

Continuity and Change of Certain Culturally Coded Survival Strategies of the Misings of Brahmaputra River Valley of Assam

Maitreyee Sarma¹ and Bapukan Choudhury²

¹*Department of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh 786 004, Assam, India*

E-mail: maitreyee.sharma@rediffmail.com

²*Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University, Gopinath Bordoloi Nagar,*

Jalukbari 781 014, Assam, India

E-mail: bapukanchoudhury@yahoo.co.in

KEYWORDS Ecology. Plains. Migration. Flood Culture. Adaptation. Acculturation

ABSTRACT Humans being, the most intelligent creature develops default settings in terms of certain culturally coded survival strategies that may differ on the availability of raw materials of the ecology and the cognitive perception of the population. The present Mising tribe of Assam was erstwhile a hill tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, migrated to the plains of the Brahmaputra valley since time immemorial and most significantly, it is the second most populated scheduled tribe (plains) of Assam today in spite of the fact that the present Mising area is extremely prone to perennial floods. However, in their erstwhile habitat in the hills they did not face this ecological feature. Therefore, the prime purpose of this research paper is to highlight the cultural traits of the Misings that are conferring advantage to them to survive in the present habitat. The continuity of the traditional hilly cultural elements can be peeped into by examining the similarities with the Minyongs (an Adi tribe) because the Misings show striking cultural affinity with the Padam-Minyong tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The modification of the traditional cultural elements after their migration is also tried to analyze. Considering Leslie White's theoretical considerations of cultural evolution and human adaptation, infrastructural level of the Misings is tried to understand through modes of production, structural level through the political economy and the super structural level is tried to portray with the aesthetic aspects like pattern of houses and boats designed by the population.