CHAPTER - V
FOLKLORE OF SARANIA KACHARI COMMUNITY
AND EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY THROUGH
FOLKLORE

5.0 Introduction:

Folklore is the traditional expressive arts, traditions, skills and knowledge of a community. It is the comprehensive and vast domain of human knowledge and expressions handed on traditionally by words of mouth as well as customary practice. It includes oral literature like songs, tales, legends, myths, ballads, proverbs, riddles, and aspects of material culture like arts, crafts, tools, implements, recipe, and aspects of social customs like beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, festivals, games, reactions. It also covers folk performing arts, like folk dance and folk drama. As M. Islam says,

Folklore is the product of the human mind. The dynamic mental process, the response of the folk-soul to either outer or inner needs, the expression of various loggings, fears, aversions or desires are mainly responsible for the creation of folklore. (Islam: 1985: page)

Firstly, the knowledge in folklore is the result of the experience of not a person, but of the community or the society at large. We may call it the wisdom of the people or the learning of the community. The individual earns knowledge through experience and knowledge is combined together, they voice the same feeling which becomes the feeling of the society. This feeling gets its expression in the elements of folklore. (Islam: 1985: 16)
The definition of folklore, folk and folk life has changed. The term folk means people belonging to the same group and share at least one common culture, language, religion or traditions. (As stated in chapter 3 of this study, p.7) The important function of folklore is always to gear up the group integration, unification and interest as it is connected to ethnic feeling. Due to the effect of globalization, nobody in the world is unknown to the rest of the world or nobody is disconnected from the rest of the world.

The concept of identity movement lies in creating the difference between other and oneself. The identity of Sarania Kachari community is constructed through its culture. The identity of Sarania Kachari community is complex as they try to establish themselves as Sarania Kachari tribe and others are not recognizing them as Sarania Kachari tribe. In history, it is mentioned that they were part of Bodo tribe. And they took saran for social upgradation and now they want to become tribe again. A question in the mind of Bodo people is that if Sarania Kacharis were Bodo then why they do not want the scheduled tribe certificate in the name of Bodo. In Bodoland Territorial Area Districts, area the number of Bodo people will decrease if they are separately identified.

The folklorist tries to discover or recreate or renew the history of a community from their folk history, audience reactions during the performance, by collecting biographies of active bearers, by analyzing influences of a folk element, for example, a folk ballad how it is created, how it was spread.

The modern folklorist studies a community in historical depth, resides in it over protected period in participant-observer-collector, and gathers information on the occasions of tale-telling, audience reactions, biographies and personalities of the major and run-of-the-mill narrators, influences on the tale repertoire from popular and art
literature, and the meanings and the satisfaction derived by tellers and auditors from the narrative genres. (Dorson: 1972: 159)

R.M. Dorson in his book “Folklore and Folk life” (1972:159) stated that folklore can be studied under four categories. The researcher is trying to introduce the folklore of Sarania Kachari under these four categories-

i. Oral literature

ii. Social folk customs

iii. Material culture

iv. Performing arts

Folklore has developed as a major concern of ethnic identity movements with an attention to group’s self-definition. The traditional myths, tales, folk practices, beliefs, orally transmitted forms belong to oral literature. Folklore cannot have written script, it has to transmit orally at least partially. William Thoms replaced the word popular antiquities with folklore expecting a similar sense of commonness. In the article “Folklore and Anthropology”, it is mentioned that while inventing the word “folklore”, Thoms neglected the material part of folklore. He included manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs. (Bascom: 285) The physical items of material culture include painting, sculpture, decorative pieces. An art is a folk art if it is done by the untrained folk artist. During the first half of the twentieth-century folklorists engaged in study oral tradition. In the year 1970, folklorist expanded their study to material culture. Individual craftsman, stylistic differences in styles, made different from one art to other. Musical instruments, tools, handmade linen, special cooking equipment are included in material part of folklore. The identification of the
word folk with peasant society is a narrow concept only and as well the concept of folklore that those belong to past only. It is not necessary to know all members of the group; he may know the common cultural traits which links him to the group. Some of the major forms of folklore myth and folktale, legends, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue twisters, greetings and leave-taking formulas, folk customs, folk medicines, folk instrumental music, folk song (lullabies, ballads), folk speech, folk similes, folk metaphors, names (nicknames). (Dundes: 1965: 2) Folk poetry includes oral epic, autograph books, and epitaphs. The folklore is orally transmitted, traditional, survival and communal. These characters are belonging to the old concept of folklore, not belong to the new one given by Alan Dundes. Folklore covers that part of the cultural anthropology which is related to the study of the customs, traditions, and institutions of living people. Folkloric items are recreated by adjusting to historical past. In a folk performance, the contradiction between audiences and speakers affects the perception of both. It grows the feeling of connection between the two. The performer is representing the audiences view at the time of performance.

This chapter covers various aspects of Sarania Kachari community consisting folklore which can be learned orally, by observing, by listening and by transmission. Sarania Kachari community of Baksa and Nalbari district has a magnificent treasure of folklore. This small study is an attempt to conceptualize the folklore of Sarania Kachari collected from different villages of these two districts. During the collection, the researcher has tried to understand the link how these items are being used in case of their identity. For conducting the analysis the researcher has included a small historical
study on the variety of ethnic people of Assam and their rebel against Assamese nationality which is based on historical and present literature.

5.1 Some features of Sarania Kachari cultural life:

5.1.1 Sarania Kachari culture: the mixture of tribal and non-tribal culture:

As Sarania Kachari culture is the mixture of tribal and non-tribal their folklore is also tribal and non-tribal. The death rituals and marriage rituals have been maintained according to Hindu Vedic rituals, but the lifestyle and performing arts, customs can be included in the tribal religion, where they worship nature. As it is an agricultural society so most part of folklore depicts natural sensitiveness. Folklore is the manifestation of notions, customs, traditional beliefs, values, celebrations, and rituals, moral values of an ethnic community or a tribe or a society. Performing art personifies the traditional musical performances, dances, drama, rituals, and hymns which are performed. Performances are mostly associated with folk customs and celebrations. Otherwise, four categories are dependent on each other.

Due to the influence of the Aryan Hindu society, Sarania Kacharis follow some Vedic rules in social functions but they are not totally merged into Hindu culture. A Brahman priest generally conducts the marriages of Sarania Kachari or other rituals. They follow Hindu marriage system. They owe natural objects like stone, river, bamboo etc. The Sarania Kacharis do not have any written documents.

5.1.2 Assimilation of Sarania Kachari with Hindu Assamese:

Sarania Kachari community has been acculturating in various degrees as a result of living in contact with the non-tribal “Sanskritized group”. The traditional pattern of life of Sarania Kachari belongs to agricultural activities. The common distinctive
feature of womenfolk of Sarania Kachari is their weaving styles, coloured and designed textiles which is common to the Sanskritized people. The different folk materials found among different communities of Assam has similarities in respect of folk festivals, folk songs, folk dresses, food habits, household styles, rituals and ceremonies relating to birth, marriage, and death.

5.1.3 Social Folk Customs are mainly agricultural and religious:

Social folk custom has a very close relationship to the material culture. For celebrating the customs, festivals, rituals, whatever materials are needed is included in folk customs. The hymns, folk songs, prayers, utter were used in celebrations, and be categorized as folk literature. And the dances, body movements, whatever performances are made for making the religious institutions or celebration enjoyable or successful can be categorized in folk performances. Social folk customs with religious, entertainment aspects have occurred with the group interactions; here family and community observances are very important for maintaining the harmony of the society. In India, the religious aspect of social folk customs has covered the rites of passage which include an initiation ceremony, marriages, and death ceremonies which are different from a different community. For a Hindu, it is different from a Muslim or a Christian. Social folk customs of Sarania Kachari community is mainly agricultural and religious.

5.2 Folk literature of Sarania Kachari Community:

Folklore can be divided into four parts. They are Oral literature, social folk customs, folk performing arts and material culture. Folk literature is that part of the society which is orally transmitted not written. The belief is that folk literature belongs
to the past, but from the field data the researcher has come to know that it is an irony of folklore that an element may create in recent time but assumes it belongs to the past. For discussing identity with the help of the folk literature of Sarania Kachari researcher has included some folk songs. These songs are very simple but traditionally handed down from generation to generation depicting the village life.

The traditional hymns of Aai Sabhah, hymns of conducting ritual regarding birth rites, puberty rites, marriage rites, and death rites make folk literature of Sarania Kachari venerable. Proverbs, riddles has local appeal; these are carrying a local scent as well as the scent of Assamese culture. These traits reflect the entire traditional way of life of Sarania people. Sarania Kachari community carrying the local stories, myths, beliefs, faiths, associated with it. Even in this modern age, they are continuing. The youth of Sarania community have now the concern to know about their faith, festivals, rituals, celebrations, in their original contexts. It should be noted that while showcasing and presenting the folkloric items for establishing their identity their authenticity and value should not be disturbed by distortion or innovative process. New generations experience old celebration with an ethnic sense.

Folk songs of any community depict the psychological condition of the particular community. It includes their reaction to each other. Folk song is a manifestation of finer aspects of human life. Folk songs are used for the pleasure of singing and listening. They act as the medium for the expression of ideas or emotion held in common by a group. A community whether agricultural or otherwise expresses itself passionately and imaginatively through its folk songs. The cultural trait of a community’s rich folk heritage can be understood clearly through their folk songs and rhymes. Folk songs are the way of lightening the burden of communal labour. Folk
songs are used for magic effects, to defeat enemies, to attract lovers to invoke the favour of the supernatural powers. Folk songs imply the use of music and the musical tradition varied greatly from one area to another. (Dorson: 1972: 64)

5.2.1 Characteristics of folk songs of Sarania Kachari:

Every community has its own account of songs, which is very valuable and it differs from one community to other and time to time the character will be changed. A folk song cannot be old. It always has the scent of the past. “A folk song is neither new nor old it is like a forest tree with its roots deeply buried in the past. But which continually puts forth new branches, new leaves new fruits. A folk song is interring woven with the aspirations, ethos, and pathos of a primitive community.” (Sharma: 5: 2007) The non-literate technologically undeveloped people express their feeling to each other by singing.

Sarania Kachari has a rich tradition of ancient folk music which is also a mixture of different folk community’s music. The musical diversity is noticeable, where some people perform only Assamese traditional performances, whereas, in another part, people from another locality perform their local performances. In the identity movement, this local performance is picked up to show to the world as their own. Originally this performance belongs to an area, not the entire community.

5.2.2 Folk songs related to folk festivals and social folk customs:

Folk songs of Bambolpita dance or Heparpita dance:

কাউর কাউরে খেলে খেচেং

বাহব ওপবত বাহব ওপবত
বাবী তিবি সুতা কাটে ভাঙ যতবর্ত
আঠিয়া কলব কল পচলা
মুহনীয়া কলব পুলি
গারে গারে ঘুবি ফুবিলো ঢকা বাধক বুলি
কি বাই হাই তো বোলে
আই হাই তো বোলে
বাম্বোল বাম্বোল পিতির মাই হেব
বাম্বোল বাম্বোল পিতির মাই
অ হবেই অ হবেই

(The crows are creating haphazard noise
Above bamboo, above bamboo
Widows cut thread on the broken spinning wheel.

Young shoot of athiya kol (one type of banana)
The plants of munhiya banana tree

Travelling the villages expecting someone will keep me as dhoka

Mother will say sister will say
Sister will say sister will say

Let’s go for beating bamboo
Let’s go for beating bamboo

O’ hurei, o’ hurei… (Deka: 2002: 146)

This song is about the normal traditional life of Sarania Kachari village which is expressing their living style. It depicts a home compound with bamboo plants, banana tree, and women busy with weaving.

1. এশ টকান্ড হালধী ওবা দুঃ টকান্ড

তিনিশ টকান্ড ঘোরাটো লাগাম চিংটি গেল

থিদি আনলো থিদি আনলো বাঙ্গালার থল নাই

শহর বড়োই দিখাই দিলা কত বাহ ভল

কি আই হাই তো বোলে

বাই হাই তো বোলে

বামোল বামোল পিতির যাই হেব

বামোল বামোল পিতির যাই

অ হবেই অ হবেই

ইয়ো বোলে জলপান সিয়ো বোলে জলপান

জল পানে পিঠাওয়া থায়

জল পানে পিঠাওয়া থায়

অ-হো কার্নি চিবাত ডলাই
পথাবলে লে যায়
আলিব মূর্ত বাই বাই যায়
কি আই হাই তো বোলে
বাই হাই তো বোলে
বামো বামো পিতিব মাই হেব
বামো বামো পিতিব মাই
অ হোবেই অ হোবেই

(Turmeric of hundred rupees, oil of two hundred
The three hundred rupees horse ran away
Bringing back, bringing back but there is not enough space for binding.
Father in law advice me to bind it
Under the kot bamboo branches
Mother says, sister also says
let’s go for beating bamboo
Let’s go for beating bamboo
o’ hurei, o’ hurei……
Mother says, sister also says
let’s go for beating bamboo
let’s go for beating bamboo
Son in laws in Sarania Kachari family is very adorable in father in law’s family. All in-laws love him. Everyone forces him to eat delicious food.

2. খটর্বা ব গোসাই ঘন দেখতে ভয়কর

ছয়কুচি নাহবব খুটা

ছয় কুচি নাহবব খুটা

অহে একালে লেখিলে বামে লঙ্কণে

আনমালে লিখিলে সীতা

কি আই হাই জো বোলে

বাই হাই জো বোলে

বাম্বোল বাম্বোল পিঠব বাই হেব

বাম্বোল বাম্বোল পিঠব বাই

অ হবেই অ হবেই

The structure of Khatara Gohai Ghor is strange

There are one hundred twenty posts of nahar tree

There are one hundred twenty posts of nahar tree

On one side there are the names of Ram- Lakshman

And in another side name of Sita.

Mother says, sister also says

Let’s go for beating bamboo

Let’s go for beating bamboo

O’ hurei, o’ hurei…(deka: 20002: 146)
In Khatara Goshai Ghar, there are one hundred twenty posts of Nahar tree which are crafted with the name of Ram-Lakhsman and Sita.

Folk songs of Bah Goshai uttsav: The team going with the bamboo god gives blessings to the household by saying “জ্ঞান গোপালক সূর্ব্বিবি হবি বোল, হবি বোল,হবি বোল,” বেং কালে ভবত ভবত চাপবা মাতিব তলত নতুন আপিব ঘা কালে চিবা কেথাব তলত’, (by remembering Gopal we should say hari bol, hari bol frog cries under the earth new bride cries under the teared warm cloth)

Folk songs of Bihu:

1. তামুল পূর্বীয়া আই হত ঐ
   বাইহত ঐ জেং বিহ নাছোগৈ আহা না বৈ
   আহ জেং বিহতে ওমালো গৈ
   তামুলপূবীয়া জিয়বী ঐ বোঝাবী ঐ
   জেং বিহ নাছোগৈ আহা না বৈ
   জেং বিহতে ওমালো গৈ
   শবমীয়া কচাবী লামিবী নাছী
   জেং বিহত নাছোগৈ আহানা না বৈ
   আহ জেং বিহতে ওমালো গৈ
   তামুল পূবীয়া আই হত ঐ
   বাইহত ঐ জেং বিহ নাছোগৈ আহা না বৈ
   আহ জেং বিহতে ওমালো গৈ
   তামুলপূবীয়া জিয়বী ঐ বোঝাবী ঐ
   জেং বিহ নাছোগৈ আহা না বৈ
   জেং বিহতে ওমালো গৈ
   শবমীয়া কচাবী লামিবী নাছী
In the above Bihu song, all are gathering for making joy, dancing, and singing.

(Mothers from Tamulpur
And elder sisters let’s go for Bihu dance
Let’s go for Jeng Bihu
Daughter’s, daughter in law’s from Tamulpur oi
Let’s go for Jeng Bihu
Let’s entertain in Jeng Bihu
Artistic dancers of Sarania Kachari
Let’s dance in Jeng Bihu
Let’s dance in Jeng Bihu)

2.  পথে বহাগেত বালীব পিছফালে শাক তুলি আছিলা ঐ আমি
    বঠতে বঠিলী লক্ষিলী নাচী কাঁট্টি চাপি পালালি অহি
    গরু বিহর দিনাখন এল একাট শাকেরে থাবাহি পূজালা ঐ আমি
    নাজ কটি কবি ননিয়ে পাষতে জেঞ্জ বিহর পাতিলা খনি
    মাঘব বিহর পিছতে ডাত শাল পাতিবা
    সুতা আনি দিয়ে তৈ পিকি হতক খাটিবা
    উত্তা লেতা চেকটী মতহ মহবা গটাবা
    আঘচোদল বব্বাও তাড়শাল পাতিবা
    থিভিব থিভিব কবি মাকোট ঐ মাবিচ
    ও লক্ষিলী ঐ দোব পাতিব চুললা মাতে
    মাকোব থিভ থিভলি গবকাব দন দপলি
    কুলি কেকেবীলী মিঠা মাতে হিয়াত তোলে কপলি
    অ লক্ষিলী অ দোব পতিব ও হ হেইয়া হেই
    মাতে মাবি থাকিবয় মন বোপাই কুলি বৃতি একিম লাগিবলে
    নবব জাতিয়ে মান
    মটরা নানীৈ খাবানৈ
2. During first Bohag in the backyard,
We were picking up green leafy vegetables
Joyful dancers come near to
During the day of Garu Bihu fill our basket with 101 green leafy vegetables
Shamelessly organized Jeng Bihu in the bank of the river
Organize your weaving tool after Magh Bihu
Ask your husband for bringing the thread
Collect your Ugha, Leta, Chereki, Jhotor, Mohura (weaving tools)
Organize your weaving tool in frontier varandah
Moving mako (weaving instrument) making a pleasant noise
O Lakhimi, oi pleasant noise will continue
With the khit khit noise of mako and hard noise of goroka (weaving instrument)
And sweet voice of kuli keteki will full our heart
Oo lakhimi o ---------------
Want to fishing at any time, if quit the job
Value of the nation will be less
Will you go to Motonga River
Wrap your cloth around the chest and take
Jakoi, khaloi (fishing instrument)

To flood having wine o sister

Daughter doesn't know how to make fish curry after fishing with Jacoi

Sarania daughter in law do not know how to make curry

Do you know the taste of dry fish curry?

Do you know the taste o sister?

During the first day of Assamese month Bohag

During the first Bohag, among the Assamese as well as Sarania Kachari community, it is a tradition to have a recipe made of one hundred and one leafy vegetables for beating diseases. After Magh Bihu, Sarania Kachari women would be busy in weaving for producing new cloth for the loved one, therefore, in the song, someone is teasing a woman by asking thread from her husband. The women are practicing fishing and weaving from the age-old. Sarania women wrap the mekhkela on her chest and used to go for fishing. In this Bihu song, the narrator is describing different kinds of activities a Sarania woman may know. A Sarania woman may know about fishing, weaving and making different kinds of curry. As they are riverside community a Sarania daughter in law should know how to make fish curry.
(Dibrugarh of upper Assam, Dhuburi of lower Assam, Nimati ghat of Jorhat.

Maibong, Haphlong is crack place.

Have seen momai kota garh (a fort in which Lachit Borphuken cut his maternal uncles head.) and Mahaboirav temple.

Have seen bridge of Namdang

We have heard lots of about Gorh Gaon

We have heard lots of about Gorh Gaon
Who has built Tolatol Ghor?
Makoni’s mother please pours tea
For Whole day
Makoni’s mother please makes tea
Have fast
Please make tea
Return to home with empty hands
Don’t go alone to the tiniali (a junction of three roads)
Young boys may tease
Modern boys are obstinacy
May tease daughter in law too
Sister Lahoti
A salute to public
Lahoti bai
Let be finished dancing Bihu Lahoti bai
Let be finished dancing Bihu

In this Bihu song, the narrator describes various historical sites of Assam. The narrator advised to young women not to walk alone, as young people can tease them.

বিহু গীতঃ

ঔবাহাটি চহালৈ ঘনে ঘনেনা যাবি
বম ফুটি মবিবি একা
জে বিহুব নাচনীলে খব লাগি নাচবি ককালটো কবি দিম বেকা
লাহটীবাই
বাইজক সেরাটি জনাই
লাহটি বাই বিছটি সামবাই ভাল
লাহটি বাই বিছটি সামবাই ভাল
ও ও বাইজ ঐ
সোনবে নাও বিহ সামবি আমি
ঘরবা ঘরবি মাও
ও বাইজ ঐ বংবে সাগব
বিছ নাচি নাচি লাগিহে ভাগব
ও ও বাইজ ঐ বাম ঐ বাম
অহা বাম বিছতে লগে পাম

Bihu Git:

Don’t go Gauhati frequently

Will die in bomb blasts

Will make your waist bent if you see our Jeng Bihu female dancer

Lahoti bai

With a salute to public

Let be finished dancing Bihu Lahoti bai

Let be finished dancing Bihu Lahoti bai

O public o

A gold boat, after finishing Bihu

let’s go home
O public we should be in happy mood
After dancing Bihu feeling tired
Oo public oi Ram oi Ram
Will meet in next Bihu session

This Bihu song depicts the terrorism in Assam. Narrator advise not to go Guwahati frequently as bomb blasts are being frequent matter.

বিহরীত:

হাই হাই বংশী হাই হাই বংশী
আইহাত ঐ বাই হাত ঐ শাক তুলবা যাও
শাক তুলব চলতে বিহ নাহি যাও
বিহ নাচি যাও

হাই হাই বংশী হাই হাই নর্মালি
পাকবিশ তলতে মই সূতা কাটিতিল্লুং
লগব জিয়াই লুগালা মাত
চন বাবীর তামুল থোক দেহা মুলিও লেবু তক
বহাগতে নাচি যাম বিহ
প্রথমনা বহাগতে বাবীরে ঐ সিদ্ধান্তে

শাক তুলি আমিলুং আমি
হয় বংতে হালী জালি গার বে জী-বোরাবী
শাক তুলাতে গাতিলুং খলি
প্রথমনা বহাগতে
বংতে-------

হয়ে গরুষ বিহর দিনাখন একশ একবিধ শাকেদি

খোঁচে ঐ ভবালো আমি

ঐ যে লাঙ্জলো ঐ কাটি কবি নূরী বে ঐ পাখতে

**Bihu song:**

Alas alas Rongali hoi hoi Kongali

O mothers o sisters lets go to collect green herbs

Let’s go for Bihu dance when going to collect green herbs

Let’s go for dancing Bihu

Alas alas Rongali hoi hoi Kongali

Cutting thread under the Pukri tree

One friend calls me

Areca nuts of destroyed grove I can die for you

Will dance Bihu in Bohag

During the first Bohag in the backside of the grove

We collect green herbs

Village daughters and daughter in laws

We offer offerings to God at the place from where we collect green herbs

During first Bohag

In joy

During Garu Bihu, we collect 100 green herbs

ঐ যে লাঙ্জলো ঐ কাটি কবি নূরী বে ঐ পাখতে

বিহরে ঐ পাতিলো আমি
গবুড বিহর দিনা
লাজেনু একটি কষি নূরি যে এ পাবতে
বিহর এ পাতিলু আমি
ঐহে শবনীয়া অসমর কিবাত কথারী বহ্ষধব
মণোনীয় প্রজাবিড আমি
ঐহে গার ব জী বোাতী স ক লোরে মিলি বিহরে এ নাপুং গৈ আমি
শবনীয়া অসমর কিবাত কথারী বহ্ষধব
মণোনীয় প্রজাবিড আমি
গারব জী-বোাতী স ক লোরে মিলি বিহরে এ নাপুং গৈ আমি
বিহরক এ নাপেল খেফালী এ কাবলু
সমজোরই নথরো যেন দায়
গারব জী বোাতী সকলেরে মিলি
বিহরক নাপুং গৈ আমি
শবনীয়া অসমর ---
গারব জী-বোাতী ---
বিহরক এ নাপেল খেফালী এ কবিছ
সমজোরই নথরো যেন দায়
সমজোরই নথরো যেন দায়
সমজোরই নথরো যেন দায়
সমজোরই নথরো যেন দায়
Folk songs of Mohoho Utsav:

Hure mosquito hure

Let’s take stick for (khediboloi) mosquito

It is the full moon of the month of Aghon

We have order driven away mosquitoes (Deka: 2002: 66)

Folk songs of Mashmoria nritya (fisherman, jakoi dance):

অ আইহত বাইহত জাখেই খালেই লো

আমতিন চূরা গেল আমি মাছ মাঙ খো

আহ আপি জাখেই মাছবা খাঁ

আহ আপি মাছ মাছবা খাঁ

ঝানাতে ঝানাকাই খাখে বুই দিত ঐ

ঝানামাছ মাছবি বুঝি

পোরাল মাছ দাংবে হল খালেই ভাবাই জাখে গে

জাক পাতি জাখে মাছি মাছবি

পাল পাতি মাছ মাঙ শবনীয়া কফাবী

আহ আপি জাখেই মাছবা খাঁ

আহ আপি মাছ মাছবা খাঁ

মাছব চিকুন মরা, ঘুমটিব চিকুন পুরা

মাছ মাছবা খাঙে আহ কবি হরাদুরা

খালে খালে লো বাখি, জাখেই লো

ভাল কবি ঐ জাখেই লো ভাল কবি
This song is based on the traditional words and lyrics. Sarania gives up Bodo language and accepts Assamese as their mother tongue with own flavor. The words, tune depicts the local flavor of the songs.

In this song singer asking mothers and elder sisters for going to fishing as Amoti has gone. In the time of Amoti, eating of fish is prohibited. When the singer was young small brother makes utensil by bamboo for fishing. Sarania women used to go for fishing in the group.
Antara2: Mowa fishes are fresh and early morning is stress-free for sleeping. When a group of people will go for fishing it will create noise automatically. In fishing activities, fish, crab, and some other living being can be collected from the pond. Dorikona, Puthi, Boitali, Cheng, Goroi, Thopagoli, Khohona, Tora, Bami different types of fishes can be collected from the pond.

Antora3: generally ponds are covered by doll grass (a kind of aquatic grass) and during the time of fishing the grass should be removed from the pond and at the removal time Magur (walking catfish), Chingi (stinging catfish) can be found which are recognized as healthy.

These songs are written by explaining their grievances, by explaining their culture, their origin. Folk songs are the most influential way to talk to members of a group.

Chorus: As this study is for understanding the relation between folklore and identity making, the researcher has included here the folklore, but for making the identity more focusing and there are some interesting contemporary song as well which researcher has found important. For understanding the identity context better, some contemporary chorus are included here.

শীল আকাশব বিশাল বুকতঃ
আমি শূকুলা ধরা উবাও
জয় উদব বড়নায় জয় ধ্বংস কেবে
বিজয়ব জয় গাণ গাও
নানা জাতি উপ জাতিব মহা মিলনত
শবনন্ত মহান জাতিব যুগপত্ত এই অসমত
ঐক্য সাধ্য মৈত্রীব মহাপ্রেমে
আমি প্রগতিম নিচাপ উদাহরণ
আই মাতিইস সেবকী সাজেবে
স্বাভাবিক ধর্মনির্দিত সংস্কৃতিতে
শান্তিব দলিলা সৌধা ফুলবে সাজাও
কবিজাতী ভেজে বন্ধ জলাও
আমার প্রাণের জাগে সোপালী সোপোন
জাতি সমাবে বাবে আকার জ্ঞান
লক্ষ্য লক্ষ্য প্রাণ সাহস বল পাও
বাধাব প্রাচীব ভাং আগাই যাও
জয়তু শব্দিয়া
জয় গান গাও
শত শত বাব তোমাক
প্রণিপাত জানাও
হেজাবে হেজাব কর গাবে
মন সহকে যায় বাবে
আমি হনেঃ কম একেআসাবে
শব্দরিয়া আমি গর্ভবে
লিখিতচুল্কে আজি আবু কোল কাহানি
কিছু আচিলো আমি
আচিলো নেকি মিচিং কচাবী
কার্নে বাড়া

পিয়ে ভূমি

আমিদো সাথে যুগ যুগ ধরি
আমি শব্দীয়া এই অসমব
সহিতলো হেনা কত ল ঘু লালচনা
আবু হেনা কত আবাসনানা
জাড়ি অভিমানি যত মতগবীব
যুগব কোঠায় যোজন কোবত
নিবৃত্যার কত আজো ককাহতে
বিচিত্রলো পরিপ্রেক্ষ
শুরুরী দিলে নতুন পথব সম্প্রাণ

ঝীলের বহ প্রতিশব্দিতিবে

dেশর হকে আমিও কিমান কবিলা
তেমাস সমাজ পরিপ্রেক্ষ
আবু আচে যত দূর অদূরব
অমূল্য প্রাপ্ত ব আমান্ত্রণ
সকলকে যে ইমান আগেন লাগে
ইমান মরম ভালগাও আমি প্রাণেরে

(মেবিনী মোহন দীপকী)

The situation of Sarania Kachari people is presented in this song as it is the union of different castes and creeds. They are struggling for progress. Saran is the only
way to eliminate the grievances and sorrows. Others neglect them. In the past, they were Mishing, Kachari, Karbi or Rabha but their present identity is Sarania.

In the blue sky
hope to fly the flag of peace
For the well being of Sarania
Sing victory song
Union of different caste and creeds
Formed Sarania community in Assam
With this united feeling
We fly flag of development
With green dress
With own culture
Decorate floral carpet of peace
Light the lamp with blood
We dream golden dream
Will give our life for the nation
Get strength of lacks
We proceed by breaking the wall
May victory of Sarania
Sing the song of victory
For hundred times
Salute you.
Thousand will say many things
What their mind wants
But will say in one sentence
proudly, we are Sarania
never want anything
what we were
maybe we were Mishing or Kachari
Karbi or Rabha
Fathers place
We know from the past
We Sarania from Assam
We bear grievances
And negligence
Because of arrogant race, arrogant people
Helpless our ancestors
Wanted to protect them
Saran shows new path of life
With coloured hope
For country, we have done a lot
Your society, your relatives
And we are living in far away
Million heart’s invitation
All feels very own
We love all from the heart (Medini Mohan Choudhury)

সমবেত সংগীতঃ

আমি তাসমীয়া জাতির শবদিয়া
ওবু আবু গোসাইব দাস
বেনো বাড়া দেউবী উপজাতি মিলি
একে লাগে কবিব্রো বাস
অ নাতী ঐ বিটিএড়ি গঠণ হ’ল
অ নাতী ঐ বাংলা জিলা আমাব হ’ল
অ নাতী ঐ আমিনো জন জাতি
অ নাতী ঐ মঙ্গলীয় প্রজাতি
কুমারীকারব মাজেব থুটানলে খাবালে
খবালি ঐ মাহেত দেবগণ মেলা চাবালে
In this song, narrator is describing

We are Assamese Sarania by caste
Disciple of guru and Gohai
Integrating Boro, Rabha, Deuri
All are living together
O nani oi form Bodoland Territorial Area Districts.
O dancer girl o we have got Baksa district
O dancer girl o we are tribal
O dancer girl o we are Mongolian
Will you go to Kumarikata by the way of Bhutan?
Will you go to see to the Daranga fair which is taken place in winter?
O dancer girl o how far is Fenuga Garh (fort)
O dancer girl, O, I have friend there
How far is Arimatta Garh (fort) ?
Have you ever gone to the west by the Gohai Kamal Road?

In this song, the narrator is describing that they are Sarania, disciples of Guru and Gohai. The people from different communities form Sarania Kachari community together and belong to Mongolian tribes. The Sarania Kachari, Bodo, Rabha, Deuri all are living in B.T.A.D.
Generally, folk songs are handed over generation to generation and the author is anonymous and the period of composition is undetermined. But some of the songs which the researcher collect from Sarania Kachari inhibited village are written by some of the renowned persons in recent time with conscious mind. But these songs are used as a folk song in public. Those are not anonymous. These songs are created for identity-making.

5.3 Social Folk Customs of Sarania Kachari:

Each society has its own specific time and special reasons for the periodical occasion. The reasons for celebrations are varied from community to community. It may be on the occasion of New Year's Eve, for starting agricultural activities, upgradation of life from one step to another, expressing joy at the end of the harvesting season. “These recurring moments of special significance, with the celebrations that fill them, are called the festival. The central function of the festival seems to be to give occasion for men to rejoice together –to interact in an ambiance of acceptance and conviviality. In the case of general participation festivals, the festival is often the only occasion in which the members of a community come together. On this occasion they interact; the interaction is satisfying therefore likely to be repeated. The satisfaction creates a bond between the participants; they have had pleasure in each other’s company; they identify with each other; in a general participation festival the individual relates to, and identify himself with the community. Thus, the festival is a prime device for promoting social cohesion, for integrating individuals in a society or group and maintaining them as members through shared, recurrent positively reinforcing performance.” (Dorson: 1972: 167)
The festivals are observed all the year around with joy and zeal. During the principal celebration, normal life has got handicapped. As the Saranias are Hindu so most of the festivals are the same as the celebration of Hindu neighbours. There are few festivals based on the worship of local tribal deities. The following are the celebration time of festivals of Sarania Kacharis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of months</th>
<th>Name of festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bohag (April-May)</td>
<td>Bah Gohai, home Jagya 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Bohag, 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of Bohag Bator puja, Deity worshipped – Bah Gohai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asadh (June-July)</td>
<td>Amoti, Deity worshipped – Mother Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadon (August-September)</td>
<td>Bambol Pita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kati (October-November)</td>
<td>Kati Gacha, Deity worshipped – Goddess Lakshmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aghon (November-December)</td>
<td>Aag-Aana (Deity- Lakshmi), Naa-Khoa (Deity-Manasa Devi), Moh-Kheda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magh (January-February)</td>
<td>Magh Bihu, Pohu Chikar Nritya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faguna (February-March)</td>
<td>Fakua</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1 Festivals of Sarania Kachari:

The celebration of festivals is the way to encourage ethnic feeling, patriotism, love, and affection towards own society, for tightening the family bonding and social bonding, to show the vibrant culture to other. If one can spend his or her leisure time in creative things it produces energy for the whole year. Festivals are different types for
different celebrations of communities. These festivals are marking of joy, to shows care for their relatives mark a change in life.

5.3.2 **Bah Goshai (Bamboo God) Festival:**

A particular characteristic of their celebration is worshipping of bamboo. The name of this tradition is “Bah Goshai” (Bamboo God festival). It is necessary to have a *Goshai Ghar* (a house where God is worshipped) in every household. Traditionally, from first the day of Assamese month that is 1st Bohag to 6th Bohag (the dates fall in the month of April) people travel from one household to another by carrying it. They respect it as their communal deity. During the day of *Goru Bihu* (a festival related to the cow), after the cow bath ritual has ended, they start to decorate the Bamboo. Firstly, the *Deuri* (priest) moves towards the bamboo with an earthen lamp and other people follow him to cut the bamboo by drumming *dhol* (drum) and Tal (musical instruments). The *Deuri* (priest) is selected from Sarania Kachari community. Women are not allowed to go at the time of cutting the bamboo. They sing devotional songs and take part in enjoyment. The length of the bamboo is about to 9 hands and 5 fingers. They wash and clean it. People wrap it by a white coloured Jama and crown with silver or a copper crown at the top of the bamboo. They decorate the bamboo with vermilion, a garland, and oil. After that, the bamboo is tied up with a post and people worship the *Bah Gosai* and they seek blessings for the upcoming New Year. Two persons carry the bamboo from both ends. First, carry man is called “*Agdhora*” and the second carry man is called “*Gordhora*”. When they enter into a household with the “*Bah Goshai*”, they keep the Bah Gosai on a “*Bota*” (a traditional tool). The place should be neat and clean. The owner of the house worships the “*Bah Goshai*” with different types of offerings. After these activities, the persons with the *Bah Goshai* perform devotional songs. But it
is not possible to perform devotional songs in every household. The owner of the house presents uncooked rice and some amount of money in front of the Bah Goshai. After the sunset, the Bah Goshai is kept in the Goshai Ghar.

The Sarania Kachari community celebrates Bah-Goshai puja (worship of Bamboo God) on the full moon day of Bohag or on 13th of Bohag, the bamboo is brought down and a Jagya has occurred with the Vedic ritual for the well being of the people along with the sacred hymns by village ladies. They celebrate Bah-Goshai puja by Hom Yogya (a tradition of Vaidic Hindu religion). At the end, the devotees take out the Bah-Goshai (Bamboo God) of the last year from the Goshai Ghar (temple) and immerse in the river.

Being conscious about their identity, from 2005, they started to celebrate the festival as a national festival. For this, people travel from one household to another by taking it from the date of 1st Bohag to 5th Bohag and at the day of 6th Bohag they celebrate centrally. The people of Sarania Kachari community from all over Assam gathered in a pre-decided place and celebrate together the festival of Bah-Goshai.

They have started the celebration of Bah Goshai festival centrally. People from different places with their respective Bah Goshai are gathered in a pre-determined place. The leaders and activists of different Sarania Kachari organizations try to successfully manage the festival. It increases unity among people. Leaders and writers of the community reinvent some old tradition and ask to observe these traditions. There are some traditions which are based on some locality. We can say about the Bah Gohai Utsav. This festival mainly celebrated in Baksa district, but now a day it is celebrated in all over the places where they live. In the context of their identity movement, they have
given great importance to their folklore material. They are using folklore material for asserting their identity as a distinctive community.

They organized a meeting in connection with the festivals. They present songs related to Sarania Kachari Community. The green colour is very important for them. All women of the community should dress up with green mekhela sadar. The Gamchas (towel) are green coloured. They welcome their guests with green colour gamchas. Banners and leaflets are published for making the image of the festivals as a central festival. Photographers and reporters are invited for publishing news about the festival in newspapers. Members from outside of the community are also invited.

The leaders, chief guest of the meeting deliver their lectures fully concentrated on identity movement. Now, most of the people of the community have given up their old subtitles like Das, Deka, and Choudhury etc. and took new subtitles “Sarania”. Though it is a celebration of a festival the meeting organized by Sarania Kachari organizations is very important for their identity movement. The activists of different Sarania Kachari organizations, leaders and people of their community remain very busy with their respective work. In the context of the festival, they publish magazine and C.D.s.

In the past, Bah Goshai festival was celebrated locally but now it is celebrated centrally. In Baksa district, Boro, Sarania, and Assamese and other communities live together.

5.3.3 Folk belief regarding Bah Goshai Puja (bamboo God worshipping):

One of the folk beliefs regarding bah Goshai festival is that celebrating this festival will reduce epidemics, hailstorm, storm, excessive rainfall, drought and other
natural calamities. They believe negligence of this festival causes disease, defamation, loss of wealth. At the beginnings of agricultural activities, this festival is celebrated for satisfying the *Bah Goshai* (Bamboo God). *Bah Goshai* (bamboo god) is a symbol of God Vishnu. As it is celebrated in community *Namghar* (where public practice traditional hymns), they name the bamboo as according to their name of the worshipping God. The worshipping God is different from village to village. They named their *Goshai Ghar* as according to the name of the local deities such as *Bangshigopal, Bhangra, Burha Goshai, Garakhia Goshai, Shyamrai, Chandi, Mahakali, Durga* etc. (Kumar: 2013: 14)

5.3.4 *Bambolpita Utsav* (festival)

Performing arts form the fourth part of the folklore and folk life. Performing arts is the conscious presentation of dance, drama and folk music. Every community of Assam is very rich in its own vibrant culture. Bambolpita Dance is connected to *Bambolpita Utsav* (Bambolpita festival) of Sarania Kachari community. *Bambolpita Utsav* (Bambolpita festival) is celebrated in the full moon night of the month of Bhadra (August-September) area wise. *Bambolpita* song is a type of folk song continuing from generation to generation among Sarania Kachari Community. It is performed at the time of the performing of Bambolpita dance. In one sense, *Bam* means “bamboo” and *bol* means “utter by striking the two pieces of bamboo each other”. Actually, the people of Sarania Kachari community invites the season of Sharat (autumn season) by celebrating *Bambolpita* Utsav. During the full moon night of Assamese month ‘Bhad’, the youth and older villagers go for a round of every household in the village where they give and take blessings by performing *Bambolpita* Dance in every household of
the village. In another sense, *Bam* means the bank, after finishing their agricultural work they come to the bank for merrymaking.

The different agricultural bamboo tools like *hulabari, Banka, Ukhani, tokon* are used in the dance performance. Performing arts is related to the life and necessity of life. The most of the people of Sarania Kachari Community is related to agriculture. It is also an agricultural festival. This is a celebration which was celebrated locally and now sometimes organized centrally. People from different villages, delegates from the different board of Sarania Kachari Student Union come together and gather in one place. Works are divided amongst them. Agricultural activities come to an end in the month of Bhadra and then people go to the bank after completing work in the water. People come to the bank and celebrate their work ending by beating bamboo, singing song, and dancing. This celebration is called *Bambolpita*.

The village youth cuts the bamboo according to own shoulder height and clean it. And they cut one small piece of the bamboo height of one feet. They strike the small piece with the large one and large one strike on earth also. The ten to fifteen youth strike on the bamboo together, it creates melodious noise. Sarania Kachari people finish their agricultural activities in the month of Bhadra. They celebrate their leisure time by singing *Bambolpita* song and they have enough time for the Rabi crops. The lyrics of the songs reflect the contemporary time. They are busy with the day to day activities, so after cows return to the cowshed they go for dancing. It is believed that it is a good sign for the household that cowherd has come to sing. They are presented rice and money.
**5.3.5 Moh Kheda:**

*Mohkheda Utsav* (Buffalo ridden festival) is celebrated in the full moon day of the month of Aghon. They celebrate this festival for five days. This festival is also known as *Bhaluk Nachua* (Buffalo dancing) festival because in this festival village boys take a decorative bear with dry banana leaf, dry rice straw etc. The bear shows dance with the song. The groups of young boys wonder door to door in dancing mode by striking in the earth with a bamboo stick.

ছোলে মহৌ মহ খেদবা টোকন লে
আঘোষ পূরিব হলে
মহ খেদবাব হকুম হল
মহ গেল মহ মহাই
হিন্দোল গচ্ছে গা গহাই

Hurry; take stick to driving away the Buffalo

It is the full moon day of Aghon

Order to drive away the Buffalo

Buffalo has run away uttering bitterly

Rubbing his body at the Hindol tree

(Mahaliya: 2012: 154)

This festival is celebrated for driving away the buffalos from the paddy field. In other places of Assam, it is celebrated for taking the mosquitoes away from the household. The purpose is different but the way and the time of celebration of this festival are same with the caste Hindu Assamese people. The young boys with their
young partners used to go every household of a village and started singing with the tune of bamboo beating.

There is no restriction on the members of the team. When they reached the courtyard, the team leader goes forward and then others follow him and they cover the courtyard in a circle. The bear does not enter with the other member of the group; he waits in the gateway for his turn. The team leader starts singing “Aghon holo purni hol moh khedbar hokum hol” (it is full moon day of the month Aghon, gets an order for driving away mosquitoes) and other members raise the song. When they mention about the bear in the song then the bear jumps into the circle and start dancing. The bear is made by wrapping dry banana leaves in one or two people. They create noise by singing a song for driving off the buffalos from the paddy field. And according to some, they sing a song for driving off the mosquitoes. There is a different meaning of the song. People are celebrating these from the time unknown just for merrymaking, now they are started to celebrate consciously after realizing that these are their identity.

5.3.6 Seasonal festival:

**Bihu:**

*Bihu* is celebrated in all over Assam and Sarania kachari also celebrate with their own flavor. They celebrate three types of *Bihu*. They prepare *pitha* (rice cake), *sandoh* (pounded fried rice), and rice beer at *Bohag Bihu*. In *Magh Bihu* also they make *chira, sandoh*, and rice beer. They eat pork, goat, and duck. Pork is popular among most of the Sarania Kachari villages. During the day of cow bath of *Bohag Bihu*, after finishing the cow bath, people come to the home and eat pork fried with *Dhekia saak* (Green leafy vegetable). It is their common habit. After coming from the market at leisure time they take the homemade beer. They dance Bihu with their traditional green
mekhela chador. Bihu is celebrated in every community of Assam by a different name. Bohag Bihu, Bah goshai, Bambolpita, Amoti chuwa, Kati Gacha, Moh kheda are their seasonal festival based on agriculture.

**Bohag Bihu:** The day before the night of the first Bohag, it is called *Uruka*. In Baksa district among the Boro community, Bohag Bihu is called *Baisagu*. In this merry making time, Sarania women prepare *pitha* (prepared by rice powder), *laru* (a sweet beverage made from coconut). The preparation is the same as Assamese community. During the time of Bohag Bihu, one particular character of Sarania Kachari is the worshipping of *Bah Gohai*. During the first day, they celebrate *Goru* (cow) Bihu. They bath the cows in *Goru Bihu* by rubbing oil with a paste of pulses and paste of turmeric. They are given new rope and a garland of vegetables is offered to eat by saying “*Lao begena kha bosore bosore barhi ja. Maro Horu bapero Horu Toi holi bor goru.*” (Eat gourd, brinjal and grow yearly. Mother is small, father is small but you are huge.) These lines are same as the Assamese language and same as the Assamese Hindu community. Cows are taken for bathing in nearby rivers or ponds. As per the Hindu religion cows are the very sacred animal, they show respect to the cows. Vegetable garlands made of gourd and brinjals are prepared for them. And the wild herbs named *Makhioti* and *digholoti* are collected for beating the cow. They rub oil on them. Old ropes are thrown, new ropes are offered to them, cowsheds are cleaned. The second day is Manuh Bihu; during this day young people take blessings from the elders. Green Gamocha (handwoven cotton towel) is offered to the elders. Young people dance in the paddy field in the mids of greenery.
**Kati Gacha:**

*Kati Gacha* is not merrymaking festival; it is a spiritual kind of thing. Sarania people pray to Lakshmi Devi for the agricultural activities for having more crops. During the day all Sarania family keeps home and surrounding area neat and clean and sprinkle the water mixed with cow dung. It is believed that the mixer of water and cow dung can pure the impurification of a home. The elders keep fasting for being pure. In Kati Gacha, Sarania people light earthen lamp under basil plant in the front yard of the house with some offerings to Lakshmi Devi. In the evening it is a ritual of lightening the agricultural field. In the agricultural field, they light the lamp on a bijuli bamboo fixing a shield of elephant apple (*ou tengar khol*) or a sheath of a banana tree (*kolor dona*) on the top of it. They offer coconut, pomelo fruit, and raw ladoos. Youngsters of the village enjoy by stealing the offerings from the field. This is the way of making joy.

It is believed that householders should not eat the offerings given in the field. The village boys come to every household and offer blessings and take part in offerings. After *Katigacha*, there is a tradition of chanting hymns in every evening through the whole month. *(Moholiya: 2015: 25)* The new wall nut is offered to god first during *Kati Gacha*. People generally light their lamp in *tengar khola* (*sheath of elephant apple*) or banana trees in the paddy fields, behind the jackfruit tree and mango tree for having more fruit.

**Magh Bihu:** During the day of *Magh Bihu*, the family members rise before sunrise and take bath and fire the *Meji* (kind of bonfire made of rice straw, bamboo, and dried banana tree leaf). Female members offer fruits and other offerings to the fire god. They offer betel nut, pulses, and sesame seeds to the fire for getting blessings from the god. Mothers or grandmother fries *maah korai*, a traditional salted crispy recipe that
includes raw rice, sesame seeds, and different kinds of pulses. Young members of the family take *maah korai* in remaining parts of the Bamboo of the Meji. The day before the month of puh is called Maghor Domahi. They celebrate Magh Bihu for seven days. Young boys sleep inside the *Bhela ghor* (a hut made of straw for that special day) during the night of *Uruka*. They steal vegetables for joy from the vegetable garden of other villagers. After firing the *Meji*, villagers take blessings of fire God by having a mark of ash of burning bamboo. Women prepare beverages for the whole night. During the Bihu, younger people take blessings from elders. Daughter-in-laws go to mother's house for having blessings from her parents. Youngsters engage in playing games like *haugudu khel, alou guti, tolo guti, rochi tona, Kukura juj khel* (cock fight game), *dhigol jaap* (long jump) etc. In the past, old people used to go for dancing and merrymaking. Householders offer sweets, cake with homemade wine to guest during Bihu. The circulation of wine is not allowed for all Sarania household.

**5.3.7 Rituals of Sarania Kacharis related to agriculture:**

*Aag ana* (bringing forepart of the paddy from the paddy field to the house): During the month of Aghon (November-December), there is a ritual of bringing the forepart of the crops to home, they first offer it to Goddess Lakshmi, and then people start to eat as food. When they bring it from the field that person who is taking it cannot see towards the back. Without bringing forepart of the Saali paddy to home it is forbiddable to cut in the field. Any one person of the family after bathing, go to the paddy field with a forepart of banana leaf, betel nut, basils leaf and Kaachi and sprinkles water for purifying the place from which he will bring the forepart and he cuts paddy and wraps with a banana leaf and brings the wraps on the head. One person cuts the paddy with his left hand and by facing north side. It is forbidden to see backside
during the time of return. If he sees back or talks with someone during walking it is believed that wealth will decrease. When the person enters the house, he receives a warm welcome and keep the forepart in front of the paddy storehouse.

5.3.8 Beliefs related to Agriculture:

Sarania Kachari people beliefs that growing plenty of mangoes signify flood and growing plenty of jackfruits signify plenty of paddies. Another belief is that if a rainbow appears in the east then it is the sign of well crop, if the rainbow appears in the west then it will be flood.

It is believed that if rain starts from Saturday then for the whole days it will be rain if rain starts from Tuesday then three days will be rain. These are Assamese proverbs, which are prevailed in Sarania Kachari community also.

The beliefs related to rice crops –

If haal (plough) has started in the month of Aghon, then in the month of Magh the haal can be used.

The bowing of Ahu Dhan (paddy planted during winter season) is done on Tuesday and Saturday, while the bowing of Sali Dhan (paddy planted during rainy season) is done on Monday or on Thursday.

Gocha loa ritual (paddy plantation): In Gocha loa, women actively take part in paddy plantation. In these rituals, there are numbers of things which are necessary for successfully ending up the ritual. The things are forepart of a bamboo, leaf of beetle nut, one pair of beetle nut, twelve nuts, one basil plant, one forepart of banana leaf, pulses and raw milk as an offering and one earthen lamp. By collecting these articles in the day of gocha loa (paddy plantation), in last side of the plot one basil plant is planted
and the earthen lamp is lightened there with one pair of betel nut and leaf. Raw rice is offered to God. After that, the householder and wife of him bow five plants. It is a moment of joy. They plant one basil plant, one black taro and one dhekiya (a wild eatable herb) in front of the earthen lamp in the field. The day when they start saali crops one person wraps five kahi bon (one type of grass) in the four sides of the plot and one in the middle of the plot. The person who plants the rice plant offers four bundles of paddy in front of the kahi bon and worships Goddess Lakshmi for well being of the paddy and spreads the seeds in the plot. They eat black taro on the day of bowing seeds. They make joy by throwing mud each other and throw mud to the person who takes Gocha. It is believed that if they do this more crops will grow. They bring mud from the field and rub walls of the Bhoral Ghor (paddy containing room) with this mud.

**Kachi Utha** (finishing the paddy plantation): After finishing the paddy cutting, they left three plants of paddy in the field, it is called keeping Goddess Lakshmi in the field. After clearing the field, they worship Goddess Lakshmi and keep the kachi in the bhakhri.

**Noa khoa Utsav:** From the 9th of Aghon new paddy has taken as food. If they don't take new paddy at Aghon, they have to wait for Magh. During Puh month, it is forbidden to take new rice. In past days, the tradition was to take new rice in someday of Aghon. Before start the feast they show respect to forefathers by offering newly grown paddy in the backyard of the house. And one bunches of rice plant is offered to the cow. The cow is a very important wealth of farmer. Then they offer food to the dogs. It is a tradition to worship Goddess Manasha during Noa khoa (new paddy
eating ceremony) ceremony. In the name of Goddess ducks, goats, pigeons are sacrificed.

**Religious activities:** To discuss Sarania Kachari religion one have to take shelter of folk culture. The fascinating religious mind of Sarania Kachari people includes Mongolian character. They believe in ghost and natural beings. They worship various local deities, invisible spirit as well as Hindu deities. They follow rituals for protecting themselves from epidemics, natural disasters, magical activities and natural beliefs. When someone notices their social and religious celebration it is easy to understand that they are still maintaining their age-old religious activities. The fear of being harmed by *Jol devata, Boliya Roja, Burha-Burhi* (traditional folk deities) is revealed through their folk culture.

### 5.3.9 A celebration of Bator Puja (worship in the street):

In case of celebration like Bator Puja (a worship which is organized in a corner of the street), written forms are not available. The people who perform this ritual do not allow to write down. They believe if these rituals are written down, it might cause harm to the writer. These are all orally transmitted from generation to generation. *Bator puja* is organized for the wellbeing of the villagers and to remove diseases, epidemics from the village. It is celebrated on the month of Bohag after immersing of the bamboo god of the last year into the river. In the same ritual, they worship Lord Ganesha, *Bat raja* (a folk deity) and *Aai Gohani* (a folk deity). Two Women perform as *Deury* (priest). By putting all the offerings in a float made of plantain tree sacrifices in the river, while they go to sacrifice the float they cannot see back, it is the bad sign of seeing the backside.
**Aai naam:** These hymns are transmitting orally from generation to generation by old ladies of the society. When the researcher asked for writing the hymns they do not allow the researcher to write. They said if the researcher note down the hymns it can harm the researcher. These simple songs depict simplicity of the people and their beliefs justifying the nature. Due to the time, it may change but the theme remains the same.

**Jol Devatar puja** (worship of Water God) is a ritual which is performed if somebody is suffering from illness then this person’s mother or wife would give some offerings in the name of Jol devata (Water God) for getting relief from such illness. They believe that offerings to water God can remove their sufferings and grievances. They offer *mahprasad* (black lentil with two eggs) and flower in a *Kolor dona* (body parts of a banana tree) to water God. The researcher has come across this ritual in Dakshin Karemarashuburi of Goreswar, Baska district. One person was suffering from pain in lower part of the body and for reducing his pain, his wife offered these things to water god. If there is a quarrel between two brothers, the mother offers *mahprasad* to Water God.

**5.3.10 Folk beliefs:**

**Local deity:** In Borimakha the names of the Goshai Ghars (village temples) are Lakkhi Thakuriani (local name of mother Goddess Lakshmi), *Paglahara, Bishnu, Garakhiya Goshai Ghar* (xau kuchi), *Bagheswari, Jogotguru*. In this *Bagheswari* temple, the goddess is worshipped to satisfy Devi for not killing the people by the tiger. As this place was covered by jungle, tiger came out from jungle often to eat domestic animals and sometimes it harmed people also. So by worshipping Goddess they commonly thought that goddess would prevent the tiger.
Chatobaba: It is also a local deity. A red cloth is wrapped around a bijuuli bamboo for fulfilling the expectations of mind. Sometimes for fulfilling expectations of mind, people bind a banana tree with the dried banana skull in one breath, the tree should be fruitful.

Burha-Burhir than: Usually Burha-Burhir than is located in near Namghar or Goshai Ghor. Burha means Lord Shiva and Burhi means Devi Parvati and than means place. They believed that Burha-Burhi will fulfill their expectations after praying in Burha-Burhir than.

If somebody lose their cow or goat or other domesticated animals then they wish offerings in the name of Burha Burhi. They believe that burha-burhi helps to find their losing things. If some married couple does not have children they also keep offerings in the name of Burha Burhi. Some people offer flower made of silver or gold. They offer banana binding in a banana plate with a bamboo for wishing for the exam. They organize Burha burhir than behind the Ahot tree, Pakri tree. Sarania people live in a gathering. (Kamala Kanta Das, 73, retired school teacher)

Maju worship: Maju worship is the worshipping of the daughter of Mahadeva. According to the Sarania Kachari community, Bishahari is Majudevi. The name of the daughter of Mahadeva is Bishahari.

5.3.11 Role of Goshai Ghor:

The social problems are solved in front of the Goshai Ghar or Nam Ghar. These are not reported in Police station. Police often comment that they do not find any complaint about Sarania Kachari inhibited villages. For arranging the public meeting there was a person called Halmajhi in the past, he informed to every household about
the meeting organize in front of the *Goshai Ghar*. People generally promise not to tell lie in front of the *Goshai Ghar*.

*Goshai Ghar* is the center of a society. All social problems are discussed in *Goshai Ghar*. They have the separate name for different *Goshai Ghar* of a different village. Such as *Paglahara Goshai Ghar, Bishnu Goshai Ghar, Lakshmi Thakuriani Goshai Ghar, Gorokhia Goshai Ghar, Bagheshwari Goshai Ghar, Jogot guru Goshai Ghar*. In *Paglahara Goshai Ghar*, they worship, Shiva. In *Bishnu Goshai Ghar* they worship Lord Vishnu. In *Lakshmi Thakuriani Goshai Ghar*, they worship Goddess Lakshmi. It is the central place for decision-making activities in case of a criminal case or any illegal activity done by villagers. Such as, if son kills father or brother kills brother then it is solved by villagers in front of the *Goshai Ghar*. One person who is called “*halmajhi*” is responsible for calling the meeting and spreading the news among villagers. If the offense is proved as true then all the people of village wash their kitchen it is called “*Pag Dhua*”.

The Sarania Kachari community is very rich in folklore. Folklore can be divided into four parts. They are folk literature, folk customs and folk performing arts. They celebrate a number of festivals in a year. The major celebrations of them are *Bah Goshai Utsav, Bambolpita Utsav, Kati Gacha, Moh Kheda, Bator puja, Durga Puja, Lakshmi puja*.

Merrymaking is very important in Folk life. The women folk of Sarania Kachari community used to go for fishing collectively. At that time, they tease each other and dance. One of the folk dances of Sarania Kachari community is *Jakoi Nritya*, which is called *Mashmoria Nritya* too. *Jakoi* is a traditional fishing article made of bamboo.
5.3.12 Astrological counting regarding agriculture:

Counting is a well known procedure to know about the climate of the upcoming New Year. When the rain is mild the seven colour bow can be seen in the sky. If the bow appears in the east the paddy will be more.

Astrological counting regarding raining: It is believed that; if rain starts from Saturday then seven days will be rain and if rain starts from Tuesday three days will be rain. These beliefs prevail in Assamese community also and these are strong in Sarania Kachari community as well.

Sarania family examines the place by one astrologer in which place they want to build their new house. When the astrologer comments about the ideal place for building, they start to build their house by choosing an auspicious day.

5.3.13 Folk believes related to paddy:

The bowing of Ahu dhan is done in Tuesday and Saturday while the bowing of Saali dhan is done in Monday or in Thurs day.

5.3.14 Mythology related to paddy:

In the book "Sarania Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti", Nalini Deka (2002:51-52) described that Lord Shiva cultivated paddy and Shiva Shankar obstructed Parvati to see his agricultural work. This obstacle causes a doubt in her mind why did he obstruct her. She went to see the field without knowledge of Lord Shiva. It is mentioned in the Bhim Charita that Mahadeva did paddy agriculture. When Parvati observed the field her eyesight fired the paddy.
At last Mahadeva wiped out the fire by his komonolu’s (water pot) water. This half fired rice is called Shalli and fresh rice is called Aahu. So, by observing paddy people should not react. People hang broken pot or bunch of Chao tree in the middle of the paddy field for protection from evil eyes. Lord Shiva gave the curse to the women that if they observe paddy in the field it would be ruined. From that day women do not go to see paddy.

After cutting Saali crop pounded rice is offered to God and then people take as food.

If someone has a cow, it is a matter of proud and respect. Regarding cow, there is one popular saying was that who has not cow he is the smallest that means he has no respect in the society which is similar to Assamese community. (Deka: 2002: 41)

In Xauri khoa (marry making feast) when a family finishes a work together after finishing they have to get together and enjoy with nice food. They eat together. This is called Xauri khoa. In Bhogali Bihu or Rangali Bihu, the elders who cannot walk by themselves young members made a sheet for them in the front yard. (Deka: 2002: 47)

5.3.15 Rites of passage:

In Indian society events related to life cycle are celebrated. Celebrations related to life cycles form a major part of the folklore of Sarania Kachari. One can understand the impact of Hinduism by studying rituals of life cycles.

Birth rituals:

The important messages for pregnant women are hiding in the oral circulation of rituals. These things are circulated from mother to daughter or mother in law to daughter in law or grandmother to great-granddaughter. It is so obvious in a village
when a woman is pregnant the women from her relatives and other experienced women from the neighborhood come to advise her. During the field experienced the researcher interviewed village women who share their feelings regarding birth rituals. Village women of Borimakha which are situated in Baksa District of Assam, India shared that a Sarania woman has to live upon straw on the earth until the umbilical cord has dropped. Now it has changed to bed. When the cord has dropped it is called *Panch Dina Oloa* (completed five days). That day the house should be cleaned. They wash cloths and every utensil and clean surroundings of the house. After bathing the mother and the child are recognized as cleaned. Mother sprinkles water with milk, basils, cow dung in the house for purifying the things. Then one lady takes the baby in her lap and the mother gives the baby from up, she does not touch the lady at that time. The other ladies can touch the baby. It is called *Chuwa Khedowa* (driving away the impurity).

After one month of the baby birth, a religious prayer is organized for the well being of the baby.

**Puberty marriage:** In Sarania society or in Assamese society it is called *Tuloni Biya* or *Dhuwoni Biya* when a girl gets menstruation for the first time. The menstruating girl has to face a number of restrictions and taboos. The time of getting womanhood has celebrated in Hindu society. When the bleeding stop, the young woman takes a bath to purify her and follows normal life. During the time of first puberty, a family of the girl keeps her inside the house far from the eyes of the male people. Girl sleeps in a mattress made of straw or in a *dhara* (carpet made by bamboo). If the girl gets puberty without eating then she can bath for four days or if she gets puberty after eating then she can bath for five days. One earthen lamp has lightened in that room with some offerings to the God. In puberty marriage, there are three japas one is from the maternal
uncle or borghoriya (from groom’s side), another one is from the best friend and one is from home. A japa contains cloth and jewelry for the little bride. The japas are called Gaziram too. In puberty marriage the role of the best friend is important. She brings japa to the home. If she gets puberty beforehand then other kumari (minor) girl can perform her role.

During Tuloni Biya, the village women enjoy, they make humour of getting fertility. They act in disguise as a male person, polish men and perform a dance at girl’s house. They make the joke of girl's mother, aunt, and grandmother and close relatives. When the girl gets puberty, in the second-day mother discuss her future with Gonok (an astrologer) by on the basis of the time of getting puberty. If the girl gets puberty in the morning it is a good sign for her future. When she bath she wears new cloth, new jewelry presented by her relatives as she gets a new life after having puberty. She can eat boil food only after bathing.

Marriage:

When groom with the groom's party comes to bride's home father welcome him with an earthen lamp and one unmarried girl washes his feet with curd and water. The system of marriage is same with Assamese community. Before the marriage, groom's relative comes to bride's house taking different presents to her. It is called Telor bhar or Juron Diya. The marriage system of Sarania Kachari had nothing differences with Hindu Assamese marriage. In conducting the marriage ceremonies ayoti has a great role. Ayotis has a team of seven to eight members. All rituals, methods, related things all are mentioned in the hymns. When they deliver uruli (a trilling sound) the place becomes sacred. During the marriage day, at some places before sunrise or in some places during the daytime people take water from river or pond for the bath ritual. The
priest worshipped the God for wishing good luck and after the worship of God the groom or bride in their respective places, sit for the Sradha (a homage to the ancestors) by facing west side. Putting oil on the head, cutting nails by brother in law or maternal uncle or hair cutter are the rituals of the marriage ceremony. The bride or groom is bathed under a banana tree. Sarania Marriages are taken place with the help of Brahman’s method. At night, the groom comes to bride’s house. So, one Brahman priest presides the marriage. The bride and groom have to be seated together and father of the bride offer her to the groom. And younger brother of the bride binds her with the groom by a Gamocha. Groom chants hymn with the priest and by worshiping Agni devata (God of fire) and in the presence of Agni Devata and the society he grants her as his better half. After finishing the Jagya the ritual is to take present. The bride’s hand is given up on the groom’s hand on a bata (a copper-made stool). The Brahman mention the giver’s name and give on the bride groom’s hand and offer ghee to the fire. At least the younger brother gives the akhoi ( parched corn of rice) in bride’s hand and groom throw these akhoi to the sacred fire. Marriage is happened by Vedic system. Relation of the girl to her parent’s family is cut off and she is gifted to the son in law with the blessings of society and almighty. After that various games are instituted in between the new couple. They show respect to the elderly relatives. After showing respect to elders bride has to leave her father’s house in sorrowful condition with a broken heart. In the marriage songs, ayotis (married woman) reveal their marriage system from the beginning to the end. In Sarania Kachari marriages, all people wear green mekhela chadar, after accepting green mekhela chadar as traditional dress for women they start to wear green mekhela chador in marriages and in other celebrations to make distinctions from others also.
Death rites:

According to Hindu faith, people believed that last rite of the dead person has to be done perfectly according to the prescribed rules in Veda; otherwise, the dead will not get salvation. After the cremation of the three days, family members keep fasting and during the third day they eat raw pounded rice with milk. The person who cremates will have to perform the rituals. When people die they follow Vedic rituals for death rites. They engage a Brahman priest in conducting the rituals. These rituals will be continuing until the 15th day of the death. During the 10th day, it is called Doha. The family of the dead person can have only boiled food with ghee and fruits. In the 15th day, it is called Matsya Sparsa (feast day), the family person takes cooked food with other villagers. From the field, the researcher comes to know that the cremation of the dead body is the impact of Hinduism. They were not aware of cremation and kept the body in the jungle.

During Spring Season they celebrate "Bohagor Domahi" which is known as Bohag Bihu or Rangali Bihu in Assamese Society. A particular characteristic of their celebration is worshipping of bamboo. The name of this tradition is "Gosai Bah puja".

They celebrate Bator puja, Katigasha, Maghor Domahi, Bambol pita Utsav, Sasong puja, Maroi puja, Chor puja. They performed some highly standard folk dances. Some of them are Bambol pita or Hepar pita dance, Mashmoriya dance, Chikar Nritya (Hunting dance), Krishi Nritya (Agricultural dance), Shram Nritya (Labour dance), Dhepa or Chunga Dhulia etc. Sarania women are expert in weaving; traditionally they wore mekhela sadar, gamocha. Men use colourful Gamocha in their home. Most of the domestic requirements of cloth are met from the family loom. Being conscious about their identity, they marked green mekhelas and white sadar with the
green border as their traditional dress in case of women. In marriage ceremonies, Sarania Kachari women use Mekhela Sadar of Pat and Muga silk. In domestic life Women of the Sarania Kachari community take a very significant part. Often they go fishing by making a group.

Folk dances of a community are evolved spontaneously from the everyday activities and experiences of its people. “Mashmoria dance”, a dance by Women of the Sarania Kachari community, reflects their fishing activity in the day to day life.

In Sarania Kachari community, black magic is considered to be practiced by women only and the Sarania Kachari calls them "Daini" (witches). It is believed that such women do harm by their black magic and generally these women are avoided by the people. During this study the researcher never come across such women in her research area.

Rice is the staple food of the Sarania Kacharis. During Bihu, they make various types of cakes from "bora" rice with the help of coconut, sesame etc like Assamese caste Hindu people. They prepared rice bear from “bora” rice. During festivals, feasts, weddings, death ceremonies, etc rice beer is essential. The Sarania Kachari community rear buffaloes, pigs, goats, ducks, the cow for milk and meat. The people of this community manufacture different types of bamboo mats, cane and bamboo baskets, artistic and ordinary bamboo mats, fishing tracks and other household types of equipment. In case of tribal jewelries, they used galpata, ring, kanpacha, chandrahar, bishahar, muthikharu, gamkharu, balakharu, nakphhuli, tora phuli etc.
5.3.16 Mukh bhanga:

It is a process of saving children from evil eyes. They believe that sometimes the cause of being ill is the effect of the evil eye. Sometimes if the child is getting thin or vomits the people thinks, the reason is the evil eye. So for releasing from the evil eye, the eyes have to be broken by following some rituals. A Ojha (village physician) comes and he chants some hymns. He collects some hukuta, cotton, mastered seeds, dry chilies and different spikes of fishes in a bamboo tray. When the Ojha chants he/she keeps moving these things around the head of the child and at the end of the hymn he/she gives these things into the fire. If these dry chilies and mastered seeds create noise and after burning these, if these make an unnatural scent then it is final that evil eyes are there.

The colourful indigenous folk culture of different communities living in Assam comprises Assamese folklore. The richness of Sarania Kachari community can be seen in folklore. The native language of Sarania Kachari community is Assamese, but the tone they used is different from standard Assamese language. They use their local tone. They have their own folktale, folk song, and riddle. A race or a culture is not static. With the passage of time different communities born from one community. No race, no community is static to their culture, language, tradition. The traditional lifestyle of this community can be understood by listening to these songs.

Sarania Kachari community is a part of bigger Kachari nationality. Institutionally they are recognized as the distinct community in census operation held in 1871 till 1971. Though they speak in the Assamese language the tone or shape (thas) of the language are different from the written Assamese language. They are Agriculture dependent community in search of fertile land and usually live beside a river. Bamboo
plays an important role in their day to day life. Bamboo plantation near their gateway to living place is a characteristic of their habitat. The different types of article made of bamboo are as follows- the roof of the house, bamboo articles used in kitchen activities (dala, kula, pachi, khorahi, chaloni), bamboo articles used in fishing activities (polo, cheap, choroha, khaloi), bamboo articles used in farming (moi, ndakura, nangol,) open big vegetables bamboo basket (dala, kula), small bamboo basket (khorahi), bamboo strainer (chaloni), an bamboo element used for catching small fishes (juluki) and a kind of bamboo scoop used in catching fish (jakoi). They believe bamboo protect them from natural disaster.

The act of village council is maintaining discipline in the village. The village council includes one president, one secretary, one gaon burha (village headman) and some members. This council solves family problems, private quarrels, and social problems. Old higher caste Hindu people do not eat cooked food in Sarania Kachari’s house. In marriage or another occasion, they take curd and chira (pounded rice) in Sarania’s house. But younger people do not maintain such obstacles. A newly married bride can enter the kitchen only after taking saran. There are some rules and regulations’ which they have to learn.

5.3.17 Folk performances:

Performing arts is the conscious presentation of dance, drama and folk music. Every community of Assam is very rich in its own vibrant culture. The word performance in the light of folkloristics is associated with every item of folklore, irrespective of its common purposes. According to this concept, all items of folklore when transported are performed. However, the performances here strictly mean the
conscious presentation of these arts, such as dance, drama, folk music etc by individuals or groups who carry these art forms from one generation to another.

5.3.18 Jakoi Nritya:

The social features of folklore are an integral part of components of folklore communication. They have symbolic significance for both speakers and audience and influence the perception and conception of an expression much the same as the words themselves do. The ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that members of the community bring with them into the communicative event of folklore are an essential part of the verbal statement that a speaker makes. (Amos: 2004: 162)

The establishment of Sarania Kachari is always beside a river. When Sarania women go for fishing folk dances or folk songs are spontaneously created. One special folk dance of Sarania community is Jakoi (fishing equipment) dance. Originally, Jakoi dance was performed for having fun while fishing. Now, Jakoi dance performances have taken place to show their culture to others. Folksongs related to Jakoi Nritya are included in this chapter in folk literature part, page no. 25-27.

5.3.19 Bambol pita dance:

Singing and dancing constitute essential features of the celebration of Bambol Pita festival. The Bambol Pita dance performed by a group of men reflects the joy of life. Accompanied by Bamboo clapper and hand clapping the Bambol Pita dance is characterized by moving hands and vigorous hip movements. In Bambol Pita dance, groups of young men and adult visit households for receiving contributions and offers blessings. The performers move in a circle. Folksongs of Bambol pita dance are mentioned in this chapter in folk literature part.
5.3.20 Mohoho dance:

Buffalos came to eat paddy in the field. Youngsters drove away buffalo from the field with jathi (lance), jong (a pointed stick made of iron or wood). While went to drive away buffalo, youngsters act joyfully, some act as buffalo, as he is a buffalo and come to eat paddy. By the time these buffalo driving away activity become marry making activities during leisure time. Though this modern age, buffalo does not come to eat paddy they used to go house to house and act like buffalo comes and they have to drive away buffalo from the field. The youngsters go house to house and collect money vegetables and rice for fest by cheering their moments. The songs of Mohoho dance are included in this chapter.

5.3.21 Pahu chikarrow nritya/ pohu kheda nritya: (dear or pig hunting dance):

During Magh Bihu, in the day of Uruka (the previous night of the 1st Magh) the village people went to forest for deer hunting with jathi (lance), jong (a pointed stick made of iron or wood). In this pohu kheda nritya (bitch hunting) dance, during Magh Bihu villagers used to go for hunting. Whatever they find in the forest dear, bear, hapa (a wildcat), jahamalla (a kind of pole cat) they hunted and took for the Uruka feast. When they went for hunting with the pleasant mood they sang song and danced. At the time of return from the hunting with chikar (hunted) they were very happy thinking about the feast. In addition, they danced and sang for expressing their happiness. During hunting when the people saw the pig or the dear, they try to trap the bitch. Before 30 or 40 years villagers used to go for hunting. After hunting for carrying the bitch to home one bear was hypnotized by chanting hymn and took home. During the time of hunting, people enjoyed the thing making gesture and jokes. Now, somewhere
*pohu chikar nritya* is taken in the full moon day of Magh as performance as recognizing their past.

### 5.3.22 Palu poha nritya: (Silkworm rearing dance):

During old-time Sarania women were busy with Silk worm. It was their day to day activity. In polu rearing dance, it shows how silkworm maintained to get thread, how to make thread from the worm by body movement. During the time of cutting the thread of maintaining the silk worm, whatever jokes, songs, utters taken place, these take the form of performance. The domestication of silkworm has become rare now, so by performing the activity of rearing the worm by village women recalls their past. Under the tree, during the time of cutting thread, they passed their time by teasing and joking. These knowledge are orally transmitting from one generation to another and visualized as performance.

The traditional folk materials used in household, agricultural, fishing activities, bamboo culture, rituals related to rites of passage, some customs reflect the traditional lifestyles of Sarania Kachari community.

### 5.3.23 Important tradition:

When we say Assamese community, people of Assam are not clear who are called as Assamese and who is not, as all tribes want their own name. Assamese people speak Assamese language and lots of tribal people are there who speak Assamese but do not want to identify themselves as Assamese. Assamese is an Indo European group of language and has its roots in the Sanskrit language. In this trend, only Brahmin, Kalitas, and Kayasthas and some Muslims can be called Assamese. The Assamese Hindu does not eat pork and beef. But it is not fixed. For a lady, she can enter the
kitchen after having the bath. During the time of menstruation, a wife cannot cook food. She cannot touch water, pond, or tube well. But this is continuously disappearing from the busy, modern life of the nuclear family.

The kitchen is an area of high purity for Sarania Kachari people too. During the time of menstruation, a wife cannot cook food among them too. They believe *Ghor Goshai* (God) of every household lives in their kitchen. Nobody can enter into the kitchen without bathing. If any women take food in another place, then she can enter her own kitchen after having a *brata* (fasting).

The celebration of their festival becomes very important for their identity movement. This group is in a stage of Sanskritization. The celebration of their own festivals has declined to some extent. But now they become conscious of their own existence in the world as a distinctive group and start to revive their culture with innovation.

The Sarania Kacharis women are known for their weaving and they weave beautiful and costly Mekhela sadar. Sarania Kacharis are good cultivators and rice is the staple food. They eat meat, fish and usually have homemade drinking and smoking. The Sarania Kacharis celebrate some important festivals throughout the year. The yearly meeting of Sarania Kachari community comes at the time of Assamese New Year celebration i.e. during the month of April.

**5.3.24 Folk beliefs related to Chotal (frontier of the house):**

The *Chotal* (frontier) is an essential part of household activities. The pulses are dried there and kept in the *Bhoral* (rice containing room). The weaving loom has settled in the corner of the field and in one corner of the field, children takes warm from the
fire. Old people used to tell folktale to their grandchild by the sitting in the frontier under the sky full of stars. The frontier should be swept in the early morning. If male members of the family walked through the dirty field then it is believed that his age will decrease. If cow crosses the dirty field, then their age also decreased. If the dog rubs his anus in front of the house and if fox hum in the frontier, these are signs of misfortune. If crow throws raw flash from the sky it is bed sign and if vulture vomits from the sky in the frontier it is a good sign. Carrying earth or cow dung in arms by the middle of the field should be avoided. If somebody crosses the frontier of the house with kodal or kuthar (both are farming tools) it indicates the death of the owner. If somebody walks away by crossing the frontier, this one is also negative sign.

5.3.25 Belief regarding the Bhoral (paddy containing room)

They light an earthen lamp in front of the Bhoral by believing that Laksmi lives there. During the time of building Bhoral, they keep a clean stone as the symbol of Lakshmi. First, they worship goddess Lakshmi by keeping the stone in front of the Bhoral and then they keep it inside. It is forbidden to take out the stone. If the stone has gone to others hand by mistake or intentionally then the householder will be poor and who get the stone will be rich. Sarania people do not take out rice from the Bhoral in the month of Puh believing forbidden to take out in the month of Puh, the needed raw rice has taken out in the last days of Aghon.

Beliefs related to main room: If Vulture leaves some portion of flash what it was eating and if it vomits in front of the main room it is a sign of good luck. If one male cow has entered in the house this is bad, if it entered the kitchen it is a good sign. If white owl falls in front of the house it is good. It is believed that the earth in front of
the main room is very pious and they mark with this earth in forehead of the child for protection from evil eye. The mother or any old woman gives a mark on the forehead of the baby with the earth from the firewood by believing that the baby will return home safely. When a new cow has brought to the house, householder offers earth from the firewood mixing with salt for easily domesticating the cow. If the half-burned wood is thrown outside, people will lose wealth.

**Other beliefs:** If howling fox utter and crab shuts its mouth then it will not rain. If white ant and black ants make a chain taking white rice in mouth then it may cause flood or rain. After the rain, if Indian ring dove bird falls in front of the house by extending her wings, then the weather will be good. Blossoming bamboos are the sign of poverty. If owl calls by falling on the roof it may the sign of misfortune. If cows react in an irrational manner and irritated, then it may the sign of Mahamari. If the pregnant cow utters in the cowshed it may sign of misfortune. If cocks fight in the frontier of the house, the guest may come.

**Beliefs related to eating:** When we are eating and something is in our throat, guest may come. During the time of eating if we bite our tongue, then we feel some people are remembering us.

If a wife takes meals before her husband then husband’s age may be decreased. When we are having meals weaving and pounding should be banned. If we eat twin fruits then people can have twin babies. Nobody should pound, weave or playing during the time of eating. After having meals one should not give his weight on the dish, and then Lakshmi will go. After having the meal, we should not go to bed immediately.
**Haal khati** (withdrawal of agricultural work): *Haal khati* means those days, they prohibit from ploughing. Sarania people do not plough in the month of puh. It is very cold. In the month of puh, they take out rice by offering flower and basil to the God. Using of *haal* during these days is prohibited. Sarania farmers obey the rituals of *haal khati* during some special time of *Krishna Ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the dark fortnight), *Amabashya tithi* (the last day of the dark fortnight), *Hukla Ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight), Full moon day or last day of the month. And during the days of puja and *Aamati* they abstain from agricultural work.

5.3.26 Beliefs

**Beliefs Regarding Travel:**

When somebody goes for the selection of bride then if grooms party come across a rally of people taking the dead body to burial yard or during the arrival of groom if the bride is weaving then it is good. If groom party watches the bride wiping her house or watch women or men who cannot give birth children these are bed signs. During the time of departure if someone see a woman who is bringing water and if mother calls from the back it is good and if the wife calls from the back it is a bad sign.

The Sarania Kachari people are believers in dreams. They have faith in medicines which are seen in dreams. If somebody laughs at dreams and snake bites in the dream it is bad. If somebody cries and catch fish in dreams then one can earn money in short terms. If somebody eats beef in dreams he will be rich. (Deka: 2002: 48)

In Sarania villages there is a beautiful way to see in which month rain will come. The method is that during the middle of the month *pousha* and *magh* twelve leafs
are tied in the plant in the name of twelve months respectively. Next day morning, they open the leaf and compare the proportion of water level what is contained there. And in which month rain will heavy or less one can calculate with the help of water proportion.

They believe that if rain starts from Saturday then the rain will be for seven days. And if rain starts from Tuesday then the rain will be for three days. The climate is hot during the month Jeth, it is called Jethua Khor.

From the seven days of the month Ahar it is Amati and during Amati mother earth gets puberty. During Amati, it continuously rains. It is believed that rain comes in the month of Ahin and Kati. If in afternoon the sky is covered by large pieces of cloud then it is called saath. If during the time of sunset, small pieces of cloud go up to the sky it may very hot.

5.4 Conclusion:

Most of the community of Assam is busy to create their separate identity. If every people in a community work hard then nothing can stop for being developed. If people have respect for each other’s culture, then nothing will exist like unequal treatment. Being ethnically asserted is not a wrong way for development. Changing in human culture is inevitable. Folklore will change with the time whether the reason behind the change is identity building or modernity. In this chapter, the researcher is trying to depict the folklore of Sarania Kachari community. Folklore of Sarania Kachari community, which the researcher includes here, is not strictly limited to them only. As Sarania Kachari community is the result of assimilation and upgradation to other community. So, the folklore of this community is also the result of assimilation.
Realizing the power of folklore in identity making, new books about culture and folklore of Sarania Kachari is published. People started to celebrate their festival widely which are vanishing from the practice. In public meetings or in the social gathering, folk songs, folk dances are projected as their identity. In *Polu Poha* (Silk Worm) dance, body movements show the process of silkworm rearing and the making of thread from worm. In beast hunting dance, how the beasts were hunted during the *Magh Bihu* is presented for showing their old culture. These dance forms are performed to show their ancestors living styles to the present generation.

Due to large-scale assimilation, the folklore of Assamese society and Sarania Kachari Community are very similar. Hardly the folklore of Sarania Kachari Community can be distinguished from the caste Hindu Assamese society. They have lost most of their folklore material, now they are trying to revive their age-old culture. They become conscious of their identity. Though Sarania Kachari is rich with their traditional culture but becoming conscious about their existence, some new folklore items are willingly generated with the help of some genius folk artist. In the newly written song, the grievances, their poverty, day to day life is described. These are crafted as folklore or these can say invented folklore. The wonderful performances were locally performed by expressing their simplicity. The intensity to perform widely is the result of forming the identity in front of others. One of the main findings of this study is that Community shapes the folklore of that community according to their interest and then folklore shapes the community over the years, which continues unknowingly.
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