

# MIGRATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF DEORIS IN ASSAM: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

## ABSTRACT

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## **Generalities**

There is a close relationship between the population migration and the consequent distribution of a particular group of people and both these factors are responsible for subsequent social and economic development of that group of people. The determinants and the pattern of population migration, their redistribution, and socio-economic and cultural changes are becoming increasingly important for researcher, policy makers and planners.

Migration is a geographical observable fact that seems to be a human necessity in every age. Since man has a tendency to leave the areas where life is intricate, people migrate to the areas where life may be effortless and better. The term 'Migration' may be originally defined as the relatively permanent movement of persons over a significant distance. Migration may be permanent or semi-permanent. Migration may be international, inter-regional, inter-urban, rural-urban or intra-urban. The south Asian subcontinent long experienced virtually uninterrupted demographic mobility, which was reflected in the almost unchecked transfer and re-settlement of population in a number of places. Such population mobility was due to both environmental and socio-economic causes. The causes of migration may be numerous and these may range from natural calamities, climatic change, epidemics, and drought to socio-economic, cultural and political.

The tribal population of India (67.6 million) is greater than that of any other country in the world. In fact, it is almost equal to the tribal population of nineteen countries that have substantial tribal population. Myanmar has a tribal population of 14 million and is the second largest tribal populated nation in the world. India has four times more than Myanmar and six times more than Mexico (10.9 million). The tribal population in India constitutes 8.08 percent of the total population. They are the most adversely affected ethnic group due to developmental projects like dams, factories and mines. In fact, they constitute 40 percent of the displaced person due to developmental projects. On the other hand, tribal population of Assam is not pretentious in a similar manner as very little industrial development has taken place in this region.

The tribal of Assam seems to be living outside the mainstream of general population, but their villages are not exclusive. Traditionally they live in clusters in hamlets, generally in remote areas. They have their own socio cultural life, which are at varying stages of development. Since independence with more than half a century of efforts by the government to bring them at par with the rest of the society not much has been achieved. Education opportunities have not been taking advantage of economic activities centers around agriculture and savings are unheard of. Their social life is unique. Because of contacts with outside societies, they have adopted Hindu religious practices, but their original religious practices are a mixture of Animism and superstitious beliefs, which are retained by many.

### **Statement of the Problem**

*Deoris* were settled on the banks of the river 'Dibang', 'Tengapani' and 'Patarsal' which is now fall within the jurisdiction of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and 'Chapakhowa' area that is in 'Sadiya' subdivision of Tinsukia district of Assam.

Available records show that prior to the sixth century *Deoris* had been living in an around Sadiya (Chapakhowa area). The term '*Deori*' is attached to the religious or priestly functionaries of various tribal as well as non-tribal communities of Assam (Bose, 1967). As in some other parts in mid-India; the tribal population in Brahmaputra valley has witnessed substantial migration and redistribution of its population in the past. Of particular importance that invites research efforts is the *Deori* population, which is confined to a few districts on both bank of the mighty Brahmaputra in upper Assam.

The process and the pattern of migration and consequent distribution of *Deoris* in Assam are quite significant and it influences the socio-economic and cultural life of the three '*foids*' or '*khels*' (sub-groups) of the community to a great extent. Till the end of the Ahom kingdom *Deoris* lived peacefully in Sadiya. They got '*Devottar*' and '*Brahmottar*' lands (donated by king) from Sadiyakhowa Gohain (Deori, 1964). During the time of Moran, Matak uprising most of the people from Sadiya had left the place. Still *Deoris* performed their duties in the temples. (Deori, 1964)

But, as a result of the attack of 'Manns' and 'Mishmi' (during the first part of seventeenth century), epidemic and diseases and influx of hill tribes from some parts of Arunachal Pradesh created problems of shelter and settlement in the large part of erstwhile *Deori* dominant areas (Deori, 1964). Gradually the hill tribes captured the lands of *Deoris*. Internal migration too took place from various parts of Arunachal Pradesh and this had a debilitating effect on availability of land for the community as a whole and the people were migrated to the south of their origin settlements through the Brahmaputra valley.

There was another inflow of migration of *Deori*'s in the last century, which was caused due to the devastating earth quake in 1950s, Consequent flood and river bank erosion in the areas of *Deori* settlement had forced them to move around to different parts of the Brahmaputra valley in search of cultivable lands. They migrated to different districts of upper (both the banks of the Brahmaputra) and middle Assam forming some groups in their own '*Khels*'. This process continued up to last century and they are now distributed in eight districts of Brahmaputra valley.

As a result of the migration and consequent spatial distribution of *Deoris* the socio-cultural, economic and religious life of the community is affected to a great extent.

Physical and Social ecology of the community is altered to a great extent in the new settlements as compared to that of Sadiya. Their economic activities have been influenced by the ecological conditions prevailing in the newly settled areas and their earlier pattern of livelihood has changed in a considerable way. A new social transformation has taken place with the assimilation of different ethnic groups. It is in this context that the present problem assumes significance, it is clear that the migration of *Deoris* from the last century has been an ongoing process. It is not the purpose here to examine this long drawn process of migration of *Deoris*, but to detain the study only to causes of migration, socio cultural traits, existing economic activities and over all cultural transformation among them. The cultural transformations of *Deoris* form the core of the proposed research.

This research aims at identifying the spatial patterns in the process of migration from earlier settlements to the present locations and the degree of cultural transformation of the community. The research also makes a modest attempt at getting an insight into the causes and consequences of migration of *Deoris* from their original settlements.

### **Choice of the Study Area**

*Deoris* are mostly found in the eight districts of upper and middle Assam and in some pockets of Lohit and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, near the Assam Arunachal Pradesh border. For the purpose of the present study the districts in Assam where this community is distributed have been selected as the study area. Needless to say, the quantum and quality of cultural transformation has been different in different tribes in this part of the state compared to other parts of northeast India. The state of Assam occupies a unique position amidst complex geologic and physiographic make up of the northeastern regions of India. The concentrations of *Deori* villages are found in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, and Sonitpur districts of north bank and in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Jorhat districts of south bank of the Brahmaputra Valley. Some villages are also found in Guwahati area of Kamrup district.

All the three *foids* (clans) are not found together in one district except Dhemaji district. Dhemaji district significantly represents villages of Dibongiyas, Tengaponiyas and Borgoyans. Hence, the case study for the present research is done in Dhemaji district.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this research as follows:

- i) to study the reasons of migration of *Deoris* from the earlier settlements to the present locations.
- ii) to examine the change in their cultural identity subsequent to their settlement in the present area.

- iii) to understand the socio-cultural transformation among Deoris that are undergoing as a result of their assimilation with different culture and their interaction with other ethnic groups in Assam.

### **Hypotheses**

- i) The loss of *Deori* culture is directly proportionate to their assimilation with other culture and their contact to other ethnic groups.
- ii) Greater the loss of cultural identity greater is the socio-cultural transformation among the *Deoris*. The above hypotheses shall be tested on the basis of Cultural Transformation Index of the study area.

### **Data Base and Methodology**

Data required for this research is obtained from primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources particularly those published successive census enumeration, *Deori* Autonomous Council and those available district headquarter, Sub deputy collector office of the concerned area. Secondary data also collected from i) Census reports on Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe, Language Tables etc. ii) Bulletins of AADSU iii) Publications of *Deori* Sahitya Sabha, Assam iv) Community block development documents, v) Published documents and articles, vi) Reports of Assam Plains Tribe Development Corporation.

Data also required for this research is obtained from primary sources.

- i) Personal interviews ii) Household questionnaires iii) Field visits etc.

The methodology for present research adopted is outlined below:

1. Zonation of study area is made on the basis of concentration of *Deori* population in Assam; following three zones have been identified-
  - a) High concentration zone
  - b) Moderate concentration zone and
  - c) Least concentration zone
2. The distribution of population in *Deori* distributed areas is defined by segregating the data into four sets (Total population, Total non-tribal population, Total non-

Deori population and Total scheduled tribe population). Distribution of these categories of population is examined at district and sub divisional level. A micro level analysis has been done to identify the concentration on village level, which is dominantly inhabited by *Deoris*.

3. At least three villages representing three *foids* (clans) i.e. Dibongia, Tengaponia and Borgoyan and a built up area (mixed of all clans) are selected to investigate the nature and consequences of migration and degree of cultural transformation.
4. A household survey of at least 40 percent of the households chosen on random basis to get the information on places of last residence, causes of migration, past and present occupation, relationship with nearby community and other related phenomena. For the built up area (Dhemaji Town) 100 percent of population is considered.
5. The degree of cultural transformation in the field study is done considering all the social parameters of the community in percentage basis from the primary data collected.

### **Organization of Manuscript**

The manuscript is organized into six broad chapters. The first chapter outlines the design of the research work. The second chapter deals with the spatial distribution of ethnic composition of population in Assam at state and district levels. The spatial distribution of different ethnic groups is also disaggregated for rural and urban population separately. Distribution of *Deori* population is disaggregated at district levels of Assam. The population of different tribes of Assam including *Deori* population is also recorded in this chapter. The third chapter deals with migration of *Deoris* from their original habitats to present locations. The routes of migration of ancestors of *Deoris* are depicted and pattern of migration during different periods till present is analyzed. The ecological pattern of distribution in the present settlements of the community is also discussed in the third chapter. The causes of migration from the original place to the present locations are analyzed.

The fourth chapter deals with socio cultural traits of *Deoris*. This chapter includes the traditional rituals and customs of the community. The fifth chapter deals with the socio-cultural changes of *Deoris* as a result of migration. Different attributes like education, religion, health care, occupation, dress pattern, marriage etc. is taken to study the socio-cultural transformations of the community. The field study data are analyzed and examined by the proposed hypotheses. The last and sixth chapter includes the findings and conclusion of the research study.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present research is an attempt to understand the migration and cultural transformation of *Deoris* in Assam. The attempt here is to examine the issue more specifically related to the community in the areas.

Chapter-I encompasses the research problem, its goal and significance. It also includes the relevant review of research in the related fields, which forms the basic foundation and direction of the study. Methods and approaches thought to be appropriate for the present study have been applied including field observations.

A study of the distribution of different ethnic groups in Assam is made in Chapter-II. State and district level patterns show comparative population distribution of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Non-Scheduled population from 1951 to 2001. An increasing trend of Non-Scheduled population (percentage to total population) is seen from 1951 to 1991 whereas the percentage to total state population of Scheduled Tribe population is decreasing from 1951 to 2001. The decadal growth of the populations of different ethnic groups is almost proportionate from 1951 to 2001. Share of Scheduled Caste population is below 10 percent in all the decades while, Scheduled Tribe population is between 10 to 20 percent (except 1951) and Non-Scheduled population is highest in all the decades except 1951(72.84%) and 1961(76.41%) having more than 80 percent.

The chapter-III deals with the migration of *Deoris* and the causes and also the ecological pattern of distribution in the present locations. *Deoris* had four *foids* namely

Dibongia, Tengaponiya, Borgoyan and Patorgoyan lived in and around Sadiya of present Tinsukia district since the sixth century. Patorgoyan group is now extinct. They might be amalgamated with other ethnic groups. They performed priestly functions during Chutia, Ahom and Kachari kingdoms. They served as priests in the Tamreswari, Kundi-Mama, Baliababa and Pator Shal temples in Sadiya. *Deoris* migrated to different areas of Brahmaputra valley from Sadiya during 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century under natural and socio-political causes. During the British period different *foids* of *Deoris* migrated in different places of upper Assam in search of cultivable land. They preferred the banks of the tributaries of river Brahmaputra. They made settlements in Choikhuwaghat, Ghunasuti, Dihingmukh, Kokilamukh, Ghelgheli, Majuli, Kolouluwa in different times.

The traditional socio-cultural rituals of *Deoris* are discussed in chapter- IV. Almost all the traditional rituals of the society are in indigenous forms. They perform religious functions in every month in the shrines as well as in the houses.

It is established that there are different religious functions observed by the *Deoris* since time immemorial. The priests and the priestly council of the shrines governed the religious as well as socio-cultural rituals of the society. Those works in *Deori* culture were considered as sacred duties.

The socio-cultural transformation of *Deoris* is examined in the chapter V. it has been observed that Acculturation leads to transformation. Through this process of social change, certain changes voluntarily or involuntarily occur in a society but by and large the core of the culture remains intact.

Due to long association with the non-*Deori* population in the plain the Tengaponia and Bargoyan section of *Deoris* embraced Assamese language while the Dibongiya section has maintained their own dialect. Another change is noticed in respect of health care and traditional medicine. Traditional health care system of the community is trampled down by the modern health care facilities, which are lagging behind the age-old tradition of *Deoris*. They have adopted modern education system and the age-old traditional education system bears no more importance for them. Likewise cultural

transformation has taken place by assimilation and amalgamation with other community and also by the influence of the modern society.

For case study of the research Dhemaji district of Assam is selected. The reason of such selection is that only Dhemaji district consists of the villages of each of the three *foids* of *Deoris* among the eight districts of *Deori* distribution. In this chapter the degree of socio-cultural Transformations among *Deoris* are examined by compiling field data collected from three sample villages and one urban center (Dhemaji town) located in the district, based on stratified sampling method for household survey using the pre-designed questionnaire . Following are the major findings of the research.

### **Major Findings of Present Research**

1. Highest concentration of *Deori* population is found in Lakhimpur District and it shares 61 percent of total *Deori* population in the state About 95 percent of *Deori* village of the district belongs to Dibongiya foid.
2. Dhemaji is the only district that contains the villages of each of the three *foids* of *Deoris*. There are 20 villages of Dibongiya *foid*, 4 villages of Tengaponiya *foid* and 5 villages belonging to Borgoyan *foid* in the district.
3. The present sample villages in Dhemaji district are latterly settled and the ascendants of first settlers of these villages settled in different places after migrating from Sadiya.
4. Agriculture is the main cause of migration (search of suitable land for cultivation) of the people in the villages (83%) whereas service is the major cause in that of Dhemaji town (74%) and 17 percent came on business purpose.
5. Traditional education system is replaced by modern education system both in the rural and urban areas and high transformation value is found 93.50 percent. Most of the students of the villages are studying in Assamese medium (Dhunaguri and Udoypur : 96% each, Borbam: 82%) . In Dhemaji town is 55 percent of the students are studying in Assamese medium. Another major transformation is recorded in Health sector (T.I. 93.75%). All these changes are the results of

acculturation and assimilation in the social ecology of the present distribution of *Deoris*.

6. Transformation is noticed in family type (T. I. 70.75%) of the sample villages. It is earlier mentioned that traditionally *Deoris* stay together in a joint family system. But now most of the households are adopting nuclear family type. It is highest in Dhemaji town with 83 percent and second in Borbam village with 81 percent.
7. A major transformation is found in language. In Sadiya all of them used to speak in *Deori* language. But now, only Dibongiya *foid* speaks the language. The Borgoyans and Tengaponiyas have embraced Assamese as their mother tongue. The Transformation Index for Language is 64.75 percent.
8. One language (either *Deori* or Assamese) is dominated in the core areas of *Deori* occupancy. In Dhunaguri (Inhabited by Borgoyans) and Udoypur (Inhabited by Tengaponiyas) 99 and 98 percent of the population use Assamese as mother tongue respectively. On the other hand 97 percent of population in Borbam village (Inhabited by Dibongiyanas) speaks in *Deori* languages.
9. Traditional house type is dominated in the villages (Dhunaguri: 69%, Udoypur: 77%, and Borbam: 66%). The number of modified traditional house is also increasing day by day. A few percent of Assam type or RCC is found in the villages. On the other hand in Dhemaji town all the *Deori* families have either Assam type or RCC type house (100%). Transformation Index for house type is 29.75 percent.
10. The *Deoris* were originated from worshipping activities of Gods and Goddesses during the reign of King Bhismaka (During the time of Mahabharata). Since then they performed priestly functionaries in the Temples of Sadiya till the end of Ahom kingdom.

But it is established that the earlier trend of worshipping has been changing. Priestly functionaries no more remain as occupation for them. More than 60 percent of the villagers practice agricultural activities and the present

generation is embracing diversified occupations including business and service. Total 87 percent of *Deori* households in Dhemaji town are engaged in service and business sector. The Transformation Index of occupation is 49.50 percent.

11. The traditional conservative nature of *Deoris* is loosening gradually and it is noticed in interaction with other ethnic groups and in number of inter-community marriage. The Transformation Index of marriage is 20.75 percent and of interaction are 18.75 percent correspondingly.
12. Traditional religious practices are prevailing in Udoypur (100%), Dhunaguri (97%) and in Borbam (84%). Transformation in the religious beliefs is more significant in urban areas than the rural villages. In Dhemaji Town 33 percent of *Deori* households follow non-traditional religion. Transformation Index of religion is 13 percent.
13. Regarding Transformation in Dress habit, the Index is 47.5 percent. Most of the people in the village wear traditional dress in the home and wear modern dresses outside the village. More than 95 percent of the people in Dhemaji town wear modern dresses in all occasions.

The study reveals that because of assimilation with other community *Deoris* lost cultural identity which they had performed in Sadiya before mass migration. Their livelihood pattern has been changing in the new environment.

The degree of cultural transformation of various aspects has been found out and it shows that greater is the loss of cultural identity, greater is the socio-cultural transformation. The proposed hypothesis for the present research is found to be true.

## Conclusion

In spite of the influence of various religions and cults in *Deori* society the trend towards traditional beliefs is still found prominent amongst them. Due to conservatism in respect of their religious beliefs, strong and deep reverence to the religious practices of its masses, the *Deoris* carry out those practices in the indigenous forms. As the worshippers of Sakti cult, sacrifice of animal forms, viz., buffaloes, goats, ducks, pigeons and fowls, is offered in the name of deities. Although *Deoris* are simple living and are adapted to their surrounding ecology; they are now seeking upliftment of their society by demanding autonomous council for them and consequently it is already declared and formed by the Assam government.

Transformation or any kind of change in traditional culture of ethnic groups is a natural process in course of time; every society always welcome reforms in the superstitions of the age-old traditions without harming the own identity. It is necessary to adopt modern views and give up evils from the societies. But while doing such type of reforms one should never forget to preserve own culture in an appropriate manner.

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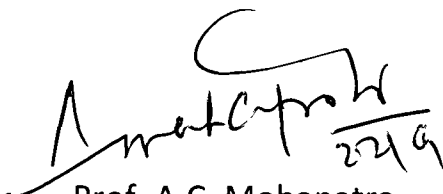
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I, Ms Sujata Deori, hereby declare that the subject matter of this Thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this Thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the Thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university/institute.

This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography.

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## CONTENTS

	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Chapter I: Introduction</b>	<b>1-26</b>
1.1 Generalities	1-3
1.2 Migration among the Tribes	3-4
1.3 The Tribes at a Glance	4-5
1.4 Acculturation: Leads to Socio-Cultural Transformation	5-6
1.5 History of Deoris	6-8
1.6 Statement of the Problem	8-10
1.7 Choice of the Study Area	11
1.8 Brief Overview of Literature	11-15
1.9 Literatures Pertaining to Deoris	15-17
1.10 Objectives	17
1.11 Hypotheses	18
1.12 Data Base and Methodology	18-19
1.13 Organization of Manuscript	20-21
References	22-26
<b>Chapter II: Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Assam</b>	<b>27-60</b>
2.1 Generalities	27
2.2 Physical Settings of Assam	28-29
2.3 Distribution of Population in Assam	30
2.3.1 State Level Pattern of Population Distribution	30-32
2.3.2 Growth of Population in Assam	32-39
2.3.3 Growth of Literacy Rate among the Tribes	39-40
2.3.4 Growth of Language Speakers among the Tribes of Assam	41-44
2.3.5 Distribution of Rural Population in Assam	45-47
2.3.6 Growth of Rural Population in Assam	47-48
2.4 District Level Pattern of Distribution of Ethnic Groups	49-53

2.5 Spatial Distribution of Deori Population in Assam	54-55
2.6 Zones of Concentration of Deoris	55-57
2.7 Concluding Statement	57-59
References	60
<b>Chapter III: Physical and Ecological Pattern of Distribution</b>	<b>61-103</b>
3.1 Generalities	61
3.2 Physiographical Settings of Assam	62-63
3.2.1 Brahmaputra Valley	
3.2.2 Barak Valley	
3.2.3 The Hills	
3.3 Demographic Characteristics	63
3.4 Socio Cultural Background	64-65
3.4.1 The Assamese Society	
3.4.2 Migration of Deoris during Distant Past	
3.5 Brief Account of Sadiya	66
3.6. Origin of the Foids or Khels among Deoris	66-68
3.6.1 The Dibongiyas	
3.6.2 The Tengaponiyas	
3.6.3 The Borgoyans	
3.6.4 The Patorgoyans	
3.7 Causes of Migration from Sadiya	68-73
3.7.1 Migration during British Period	
3.7.2 Migration after Great Earthquake	
3.8 Physical and Ecological Pattern of Distribution of Deoris	74-75
3.9 Distribution of Deori Villages in North Bank	75-89
3.9.1 Deori Villages in Sonitpur District	
3.9.2 Deori Villages in Lakhimpur District	
3.9.3 Deori Villages in Dhemaji District	
3.10 Distribution of Deori Villages in South Bank	89-102

3.10.1 Deori Villages in Tinsukia District	
3.10.2 Deori Villages in Dibrugarh District	
3.10.3 Deori Villages in Sibsagar District	
3.10.4 Deori Villages in Jorhat District	
3.10.5 Deori Villages in Kamrup District	
3.11 Concluding Statement	102
References	103
<b>Chapter IV: Socio-Cultural Traits</b>	<b>104-136</b>
4.1. Generalities	104
4.2. Society and Culture	104-105
4.3. Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Deoris	105-109
4.3.1 Importance of Deities	
4.3.2 Agricultural Practices	
4.3.3 Self-Dependency	
4.3.4 Judicial Systems	
4.3.5 Education and Educational Center	
4.4 Village and House Types	109-110
4.5 Dress Pattern of the Community	110-111
4.6 Food Habit of the Community	111
4.7 Language of the Community	112
4.8 Nature of Religion	112
4.9 Role of the Priests in the Society	112-113
4.10 Clans of the Deoris	113
4.11 Worshipping Deities and Places Worship	113-115
4.12 Priestly Council and its Officials	115-117
4.12.1 The Chari-Deori (Four Deoris)	
4.12.2 Other Officials of Priestly Council	
4.13 The Shrine and related Rituals	117-120
4.13.1 Bhakat Makan Ritual	

4.13.2 Chak-Chik or Chua Labiruba Ritual

4.13.3 Makan Chiban Rituals

4.13.4 Metua (Bor) Ritual

4.13.5 Rajkebang or Rajkema (Midi Deruruba) Ritual

4.13.6 Sat Labiruba Rituals

4.13.7 Sauna Puja Ritual

4.13.8 Bisu-Puja

4.14 Some Other Rituals Performed in the House or in the Village 120-128

4.14.1 Achira or Achia (Achar/Bor) Ritual

4.14.2 Bhakat Midi or Purushiya (Na-Janiya/Akoish Janiya)

4.14.3 Bebaraja Ritual

4.14.4 Borchuan Ritual

4.14.5 Chan-Ya Ritual

4.14.6 Dangaria (Bura/Rangason) Ritual

4.14.7 Dua Chitere or Borkin Ritual

4.14.8 Hamkia Midi Ritual

4.14.9 Jalkai Ritual

4.14.10 Jal Narayan Ritual

4.14.11 Ji-Iban Ritual

4.14.12 Kalika (Bor) Ritual

4.14.13 Kania Jalpan Ritual

4.14.14 Kin-Dabeba Ritual

4.14.15 Minuchi or Miruchi Ritual

4.14.16 Mora or Mimo Ritual

4.14.17 Risto Ritual

4.14.18 Suwosani Midi (Yanyo Midi) Ritual

4.14.19 Yan Teruba Ritual

4.14.20 Yoi-Chagaduba or Midi Chagaduba

4.14.21 Yoi Midi Ritual

4.14.22 Yoi-Nigi-Numa Ritual	
4.15 Birth Rites of Deoris	128
4.16 Death Rites of Deoris	129
4.17 Marriage and its Rituals	129-131
4.18 Bihu festival of Deoris	131-134
4.18.1 Bahagio Bisu	
4.18.2 Maghio-Bisu	
4.19 Concluding Statement	134
References	135-136
<b>Chapter V: Socio-Cultural Transformation</b>	<b>137-183</b>
5.1 Generalities	137
5.2 Cultural Transformation among Tribes in the Past	137-140
5.3 A Case Study in Dhemaji District	140
5.4 Location and Physical Setting of the District	140-141
5.5 General Characteristics of the Sample Villages	142-145
5.6 Study of the Sample Villages	145-176
5.6.1 House Types	
5.6.2 Family Types	
5.6.3 Causes of Migration to the Present Settlement	
5.6.4 Changes in Languages	
5.6.5 Levels of Education	
a. Educational levels in Dhunaguri village	
b. Educational levels in Udoypur Village	
c. Educational levels in Borbam village	
d. Education levels in Dhemaji town	
5.6.6 Medium of education of the students	
5.6.7 Occupational Pattern	
5.6.8 Transformation in Occupation	
5.6.9 Changes in Health Care Facilities	

5.6.10 Interactions with Other Community	
5.6.11 Inter-Community Marriages	
5.6.12 Religious Perception	
5.6.13 Dress Habits	
5.6.14 Changes in Bihu puja	
5.7 Cultural Transformation Index	176-181
5.8 Concluding Statement	181-182
References	183
<b>Chapter VI: Summary and Conclusion</b>	<b>184-196</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>197-207</b>

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix-I Assam: District wise Scheduled Tribe Population (1991 and 2001)

Appendix-II Percentage of Literacy of Scheduled Tribes in Assam, (1971&1991)

Appendix-III Growth of Scheduled Tribes in Assam (1971, 1991 and 2001  
Census)

Appendix-IV Assam: District wise Distribution of Population by Ethnic Groups  
1991-2001 (in %)

Appendix-V Category of Population in the Areas of Deori Distribution

Appendix-VI Household Questionnaire

## **PERSONAL BIODATA**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Caption
2.1	Population Trend in Assam: 1901-2001
2.2	Growth of Population in Assam: 1991-2001
2.3	Assam: Growth of Population by Ethnic Groups: 1951-2001
2.4	Assam: Distribution of Population by Ethnic Groups: 1971-2001
2.5	Frequencies of Language Speakers among the Tribes of Assam, (1971 & 1991)
2.6	Decadal Changes of Language Speakers of Different Tribes in Assam (1971-1991)
2.7	Decadal Variations of Deori Language Speakers in Assam
2.8	Assam Proportion of Rural Population by Ethnic Groups: 1971-1991
2.9	Proportion of Rural Population in Assam (ST/ Non-Scheduled/ Deori) 1991-2001
2.10	Growth of Rural Population in Assam: 1971-2001(in %)
2.11	Decadal Change of Deori Population (Rural): 1991- 2001
2.12	Assam: District wise Growth of Scheduled Tribe Population (1971 and 1991)
2.13	District wise Distribution of the Deori Population, Assam: 2001
2.14	Degree of Concentration of Deori Population
2.15	Zones of Deori Concentration
3.1	Distribution of Population in Revenue Circles of Sonitpur District
3.2	List of Deori Villages in Gohpur Mouza
3.3	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Lakhimpur District
3.4	List of Deori Villages in Laluk Mouza
3.5	List of Deori Villages in Bihpuria Mouza
3.6	List of Deori Villages in Narayanpur Mouza
3.7	List of Deori Villages in North-Kherajkhat Mouza
3.8	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Dhemaji District
3.9	List of Deori Villages in Bordoloni Mouza

- 3.10 List of Deori villages in Dhemaji Mouza
- 3.11 List of Deori villages in Jonai Mouza
- 3.12 Break wise Family in Dhemaji District
- 3.13 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Tinsukia District
- 3.14 List of Deori villages in Margherita Revenue Circle
- 3.15 List of Deori Villages in Sadiya Revenue Circle
- 3.16 List of Deori villages in Doomdoma Revenue Circle
- 3.17 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Dibrugarh District
- 3.18 List of Deori Villages in Dibrugarh District
- 3.19 Dibrugarh East Revenue Circle
- 3.20 Break wise Deori Population in Dibrugarh District
- 3.21 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Sibsagar District
- 3.22 List of Deori Villages in Sibsagar District
- 3.23 Distributions of Population in the Revenue Circles of Jorhat District
- 3.24 List of Deori Villages in Jorhat West Circle
- 3.25 List of Deori Villages in Majuli Circle
- 3.26 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Kamrup District
- 3.27 List of Deori villages in Kamrup District
- 4.1 Clans of the Deori Priest
- 5.1a Selected Background Characteristics of Sample Villages
- 5.1b Distribution of Different Sub-Groups (Foids) in Sample Villages
- 5.2 House Types in the Sample Villages
- 5.3 Family Types in the Sample Villages
- 5.4 Causes of Migration
- 5.5 Languages Spoken by Deoris in the Sample Villages
- 5.6 Levels of Education in Sample Villages
- 5.7 Educational Levels in Dhunaguri village
- 5.8 Educational Levels in Udoypur Village

- 5.9 Educational levels in Borbam village
- 5.10 Educational Levels in Dhemaji Town
- 5.11 No of Students Studying Outside the Village/District
- 5.12 Occupational Patterns of the Sample Village
- 5.13 Transformations in Occupation
- 5.14 Treatment of Patient in the Sample Villages
- 5.15 Degree of Interaction of Deoris with other Community
- 5.16 Nature of Inter- Community Marriage of Deoris
- 5.17 Followers of Traditional and Non-Traditional Religion
- 5. 18 Percentages of Traditional/non-traditional Followers of Religion
- 5. 19 Dress Habits of Deoris
- 5.20 Cultural Transformation Index
- 5.21 Category of Cultural Transformation
- 5.22 Cultural Transformation Index for the Sample Villages

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Caption
2.1	Population Trend in Assam: 1901-2001
2.2	Assam: Growth of Population, 1901-2001
2.3	Assam: Growth of Population by Ethnic Groups, 1951-2001
2.4	Distribution of Population by Ethnic Groups: 1971-2001
2.5	Assam: Growth of Scheduled Tribes (1971-2001)
2.6	Assam: Literacy Rates of Scheduled Tribes, 1971-2001
2.7	Decadal Change of Language Speakers, 1971-1991
2.8	Decadal Variation of Deori Language Speakers (1951-1991)
2.9	Assam: District wise Growth of Scheduled Tribe Population 1971-1991
2.10	District wise Distribution of Scheduled Tribe Population: Assam-1991 &2001
3.1	Percentage of Deoris to Scheduled Tribe and Total Population (Revenue Circle wise -2007)
3.2	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of SonitpurDistrict
3.3	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Lakhimpur District
3.4	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in DhemajiDistrict
3.5	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Tinsukia District
3.6	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Dibrugarh District
3.7	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Sibsagar District
3.8	Distribution of Population in Revenue Circles Jorhat District
3.9	Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Kamrup District
5.1	Distribution of Different Foids in the Sample Villages
5.2	House Types in Sample Villages
5.3	Family Types in the Sample Villages
5.4	Causes of Migration of the Sample Villages

- 5.5 Speakers of Deori and Assamese Language in the Sample Villages
- 5.6 Educational Levels in Dhunaguri Village
- 5.7 Educational Levels in Udoypur Village
- 5.8 Educational Levels in Borbam Village
- 5.9 Educational Levels in Dhemaji Town
- 5.10 Students Studying Outside the Villages/District
- 5.11 Medium of Education of Deori Students
- 5.12 Occupational Pattern of Sample Villages
- 5.13 Transformation of Occupation in Dhunaguri Village
- 5.14 Transformation of Occupation in Udoypur Village
- 5.15 Transformation of Occupation in Borbam Village
- 5.16 Transformation of Occupation in Dhemaji Town
- 5.17 Changes in Traditional Treatment in the Sample Villages
- 5.18 Interaction with Other Communities
- 5.19 Pattern of Inter Community Marriage of Deoris
- 5.20 Religious Status in the Sample Villages
- 5.21 Dress Habit of Males in the Sample Villages
- 5.22 Dress Habit of Females in the Sample Villages
- 5.23 Cultural Transformation Index
- 5.24 Percentage of Cultural Transformation of the Sample Villages

## LIST OF MAPS

### Map No

- 1 Location of Study Area
- 2 Distribution of Deoris-Assam, During 13<sup>th</sup> Century
- 3 Areas occupied by Deoris- 1911
- 4 Distribution of Deoris- Assam
- 5 Zones of Deori Concentration-Assam
- 6 Migration of Deoris During 1<sup>st</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1829-1830)
- 7 Migration of Deoris during the British Period (Between 1831-1950)
- 8 Migration of Deoris after 1950s Earthquake
- 9 Distribution of Deori Villages-Sonitpur District
- 10 Distribution of Deori Villages-Lakhimpur District
- 11 Distribution of Deori Villages-Dhemaji District
- 12 Distribution of Deori Villages-Tinsukia District
- 13 Distribution of Deori Villages-Sadiya Sub-Division
- 14 Distribution of Deori Villages-Dibrugarh District
- 15 Distribution of Deori Villages-Sibsagar District
- 16 Distribution of Deori Villages-Jorhat District
- 17 Distribution of Deori Villages-Kamrup District
- 18 Dhemaji District-Location of Sample Sites

**Chapter- I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## **Chapter-I**

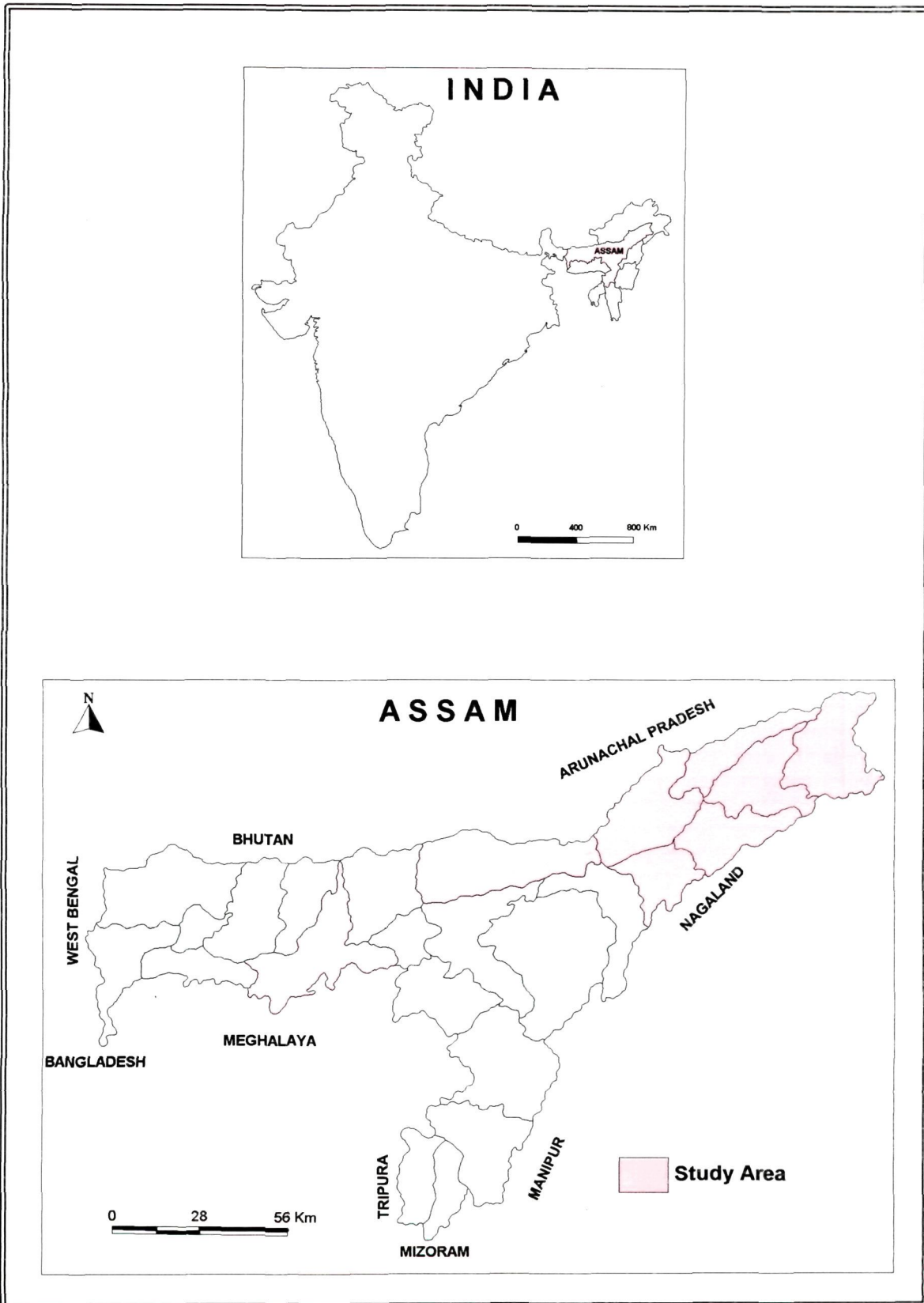
### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Generalities**

There is a close relationship between the population migration and the consequent distribution of a particular group of people and both these factors are responsible for subsequent social and economic development of that group of people. The determinants and the pattern of population migration, their redistribution, and socio-economic and cultural changes are becoming inertly important for researcher, policy makers and planners.

Migration is a geographical observable fact that seems to be a human necessity in every age. Since man has a tendency to leave the areas where life is intricate, people migrate to the areas where life may be effortless and better. The term 'Migration' may be originally defined as the relatively permanent movement of persons over a significant distance. Migration may be permanent or semi-permanent. Migration may be international, inter-regional, inter-urban, rural-urban or intra-urban. The south Asian subcontinent long experienced virtually uninterrupted demographic mobility, which was reflected in the almost unchecked transfer and re-settlement of population in a number of places. Such population mobility was due to both environmental and socio-economic causes. The causes of migration may be numerous and these may range from natural calamities, climatic change, epidemics, and drought to socio-economic, cultural and political.

# LOCATION OF STUDY AREA



Map No.-1

The population composition of India includes different ethnic groups with different socio-cultural identities. A fairly sizable tribal population contributes to the Indian culture with their own traditional socio-cultural traits. The tribal segment is far from homogeneity and displays a fairly high degree of diversity in its socio-cultural traits and the stage of social evaluation and their spatial distribution. A common feature of all tribal groups is that historically they have remained away from the main centre of population agglomeration. They have a tendency to live in isolation i.e. the forested areas, hills, and sometimes riverbanks are the common place for their settlements.

The tribal population of India (67.6 million) is greater than that of any other country in the world. In fact, it is almost equal to the tribal population of nineteen countries that have substantial tribal population. Myanmar has a tribal population of 14 million and is the second largest tribal populated nation in the world. India has four times more than Myanmar and six times more than Mexico (10.9 million). The tribal population in India constitutes 8.08 percent of the total population. They are the most adversely affected ethnic group due to developmental projects like dams, factories and mines. In fact, they constitute 40 percent of the displaced person due to developmental projects. On the other hand, tribal population of Assam is not pretentious in a similar manner as very little industrial development has taken place in this region.

The tribal of Assam seems to be living out side the mainstream of general population, but their villages are not exclusive. Traditionally they live in clusters

in hamlets, generally in remote areas. They have their own socio cultural life, which are at varying stages of development. Since independence with more than half a century of efforts by the government to bring them at par with the rest of the society not much has been achieved. Education opportunities have not been taking advantage of economic activities centers around agriculture and savings are unheard of. Their social life is unique. Because of contacts with outside societies, they have adopted Hindu religious practices, but their original religious practices are a mixture of Animism and superstitious beliefs, which are retained by many.

## **1.2 Migration among the Tribes**

In the historic past various tribes migrated to India from different parts of the world and settled in such places where they can be tenable. But in course of time many tribal groups had to migrate from their original settlement to different locations within the region due to various socio-economic and political causes like natural calamities, epidemics, intrusion by non-tribal people etc. The process of migration of the tribal people perhaps began during colonial period, when the resource-rich tribal areas (particularly in mid- India) are exposed to colonial exploitation. Encroachment of non-tribal groups or other ethnic groups in the tribal areas have made the tribal people to be redistributed in different places. The tribal groups who are in any case distributed in geographically off-putting area even further squeezed into in hospitable tracts within the region or had to move out to nearby emerging towns. The redistribution of tribal groups in different

locations of the region influences the existing society and *vice-versa* (especially in social, cultural, and also economic aspects).

In North East India, large concentration of Scheduled Tribe population is found with different ethnic identities. Each of the seven states of North East India has a large number of tribal populations either in hilly areas or in rivarine tracts and also in frontiers. There is a significant redistribution of tribal population especially in the Brahmaputra valley as a result of migration within the region under specific circumstances. The *Deoris* are a major community (Scheduled Tribe) in Assam especially in the upper Assam area. The present spatial distribution of *Deori* population in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam and in the Lohit and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh is due to the result of their migration from their original settlements during the last century in various circumstances.

Dhemaji the easternmost district of Assam, is constituted bifurcating Lakhimpur district and is the homeland of a large number of scheduled tribes namely the Mishings, the Deoris, the Sonowal Kacharis, the Bodos, the Tiwas besides other ethnic groups like the Chutias, the Ahoms, the Koch and others.

### **1.3 The Tribes at a Glance**

The tribal communities of Assam constitute 12.82 percent of the total population (2001 census) .The tribal societies of this region are more or less isolated from outside world and from other similar societies until recent past.

However, since independence, the gradual exposure to people of outside societies caused a gradual transition of their work, culture and way of living. The Bodos are the largest group of Scheduled Tribe of Assam and they constitute 44.1 percent of total S.T. population of the state. Their total population is 14, 58,334 according to 2001 census. They are distributed in the most of the plain districts of Assam. Their settlements in the new locations are still in progress under some ecological causes.

The Mishings are the second largest group of scheduled tribe (plains) of Assam after the Bodos They constitute 16 percent of total S.T. population (5, 38,333 person, 2001). They are distributed in the riverine areas of Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Tinsukia and Sonitpur districts of Assam. The population of Mishing language speakers in Assam is 3, 81,562(1.7%). After Mishings, Karbis constitute 10 percent (3, 28,968 person, 2001) of the total S.T. population followed by Sonowal Kachari 8.70 percent (2, 89,735 person, 2001), Rabha 8 percent (2, 72,707 person), Dimasa Kachari & Hojai 3 percent, (80,099 persons), and *Deori* 1.30 percent, (44,262, persons) respectively.

#### **1.4 Acculturation: Leads to Socio-Cultural Transformation**

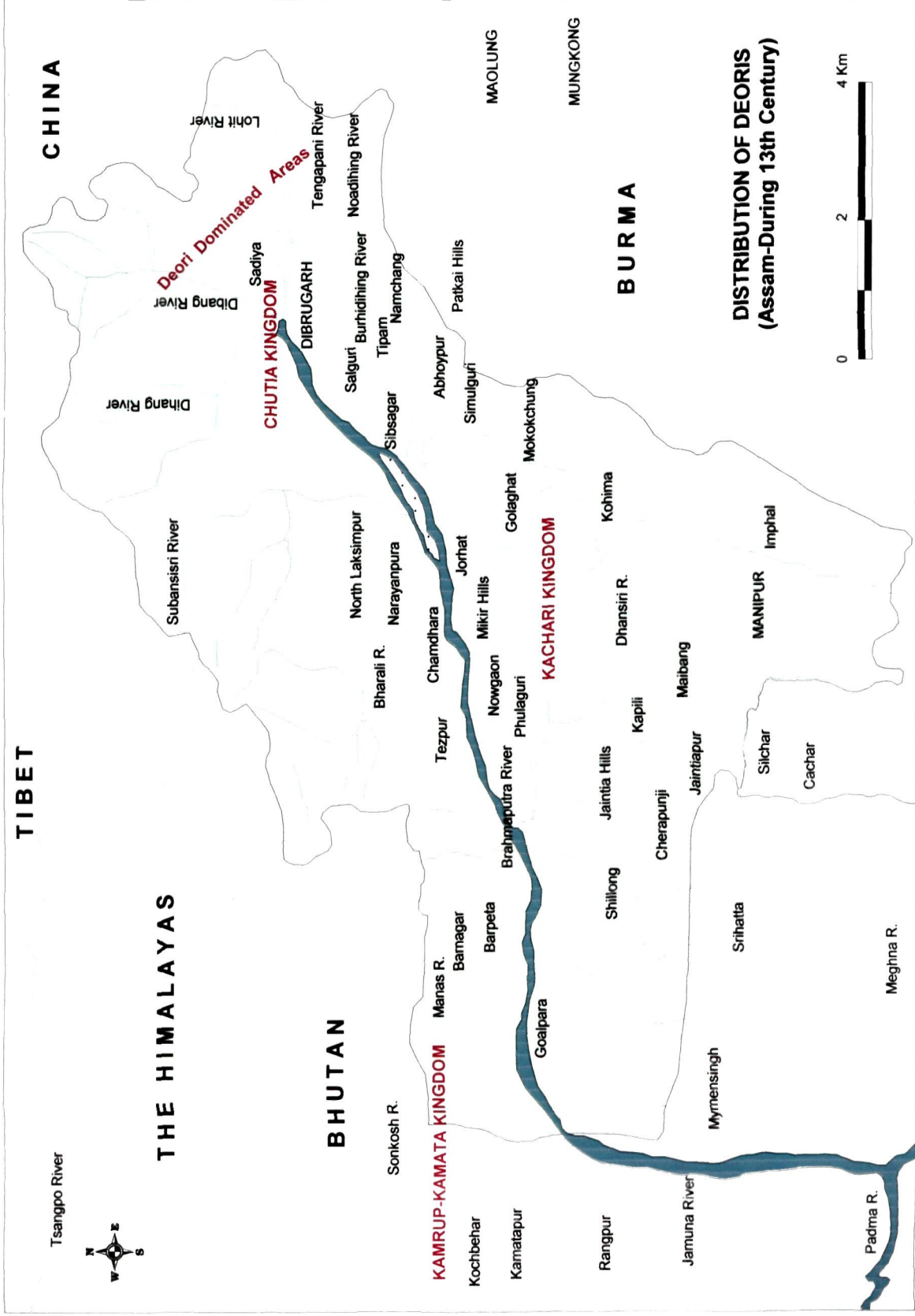
Bowell used the term acculturation in 1880 to signify the changes from a purely traditional to a modern way of life (Deori, et. al 2007). Moore in 1959 described that," it is a transfer of cultural or social elements from one society to

another” (Deori, et. al 2007). Through this process of social change, certain changes voluntarily or involuntarily occur in a society but mostly the core of the culture remains intact. The process however, has both positive and negative aspects. Socio-political, environmental and planned development factors play a decisive role in bringing about changes. Fiscer, in 1973 described that the capacity for culture is essentially a capacity for learning an arbitrary, traditional way of life through social communication and for changing his way of life when environmental or social circumstances require (Deori, 1988).

The socio-cultural traits discussed in the chapter (Chapter IV) are practiced by *Deoris* before 1950s, which was a traditional *Deori* culture. After the independence till 1970s, they were performing their rituals in the same traditional way but with lot of flexibility. After 1970s substantial changes have occurred among their culture. The ecological environment in the present settlement has influenced their traditional culture to a great extent. The developmental activities adopted by the Assamese society also persuade their life significantly. So, these factors are mainly responsible for large-scale cultural transformations of *Deoris*.

### **1.5 History of *Deoris***

According to ‘*Kalika Purana*’ and ‘*Yogini Tantra*’, prior to the sixth century, *Deoris* had been performing religious practices in the ‘*Tamreswari* or *Kechaikhati*’ temple, ‘*Burha-Burhi*’ temple, ‘*Baliababa*’ temple and in ‘*Patar Shaal*’ (which is in the north-east of Sadiya). The chief deities of the *Deori* are—



Source: Political History of Assam by H.K. Barpujari

Map No -2

(1) '*Kundimama*' or '*Gira-Girachi*' or '*Burha-Burhi*' (Lakshmi- Narayan) (2) *Baliababa* or *Pisa-Dema* (Lord Shiva) and (3) *Kechaikhati* or *Tamreswari* or *Pisachi Dema* (Goddess Kali).

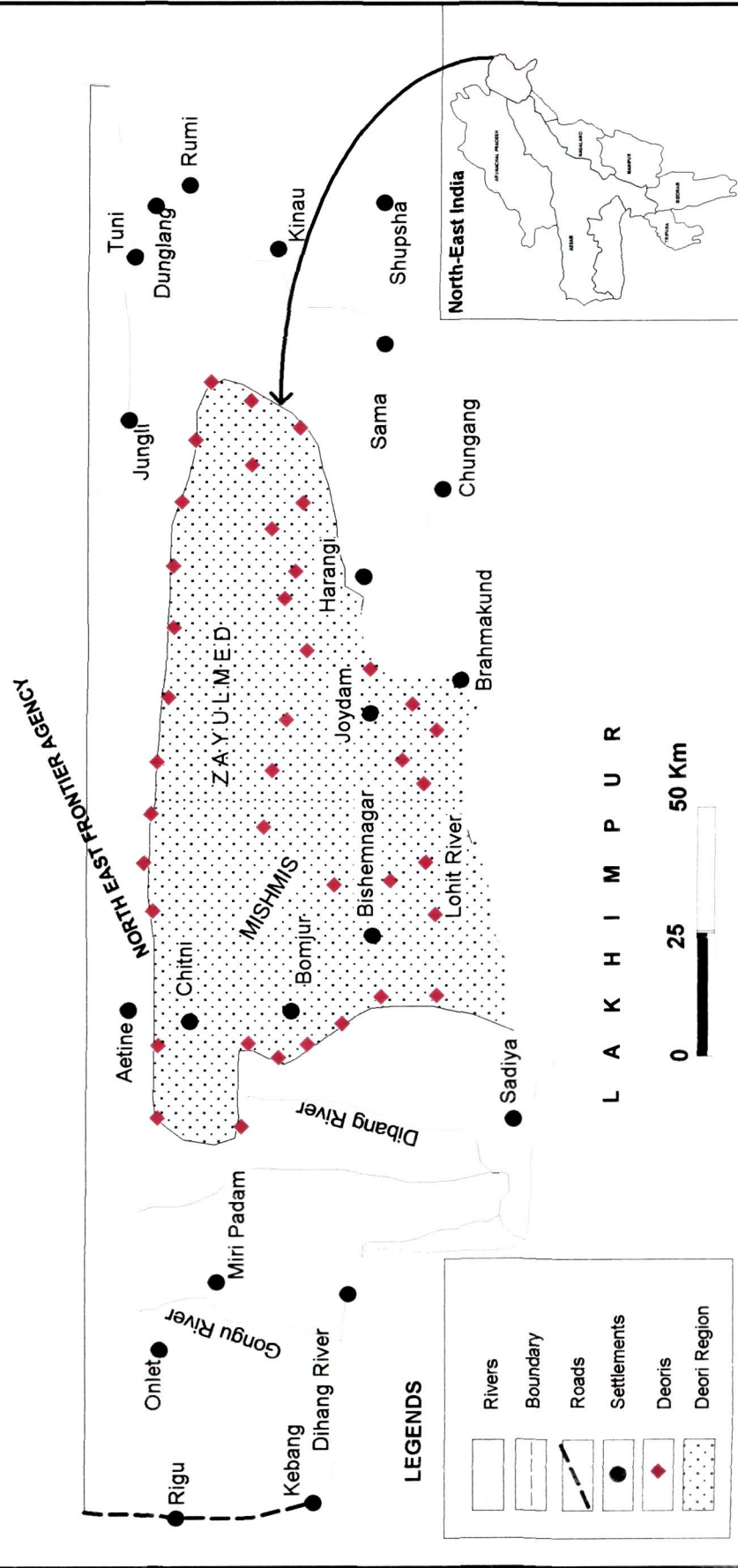
This region was a part of 'Saumar Pith' of ancient Kamrup and was known as 'Bidarva' kingdom (lately Sadiya) in the time of Mahabharata and 'Kundil Nagar' was its capital during that period. The name 'Kundil' came into existence from the *Deori* supreme God 'Kundimama'.

*Deoris* served as priests at four different temples all situated in the present Sadiya and at three of which a human sacrifice was offered yearly and at the fourth a white buffalo. Latterly these sacrifices have been offered to the Hindu Goddess Durga (Deori, 1964). The practice of human sacrifice was abolished during the reign of Swargadeo Rudra Singha (Ahom King).

Many religious people from China, Tibet and Burma and many Hindus of India came to the temples that were worshipped by *Deoris* in the month of 'Saon'(July-August) and 'Bohag'(April-May) with a view to worship there (Deori, 1964). Chutias for the same reason accepted the '*Sakta*' religion and became disciples of the *Deori* priests.

'Ahom' and 'Kachari' kingdom appointed the *Deoris* as their priests in different temples. It has been observed that the original seat of *Deori* was in the region beyond Sadiya. It is only about a century ago that they moved to their present settlements, and some of them still occasionally visit Sadiya for religious purposes (Gait, 1905). Further the pre-history indicates that the *Deoris* had come

# AREAS OCCUPIED BY DEORIS - 1911



L A K H I M P U R



## LEGENDS

	Rivers
	Boundary
	Roads
	Settlements
	Deoris
	Deori Region

Source: S. Endle, The Assam Province-1911

Map No.-3

to India in the dim and distant past from northeast Asia i.e. from Chinese and Mongolian territories. *Deoris* had settled in Yunnan Pradesh of South China, Mongolia and later on they settled at Jaimal-Jaidham before settled at Sadiya. They lived in the valleys in the rivers of Brahmaputra, Tsangpo, Lassa, Siddhakhetri, Swati, Bidarva or Banzul, Kundil, Chengchukul, Laibari, Laphabari, Sadiya etc (Deori, 2002). The pre-historical legends as well as historical accounts by and large have made the *Deori* as the 'Tribal Brahmin' or 'Tribal Priest' of the ancient north east India. Their religious faiths, rituals and the language used in '*Deva -Puja*' (Worshipping the God), were prevalent all over Assam, i.e. the Kamata-Kamrup region (Deori, 1964).

### **1.6 Statement of the Problem**

*Deoris* were settled on the banks of the river 'Dibang', 'Tengapani' and 'Patarsal' which is now fall within the jurisdiction of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and 'Chapakhowa' area that is in 'Sadiya' subdivision of Tinsukia district of Assam.

Available records show that prior to the sixth century *Deoris* had been living in an around Sadiya (Chapakhowa area). The term '*Deori*' is attached to the religious or priestly functionaries of various tribal as well as non-tribal communities of Assam (Bose, 1990). As in some other parts in mid-India; the tribal population in Brahmaputra valley has witnessed substantial migration and redistribution of its population in the past. Of particular importance that invites

research efforts is the *Deori* population, which is confined to a few districts on both bank of the mighty Brahmaputra in upper Assam.

The process and the pattern of migration and consequent distribution of *Deoris* in Assam are quite significant and it influences the socio-economic and cultural life of the three '*foids*' or '*khels*' (sub-groups) of the community to a great extent. Till the end of the Ahom kingdom *Deoris* lived peacefully in Sadiya. They got '*Devottar*' and '*Brahmottar*' lands (donated by king) from Sadiyakhowa Gohain (Deori, 1964). During the time of Moran, Matak uprising most of the people from Sadiya had left the place. Still *Deoris* performed their duties in the temples. (Deori, 1964)

But, as a result of the attack of 'Manns' and 'Mishmi' (during the first part of seventeenth century), epidemic and diseases and influx of hill tribes from some parts of Arunachal Pradesh created problems of shelter and settlement in the large part of erstwhile *Deori* dominant areas (Deori, 1964). Gradually the hill tribes captured the lands of *Deoris*. Internal migration too took place from various parts of Arunachal Pradesh and this had a debilitating effect on availability of land for the community as a whole and the people were migrated to the south of their origin settlements through the Brahmaputra valley.

There was another inflow of migration of *Deori's* in the last century, which was caused due to the devastating earth quake in 1950s, Consequent flood and river bank erosion in the areas of *Deori* settlement had forced them to move around to different parts of the Brahmaputra valley in search of cultivable lands.

They migrated to different districts of upper (both the banks of the Brahmaputra) and middle Assam forming some groups in their own '*Khels*'. This process continued up to last century and they are now distributed in eight districts of Brahmaputra valley.

As a result of the migration and consequent spatial distribution of *Deoris* the socio-cultural, economic and religious life of the community is affected to a great extent.

Physical and Social ecology of the community is altered to a great extent in the new settlements as compared to that of Sadiya. Their economic activities have been influenced by the ecological conditions prevailing in the newly settled areas and their earlier pattern of livelihood has changed in a considerable way. A new social transformation has taken place with the assimilation of different ethnic groups. It is in this context that the present problem assumes significance, it is clear that the migration of *Deoris* from the last century has been an on going process. It is not the purpose here to examine this long drawn process of migration of *Deoris*, but to detain the study only to causes of migration, socio cultural traits, existing economic activities and over all cultural transformation among them. The cultural transformations of *Deoris* form the core of the proposed research.

This research aims at identifying the spatial patterns in the process of migration from earlier settlements to the present locations and the degree of cultural transformation of the community. The research also makes a modest

attempt at getting an insight into the causes and consequences of migration of *Deoris* from their original settlements.

### **1.7 Choice of the Study Area**

*Deoris* are mostly found in the eight districts of upper and middle Assam and in some pockets of Lohit and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, near the Assam Arunachal Pradesh border. For the purpose of the present study the districts in Assam where this community is distributed have been selected as the study area. Needless to say, the quantum and quality of cultural transformation has been different in different tribes in this part of the state compared to other parts of northeast India. The state of Assam occupies a unique position amidst complex geologic and physiographic make up of the northeastern regions of India. The concentrations of *Deori* villages are found in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, and Sonitpur districts of north bank and in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Jorhat districts of south bank of the Brahmaputra Valley. Some villages are also found in Guwahati area of Kamrup district.

All the three *foids* (clans) are not found together in one district except Dhemaji district. Dhemaji district significantly represents villages of Dibongiyas, Tengaponiyas and Borgoyans .Hence, the case study for the present research is done in Dhemaji district.

## **1.8 Brief Overview of Literature**

Studies on migration of population are not of recent origin and the literature and records these fields are more or less available. However, much of the studies done earlier are mostly confined to areas outside the northeast India. Secondly such studies are inherent in analysis pertaining to population distribution itself.

The south Asian subcontinent long experienced virtually uninterrupted demographic mobility, which was reflected in the almost unchecked transfer and resettlement of population in a number of places. A large number of studies on population migration relate to displacement of population due to various developmental activities in India as well as whole south Asia.

Ahmed (1987) deals with the population trends in Pakistan and discusses the impact of the early refugee influx on the internal migration and urbanization of the country. Elahi and Sultana (1991) discussed major and minor population shift in south Asia in different historical period: Pre-British, British and Post independence. Skeldon (1991) observed that the migration in south Asia is concerned with contemporary mobility of population as reflected in population census survey and survey work reaching back to the 1950s. The discussion includes overall spatial patterns of flows, rural transfers, socio-cultural transformation of migrants. Shrestha (1991) analyzed general trends in change and redistribution of population in Nepal for the country as a whole and for the main ecological zones. Ahmed (1991) discussed the size, character and

distribution of population in Pakistan and held the view this way very much influenced by the 1947 partition of the subcontinent. Pareek et.al (1974) and Jain (1975) reviewed the trends and outcome of current research on population, including population distribution, migration, cultural change and development perspective in India. Patra (2003) analysed ethnic conflict as a force in internal displacement of people along ethnic lines in the areas of Bodo concentration in Assam.

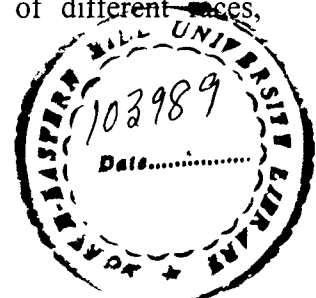
In a micro level study based on sample survey Das (1980) attempted to assess the impact of various developmental schemes upon socio-economic transformation in the Dimoria Tribal developmental Block of Assam. Nath et.al (1988) dealt with the position of women in the traditional tribal societies of northeast India citing example from social and cultural transformation from different tribes. Sharma (1981) examined the extent of socio-economic transformation of the urban community situated near the Guwahati city. Borah et.al (1984) studied the impact of Guwahati city on the socio-economic as well as cultural transformation in the peri-urban areas through gradient analysis. Jafri and Sahu\_(1978) analysed the impact of Shillong city in its fringe areas in terms of social transformation and levels of social development. Mahanta (1986) attempted an analysis of the ongoing social transformation and emerging conflicts among the different social groups in the Shillong urban agglomeration. Saharia (1985) made study on rural transformation in Dolgaon area, Assam.

Barclay (1958) rightly remarked that the fact that migrant, is a person, who travels, is the only unambiguous element involved in the entire processes of transformation. Bogue (1959) considers a movement of people as an instrument of cultural diffusion and social integration that result into more meaningful distribution of population. Beaujeu-Garnier (1966) rightly remarked that area from which people out migrate, the area to which they immigrate and the migrants themselves never remain the same. Migration cannot be considered a mere shift of people from one place of residence to another as it is the most fundamental to the understanding of continuously changing space-content and space relationships of an area (Gosal, 1961). Migration holds a place of prominence in a geographical analysis of population change (like fertility and mortality) in any area (Trewartha, 1969). Origin, distribution and ecological adaption of hill tribe in selected areas of Arunachal Pradesh were studied by (Roy Burman, 1970). Unlike fertility and mortality, migration is not just an unequivocal biological event but also a physical and social transaction (Zelinsky, 1971). Waddle (1975) has made distinction between cultural environment and physical setting in the Brahmaputra valley. Prothero (1979) stated that spatial mobility embraces all sorts of terrestrial movements but all forms of spatial mobility cannot be regarded as migration. Grigg (1980) studied migration and its consequences on underdeveloped countries. Jones (1980) showed the migration variations in different metropolitan cities using statistical techniques. Of the three major components of population change (i.e. Fertility, Mortality and Migration), migration is the most difficult to

conceptualize and measure (Jones, 1981). Fellmann (1985) studied concentration and redistribution of American black in northern cities. The migrants not only try to preserve their socio-cultural traits but also try to spread them (Merrick, 1986). Ahmad (1987) has attempted redistribution of tribal population in India on account of developmental processes. Migration or out going population influences the society, culture, economy and environment both at the places of origin and destination (Ravenstein, 1989). Bose (1990) emphasizes the distributional pattern of hill tribes in northeast India on the basis of regional development. Chandna (1990) has remarked that, the places of origin, the places of destination and individuals and families of the migrants undergo a qualitative and quantitative change in their population and demographic structure. Chube (1990) has analyzed the economic activity is the main cause of population migration concerned with other related problems. Rubenstein (1990) stated that the interactions of people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds when they stay together lead to the enrichment of civilization. Migrants often not only lose their culture but also amalgamate new tradition of the area concerned (Kosinski, 1991).

### **1.9 Literatures Pertaining to *Deoris***

The northeastern part of India comprises of many tribal communities each with its perceived separate cultural identity. The state of Assam, one of the seven sister states of northeast India, also has a number of racial groups with significant cultural variation among them. Assam is a melting pot of different races,



languages and cultures. Brown in 1895 stated that the *Deoris* are a small tribe in the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts of upper Assam (Deuri, (1992).

*Deoris* served as priests at four different temples all situated above the present Sadiya (Deori, 1964). Goswami (1962) studied the origin and changing nature of *Deoris* in the Assam. *Deoris* were the royal priests of king Bhismaka and the god and goddesses they worshipped were the same god and goddesses that were worshipped by king Bhismaka (Deori, 1964). It is only about a century ago that the community moved to their present settlements, and some of them still occasionally visit Sadiya for religious purposes (Deori, 2002). Deori (1964) had made an attempt to reveal the complete culture and history of *Deori* society. Redistribution of *Deoris* after the 1950s and their settlement and social problems were studied by (Deori, 1964). Barkakati (1969) studied the origin and migration of tribal people in Assam and their nature of settlement. Bhuyan (1969-71) showed the change of cultural settings among the tribes of undivided Assam. Bhuyan (1973) showed how the migrant has changed the socio-economic structure of Brahmaputra valley. The wise and noble people performing priestly functions in four Deo-Shaals in Sadiya were known as *Deori* (Saikia, 1974). Migrations of different tribes in the riverine tract of Brahmaputra valley were studied (Baruah, 1987). Historical description of tribal origin and distribution in Assam was described by (Barpujari, 1988). Deuri (1991) has made an attempt to show the distribution of *Deoris* and concentration in an around the Sadiya. Bhuyan (1991) highlighted the nature of immigration and population pressure of

tribal communities in some selected areas in Assam. Taher (1993) studied the changing pattern of ethnicity among tribal community in Assam due to migration wave. Tribal redistribution in the bordering areas of Assam and its social impact was highlighted by (Barthakur, 1997). Changing patterns of tribal settlements in Bodo dominated areas were studied by (Baishya, 1997). Deori (2002) defined the cultural impact of the *Deori* community in relation to redistribution among other tribe in the Brahmaputra valley. The forefathers of *Deoris* came to India in the dim and distant past from northeast Asia i.e. from Chinese and Mongolian territories. They settled in the valleys in the river Brahmaputra, The Tsangpo, Lassa, Siddhakhetri, Swati, Bidarva or Banzul, Kundil, Chengchukul, Laibari, Laphabari, Sadiya etc (Deori, 2002).

### **1.10 Objectives**

The objectives of this research as follows:

- i) to study the reasons of migration of *Deoris* from the earlier settlements to the present locations
- ii) to examine the change in their cultural identity subsequent to their settlement in the present area and
- iii) to understand the socio-cultural transformation among *Deoris* that are undergoing as a result of their assimilation with different culture and their interaction with other ethnic groups in Assam.

### **1.11 Hypotheses**

- i) The loss of *Deori* culture is directly proportionate to their assimilation with other culture and their contact to other ethnic groups.
- ii) Greater the loss of cultural identity greater is the socio-cultural transformation among the *Deoris*. The above hypotheses shall be tested on the basis of Cultural Transformation Index of the study area.

### **1.12 Data Base and Methodology**

Data required for this research is obtained from primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources particularly those published successive census enumeration, *Deori* Autonomous Council and those available district headquarter, Sub deputy collector office of the concerned area. Secondary data also collected from i) Census reports on Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe, Language Tables etc. ii) Bulletins of AADSU iii) Publications of *Deori* Sahitya Sabha, Assam iv) Community block development documents, v) Published documents and articles, vi) Reports of Assam Plains Tribe Development Corporation.

Data also required for this research is obtained from primary sources.

- i) Personal interviews ii) Household questionnaires iii) Field visits etc.

The methodology for present research adopted is outlined below:

1. Zonation of study area is made on the basis of concentration of Deori population in Assam; following three zones have been identified-
  - a) High concentration zone
  - b) Moderate concentration zone and
  - c) Least concentration zone
2. The distribution of population in *Deori* distributed areas is defined by segregating the data into four sets (Total population, Total non-tribal population, Total non-Deori population and Total scheduled tribe population). Distribution of these categories of population is examined at district and sub divisional level. A micro level analysis has been done to identify the concentration on village level, which is dominantly inhabited by *Deoris*.
3. At least three villages representing three *foids* (clans) i.e. Dibongia, Tengaponia and Borgoyan and a built up area (mixed of all clans) are selected to investigate the nature and consequences of migration and degree of cultural transformation.
4. A household survey of at least 40 percent of the households chosen on random basis to get the information on places of last residence, causes of migration, past and present occupation, relationship with nearby community and other related phenomena. For the built up area (Dhemaji Town) 100 percent of population is considered.

5. The degree of cultural transformation in the field study is done considering all the social parameters of the community in percentage basis from the primary data collected.

### **1.13 Organization of Manuscript**

The manuscript is organized into six broad chapters. The first chapter outlines the design of the research work. The second chapter deals with the spatial distribution of ethnic composition of population in Assam at state and district levels. The spatial distribution of different ethnic groups is also disaggregated for rural and urban population separately. Distribution of *Deori* population is disaggregated at district levels of Assam. The population of different tribes of Assam including *Deori* population is also recorded in this chapter. The third chapter deals with migration of *Deoris* from their original habitats to present locations. The routes of migration of ancestors of *Deoris* are depicted and pattern of migration during different periods till present is analyzed. The ecological pattern of distribution in the present settlements of the community is also discussed in the third chapter. The causes of migration from the original place to the present locations are analyzed.

The fourth chapter deals with socio cultural traits of *Deoris*. This chapter includes the traditional rituals and customs of the community. The fifth chapter deals with the socio-cultural changes of *Deoris* as a result of migration. Different attributes like education, religion, health care, occupation, dress pattern, marriage

etc. is taken to study the socio-cultural transformations of the community. The field study data are analyzed and examined by the proposed hypotheses. The last and sixth chapter includes the findings and conclusion of the research study.

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**Chapter-II**  
**Distribution of Ethnic**  
**Groups in Assam**

## Chapter-II

### DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN ASSAM

#### 2.1 Generalities

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to understand the spatial distribution of the population classified by ethnic groups in Assam while trying to understand the distributional pattern of *Deoris*. The study of regional distribution of different ethnic groups will be helpful to identify the areas of concentration of tribal segments. State and district level census data of different segments are analyzed. The spatial changes in their distribution in different time points are compared by different diagrams, tables and maps. The North-Eastern part of India comprises of many tribal communities each with its perceived separate cultural identity. The state of Assam has a number of racial and ethnic groups with their own specific and traditional cultures. The tribes of Assam display a very high degree of ethnic diversity in their racial composition and distribution. Ethnic diversity has led to spatial distribution of population in Assam.

## 2.2 Physical Settings of Assam

Assam can be broadly divided into three physical units: the north-eastern, central hill tracts, and the valleys of the Barak and Brahmaputra. On the north of Assam lie the Eastern Himalayas reaching the highest altitude in the northeast at Namcha Burwa, at 7,756 feet above the mean sea level. The different parts of the sub Himalayan region are named after the semi Mongoloid tribes who inhabit these hills such as the Bhutias, Akas, Duflas (Nishis), Abors (Adis), Miris (Mishings) and Mishimis. This range continues towards the southeast and joins the Patkai hills, the natural boundary between Assam and Myanmar. The Assam Range in the middle is occupied from the east to the west by the various tribes such as the Nagas, the Jaintias, the Khasis and the Garos. On the south lie Chin and Lushai (Mizo) Hills, Chittagong Hill Tract and Hill Tipperah. Though surrounded by mountain barriers, Assam were linked with the neighboring countries by several routes. The Assam-Burma route helped the migration of the racial elements from Southeast Asia. The Ahoms and other Tibeto-Burmans followed the Patkai route from the northeast. The hill passes of Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal were probably used by certain waves of the Tibeto- Burman migrants (Barua, 1960). The most frequented route was on the west; the valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra through which the Aryans are supposed to have penetrated in

to Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa. Assam is, thus, located in one of the great migration routes of mankind.

The physical divisions of Assam have led to the emergence of two distinct ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups, namely the dwellers of the hills and those of the plains. It is said that the process of 'Aryanisation' or 'Sanskritization' was nearly completed in the Brahmaputra Valley by 1200 A.D (Baruah, 1991). This was not the case of all those who have been living for centuries far away from the mainstream, in a relatively isolated and inaccessible and less fertile and less agriculturally productive regions of forests, hills and mountains. They continued to maintain their identity in speech, tradition, customs, usages, institutions and religious beliefs. Land was the backbone of their economy, but the nature and extent of land forced them to practice Jhuming or shifting cultivation. There had been frequent interaction between the people of the hills and the plains particularly in economic spheres notwithstanding the natural barriers like the hill tracts and rivers (Logan, 1848). The hill men depended largely on the plains for their foodstuff and other necessities, and the plainsmen provided them with their requirements. Some of them even preferred to settle in the plains or at the foothills, and consequently there had been a process of assimilation-racial, linguistic and cultural, though at very limited scale.

### **2.3 Distribution of Population in Assam**

Demographic characteristics of the population in Assam show a striking variation across different regions. The spatial distribution of population as well as the density is getting accentuated with changes in the ethnic composition and migration from neighboring states and other countries. An understanding of the changing distribution of population is expected to throw some light on the tendency to resettle of population in the state.

#### **2.3.1 State Level Pattern of Population Distribution**

Distribution of population in Assam is greatly affected by various factors, such as Physiography (fertile land), socio-cultural and demographic elements. The 1901 census enumerated 3,290 thousand persons on Assam as a whole with an overall density of 42 persons per square kilometers, and with a sex ratio of 918 females per thousand males. By the year 1911, the total population increased to 3,849 thousand persons; the density increased to 49 persons but the sex ratio decreased to 915 females per thousand males. The population increased rapidly thereafter. The census years 1971 enumerated 14,625 thousand people in Assam with an overall density of 186 persons with a sex ratio of 896 females per thousand males. By the year 2001, the

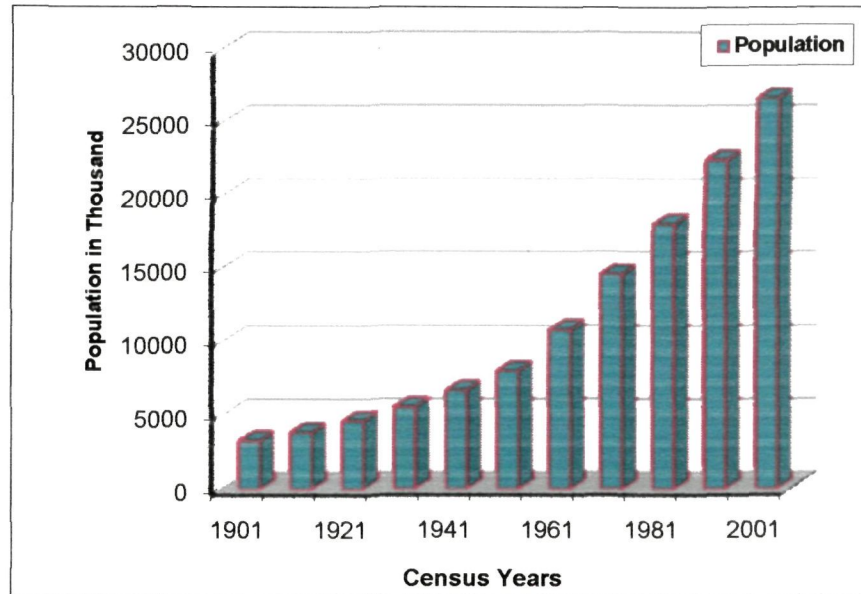
population increased to 26,638 thousand persons, and the density, too, nearly doubled. The sex ratio reached to 932 (Table-2.1 and Fig.-2.1). This figure directly indicates the role played by immigration in increasing the population as well as the density in the state of Assam. The phenomenal increase in population since 1971 clearly indicates the role played by immigration in increasing the population as the natural increase cant singularly explained such a large rise.

**Table: 2.1 Population Trend in Assam, 1901-2001**

Census Years	Population in Thousand	Sex Ratio
1901	3290	918
1911	3849	915
1921	4637	897
1931	5560	875
1941	6695	875
1951	8029	868
1961	108375	869
1971	14625	896
1981*	18041	NA
1991	22414	923
2001	26638	932

\*The 1981 Census is not conducted in Assam. The population figure is based on Interpolation. **Source:** Census of Assam, 1971, 1991 and 2001

**Population Trend in Assam, 1901-2001**



**Figure: 2.1**

### **2.3.2 Growth of Population in Assam**

The study of population growth is directly linked to the density of population. Density of population depends on the growth rate of population in a particular time frame. However, the study of population growth and density may provide valuable insights in the distribution of *Deoris*.

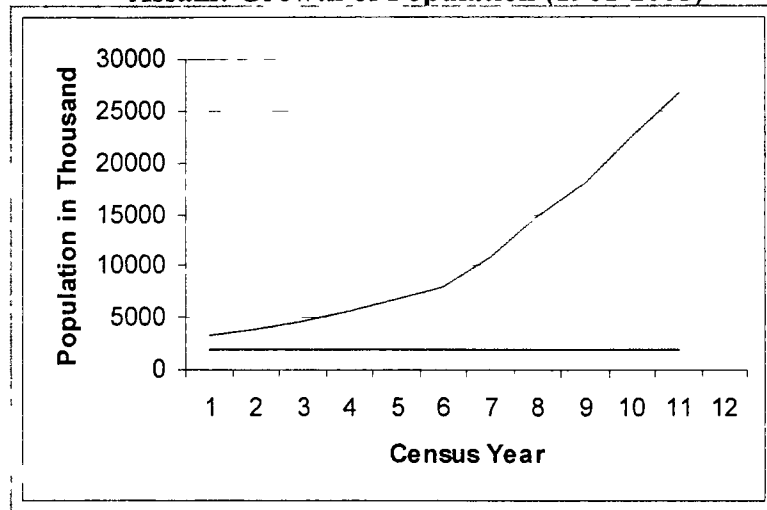
**Table: 2.2 Growth of Population in Assam, 1991-2001**

State	Census Year	Population in Thousand	Decadal Growth		Change in Decadal Growth		Average annual exponential growth rate	Progressive growth rate over 1901
			Absolute	Percent	Absolute	Percent		
A S S A M	1901	3290	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1911	3849	559	16.99	-	-	1.57	16.99
	1921	4637	788	20.47	229	3.48	1.86	37.46
	1931	5560	923	19.91	135	-0.56	1.82	57.37
	1941	6695	1135	20.41	212	0.50	1.86	77.78
	1951	8029	1134	16.94	-1	-3.47	1.82	94.72
	1961	10837	2808	34.97	1674	18.03	3.00	129.69
	1971	14625	3788	34.95	980	-0.02	3.00	164.40
	1981	18041	3416	23.36	-372	-11.59	2.10	188.00
	1991	22414	4373	24.24	957	0.88	2.17	212.24
	2001	26638	4224	18.85	-149	-5.39	1.73	231.09

**Source:** Census of Assam, 1971-2001. The 1981 Census could not be held in Assam. The population figures for 1981 has been worked out by Interpolation

The growth of population implies the changes in the size of residents of region during a specific period of time; whether the change is positive or negative. This is mainly due to the differential birth and death rates as well as due to the effects of migration. Assam had a total population of 26638 thousand person in 2001, which increased from a meager 3290 thousands in 1901, with a growth rate nearly 710 percent during 1901-2001 (Table-2.2 and Figure-2.2). The growth trends have an alteration of ups and downs after every decade in terms of percentage. The rate of growth in each decade has been positive, though the extent of growth has been varying.

**Assam: Growth of Population (1901-2001)**



**Figure: 2.2**

The growth rate greatly fluctuated between 1901 till about 1951 ranging between 15 and 20 percent. The population grew at a much faster rate in the following two decades up to 1971 the rate of growth as high as 34 percent or more during these two decades. There has been a slowing down in the rate of population growth since 1981. The 2001 census records a much lower rate of population growth at 18.85 percent only. It may be noted that Assam's population growth has never been uniform as the growth rates have fluctuated alarmingly over the decades since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The most notable rise in the population however took place during 1951 to 1971.

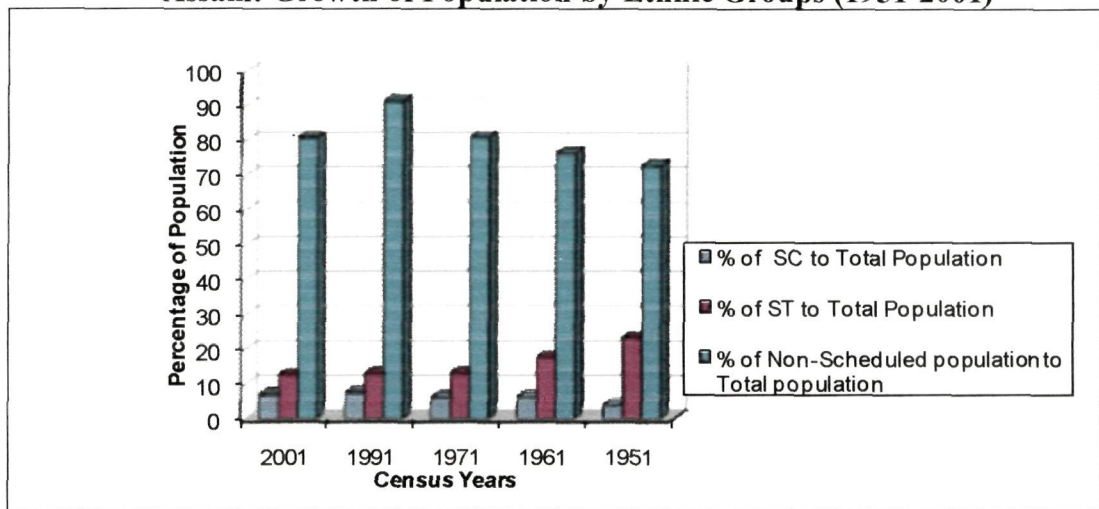
**Table: 2.3 Assam: Growth of Population by Ethnic Groups, 1951-2001**

Census Year	Total Population in Assam	Scheduled Caste Population	% of SC to Total Population	Scheduled Tribe Population	% of ST to Total Population	Non-Scheduled population	% of Non-Scheduled population to Total population
2001	26655528	1825949	6.85	3308570	12.41	21521009	80.74
1991	22414322	1659412	7.40	2874441	12.82	20467469	91.31
1971	14957542	912639	6.10	1919947	12.84	12124956	81.06
1961	11872772	732756	6.17	2068364	17.42	9071652	76.41
1951	8029505	313219	3.90	1867113	23.25	5849173	72.84

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam

The above table shows the percentages of SC, ST, and Non-Scheduled population to total population of Assam from 1951 to 2001. SC population constitutes 3.90 percent in 1951 while the percentages for ST and Non-Scheduled population are 23.25 and 72.84 respectively. On the other hand 2001 census shows that the percentages of SC, ST and Non-Scheduled population are 6.58, 12.41 and 80.74 respectively. The decadal growth of the populations of different ethnic groups is almost proportionate from 1951 to 2001. Share of SC population is below 10 percent in all the decades while ST population is between 10 to 20 percent (except 1951) and Non-Scheduled population is highest in all the decades except 1951(72.84%) and 1961(76.41%) having more than 80 percent.

**Assam: Growth of Population by Ethnic Groups (1951-2001)**



**Figure: 2.3**

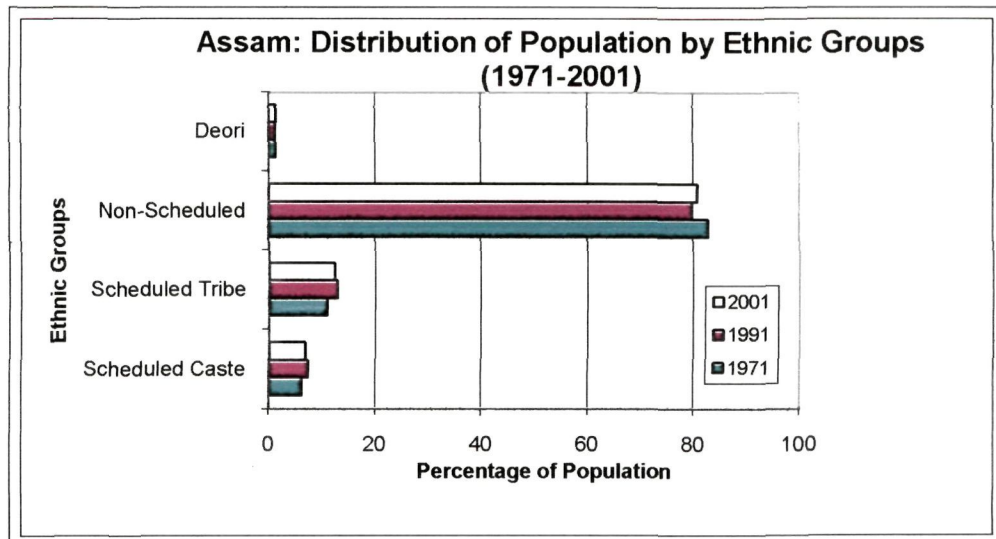
From the census data for 1971, 1991 and 2001 in the Table: 2.4 it can be compared the different percentages of Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe, Non-Scheduled and *Deori* population in Assam.

**Table2.4**

**Assam: Distribution of Population by Ethnic Groups (1971-2001)**

State	Census Year	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	Non-Scheduled	Deori
Assam	1971	6.24	10.98	82.78	1.28
	1991	7.40	12.83	79.77	1.25
	2001	6.85	12.41	80.70	1.34

**Source:** Department of Plain tribes and Backward Classes, Assam



**Figure: 2.4**

As the population of *Deoris* are small as compared to other tribes, its percentage to total population lies between 1 and 2 only. But it is noteworthy that in the census years, district level data with detailed village populations for *Deoris* was not conducted. There are many non-census *Deori* villages where a large number of *Deori* population live. Hence the census data mentioned here cannot be considered as actual data.

An interesting fact of the ethnic composition of the population relates to large increase in the share of the scheduled caste population between 1971 and 1991, and substantial decrease in their population in the following decade. The share of scheduled tribe population also

showed a very increase during 1971-91 decades but decreased marginally in the following decade.

The increase in the proportion of scheduled population during 1971-91 decades is followed by a corresponding decrease in the share of the Non-Scheduled population, which declined, from 82.78 percent in 1971 to 79.77 percent in 1991. The proportion of this group has marginally increased in the year 2001 (Table- 2.4 and Fig.2.4). In the last thirty years, the share of tribal population shows a positive change compared to other ethnic groups in the state as a whole.

There are about 23 Scheduled Tribes (Hills& Plains) in Assam residing in different districts. (Appendix-III) shows the population of different Scheduled Tribes in Assam during 1971, 1991 and 2001 Census. Boro-Boro Kachari group has the highest proportion of population among all the tribes throughout the three decades (Fig: 2.5). They shared 33.36 percent of total tribal population in 1971. This figure increased to 44.07 and 44.08 percent during 1991 and 2001 respectively. Miri (Mishing) is the second largest group having 13.52 and 16.27 percent of tribal population in 1991 and 2001. This figure for the year 1971 was 13.52. The third largest group is Mikir (Karbi). Their percentage to total ST population in 1971 was 9.23 and it is increased to 9.94 during 1991 and

2001. *Deoris* shared 1.20 percent of total tribal population of Assam in 1971 census. During 1991 census their proportion was 1.25 percent and in 2001 it increased to 1.34 percent. Lekher, Synteng and Pawi are the smaller groups having less than 0.05 percent of tribal population.

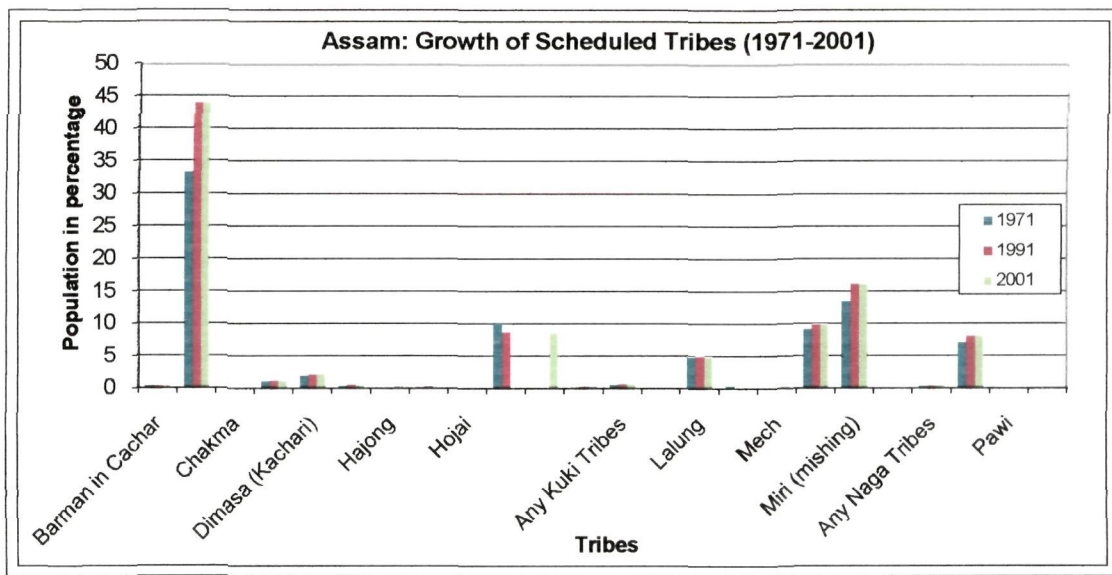


Figure: 2.5

### 2.3.3 Growth of Literacy Rates among the Tribes

The literacy rates among different tribes living in Assam (Appendix-II and Fig-2.6) reveals that any Mizo tribes (Lushai) have the highest literacy rate (66.53%) and Hmar having 61.43 percent in the second position. The main reason of this is that these tribes are found in a small quantity (Lushai-1031, Hmar-11,189). Total eight tribes have the literacy rate above 50 percent.

In case of *Deoris*, a sharp rise in literacy rate is noticed from 1971(27.72%) to 1991(54.13%). The lowest percentage in 1991 is found among Chakmas (11.84). Besides Chakma, there are five other tribes having the literacy rate below 30 percent. These are Synteng (22.28%), Khasi and Jayantia (24.56%), Hojai (14.9%), Hajong (26.19%), Dimasa (22.3%) respectively. An increasing trend of literacy rate is found in most of the tribes. The educational policies adopted by the Govt. of India as well as Assam have influenced the rise of literacy rate.

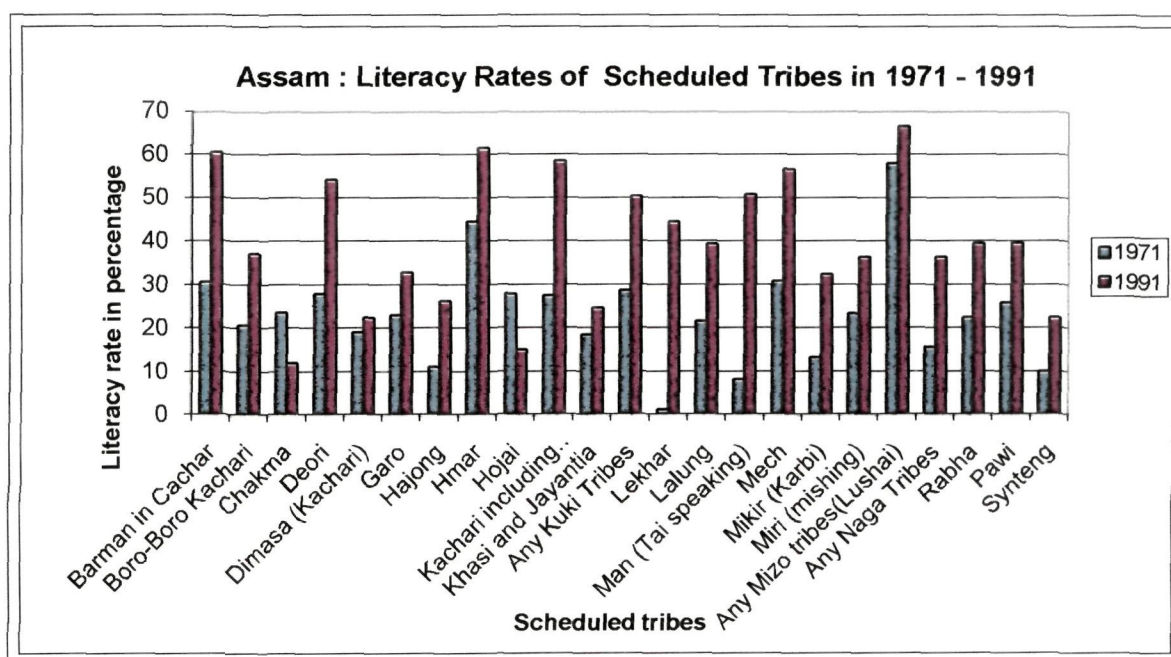


Figure: 2.6

### 2.3.4 Growth of Language Speakers among the Tribes of Assam

Each of the tribes of Assam has their own dialect or language.

But in course of time the numbers of their own language speakers are decreasing gradually as a result of acculturation and assimilation with greater Assamese society. So it is noticed that, there is a difference between actual population and number of dialect speakers. The language wise distribution of scheduled tribe population as per 1991 census is shown in (Table: 2.5). It would be relevant to compare the figures of language speakers among the tribes as per 1971 census.

**Table: 2.5 Frequencies of Language Speakers among the Tribes of Assam, 1971, 1991**

Name of the Languages	Total (1971)	Language speakers (1971)	Total (1991)	Language speakers (1991)
Boro/ Bodo	6,40,459	5,33,713	1267015	11,84,569
Deori	23080	12,190	35849	15,955
Dimasa	39342	33,507	65009	64,654
Garo	9139	7,600	17998	14,779
Hmar	5380	4,836	11189	9,054
Mikir/Karbi	177194	161354	285811	2,55,032
Koch	NA	NA	NA	3,596
Kuki	13524	5,098	21883	15,209
Lalung	95,609	9,954	143746	32,633
Lushai/Mizo	711	4,00	1031	719
Miri/Mishing	259551	1,77,226	467740	3,81,562
Rabha	138630	32,400	236931	1,12,424
Rengma	NA	NA	NA	1,35,905

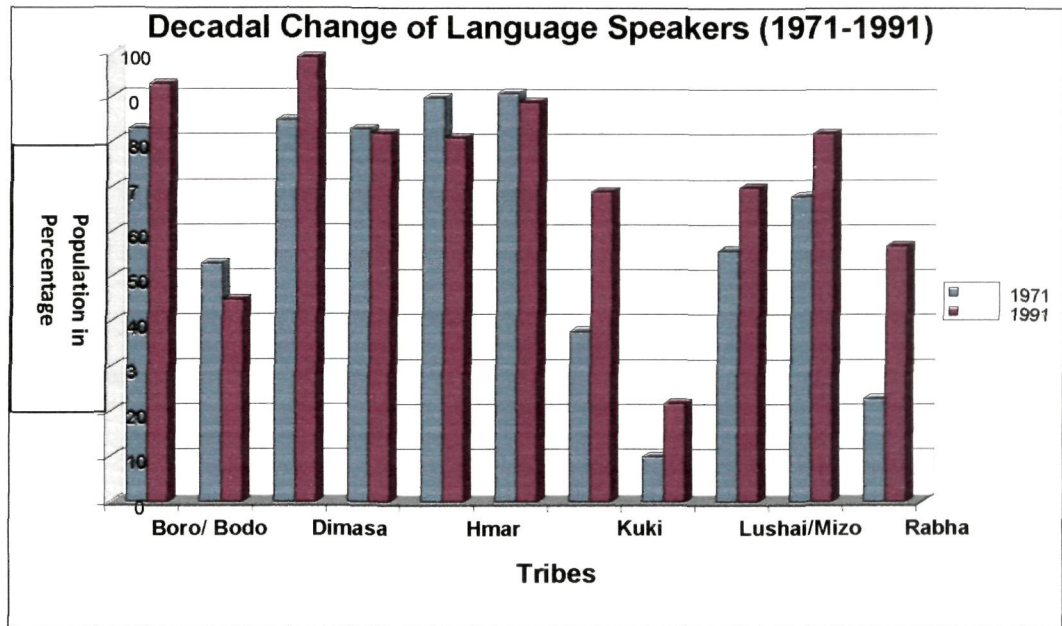
**Source:** Census of India 1971 and 1991

**Table: 2.6 Decadal Changes of Language Speakers of Different Tribes in Assam, 1971-1991 in (%)**

<b>Name of the Language</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1991</b>
Boro/ Bodo	83	93
Deori	53	45
Dimasa	85	99
Garo	83	82
Hmar	90	81
Mikir/Karbi	91	89
Kuki	38	69
Lalung	10	22
Lushai/Mizo	56	70
Miri/Mishing	68	82
Rabha	23	57

**Source:** Census of India 1971 and 1991

Among the Boros 83 percent spoke Boro languages during 1971 census and 93 percent in 1991 census. During 1971 census 53 percent of *Deoris* spoke *Deori* language while during 1991 census, only 45 percent spoke their language. Among the Garos 83 percent spoke Garo language during 1971 census and 82 percent spoke the language in 1991 census.



**Figure: 2.7**

Decreasing trend of the numbers of dialect speakers are found among Hmar, Mikir/Karbi, Garo and *Deori* community between these two census periods.

On the other hand increasing trend is found among the Mishings, Lushai/Mizos, Kukis, Dimasas and Boro/ Bodos and Rabhas. Their population is increased significantly from 1971 to 1991. It has been noticed that there are decadal change of *Deori* language speakers from 1951 to 1991. Percentage of *Deori* language speakers is decreasing from

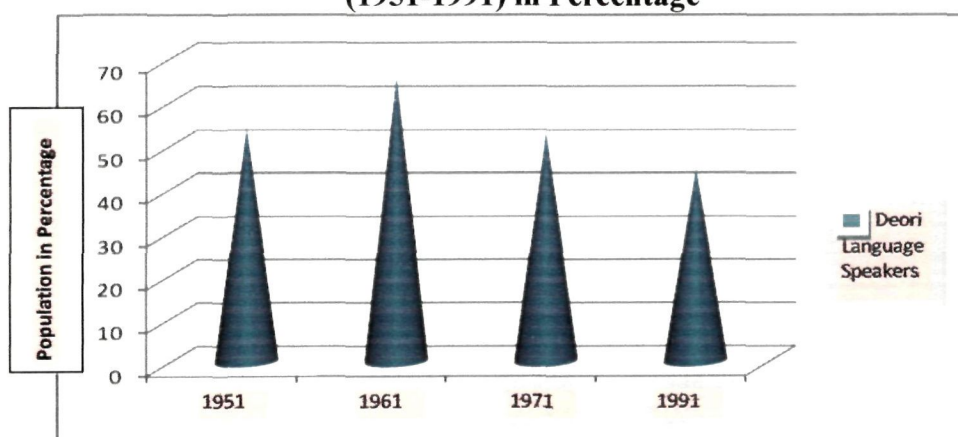
1961 (65.60%) to 1971(52.81%) and from 1971 to 1991(44.50%) correspondingly.

**Table: 2.7 Decadal Variation of Deori Language Speakers in Assam**

Census year	Total Deori population	Number of Deori language speakers	Percentage of Deori language speakers to total Deori population
1891	4000	NA	
1931	NA	4000	
1951	12503	6715	53.71
1961	13876	9103	65.60
1971	23080	12190	52.81
1981	No census	No census	No census
1991	35849	15955	44.50

**Source:** Department of plains tribe and backward classes, Assam, 2001  
NA-Not Available

**Decadal Variation of Deori Language Speakers (1951-1991) in Percentage**



**Figure: 2.8**

### 2.3.5 Distribution of Rural Population in Assam

According to the 1971 census, more than 91 percent (91.17%) of the population of Assam lived in rural areas. The fact that the rural component of the population in Assam decreased to 88.89 percent in 1991 shows little changes in the rural urban composition of the population in two decades. Even the 2001 census records 87.10 percent rural population displaying very little change in the rural urban composition of the population in the last decade.

The following table reveals that the vast majority of the population irrespective of the ethnic differentiation lived in rural areas in the districts. The Scheduled Tribe population in sharp contrast remains vastly rural in their population composition and there is a little inter-district variation in this feature of population composition.

**Table: 2.8 Assam Proportion of Rural Population by Ethnic Groups 1971-1991 (in %)**

District	Scheduled Tribe			Non-Scheduled		
	1971	1991	Change	1971	1991	Change
1. Goalpara	100	98.20	-1.8	91.4	90.09	-1.31
2. Kamrup	98.96	94.79	-4.17	87.2	80.93	-6.27
3. Darrang	99.64	98.98	-0.66	93.44	93.29	-0.15
4. Nagaon	99.66	96.52	-3.14	91.89	89.95	-1.94
5. Sibsagar	99.59	98.57	-1.02	90.97	89.81	-1.16
6. Lakhimpur	98.88	97.63	-1.25	86.33	85.60	-0.73
7. K. Anglong	99.29	93.41	-5.88	94.64	84.34	-10.3
8. N.C. Hills	98.42	88.24	-10.18	81.71	55.16	-26.55
9. Cachar	99.65	98.29	-1.36	91.54	91.12	-0.42
<b>Assam</b>	<b>99.36</b>	<b>96.62</b>	<b>-2.74</b>	<b>90.12</b>	<b>87.90</b>	<b>-2.22</b>

**Source:** Census of Assam, 1971-1991

Table 2.9 reveals that the majority of the population spaced out to the ethnic differentiation lived in rural areas in all districts (2001). There were, however, important inter district variations in the proportion of rural population. The Scheduled Tribe population in sharp contrast remains vastly rural in their population composition and there is little inter-district variation in this feature of population composition.

**Table: 2.9 Proportion of Rural Population in Assam (ST/ Non-Scheduled/Deori) 1991-2001(in %)**

Districts	Scheduled Tribe			Non-Scheduled			Deori		
	1991	2001	Change	1991	2001	Change	1991	2001	Change
1.Dhubri	98.04	97.72	-0.32	89.16	89.49	0.33			-
2.Kokrajhar	97.74	96.10	-1.64	91.86	92.09	0.23			-
3.Bongaigaon	99.04	96.32	-2.72	89.34	86.8	-2.54			-
4. Goalpara	98.52	98.69	0.17	91.63	91.09	-0.54			-
5. Barpeta	99.31	99.04	-0.27	93.00	92.44	-0.56			-
6. Nalbari	99.89	99.90	0.01	97.35	97.25	-0.1			-
<b>7. Kamrup</b>	<b>88.18</b>	<b>87.02</b>	<b>-1.16</b>	<b>64.69</b>	<b>60.86</b>	<b>-3.83</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>+0.03</b>
8. Darrang	99.02	98.33	-0.69	94.66	94.75	0.09			-
<b>9. Sonitpur</b>	<b>98.93</b>	<b>98.54</b>	<b>-0.39</b>	<b>92.12</b>	<b>88.43</b>	<b>-3.69</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>+1.78</b>
<b>10.Lakhimpur</b>	<b>98.59</b>	<b>98.43</b>	<b>-0.16</b>	<b>90.90</b>	<b>90.41</b>	<b>-0.49</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>+2.63</b>
<b>11. Dhemaji</b>	<b>99.17</b>	<b>97.64</b>	<b>-1.53</b>	<b>97.13</b>	<b>88.76</b>	<b>-8.37</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>+0.74</b>
12. Morigaon	96.2	96.45	0.25	94.49	94.92	0.43			-
13. Nagaon	96.97	98.20	1.23	88.69	87.55	-1.14			-
14.Golaghat	98.66	97.31	-1.35	93.60	90.67	-2.93			-
<b>15. Jorhat</b>	<b>98.75</b>	<b>98.15</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>82.38</b>	<b>80.19</b>	<b>-2.19</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>+0.15</b>
<b>16. Sibsagar</b>	<b>97.83</b>	<b>96.65</b>	<b>-1.18</b>	<b>92.85</b>	<b>90.84</b>	<b>-2.01</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>-0.14</b>
<b>17. Dibrugarh</b>	<b>92.08</b>	<b>89.24</b>	<b>-2.84</b>	<b>81.98</b>	<b>80.51</b>	<b>-1.47</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>+2.11</b>
<b>18. Tinsukia</b>	<b>97.04</b>	<b>95.99</b>	<b>-1.05</b>	<b>83.19</b>	<b>80.02</b>	<b>-3.17</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>+0.52</b>
19.K.Anglong	93.41	92.09	-1.32	84.34	83.81	-0.53			-
20. N.C. Hills	88.24	81.29	-6.95	55.16	40.20	-14.96			-
21. Karimjanj	91.33	88.25	-3.08	92.79	92.76	-0.03			-
22.Hailakandi	93.29	94.76	1.47	92.19	91.65	-0.54			-
23. Cachar	99.11	97.32	-1.79	89.55	85.04	-4.51			-
<b>Assam</b>	<b>96.62</b>	<b>95.34</b>	<b>-1.28</b>	<b>87.90</b>	<b>87.90</b>	<b>-1.90</b>			<b>+7.82</b>

Source: Census of Assam, 1991-2001

The rural urban composition of the Non-Scheduled population also is not very unusual across the districts barring North-Cachar district where majority of the population belonging to this category lives in urban areas

### 2.3.6 Growth of Rural Population in Assam

Assam is the high concentration of rural population as compared to the other states of North East India. Following table (Table-2.10) shows the growth of rural population in whole of Assam during 1971, 1991 and 2001 respectively.

During the period 1971 and 1991, the rural population in Assam grow at a rate of around 50 (49.39%), which is only a little lower than the overall growth rate (53.21%) experienced in Assam during the same period. There was a decline in the rural growth rate (even after adjusting the growth rate for two earlier decades of 1971-1991) by the year 2001 when the rural growth fell to a low of 16.53 percent. This fall in the rural growth may be attributed mostly to the rural to urban stream of migration.

**Table: 2.10 Growth of Rural Population in Assam, 1971-2001(in %)**

Census Year	Rural Population	Overall Growth Rate	Rural Growth Rate
1971	13335930	-	-
1991	19922265	53.21	49.39
2001	23216288	18.93	16.53

Source: Census of India (Assam State) 1971, 1991 and 2001

The *Deori* Villages are mostly restricted in the rural area either in the extreme corner or in the periphery of the interstate boundary. They constitute a foremost population in the seven districts of rural Assam except in the Kamrup district where their villages are controlled near by the urban perimeter.

The following (Table-2.11) defines the decadal change of rural *Deori* population in (1991-2001). In this decade three district namely Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Sonitpur experiences major decadal growth (+2.63, +2.11 and +1.78 respectively) in terms of Total *Deori* population. Kamrup district has the minimum decadal growth rate of *Deori* population (+0.03). Other four districts have moderate decadal growth below 1.00 percent in the same decade.

**Table: 2.11 Decadal Change of Deori Population (Rural) 1991- 2001**

Sl. No.	Districts	Total population 1991	Deori population 1991		Total population 2001	Deori population 2001		Change over the decade
			Deori	%		Deori	%	
1	Sonitpur	1424287	1333	0.09	1681513	31461	1.87	+1.78
2	Lakhimpur	751517	12119	1.61	889010	37779	4.24	+2.63
3	Dhemaji	478830	5891	1.23	571944	11311	1.97	+0.74
4	Tinsukia	962298	4939	0.51	1150062	11919	1.03	+0.52
5	Dibrugarh	1042457	2168	0.3	228438	5506	2.41	+2.11
6	Sibsagar	907983	3843	0.42	1051736	3042	0.28	+0.14
7	Jorhat	871206	3759	0.43	999221	5821	0.58	+0.15
8	Kamrup	2000071	611	0.01	2522324	1129	0.04	+0.03
<b>Total</b>			<b>34,663</b>	<b>4.6</b>		<b>1,07,968</b>	<b>12.42</b>	<b>+8.1</b>

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2001

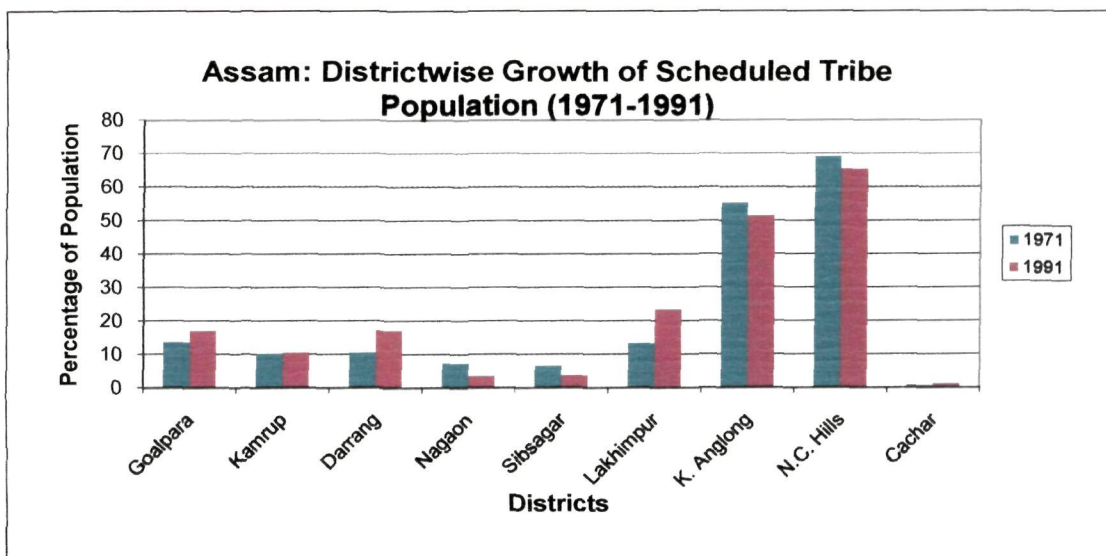
## 2.4 District Level Pattern of Distribution of Ethnic Groups

Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Non-Scheduled populations are very unevenly distributed in different districts of Assam. Decadal growth of the tribes in different districts are analysed in the following tables and diagrams.

**Table: 2.12**  
**Assam: District wise Growth of Scheduled Tribe Population**  
**(1971 and 1991)**

<b>District</b>	<b>% of ST Population to total district Population (1971)</b>	<b>% of ST Population to total district Population (1991)</b>
Goalpara	13.84	17.23
Kamrup	10.44	10.72
Darrang	10.69	17.32
Nagaon	07.44	3.69
Sibsagar	06.82	3.80
Lakhimpur	13.49	23.57
K. Anglong	55.37	51.56
N.C. Hills	69.15	65.54
Cachar	00.89	1.36

**Source:** Census of Assam, 1991

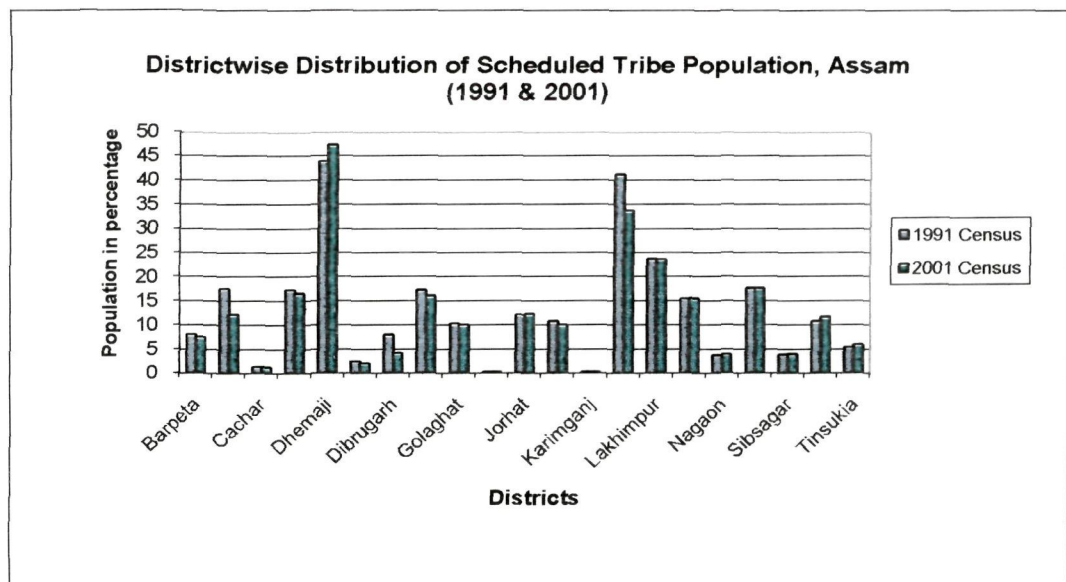


**Figure: 2.9**

Lakhimpur in the eastern part and Goalpara in the west are two other areas in the plains that contain a significant (over 13%) proportion of the scheduled tribes in 1971 (Table: 2.12). They are also numerous in Kamrup and Darrang districts in the plains of Brahmaputra where their share was 11 to 14 percent as per 1971 enumeration. The scheduled tribes have some presence all over Assam except in the Barak valley. The pattern remains more or less identical in the year 1991. However, there are some notable changes. While Goalpara and Lakhimpur districts experienced substantive increase in the share of scheduled tribe population there was a significant decline in the proportion of scheduled tribe population in the tribal dominated districts of Karbi Anglong and North

Cachar Hills. Substantial incursion of the non-tribal population into these hill districts is the chief cause in the fall of tribal proportion in these areas.

The analysis of the distribution of Scheduled Tribe population in Assam at the district level reveals striking spatial variation except in the Cachar plains. The Scheduled Tribe population is largely confined to the hill areas of the state. Dhemajii in the eastern part and Kokrajhar in the west are two other areas in the plains that contain a significant 47.29 percent and 33.67 percent proportion of the Scheduled Tribes in 2001 (Appendix-I)).



**Figure: 2.10**

The Scheduled Tribe populations display a very uneven distribution across the districts. The hill districts of North-Cachar and

Karbi Anglong as well as the plain districts of Dhemaji and Kokrajhar supported a very high percentage (over 40 percent) of Scheduled Tribes in the year 1991. The other districts in the plains, that contained a sizeable Scheduled Tribe population include Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Nalbari forming a contiguous zone in the lower Brahmaputra valley; and Darrang, Lakhimpur and Morigaon forming another pocket of tribal concentration in the Upper and Central Brahmaputra valley. The spatial pattern of distribution of the Scheduled Tribe population underwent little change in the year 2001 with minor modifications. The Scheduled Tribes also experienced a fall in their proportion in the total population in many districts. The only exceptions are found in the hill districts and Dhemaji, where the Scheduled Tribes have actually increased their share in the total population. Nevertheless, the fact that their share has fallen in many districts reveals the weakness of Census data. Either the 1991 census overestimated the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population or has under enumerated them in the 2001 census

The Scheduled Tribe population consists more than forty percent of the total population in Dhemaji and Kokrajhar district in 2001. Scheduled Tribe population in Lakhimpur district shares 23.49 percent of total district population. While tribal population in Dhemaji district is

increasing, it is decreasing in tribal dominated Kokrajhar district. (Fig-2.10). On the other hand, most of the districts, except the above mentioned has scheduled tribe population below 20 percent. Growth of Scheduled Tribe population is noticed in Nagaon, Sibsagar, Sonitpur and Tinsukia districts within this decade.

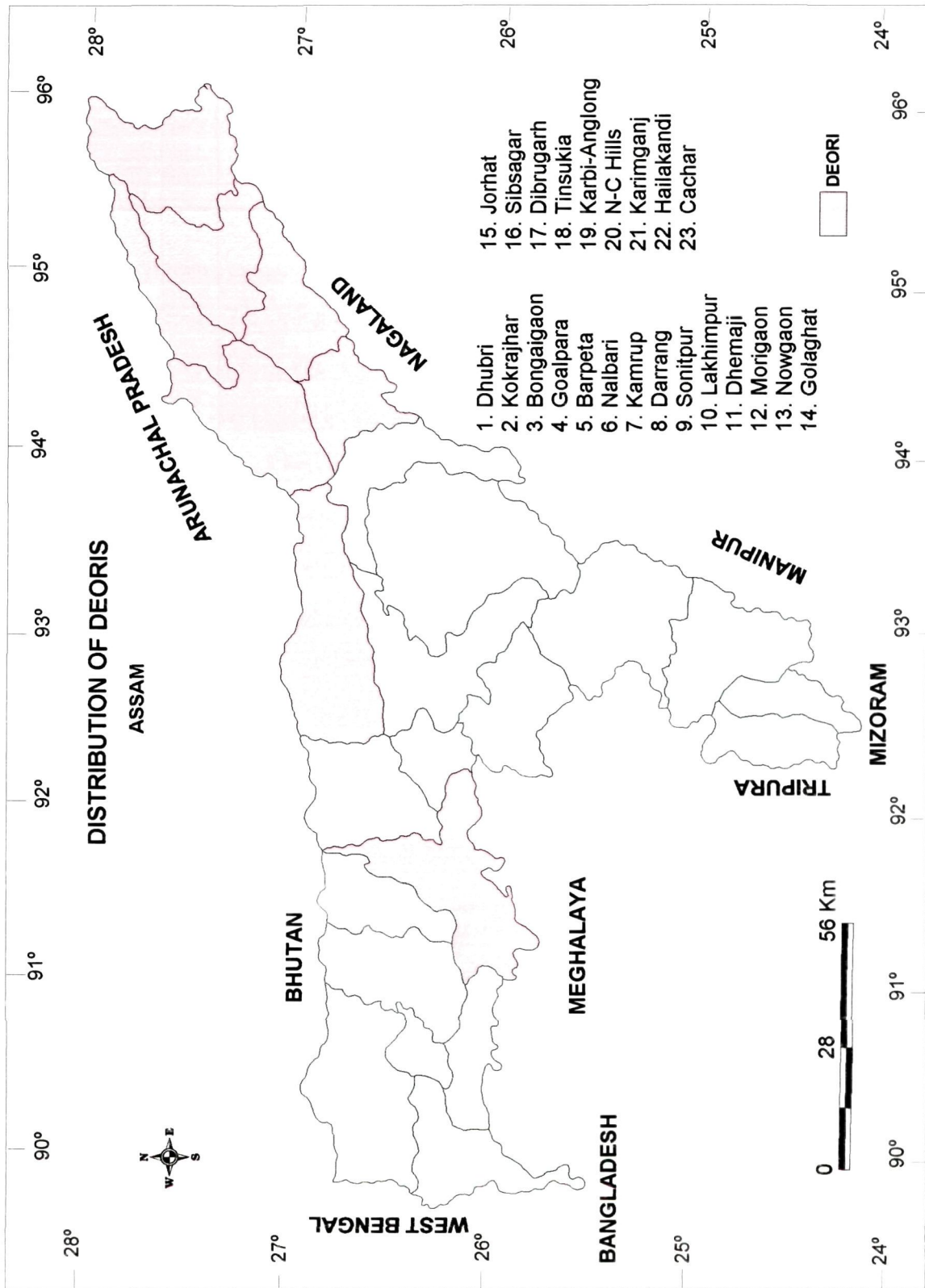
The Non-Scheduled population accounted for over 80 percent in most of the district of Assam except the two hill districts containing a majority of the Scheduled Tribe population. However, their proportion has been declining in nearly all districts except in the hill district of Karbi Anglong and North-Cachar Hills

It is interesting that the proportion of Non-Scheduled population in all has increased in a majority of the districts with the possible exception of those in which the proportion of Scheduled Tribe population shows an increase during the period between 1991 and 2001 (Appendix-IV). The spatial pattern of distribution of Non-Scheduled population however does not show much of change.

## 2.5 Spatial Distribution of *Deori* Population in Assam

The state of Assam occupies a unique position amidst complex geologic, physiographic and social make up of the north-eastern regions of India. *Deoris* are mostly found in the district of upper and middle Assam and in some pockets of Lohit and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh, near the Assam Arunachal Pradesh border. The concentrations of *Deori* villages are found in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, and Sonitpur districts of north bank and in Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Jorhat districts of south bank of the Brahmaputra Valley. Some villages are also found in Guwahati area of Kamrup district which may of recent migration from within Assam. In the table (Appendix-V) Total population, Scheduled Tribe population, *Deori* population, total non-Tribal population and Total non-*Deori* population is shown in the *Deori* distributed districts of Assam.

Table-2.13 shows that in the year 2001 Lakhimpur district alone has more than 60 percent of the *Deori* population to the total *Deori* population of the state. Sonitpur district also endowed with 14 percent of *Deori* population in the same decade. Other districts contributed a small number of populations to the total *Deori* population of the state as



Map No.-4

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

because they share insignificant percentage of population to the total population of the state.

## 2.6 Zones of Concentration of Deoris

Over and above discussions of the demographic scenario in Assam could be found out the districts where *Deoris* are highly, moderately and least concentrated.

**Table: 2.13 District wise Distribution of the Deori Population, 2001 Assam**

Sl. No.	Districts	Total population	ST population	Deori population	% of Deori population to total population of the district	% of Deori population to total ST population of the district	% of Deori population in the district to the total Deori population of the state
1	Lakhimpur	889,010	208,864	132,736	15	64	61
2	Dhemaji	571,944	270,496	12,463	2	5	6
3	Sonitpur	1,681,513	195,083	31,461	2	16	14
4	Jorhat	999,221	123,134	6,762	0.68	5	3
5	Dibrugarh	228,438	9,507	6,076	3	64	3
6	Sibsagar	1,051,736	41,533	13,300	1	32	6
7	Tinsukia	1,150,062	67,234	12,722	1	19	6
8	Kamrup	2,522,324	250,393	1543	0.06	0.62	0.71

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

The Total population, number of Scheduled Tribe population and number of *Deori* population of each of the districts are taken in to consideration. Then percentage of *Deori* population to total population of the district is calculated. The percentages of *Deori* population to Scheduled Tribe population of the district and to total *Deori* population of the state are also found out.

**Table: 2.14 Degree of Concentration of Deori Population**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Degree of concentration of Deori population in the districts</b>
1	Lakhimpur	47
2	Dhemaji	4
3	Sonitpur	11
4	Jorhat	3
5	Dibrugarh	23
6	Sibsagar	13
7	Tinsukia	9
8	Kamrup	0.46

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

With a view to find out the degree of concentration the average values of the three sets of data are calculated for each district and these values are shown in percentages. Subsequent to analyzing the *Deori* population in 2001, it is clearly point out that the degree of concentration of *Deori* population is highest in Lakhimpur (47%) following Dibrugarh (23%), Sibsaagar (13%), Sonitpur (11%) and other three districts namely Jorhat, Tinsukia and Kamrup and Dhemaji below 10 percent (Table-2.14). Kamrup district has the lowest degree of concentration only (0.46%), though four villages confined in the urban areas which consist a few population.

**Table: 2.15 Zones of Deori Concentration**

<b>Zones</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Range</b>
High Concentration	Lakhimpur	Above 40
Moderate Concentration	Dibrugarh	20- 40
Least Concentration	Dhemaji,Sibsagar, Tinsukia,Sonitpur, Jorhat & kamrup	Below 20

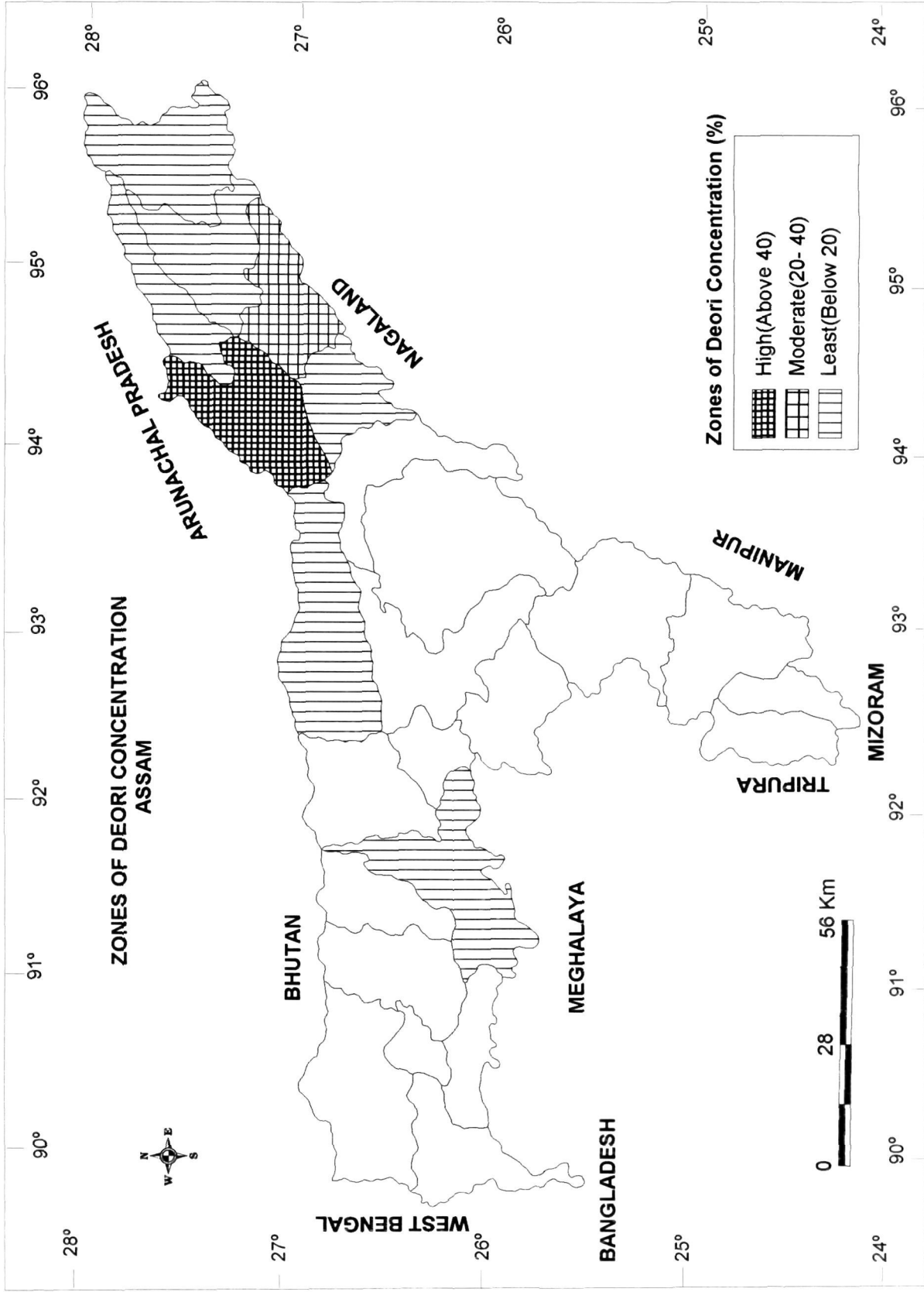
**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

After finding out the Concentration Indices the districts are categorized in to three concentration zones. Districts having degree of concentration above 40 percent are included in High Concentration Zone; those districts which have the values within 40 to 20 are included in Moderate Concentration Zone. The least concentration zone is characterized by the values below 20.

Table: 2.15 show that Lakhimpur District has the Highest Concentration of *Deoris* (Concentration Index 47) and Dibrugarh District has Moderate Concentration (Concentration Index 23). The other six districts are included in the Least Concentration Zone.

### **2.7 Concluding Statement:**

The study of spatial distribution of ethnic groups in Assam leads to the following generalization. As far the tribal population is concerned, this segment is highly concentrated in three major pockets in Assam: lower part of northern Brahmaputra valley mostly inhabited by the Bodo, Rabhas



Map No.-5

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

and Tiwa communities; in the south central parts considering of the two hill districts (North Cachar and Karbi Anglong) of Assam where the Karbis and Kacharis dominate and the third pocket is located in the north eastern corner (Dhemaji district) of Assam which too contain a sizeable proportion of the Mishing, Sonowal Kacharis and *Deoris* in the total Scheduled Tribe population.

On the other hand, the Non-Scheduled population is distributed all over the state though the extent of their dominance is inversely related to the areas of concentration of the Scheduled Tribes. The most interesting aspects of the ethnic composition of Assam relates to the fact that the Scheduled Tribe population is distributed both in hills as well as in plains. The *Deori* tribes are by and large confined the both bank of upper Brahmaputra valley.

At the state level pattern of population distribution, the share of the Scheduled Tribe population increased rapidly during the period 1971-91, but declines subsequently. The *Deori* population too increased its share in the total as well as in the Scheduled Tribe segment in the same period. The increase in the tribal population as also of the *Deoris* appears to be due to high natural increase in their population.

At the district level pattern of population growth, the *Deori* population shows extreme clustering in eight districts located in upper and lower Brahmaputra valley. These districts have experience rise in the proportion *Deori* population during 1971-91 decades.

The Scheduled Tribe population in sharp contrast remains vastly rural in their population composition and there is a little inter-district variation in this feature of population composition. As far as their redistribution across rural and urban areas is concerned, there is a very little evidence of it except in the hill district of North Cachar and Karbi-Anglong, where substantial erosion has taken place to the Scheduled Tribe population living in rural areas. Elsewhere, there is only a marginal fall in the rural component of Scheduled Tribe population.

The relative share of *Deori* population to the total Tribal population of the state is very nominal. In the year 1991 it shares only 4.6 percent and in 2001 it increases up to 12.42 percent respectively. The concentration of *Deori* population is highest in Lakhimpur district and minimum in Kamrup district because of distant factor as well as rural urban ethnic composition.

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**Chapter-III**

**Physical and  
Ecological Pattern of  
Distribution**

### Chapter-III

## PHYSICAL AND ECOLOGICAL PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION

### 3.1 Generalities

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to understand the physical and ecological pattern of distribution of *Deoris* while trying to understand the nature of their settlements. The present spatial distribution of *Deoris* in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam and in the Lohit and Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh is owing to the result of migration on or after their original settlements during the last century in a variety of causes. During 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries *foids* (Divisions) of *Deoris* were distributed in different districts of upper Assam. This phase shows migration of *Deoris* in different places in search of suitable land for livelihood. By analyzing the present distribution of the community in eight districts of Assam, it would be possible to identify the areas of concentration and clustering of the community. This has been achieved by analyzing the primary data of the community at village levels in the year 2007.

As mentioned earlier some specific causes like natural and socio-political are responsible for migration of the community. The present distributional pattern of the community is influenced by the existing physical and ecological factors of the areas.

### **3.2 Physiographical Settings of Assam**

Assam is situated in the North-Eastern part of India. It extends from  $24^{\circ}8'/N$  to  $27^{\circ}25'/N$  latitude and from  $89^{\circ}42'/E$  to  $96^{\circ}E$  longitude. It is bordered by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur in the east and south-east, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya in the south and south-west, Bangladesh in the west and south-west, and West Bengal in the west. It has a total geographical area of 78,438 sq km and a population of 26.6 million (2001). The arithmetic density of population stands at 340 per sq km. The state comprises twenty-eight administrative districts (2005), out of which two lie in the hilly area.

On the basis of physiographic characteristics Assam may be divided into three physical divisions, viz (i) Brahmaputra valley, (ii) Barak valley and (iii) the hilly region consisting of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills.

#### **3.2.1 Brahmaputra Valley**

The Brahmaputra valley is about 725 km long and 80 Km wide on the average and it covers an area of 56,339 sq Km, representing 72 percent of the total geographical area of the state (Das, 1984). The plain consists of both new and old alluvium deposited by the river Brahmaputra and its numerous tributaries. The valley as a whole has an extremely gentle east-west slope of 12.5 cm per Km. Na-Sadiya, near the head of the valley has an elevation of 134m above mean sea level and at the lower most part of the valley, the elevation is 36m near Dhubri.

### **3.2.2 Barak Valley**

The Barak valley is a product of erosion and depositional activities of the river Barak and its tributaries. It has an average east-west length of about 100 km and a north-south width of about 70km. the total area of it is 6,962 sq km according for about 9 percent of the geographical area of Assam.

### **3.2.3 The Hills**

The region comprising the Karbi Hills and North-Cachar Hills covers an area of 15,222 sq km, which is 19 percent of the total geographical area of Assam. Geologically, Karbi Hills are projected eastern part of the Meghalaya Plateau. Age-old erosion has highly denuded the Karbi Hills and it is detached from the main plateau by the active head-ward erosion of the Kapili and Dhansiri rivers.

## **3.3 Demographic Characteristics**

According to the census of 2001, the population of the state is 26.6 million, with an arithmetic density of 340 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. In general, the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys have high density of population. The most densely populated districts of the state are Nagaon (604 persons/ km<sup>2</sup>), Dhubri (584 persons/ km<sup>2</sup>), Kamrup (579 persons/ km<sup>2</sup>) and Karimganj (555 persons / km<sup>2</sup>). On the contrary the hill districts of North Cachar and Karbi Anglong have a density of 38 and 78 persons per sq km respectively.

### **3.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.4.1 The Assamese Society**

Assam is a zone of fusion of both racially and culturally diverse groups of people. The present population of Assam has four basic racial traits: the Proto-Australoid, Mangoloid, Aryo-Mangoloid and Aryo-Mangolo-Dravidian (Taher, 1988). Ethno-Linguistically the entire population can be divided into three major groups, viz. Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Chinese and Indo-European.

The earliest inhabitants of Assam were the Austro-Asiatic group of people. Traces of their racial and cultural traits are found among the Mon-Khmer language speaking Khasis, some of who live in Karbi-Anglong and North-Cachar Hills districts. They were followed by the people speaking Tibeto-Burman languages, now represented, especially by the *Bodo*, *Karbi*, *Tiwa*, *Mishing*, *Deori* and Naga groups of people who are distributed all over the plains and hills of Assam.

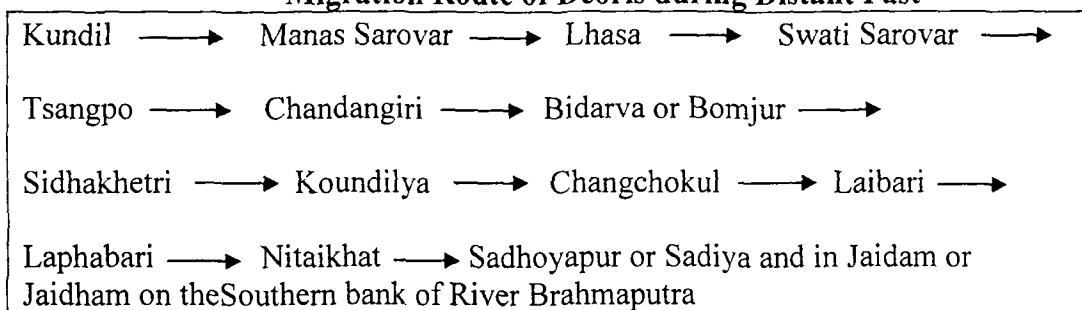
Assamese society is quite distinct from any other societies of India. Diverse racial and cultural elements have mingled in such a way that the present society has taken a composite character. The *Neo-Vaishnavism*, which was initiated and popularized by the saints, 'Sankardev' and 'Madhabdev' in the late fifteenth century created an atmosphere of tolerance and liberalism among the racially and culturally diverse population groups of the state (Baruah, 1991).

### 3.4.2 Migration of Deoris during Distant Past

It has been stated in the available documents that the *Deoris* are ethnically affiliated to the great Tibeto –Burman tribes of North East India (Bordoloi, 1987). They conducted Magico-Religious rituals in the royal temples of the Chutiya Kingdom and of other kingdoms in olden days.

*Deoris* were the inhabitant of Kundil or Sadiya kingdom. They were the royal priests of king ‘Bhismaka’ (Deori, 2002). Before ending of the regime of king ‘Bhismaka’ in ‘Kundil’ or ‘Bidarva’ kingdom, devastating natural calamities took place. All the members and relatives of his family and clan gathered together and started migrating towards Himalayas. First they reached ‘Manas Saruvar’ and they lived there for several years. Again they migrated on the hills towards Tibet and they reached Lhasa. After inhabiting many years in Lhasa they again migrated and reached ‘Swati Saruvar’ where they spend several years on the bank of it (Deori, 1964). In such way they have migrated and lived in different places in the ancient times. The descendants are again migrated back to their own land following the same direction and latterly they settled in Sadiya and in Jaidam.

#### Migration Route of Deoris during Distant Past



### **3.5 Brief Account of Sadiya**

Sadiya is the easternmost subdivision of Assam in Tinsukia district. It is bordered by parts of Dibang valley and Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh to the north and west respectively, and the west of Sadiya lays the Lohit district. River Lohit created the southern boundary of Sadiya. Siang, Dibang and Lohit River meet up at the south-western corner of Sadiya forming the mighty Brahmaputra to the downstream.

From the time immemorial Sadiya flourishes glorious history of ancient period. This region was a part of 'Saumar Pith' of ancient 'Kamrupa' and was known as 'Bidarva Kingdom' (latterly Sadiya). In the time of 'Mahabharata' king 'Bhismaka' ruled over Sadiya. 'Kundil Nagar', the capital of Bidarva kingdom was situated on the bank of Kundilpani River. Chutiyas and Ahoms also ruled in Sadiya in different periods (Deori, 1994). *Deoris* were the priests of Tamreswari, Baliababa, Gira-Girachi and Patorshal temples of Sadiya during the tenet of Chutiyas and Ahoms. The distressing earthquake of 1950s worst affected the human establishments in Sadiya. Most of the historical monuments were ruined and many people go away to different locations in search of new settlements.

### **3.6 Origin of the Foids or Khels among Deoris**

There are four broad *khels* or *foids* (clans) amongst the *Deoris*. These divisions are- (1) Dibongiya, (2) Tengaponiya (3) Borgoyan and (4) Patorgoyan. The division is termed as '*foid*' or '*khel*' (clans) by the *Deoris*. Each of the

division is originated from a particular river or place's name (Dutta, 2005). Dibongiya, one of the four *khels* (clans) of the *Deoris* settled on the bank of river Dibang that flows from the Dibang valley district of Arunachal Pradesh near Sadiya. Tengaponiya occupied on the banks of river Tengapani. Borgoyan settled on the plains of Borpani River which was flowing through the southern boundary of Sadiya. Patorgoyan settled on the foothills i.e. Pat-Sadiya. It is said that people of Patorgoyans are now present in Myanmar and among the Tiwa community of Morigaon district of Assam.

### **3.6.1 The Dibongiayas**

The Dibongiayas may be regarded as the major division of the *Deoris*. They are also known as 'Jimocharu', which has been probably derived from the word 'Jimochanya' (*Jimo-chan-ya*) or vice-versa (Saikia, 1971). The Dibongiayas seem to have preserved the traditional socio-ritual organization. The clans of the Dibongiayas are—(i) Sundario, (ii) Patriyo, (iii) Airiyo, (iv) Chario, (v) Chitigayo, (vi) Kumotayo, (vii) Chukrangyo, (viii) Dupiyayo, (ix) Murangyo, (x) Teliyayo, (xi) Lagachuyo, and (xii) Kalia-Chakuyo.

### **3.6.2 The Tengaponiyas**

The Tengapaniya division is sub-divided into seven clans, viz., (i) Machiotika, (ii) Bikarmiyatika, (iii) Kutiyatika, (iv) Chakucharutika (v) Pagimegeratika, (vi) Papartiatika, and (vii) Chenaboriatika.

### **3.6.3 The Borgoyans**

The Borgoyan division of the *Deoris* is also known as 'Midiya'. There are few clans of this division. The major clans of this division are—(i) Ikucharu, (ii) Chimucharu, (iii) Hizaru, (iv) Busaru, (v) Luparu and (vi) Gosaru.

### **3.6.4 The Patorgoyans**

At present, the Patorgoyan division cannot be traced out anywhere. It is presumed that they might have amalgamated with the people of the Dibongiya and Borgoyan divisions of the *Deoris* in course of time. Some thinkers contend that the people of the Patorgoyan division might have amalgamated with the Lalungs (Tiwas) and Jaintias.

## **3.7 Causes of Migration from Sadiya**

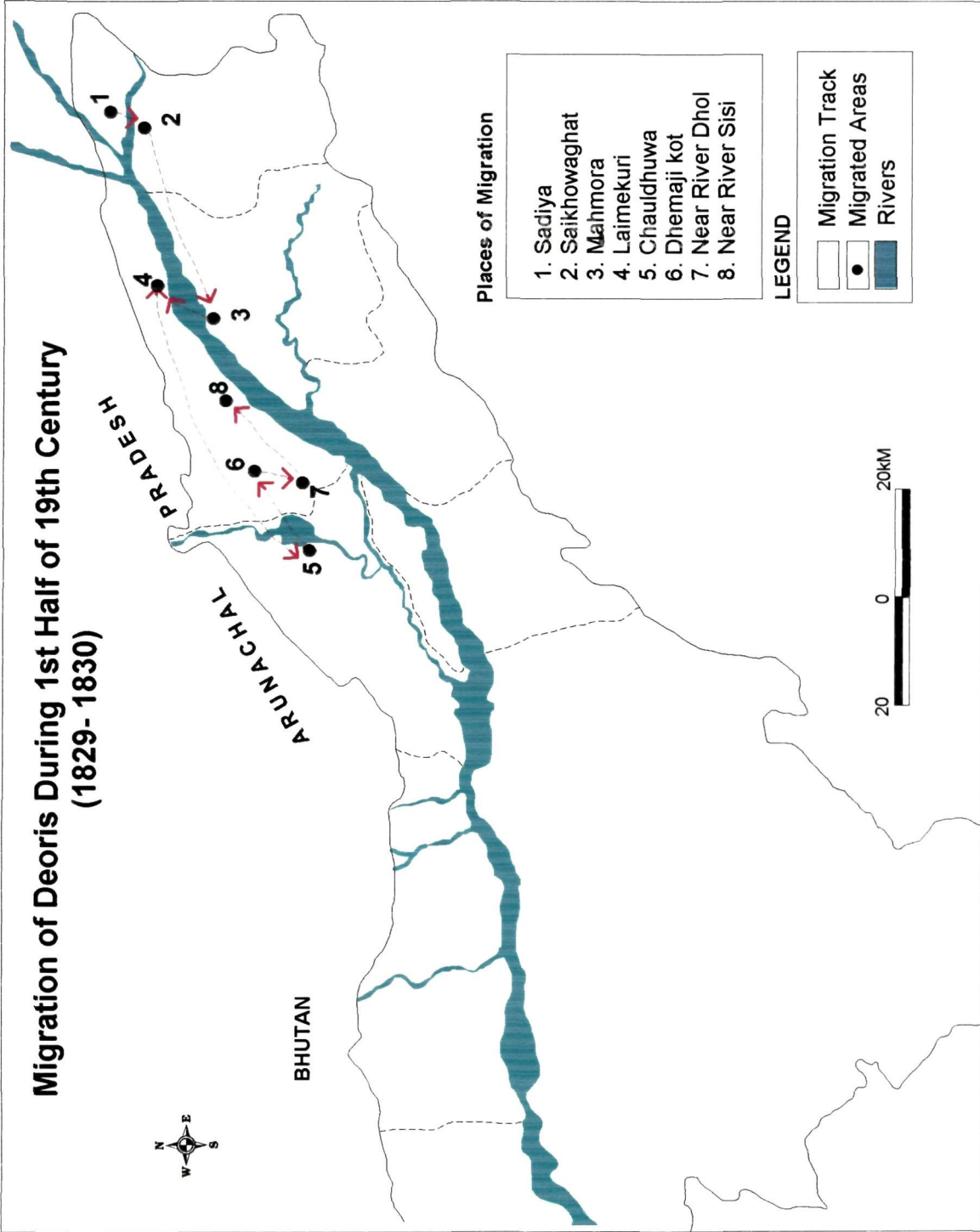
In the history of migration of the world, it has been observed that different reasons for which ethnic groups had to leave their settlements and search for another suitable area for better livelihood. Environmental and cultural factors play an important role in such kind mobility. The *Deoris* also migrated to different areas of Brahmaputra valley from Sadiya during 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century due to some specific causes. The major causes of migration pointed below-

It is mentioned that *Deoris* lived in and around Sadiya since the sixth century. They performed priestly functionaries in 'Chutias', 'Ahoms' and 'Kachari' kingdoms. They served as priests in the 'Tamreswari' or 'Kechaikhati'

(Goddesses Kali), 'Kundi-Mama' (Lakshmi-Narayan), 'Baliababa' (God Siva) and 'Pator Shaal' temples in Sadiya. During the Ahom kingdom, *Deori* priests were offered 'Devottar' and 'Brahmottar' lands from Sadiyakhowa Gohain and they lived peacefully with their amenities till the end of Ahom kingdom. Sadiya was affected by Moran and Matak uprising during the period and most of the people fled from Sadiya to different locations in Brahmaputra valley.

During the first part of seventeenth century the Mishimis attacked Sadiya. Besides this, influx of hill tribes from Arunachal Pradesh arise problem for shelter and settlements in large part of erstwhile *Deori* dominant areas. Towards the end of Ahom kingdom during 1794, the Khamtis captured Sadiya after assassinating Sadiyakhowa Gohain. A few years later, Maans (invaders from erstwhile Burma) started attacking Assam. They attacked Assam in 1817, 1819 and 1821 respectively in three times and created violence among the people. Consequent epidemic and diseases brought never-ending measures to the people. They ruled Assam since 1823 and in 1826, the 'Treaty of Iyandabu' transferred administration of Assam to the hands of the British. During these socio-political crisis and disturbance, *Deoris* had to leave their permanent settlements of Sadiya like others. They migrated to the south towards the plains of Brahmaputra valley (Gazetteers of Assam, Undivided Lakhimpur District, 1976, pp. 136-137; Goswami-1994).

# Migration of Deoris During 1st Half of 19th Century (1829- 1830)



### Places of Migration

1. Sadiya
2. Saikhowaghat
3. Mahmora
4. Laimekuri
5. Chauldhuwa
6. Dhemaji kot
7. Near River Dhol
8. Near River Sisi

### LEGEND

- Migration Track
- Migrated Areas
- Rivers

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-6

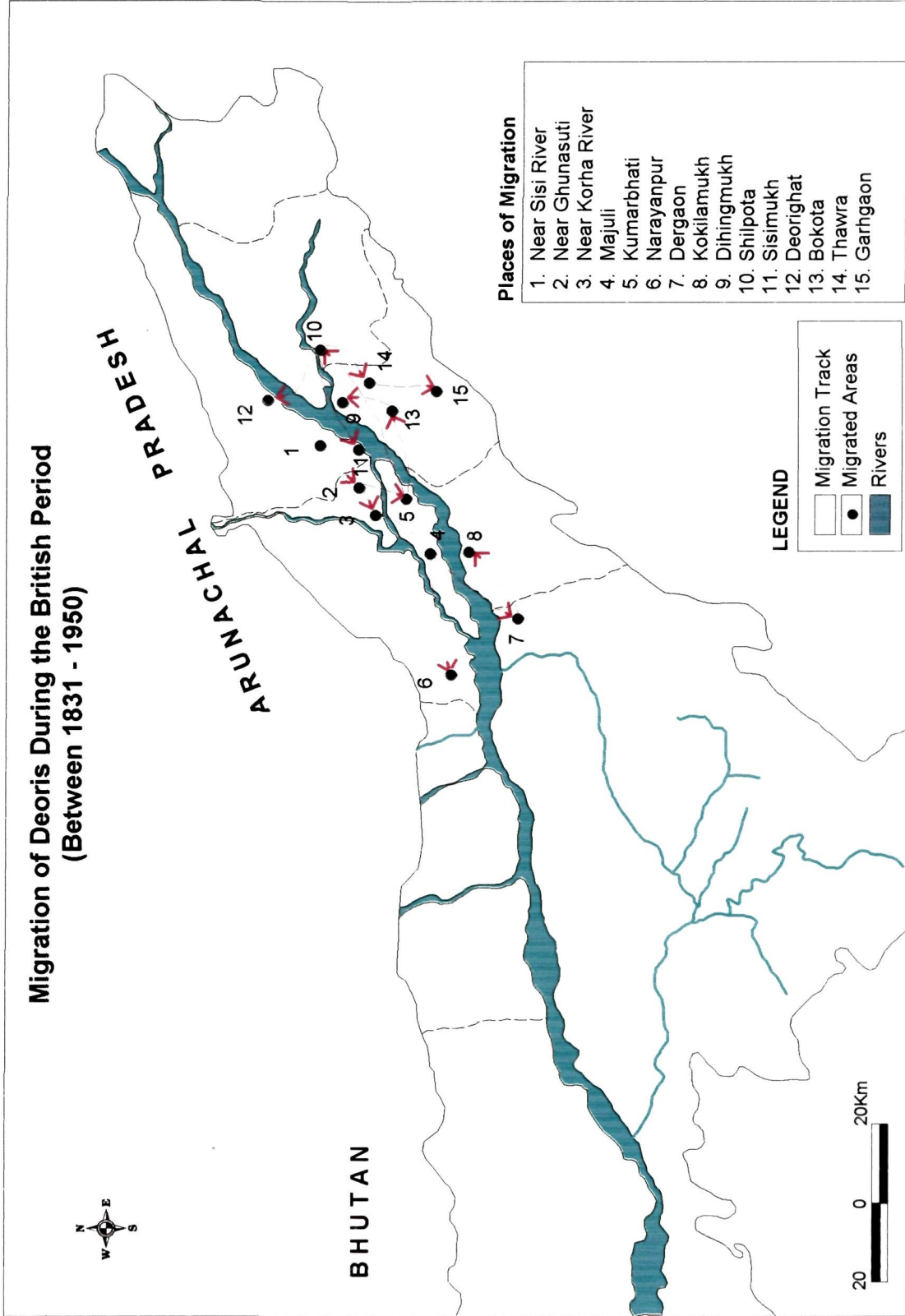
### 3.7.1 Migration during British Period

The four *foids* (Divisions) of *Deoris* took four boats on the river Brahmaputra and sailed downward without knowing anything about their destination. Dibongiyas reached swampy areas of river Dihang from the bank of river Dibang than after crossing the Luit (Brahmaputra) they reached Rangdai Chapori and lived there. Borgoyans came to the banks of Kundilpani River than Jianmari near Gharmora River and then moving towards south they reached the Dibongiyas. The Tengaponiyas after approaching from the banks of river Tengapani reached Tinimuni Phant and after sailing downward they reached with the other two *foids*(clan) of *Deoris*. In such manner members of male, female and children of the three *foids* again assembled together at the southern bank of Brahmaputra. At this place they had to subsist in camps on the sands of the Luit (Brahmaputra River) making ‘*Chois*’ (Shade) of the boats. These places experienced large gathering of people imminent from hills and plains who came to say good bye to each other. All the people became cheerless in apprehension of breaking the age long relationship among them. They have determined to continue the worshipping in the ‘*Dewalayas*’ (Temples) with a view to alive the relationship between plains and hills. The place is known as ‘Saikhowa’ (in the bank of mighty Brahmaputra, Tinsukia district), because the people lived and cooked food under the shade of the *Chois*. Today the place is called ‘Saikhowa Ghat’.

Some families of Borgoyan *foid* came and stayed in Sonari at the banks of Dhol River in Saikhowa Ghat after ascertain *Deughar* (Temple). All of them went downward of the river and stayed for a number of months at Rangdai. Again they sailed and settled in Mahmora, Laimekuri, Tarajan, and Nagaghuli respectively. Then their boats reached Chauldhuwa. After spending a few days they crossed the river Brahmaputra and reached the northern bank. They again started migrating in different places and reached Chengajan, Dhemaikot, Bank of river Dhol, Dhunaguri Chapori, Nalanipam, bank of river Sisi and Bangalmari respectively and settled there.

Dibongiyas went to the banks of Ghunasuti on or after the bank of river Sisi; Tengaponiyas went to the bank of Korha River in Benganagorha and the Bargoyans went to the banks of river Kaithang to the east of Benganagorha. They stayed there for some years and many of them had faced problems for livelihood in that places. Later, all of the three *foids* settled in Majuli. Dibongiyas settled on the bank of Borpukhuri, Tengaponiya on the banks of Morisukan Suti and the Borgoyan settled in the vicinity of the pond of Borganga. Due to increase of the family numbers, some families of Dibongiya went to Borbill, some others to Kumar Bheti and some others went and lived on the bank of Galphula River. A number of other families of Dibongiyas went to Dikrang of Narayanpur and some others to Dergaon. The families from Dergaon later on settled in Kokilamukh. The families of both Dibongiyas and Tengaponiyas came and lived in Bhagh Chung in southern bank of river Brahmaputra. A few families of Dibongiyas

# Migration of Deoris During the British Period (Between 1831 - 1950)



Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-7

came to Shilpota at the border area of Ahom and Matak Kingdom in upper Assam. After migrating and staying in so many places till they could not find suitable land for permanent settlement. They again went to Sisimukh. Borgoyans went to Deoriting from Bhaghchung. Many families of them went to Bokota. Later all of them lived in Dihingmukh. Again a number of families from Dihingmukh after crossing the river Brahmaputra settled in Deorighat. This place was frequently affected by flood. So they left that place and again went back to Dihingmukh. A small numbers of families of Tengaponiyas went to Tipachi Ting from Bhaghchung, and some others went to Athabari of Thaura area. A little number of families came to Rangna or Rauna gaon to the south east of Garhgaon from Athabari. Again all of them came back and inhabited in Dihingmukh. A small number of families from Dihingmukh went to Ghelgheli and Kolowlua (Dibrugarh District).

The Borgoyans and Tengaponiyas both spoke their *Deori* language till they lived in Dihingmukh. The Dibongiyas seem to have preserved the traditional socio-ritual organization. The Borgoyan and the Tengopaniya groups have altogether given up their traditional dialect in favour of Assamese (Deori, 1964).

### **3.7.2 Migration after Great Earthquake**

There was another stream of migration of *Deoris* in the last century, which was caused due to the devastating Earthquake in 1950s. The consequent flood and bank erosion in every year made life of the community severely miserable and it

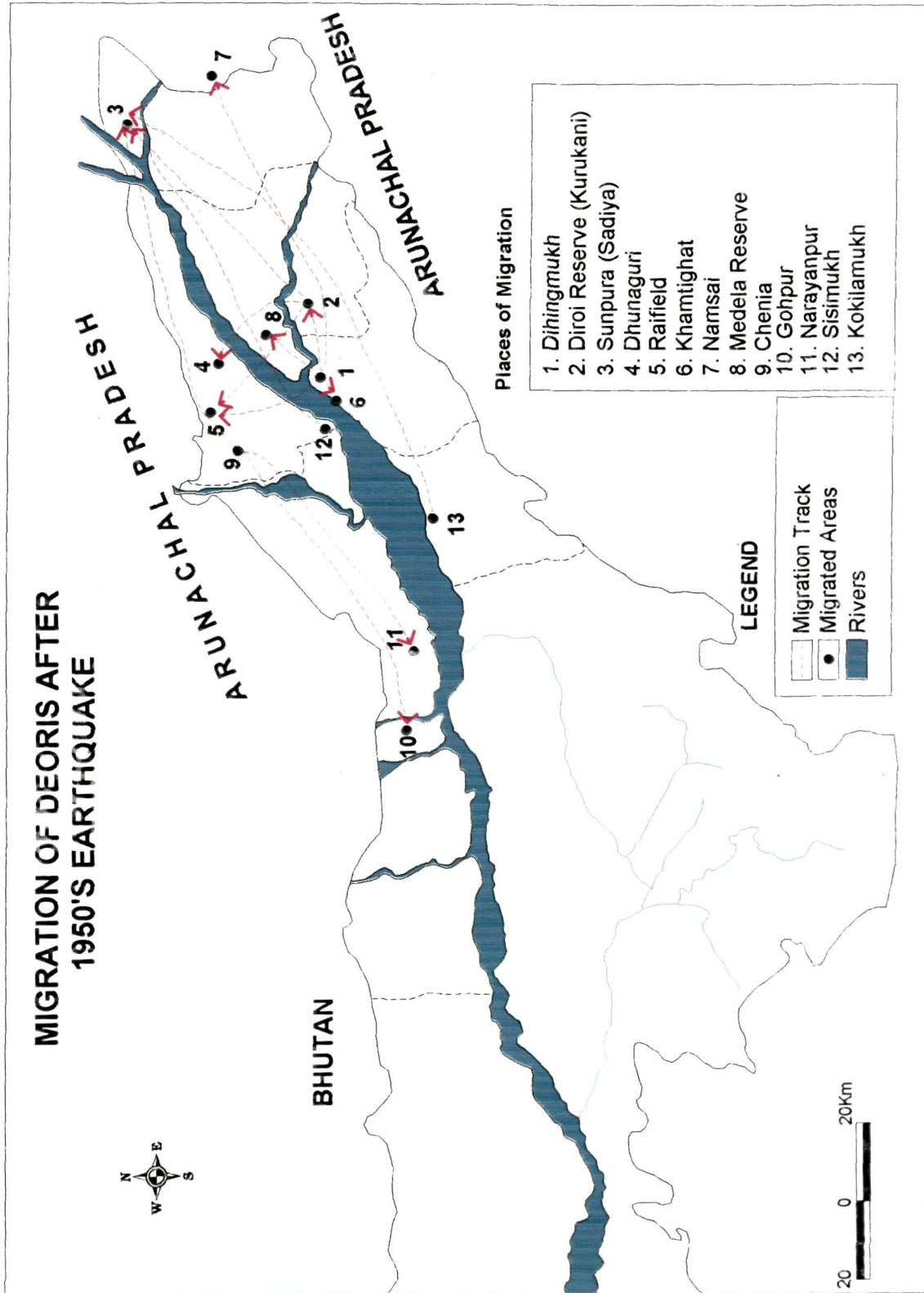
changed their ways of life. Not a single *Deori* village was left untouched by these natural calamities.

The big villages of Borgaon, Tengapani, and Ghelgheli of Dihingmukh region were completely eroded away by the bank erosion of river Brahmaputra. The *Deoris* had to move around again in search of cultivable land. Most of the people of Borgoyan Deorigaon migrated to Kurukani of *Deori* reserve. Some families of them went to Sunpura of Sadiya and a little other went to Dhunaguri, Akajan and Raipather of Dhemaji district. About half of the villagers of Tengapani village stayed behind in Panidihing.

A few of them went to Khamti Ghat, Namsai and Rai Pathar. Most of the people of Ghelgheli village settled in Medela reserve and in Panidihing. Some families from the villages went and stayed in Raipather and Namsai. A few families of Kolowlua of Khowang went back to Namsai and Raipathar. A large portion of people of Chenia migrated to Gohpur of Sonitpur and a small portion went to Phulguri of Narayanpur. Some families of Borbam, Sisimukh, Upar and Namdeori village of Kokilamukh migrated to Torani of Sadiya.

In such ways *Deoris* were migrating here and there in search of suitable livelihood till the 70<sup>s</sup> of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pattern of present distribution of *Deoris* in the eight districts namely Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sonitpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat and kamrup of Assam is the outcome of such migration.

# MIGRATION OF DEORIS AFTER 1950'S EARTHQUAKE



Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-8

### **3.8 Physical and Ecological Pattern of Distribution of Deoris**

Man and its culture is the artifact of the prevailing Physio-social environment. The varying environment influences the distributional pattern of ethnic groups in times. In north-east India there is a fairly sizable tribal population with diversified socio-cultural traits in spatial locations. It is already discussed the causes of migration of *Deoris*. Their pattern of distribution is influenced by a number of causes. Here attempt has been made to represent the physical and ecological pattern of distribution of *Deori* community.

A comparative analysis is done of Total, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, *Deori*, Non-Tribal and Non-*Deori* population in selected revenue circles in the eight districts where *Deoris* are confined to a large extent (Appendix-V (a)

Percentage of *Deori* population to total population of the revenue circle is highest in Helem (18%) in Sonitpur district followed by Kadam (16%) in Lakhimpur district. The lowest percentage to total population is found in Guwahati (0.03%) and Dhemaji revenue circle (0.03%) correspondingly.

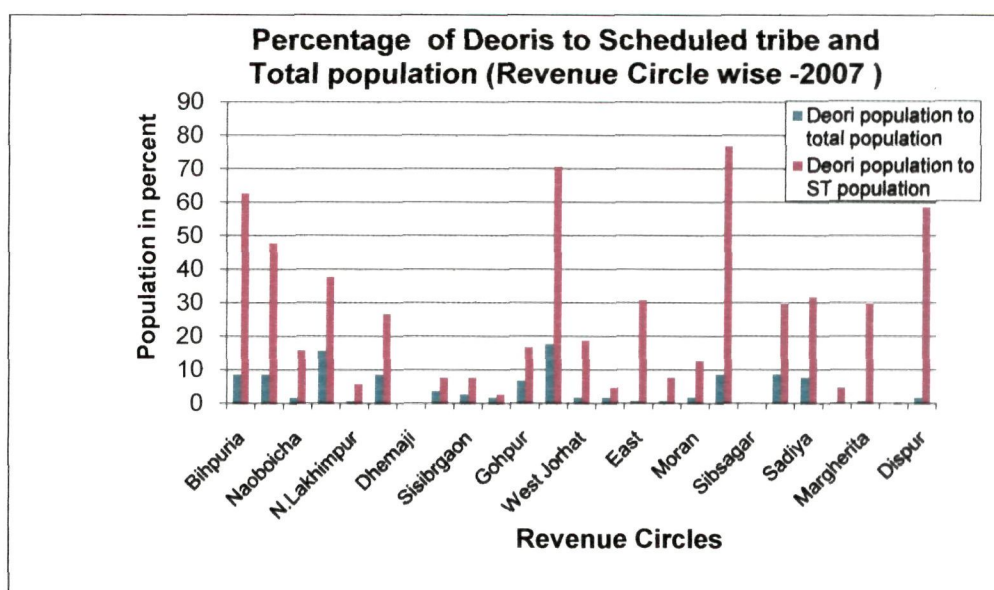


Figure: 3.1

Demow revenue circle is concentrated with the highest proportion of *Deori* population i.e. 77 percent to total Scheduled Tribe population followed by Helem circle with 71 percent. Bihpuria revenue circle (63%) has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest share of *Deoris* to Scheduled Tribe population of the state. Lowest percentage is found in Dhemaji town committee 0.09 percent and Guwahati town committee (0.03).

### 3.9 Distribution of Deori Villages in North Bank

North bank plain of river Brahmaputra is part of physiographic unit of Assam. Arunachal Himalaya borders the three *Deori* distributed districts, namely Sonitpur, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. Most of the *Deori* villages were shifted from the south bank of river Brahmaputra in search of fertile level land for livelihood.

### 3.9.1 Deori Villages in Sonitpur District

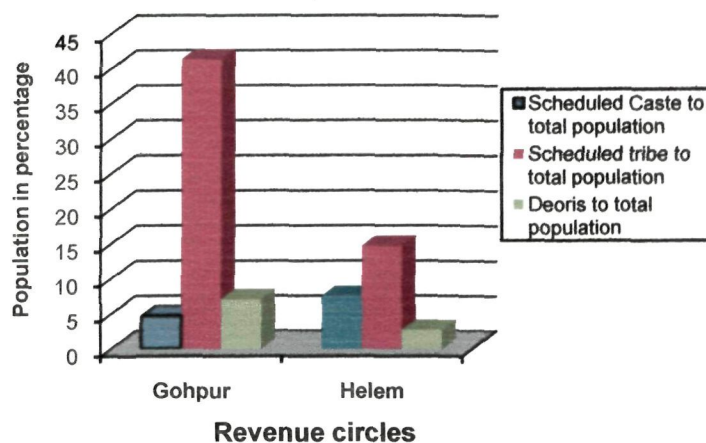
*Deoris* are inhabited in Gohpur Reserve Forest of Sonitpur district. They migrated from Chenia of Dhemaji district after 1950s. Frequent flood and riverbank erosion in the earlier settlements led them to search of cultivable areas for livelihood. After migrated from Chenia they preferred the forest areas of Gohpur for habitat. Magoni and Sulengi are two small tributaries flowing in north south direction created patches of fertile land. River Khoroi, Balijan are the small tributaries which contribute to the ecological settings of the *Deori* settlements. There are twelve *Deori* villages (*Dibongiya foid*) and three-forest villages located in Gohpur area, they use *Deori* language among them, and while communicating to other communities they speak in Assamese.

**Table: 3.1 Distribution of Population in Revenue Circles of Sonitpur District (in %)**

District	Revenue Circle	SC to total population	S T to total population	Non-scheduled to total population	Deori to total population
Sonitpur	Gohpur	4.64	41.37	53.99	7.11
	Helem	7.54	14.73	77.73	2.72

Source: Department of Plains Tribe and Backward Classes, Assam-2007

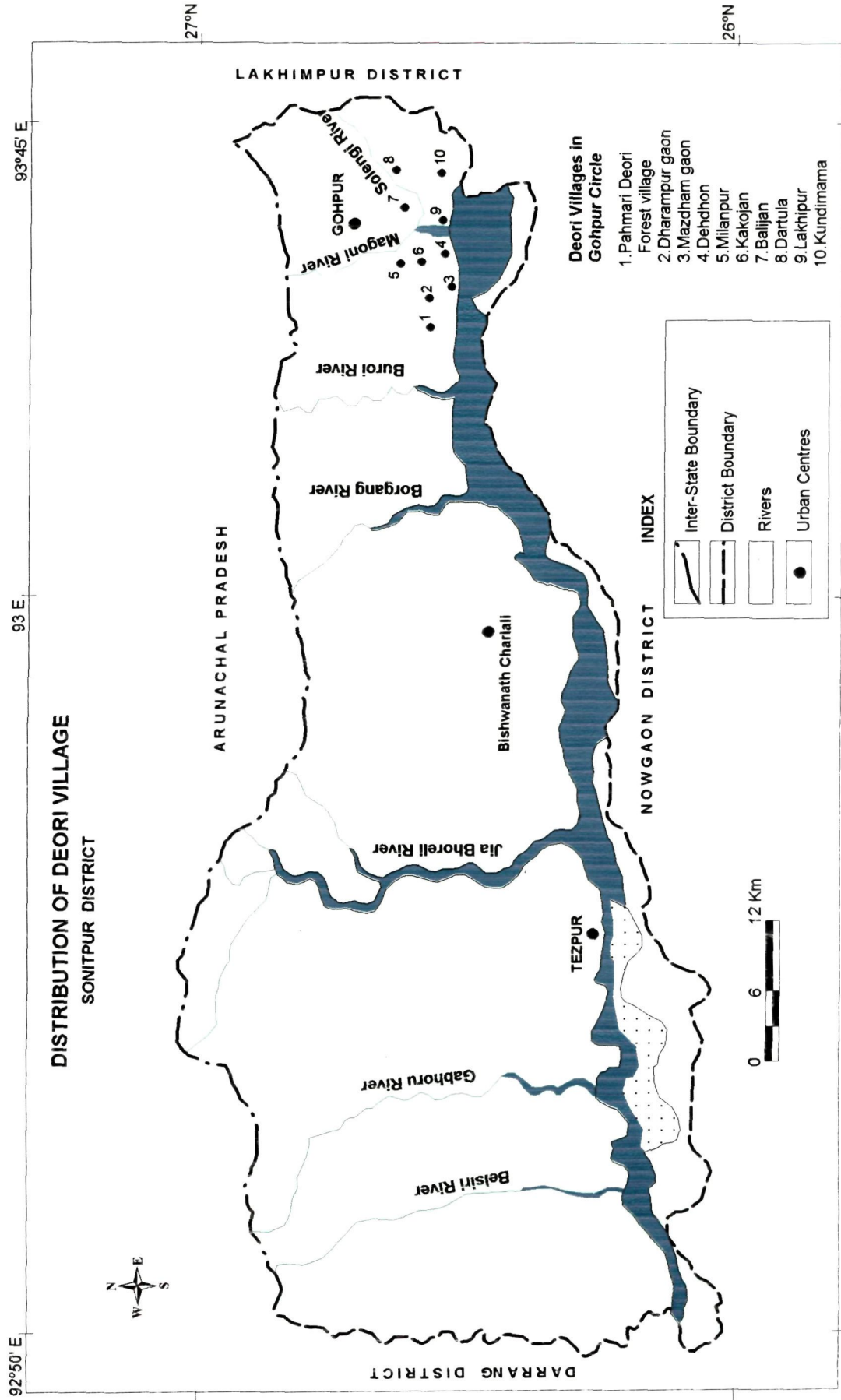
**Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Sonitpur District**



**Figure: 3.2**

The existing environs created by the topography influence the ecological adaptation of the community. Beside Deoris, settlements of Mishing, Bodo, tea garden labours, Nepali and non-scheduled communities are found in both the revenue circles. A congenial social relationship is developed among these communities in the area. They indeed retained their age-old tradition though amalgamated with other community.

The percentage of *Deori* population to total population in Gohpur Revenue Circle is 7.11 where population consists 14.73 percent. In Helem Revenue Circle percentage of scheduled tribe is 14.73 and percentage of *Deori* population is 2.73.



Map No.-9

Source: Prepared by Researcher based on Field data

**Table: 3.2 List of Deori Villages in Gohpur Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Total Deori Population	% of Deori population to Total Deori population the of District
Sonitpur	Pahumari –Deori Gaon	3876	12.98
	Do (2)	3123	10.46
	Do (3)	2215	7.42
	Dharampur – Gaon	3480	11.66
	Mazdham –Gaon	2620	8.78
	Drhdhon	2051	6.87
	2 No.- Milanpur	2190	7.34
	Kakojan	1950	6.53
	Balijan	2675	8.96
	Dartula	2361	7.91
	Lakhipur	1921	6.43
	Kundimama	1393	4.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29,855</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Among the villages in Sonitpur district highest percentage of *Deori* population is concentrated in Pahumari Deori gaon. It contains 12.98 percent of total *Deori* population of the district.

### 3.9.2 Deori Villages in Lakhimpur District

The first settlement in Lakhimpur district was found in Chauldhuwa on the bank river Subansiri. During the British period *Deoris* settled on the banks of river Korha, and Kaithong. At present *Deori* villages are distributed near the rivers Dikrong, Ranganodi, Subansiri, Korha-noi, Luit-suti etc. Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers.

Lakhimpur district has the highest concentration of *Deori* population (61% to total *Deori* population of the State) as compared to the other districts. *Deori* villages are found in Laluk, Narayanpur, Bihpuria and North Kherajkhat Mouza. Narayanpur revenue circle has the highest percentage of *Deori* population (12

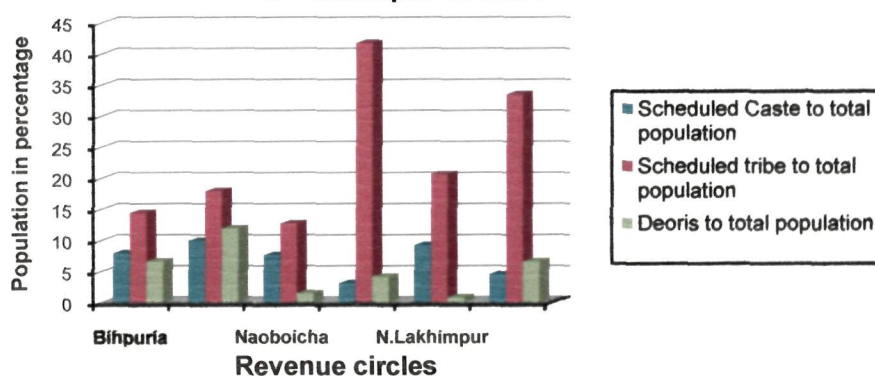
percent to total population of the Revenue Circle) and North Lakhimpur Revenue Circle has least concentration (0.91percent).

**Table: 3.3 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Lakhimpur District (in %)**

District	Rev. Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-Scheduled To total population	Deoris to total population
Lakhimpur	Bihpuria	8	14.52	77.48	6.7
	Naraynpur	10.03	18.01	71.96	12
	Naoboicha	7.72	12.8	79.48	1.58
	Kadam	3.17	41.82	55.01	4.22
	N.Lakhimpur	9.29	20.73	69.98	0.91
	Subansiri	4.6	33.59	61.81	6.67

**Source:** Department of Plains Tribe and Backward Classes, Assam-2007

**Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Lakhimpur District**



**Figure: 3.3**

So far data obtained from the field, it is observed that the majority of *Deori* population concentrated in North Kherajkhat and Narayanpur Mouza of the district. Laluk Mouza contains 19 *Deori* villages, 20 villages in Bihpuria, 25 in Naraynpur Mouza and in North Kherajkhat mouza, there are 33 *Deori* villages. Though the *Deori* villages are distributed in the adjacent Mouzas, North-

Kherajkhat Mouza alone is dominated by highest concentration of *Deori* population. About 95 percent of *Deori* villages of the district belong to Dibongiya *foid*. The following table shows the village wise *Deori* populations of the four Mouzas in Lakhimpur district.

**Table: 3.4 List of Deori Villages in Laluk Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Total Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Lakhimpur	Tunijan	181	0.33
	Krishnapur Deori Atigu	575	1.04
	Adhakhuna Deori Atigu	750	1.36
	1.Lakhi Deori Atigu		1.70
	2.Likhok Chapori Deori	936	
	3.Milaising Igaba Atigu		
	Bangalmora Deori Gaon	2319	4.21
	Nahargur Gaon	612	1.30
	Bangalmara Geazing	462	0.84
	Bangalmara Thengal	682	1.24
	Bandarchuk Igaba Atigu	480	0.87
	Harmoty Gaon	154	0.28
	Harmoty Deori Atigu	980	1.78
	Rangajan Deori Atigu	287	0.52
	F.C. Grant Rangdoi	455	0.83
	1 no. Bahgora	445	0.99
	Gabhoru Tunijan	240	0.44
1 no. Tunijan	305	0.55	
Parbatipur N0.1	350	0.64	
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,213</b>	<b>18.55</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

In Laluk Mouza most of the villages are of Dibongiya *foid* and speak *Deori* languages. They share 18.55 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district (Table-3.4). Their main occupation is agriculture, mainly rice cultivator. *Deoris* were settled in Bihpuria Mouza before 1950s. Number of family settled in Phulguri (migrated from Chenia) in Narayanpur is increased gradually and at present different villages are developed in and around the area.

**Table: 3.5 List of Deori Villages in Bihpuria Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Deori population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Lakhimpur	Padumoni	787	1.43
	Kundilpur	849	1.54
	Panigaon	292	0.53
	Merua	142	0.25
	Jamduar	40	0.07
	Jaidham	599	1.08
	Bahgora	600	1.08
	Uriampara	157	0.28
	Kachikata Deori Gaon	947	1.72
	Kachikata Bazar Atigu	486	0.88
	Jimachaya Atigu	825	1.49
	Naharani Atigu	636	1.15
	Suntapur	222	0.40
	Pach Ali Jimachaya Atig	475	0.86
	Kandali urga Atigu	439	0.79
	Chinatali	275	0.49
	Laholial	180	0.32
Purani Bahgora	600	1.09	
Moraci Thengal	510	0.92	
<b>Total</b>		<b>9061</b>	<b>16.37</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Bihpura Mouza shares 16.37 percent of *Deori* population i.e. (9,061 persons) to total *Deori* population of the district. All the villages belong to Dibongia *foid* and people use of their own dialect. They are generally cultivator and inhabited in the fertile bank of River Dikrong and Singara. Many of the villages are found along the bank of Brahmaputra River and close to the forested areas.

**Table: 3.6 List of Deori Villages in Narayanpur Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Lakhimpur	Bordeuri Gaon	1270	2.30
	Bordeuri Atigu	1608	2.92
	Major Deori	1079	1.96
	Gai Atigu	1928	3.50
	Dakhin Deori Atigu	942	1.71
	Sadial Deori Gaon	1125	2.04
	Gatakpur Jimachaya Atigu	1804	3.27
	Swarnapuri Deori gaon	701	1.27
	Bordoloni Deori Gaon	1734	3.15
	Utani Deori Atigu,	1515	2.75
	Madhya pather Deori Gaon	1825	3.31
	Gauri nagar Deori Gaon	466	0.84
	Gawachi 1	257	0.46
	Gawachi 2	168	0.30
	Tenga pather Deori Gaon	216	0.39
	Udeshyapur Deori Gaon	241	0.43
	Tengapather-Kushapur Deori Gaon	220	0.39
	Sonarbari Block DeoriGaon	232	0.42
	Sonar bari Atigu	145	0.26
	Sonarbari Igaba Atigu	322	0.58
	Holaguri Deori Gaon	271	0.49
	Dhanguloi Atigu	551	1.00
	Kundil Atigu	422	2.85
	Jamachaya Deori Atigu	285	6.30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19327</b>	<b>37.09</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

There are 25 Dibongiya villages in the Narayanpur Mouza has a share of 37.09 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district. Most of the villages are located near the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border and near by the bank of many small rivers curving in the area. There are ten big *Deori* villages which have population more than 1,000 persons. People in the locality are engaged in agriculture as because availability of fertile and cultivable land.

**Table: 3.7 List of Deori Villages in North-Kherajkhat Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Lakhimpur	Khamti pather Gaon	1021	1.85
	Kinapather	1778	3.23
	Zakhingoya	334	0.60
	Kinapather No.2	1638	2.97
	Borchapori Deori Atigu.	802	1.45
	Maj chapori Deori Gaon	578	1.05
	Egaba Atigu	382	0.69
	Balaguri Deori Gaon	326	0.59
	Kothajan Deori Gaon	380	0.69
	Pichala Deori Gaon	439	0.79
	Dihiri Deori Gaon	257	0.46
	Jamachan Singia Atigu	534	0.97
	Deotala Atigu	278	0.50
	Dankorpur Deori Atigu	341	0.61
	Lankapur Deori Atigu	253	0.45
	Bhogpur Deori Atigu	240	0.43
	Sankarpur Deori Atigu	421	0.76
	Joypur pichala	569	1.03
	Durpang Deori Atigu	441	0.80
	Garubandha Deori Atigu	232	0.42
	Baska chuk Deori Atigu	231	0.41
	Sangia Deori Gaon	343	0.62
	Sishimukh Deori Gaon	329	0.59
	Dikrong chapori Deori Gaon	245	0.44
	Pithaguri Deori Atigu	380	0.69
	Siba atigu	491	0.89
	Kachikata Deori Atigu	528	0.95
	No.1 Deuri Atigu	425	0.77
	Kushar bari Deori Atigu	40	0.07
	Buhaburi	235	0.42
	Kasikjuli Deori Atigu	449	0.81
	Joypur Deori Atigu	345	0.62
	<b>Total</b>		<b>15,285</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

The highest concentration of *Deori* villages in Assam found in North-Kherajkhat Mouza of Lakhimpur district in close proximity to Narayanpur Mauza. There are 33 Dibongiya villages confined in the area bearing age-old tradition of *Deori* community. The region shares 27.62 percent of *Deori* population to total population of the district. The three Mouza (Narayanpur, North

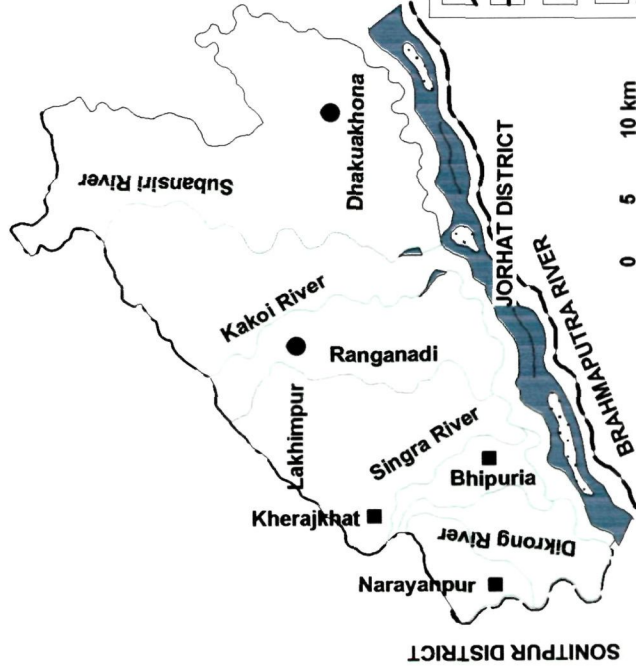
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94°15'E

# DISTRIBUTION OF DEORI VILLAGES LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT



ARUNACHAL PRADESH



## LEGEND

- Inter-State Boundary
- District Boundary
- Rivers
- Urban Centre
- Mouza

### Deori Villages in Narayanpur Mouza

- Bordeori Gaon
- Bordeori Atigu
- Major Deori
- Gal Atigu
- Dakhin Deori Atigu
- Sadial Deori Gaon
- Gatakpur Jimachaya
- Swamapuri deori Gaon
- Bordoloni deori Gaon
- Utani Deori Atigu
- Madhya pather
- Gauri nagar Deori Gaon
- Gawachi 1
- Gawachi 2
- Tenga pather Deorigaon
- Udeshyapur deorigaon
- Tengapather Kushapur
- Sonarbari Block Deori
- Sonarbari Atigu
- Sonarbari igaba Atigu
- Holaguri Deori Gaon
- Dhanguloi Atigu
- Kundil Atigu
- Jamachaya Deori Atigu

### Deori Villages in Bhipuria Mouza

- Kundilpur
- Panigaon
- Padurmoni
- Merua
- Laholial
- Jamduar
- Jaidam
- Bahgora
- Uriampara
- Chinatali
- Naharani Atigu
- Jimachaya Atigu
- Kandali Urga Atigu
- KachikataBazar Atigu
- Purani Bahgora
- Pachali Jimachaya Atigu
- Suntapur Deorigaon
- Suntapur Deorigaon
- Kachikata Deorigaon
- Moraci Thengal Deori Atigu

### Deori Villages in North Kherajkhat Mouza

- Khamti Pather
- Kinapather
- Zakhingoya
- Kinapather No 2
- Borchapori Deori
- Maj chapori Deori
- Egaba Atigu
- Balaguri Deori gaon
- Kothajan Deorigaon
- Pichala Deorigaon
- Dhiri Deorigaon
- Jamachan Singia
- Deotala Atigu
- Dankorpur
- Lankapur Deoriatigu
- Bhogpur Deoriatigu
- Sankarpur Deori
- Joypur Pichala
- Dupang Deori Atigu
- Garubandha Deori
- Baska Chuk Deori
- Singla Deorigaon
- Sishimukh Deori
- Dikrong Chapori
- Pithaguri Deoriatigu
- Siba Atigu
- Kachikata Deori
- No. Deori Atigu
- Kushar bari Deori
- Buhaburi
- Kasikujli deori Atigu
- Joypur Deori Atigu

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-10

Kherajkhat and Bihpuria) situated on the bank of river Dikrong, Ranganadi and Singara. The availability of fertile land and congenial physical environs of the catchment area bound the community to straighten out for livelihood.

### 3.9.3 Deori Villages in Dhemaji District

The villages of all the three *foids* (Tengaponiya, Dibongiya and Borgoyan) of *Deoris* are found in Dhemaji district which is not noticed in the other districts. The first settlement of *Deoris* in Dhemaji district was found in Laimekuri on the bank of river Dikrai. After then, during British period they migrated and settled near the banks of the river Dhol, Kumotia, and Sisi. After 1950,s earth quake, another groups of *Deoris* settled in Dhunaguri, Okajan and Rai field (near the foothills of Arunachal). Agriculture was the prime factor for settlement.

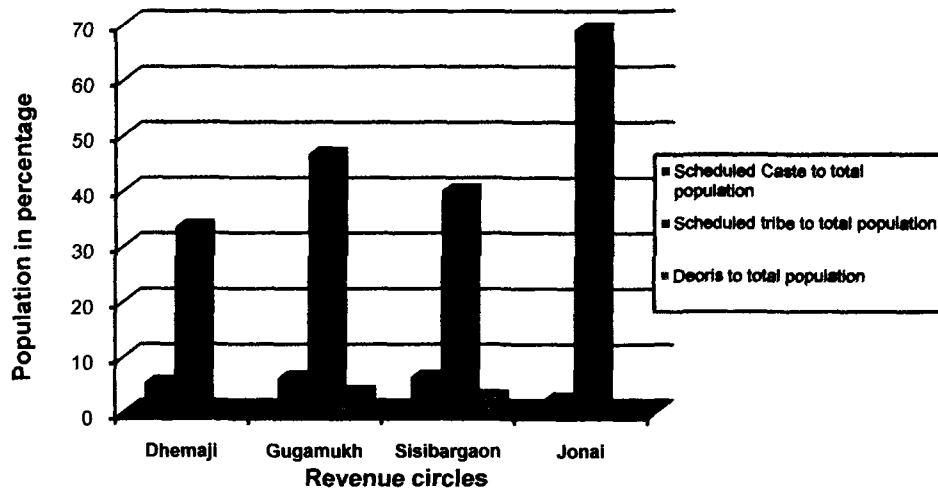
**Table: 3.8 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Dhemaji District (in %)**

District	Revenue Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-Scheduled to total population	Deoris to total population
Dhemaji	Dhemaji	5.52	33.57	60.91	0.02
	Gugamukh	6.41	46.71	46.88	3.79
	Sisibargaon	6.55	40.11	53.34	3.02
	Jonai	2.59	69.12	28.29	1.49

Source: Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2007

Among the four Revenue Circles in Dhemaji District highest percentage of *Deori* population is found in Gogamikh Revenue Circle (3.79%). Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population shares 6.41percent and 46.71 percent respectively.

**Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Dhemaji District**



**Figure: 3.4**

There are 20 villages of Dibongiya *foid* four villages of Tengaponiya *foid* and five villages belonging to Borgoyan *foid* located either the bank of river or near the forested areas of Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border (Deori, 1997). Each *foid* performs their own religious practices in their *Thans* (Temple). The people are basically engaged in agriculture.

**Table: 3.9 List of Deori Villages in Bordoloni Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Dhemaji	2 no. Ghotapather bali Deori	285	2.29
	Thriceguri	630	5.07
	Borbam Deori	625	5.03
	Koupatoni Deori	51	0.41
	Bamchenia	1051	8.46
	Chenia Ghat	163	1.31
	Uttar Maj Deori	99	0.80
	Upur Chenia	248	2.00
	Majorbari Deori	222	1.79
	Maj Deori	248	2.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>3622</b>	<b>29.16</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher- 2007

The total population of the district is dominated by 80 percent of tribal segment consisting Sonowal Kachari, Mishing, *Deori*, Tiwa, and Hajong. Although these ethnic groups are living in separate villages, they have good social relationship among themselves. Evidence of ethnic conflict is rare. Means of livelihood is almost similar among them. The people are basically engaged in agriculture. People belong to the *Deori* community settled in the fertile bank of Kumotia, Jiadhol, Moridhol, Sisi, Gai Nadi and Simen in the district.

Bordoloni Mouza of the district represents 10 Dibongiya villages. The Mouza shares 29.16 percent total *Deori* population of the district. The flood plains of the Kumotia and Jiadhol River and the ecology of the area have a preference to settle the community for better occupation.

**Table: 3.10 List of Deori villages in Dhemaji Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Dhemaji	Ramyapur Deori Gaon	100	0.81
	Udaypur Deori Gaon	810	6.52
	Sripani Deori Gaon	412	3.32
	Bhekuli Deori Gaon	550	4.43
	Purani Sissi Deori Gaon	521	4.19
	Sissi Deori Gaon	410	3.30
	Dhunaguri Deori Gaon	729	5.87
	Purani Dhunaguri Deori	455	3.66
	Kapatali Deori Gaon	503	4.05
	Gai Deori Gaon	250	2.01
	Bormuria Deori Gaon	1126	9.07
	Bormuria Anshria Deori Gaon	212	1.71
	Silapather Deori Gaon	57	0.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,135</b>	<b>49.4</b>	

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

There are 13 villages of *Deoris* in the Dhemaji Mouza with separate villages of each of the three *foids* (Dibongiya, Tengaponiya and Borgoyan). The total *Deori* population of the district is about 6,135 and it share 49.4 percent of *Deori* population to the total *Deori* population of the district. No *Deori* villages are found in the municipal area but many families of the three *foids* are scatterdly distributed in Dhemaji town. The *Deori* villages are located in the periphery of the Dhemaji town. It is very interesting about the community is that only one *foid* is dominated in one village.

**Table: 3.11 List of Deori villages in Jonai Mouza**

District	Name of the villages	Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Dhemaji	Borong Arasuti	184	1.48
	Ruhitpur	902	7.26
	Haripur	153	1.23
	No-1 Rangkop	270	2.17
	No-2 Rangkop	263	2.12
	Bijoipur	445	3.58
	Lohijan Majgaon	226	1.82
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,443</b>	<b>19.66</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Jonai the eastern most sub-divisional headquarter of Dhemaji district in the north bank of the Brahmaputra laying the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh is also endowed with *Deori* villages comprising three *foids* . There are 7 Deori villages with a total population of 2443 and 19.66% of Deori Population to the total Deori population of the district .

In this Mouza first settlement of *Deori* population was found in Laimekuri during 1<sup>st</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are Nepali and Mising villages near the Deori villages and they have interactions with the people of nearby areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

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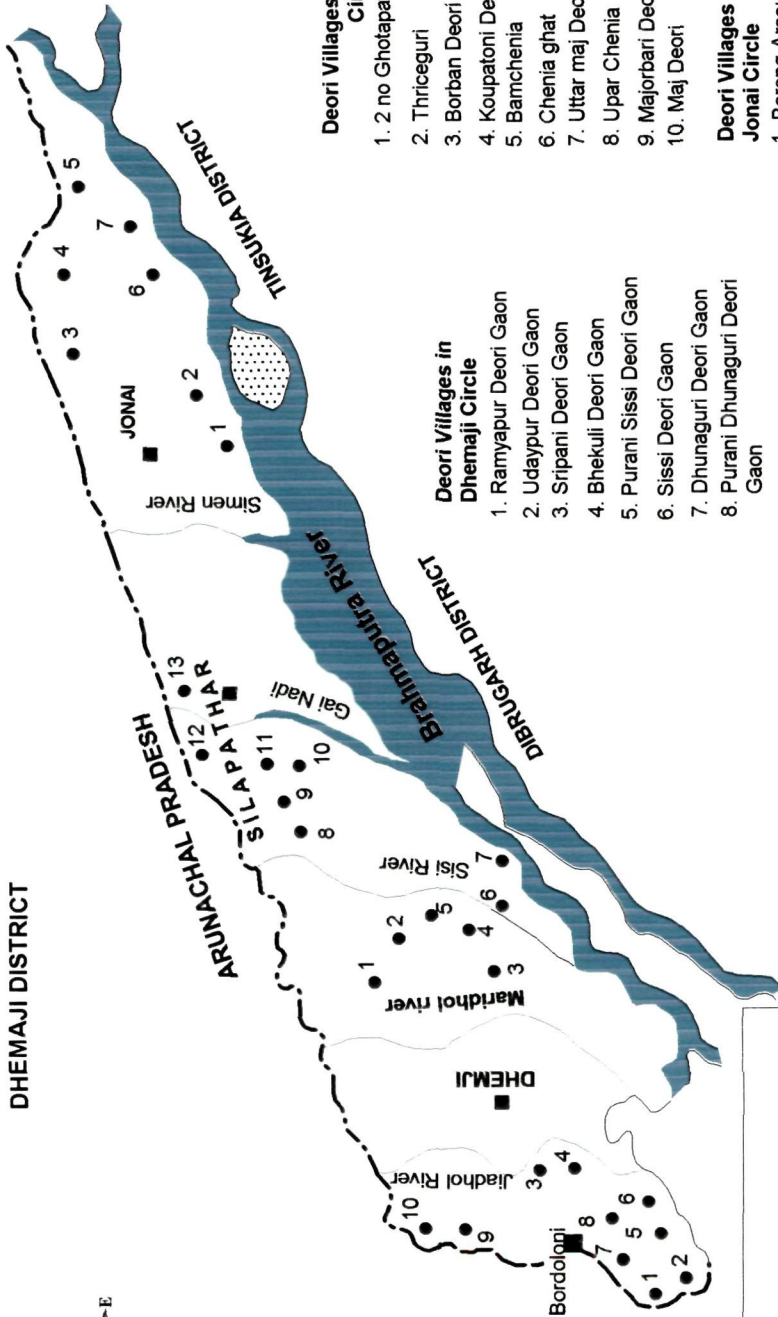
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27°45' N

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# DISTRIBUTION OF DEORI VILLAGES

DHEMAJI DISTRICT



### INDEX

	Inter-State Boundary
	District Boundary
	Rivers
	Urban Centres

### Deori Villages in Gogamukh Circle

1. 2 no Ghotapather bali Deori
2. Thriceguri
3. Borban Deori
4. Koupatori Deori
5. Bamchenia
6. Chenia ghat
7. Uttar maj Deori
8. Upar Chenia
9. Majorbari Deori
10. Maj Deori

### Deori Villages in Dhemaji Circle

1. Ramyapur Deori Gaon
2. Udaypur Deori Gaon
3. Sripani Deori Gaon
4. Bhekuli Deori Gaon
5. Purani Sissi Deori Gaon
6. Sissi Deori Gaon
7. Dhunaguri Deori Gaon
8. Purani Dhunaguri Deori Gaon
9. Kapatali Deori Gaon
10. Gai Deori Gaon
11. Bormuria Deori Gaon
12. Bormuria Anshria Deori Gaon
13. Silapather Deori Gaon

### Deori Villages in Jonai Circle

1. Borong Arasuti
2. Ruhitpur
3. Haripur
4. No - 1 Rangkop
5. No - 2 Rangkop
6. Bijoipur
7. Lohijan Majgaon

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-11

**Table: 3.12 Break wise Family in Dhemaji District**

District	Name of the villages	Family	Population	Percentage to Total Deori population of the district
DHEMAJI	Aagom Dolung	4	18	0.14
	No.2 Murkong Selek	3	10	0.08
	Rankop Tmiali	5	24	0.19
	Kamalpur	4	25	0.20
	Mahmora	1	5	0.04
	Chirampuriya	7	43	0.35
	Kardengchuck	11	45	0.36
	Madhyalakhipur	6	34	0.27
	Membarchuk.	13	49	0.39
	Chirung	1	5	0.04
	<b>Total</b>			<b>258</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

There are total 54 *Deori* families which are scattered in different locations in the district. These are isolated settlements having a total population of 318. These settlements are found mostly near the villages of other ethnic groups or near some small urban centers.

### 3.10 Deori Villages in the South Bank of River Brahmaputra

*Deori* villages are also distributed in the south bank of Brahmaputra River in five districts i.e. Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia and four villages in Kamrup districts near Guwahati. It is noteworthy that only a few villages of Dibongia *foid* are identified in the south bank as they are concentrated in North bank of the valley. Borgoyan and Tengaponia villages spread in the four districts along the rivers and in forested areas.

### 3.10.1 Deori Villages in Tinsukia District

Tinsukia district is located at the easternmost part of Assam and is adjacent to the hilly Arunachal Pradesh on its three sides. Sadiya which is known as the original home of *Deoris* is located in this district. *Deoris* were performing worshipping activities as priests in the temples of *Burha-Burhi* or *Kundi-Mama* (Lakshmi-Narayan), *Baliababa* or *Pisa-dema* (Lord Shiva), and *Tamreswari* or *Kechaikhati* (Goddess Kali) in Sadiya since the sixth century. From this region *Deoris* have migrated to different places of the Brahmaputra valley in the later periods.

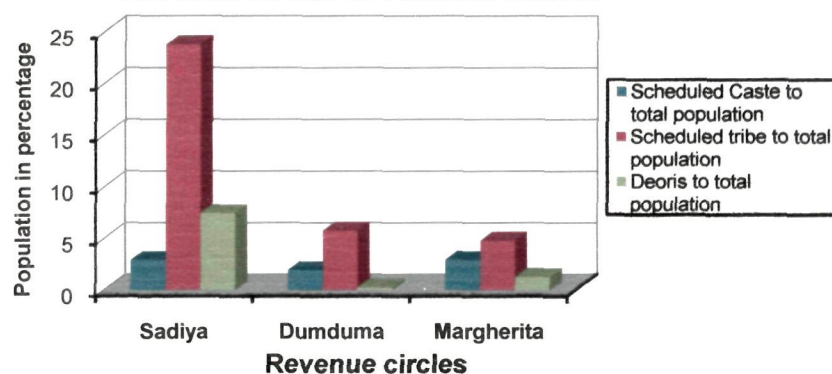
*Deori* villages are presently distributed in three Revenue Circles namely Margherita, Sadiya and Dumduma. In the three circles, concentration of *Deori* population is highest (59.26%) in Sadiya Circle and least in Dumduma Revenue Circle.

**Table: 3.13 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Tinsukia District (in %)**

District	Revenue Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-scheduled to total population	Deoris to total population
Tinsukia	Sadiya	2.90	23.79	73.31	7.45
	Dumduma	1.93	5.76	92.31	0.26
	Margherita	2.93	4.81	92.26	1.29

Source: Department of Plains Tribe and Backward Classes, Assam-2007

**Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles in Tinsukia District**



**Figure: 3.5**

*Deori* villages of Tengaponia and Borgoyan *foids* are found in the Margherita Revenue Circle. There are eight *Deori* villages with a total population of 3,815. The area holds 31.82 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district.

**Table: 3.14 List of Deori villages in Margherita Revenue Circle**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Margherita	Hulung guti Gaon	1014	8.46
	Nam-hulung Bijoypur gaon	512	4.27
	Philobari Nagaon	100	0.83
	2 No. Mohong Gaon	1323	11.04
	Bishnupur Gaon	298	2.49
	Madhopur Gaon	311	2.59
	Digboi Town	103	0.86
	Tink pani Forest	154	1.28
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,815</b>	<b>31.82</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

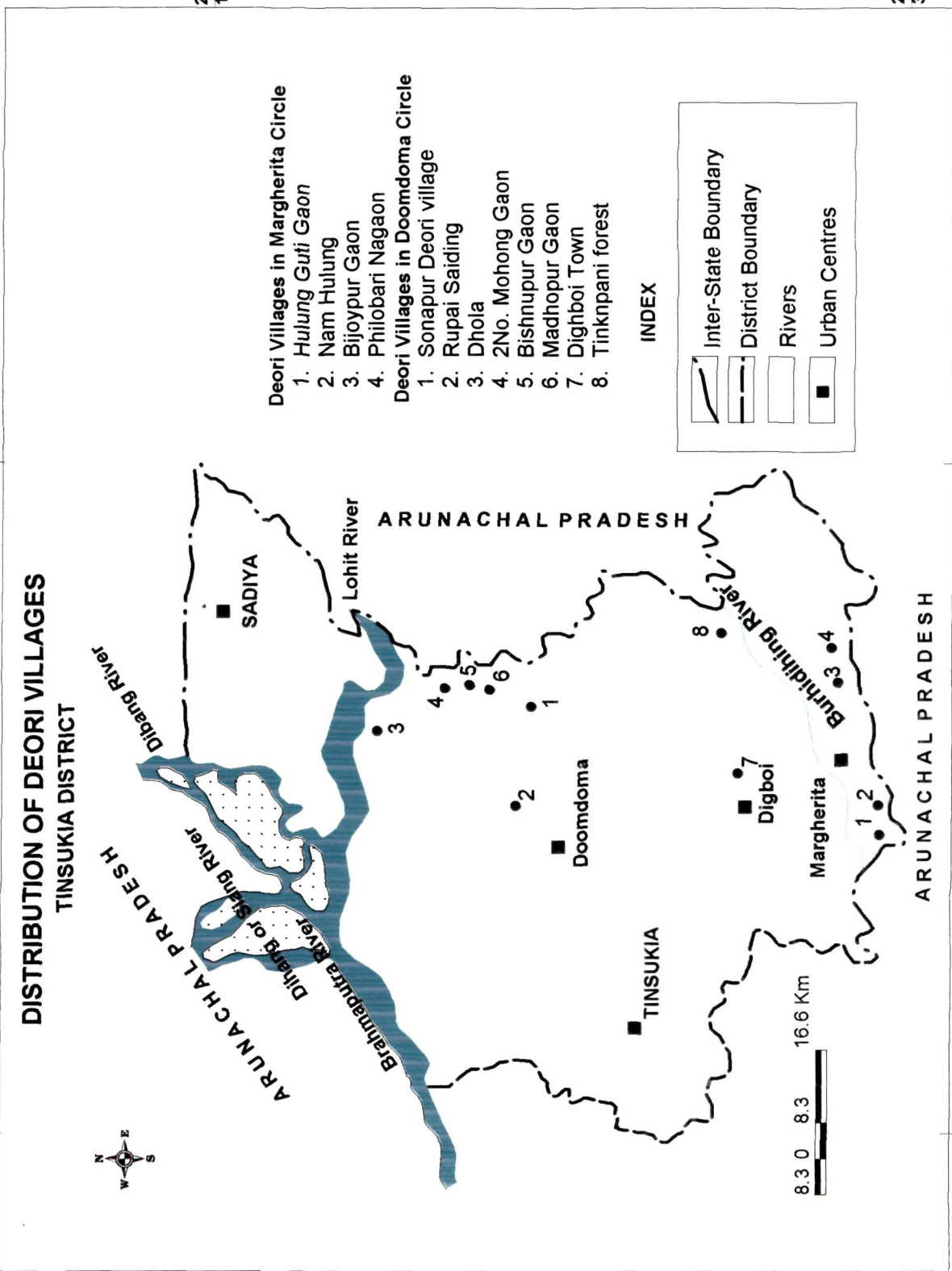
Sadiya the eastern most sub division of Tinsukia district once known as ‘Kundil’ province came into existence from the *Deori* supreme God

95°45' E

96°10' E

28° 10' N

27° 30' N



Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

'Kundimama'. The original abode of the *Deori* was on the banks of the river Dibang, Tengapani, Borno and Patarsal, which is now fall within the jurisdiction of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and Chapakhowa area that is in Sadiya subdivision. Although most of the *Deori* population had migrated from Sadiya during 1829-31 under socio-political circumstances; many *Deori* families went back to settle there during last part of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now villages are distributed in the banks of river Lohit, Dhola, Dumduma, Burhidihing and in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Table: 3.15 List of Deori Villages in Sadiya Revenue Circle**

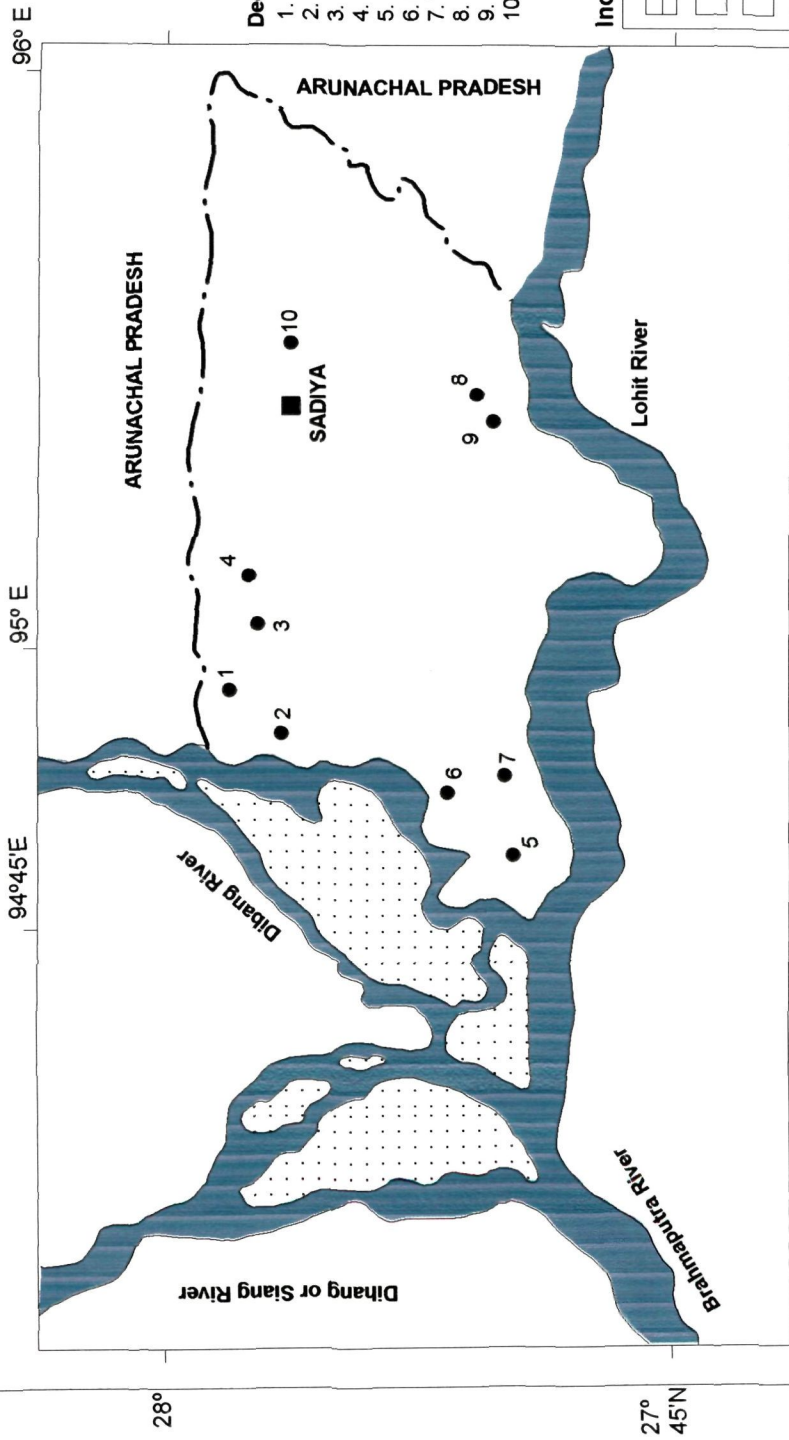
District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Sadiya	Addarsha Rukmini	758	6.32
	Bhabanigarh	573	4.78
	Buraburi	618	5.16
	Buraburi Deori No.2	379	3.16
	Borgoyan	452	3.77
	Kopowpather	540	4.50
	Milanpur	643	5.36
	Tokajan	1215	10.14
	Nital Deori	632	5.27
	Udoipur Deori	918	7.66
	Chapakhowa town and others	377	3.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,105</b>	<b>59.26</b>	

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

At present there are 11 *Deori* villages in Sadiya subdivision belonging to both Tengapaniya and Borgoyan *foids* and shares to 59.26 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of district.

There are only 3 *Deori* villages in Doomdoma Revenue Circle of Tinsukia district belonging to Tengaponia *foid* and shares only 8.91percent of *Deori* population of the total *Deori* population of district.

**DISTRIBUTION OF DEORI VILLAGES**  
SADIYA SUB - DIVISION



**Deori Villages in Sadiya Circle**

1. Adarsha Ruk
2. Bhabanigarth
3. Buraburi
4. Buraburi Deori No.2
5. Kopowpathar
6. Milanpur
7. Tokajan
8. Nital Deori
9. Udoipur Deori
10. Chapakhowa town

**Index**

	Inter-State Boundary
	Rivers
	Urban Centres



Source: Prepared by the Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-13

**Table: 3.16 List of Deori villages in Doomdoma Revenue Circle**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
<b>Doomdoma</b>	Sonapur Deori village	907	7.57
	Rupai Saising	140	1.17
	Dhola	20	0.17
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,067</b>	<b>8.91</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Among the villages in the Dumduma Revenue Circle, Sonapur has the highest percentage (7.57%) of *Deori* population.

### 3.10.2 Deori Villages in Dibrugarh District

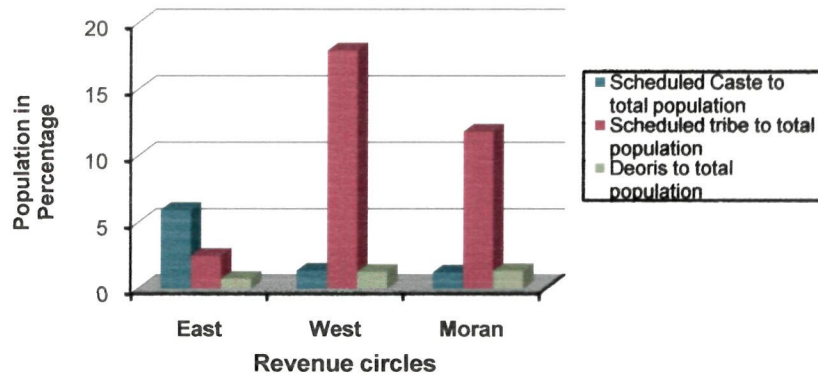
Many *Deori* people settled in Dibrugarh district after migrating from Sadiya in Tinsukia district during first part of 19<sup>th</sup> century. They firstly settled in Mohmora, Shilpota, and in Moran. *Deori* villages are distributed in East, West and Moran Revenue Circles along the bank of Buridihing and Brahmaputra River.

**Table: 3.17 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Dibrugarh District (in %)**

District	Revenue Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-scheduled to total population	Deoris to total population
<b>Dibrugarh</b>	East	5.95	2.50	91.55	0.74
	West	1.37	17.93	80.7	1.28
	Moran	1.23	11.84	86.93	1.34

**Source:** Department of Plains Tribe and Backward Classes, Assam-2007

**Distribution of Population in the Reveue Circles  
in Dibrugarh District**



**Fig-3.6**

Among the Revenue Circles, villages of Dibrugarh West and Moran Revenue Circles have highest *Deori* population holding 89.45 percent of total *Deori* population of the District.

Most of the villages are concentrated in Khowang area. *Deori* villages are dominated by both Borgoyan and Tengaponia *foids* embracing age old tradition of the community. Apart from the villages many families stay in municipal area of Dibrugarh town.

**Table: 3.18 List of Deori Villages in Dibrugarh District**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Dibrugarh West and Moran Revenue Circle	Madhupur	1357	26.62
	Deori gaon		
	Kachamari	445	8.73
	Deori gaon (Khamtighat)		
	Raidang gaon	189	3.71
	Chiring gaon	435	8.53
	Chiring gaon (South Milannagar)	336	6.59
	Tekela Chiring gaon	775	15.20
	Kolowlawa	1278	20.07
	Deori gaon		
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,815</b>	<b>89.45</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Among the villages in the district Kolowlawa *Deori* gaon alone has 20.07 percent of *Deori* population of the Districts total population of the community.

**Table: 3.19 Dibrugarh East Revenue Circle**

District	Name of the village	Deori population	Percentage to the total district population
Dibrugarh	Extended Chiring gaon Ward( Milonnagar)	435	8.53
	Extended Chiring gaon ward(South Milonnagar)	336	7
	Extended Tekela Chiring gaon ward (Chiring Chapori)	775	15.20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1546</b>	<b>30.73</b>

Source: Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

In Dibrugarh East Revenue Circle, *Deori* population is mostly concentrated in Chiring Chapori with 15.20 percent of total *Deori* population of the district.

**Table: 3.20 Break wise Deori Population in Dibrugarh District**

District	Name of the places	Population	Percentages to total Deori population of the district
Dibrugarh	Boiragimath gaon	11	0.22
	Niz Mankata gaon	40	0.78
	Teper gaon	15	0.29
	Hatimara gaon	4	0.08
	1/159 O.R.R Grant	20	0.39
	Tileinagar	36	0.71
	Hatkhela	41	0.80
Moran	Piyalinagar	36	0.71
	Jaya nagar	29	0.57
	Kushalnagar	31	0.61
	Milanpur	19	0.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>5.53</b>	

Source: Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

Break wise *Deori* families are found in 11 places in Dibrugarh district having a total population of 282. This population share 5.53% of total *Deori* population of the district.

### 3.10.3 Deori Villages in Sibsagar District

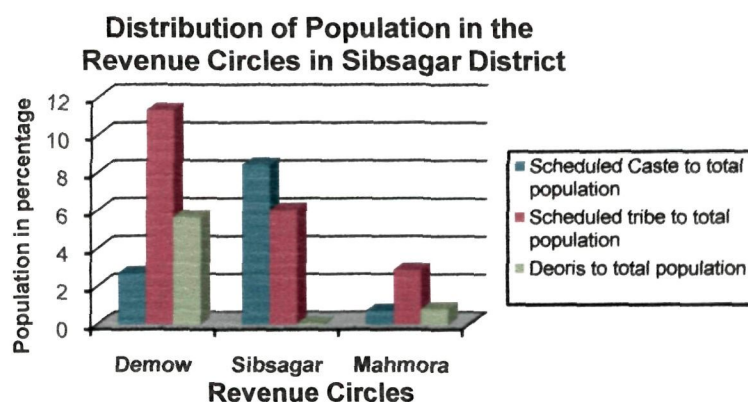
*Deori* villages in Sibsagar district are found in Demow, Sibsagar and Mahmora Revenue Circles .During the British period, in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century; three *foids* of *Deoris* established three separate villages in Dihingmukh region of the district. The river Brahmaputra and river Dihing nourished their agricultural lives. Borgaon, Tengapani and Ghelgheli were the big villages where *Deoris* spent peaceful life till the earth quake of 1950. After this earth quake these big villages of Dihingmukh region were completely eroded away by the bank erosion of river Brahmaputra. Most of the people migrated to the north bank of the Brahmaputra River and settled in Udaypur, Dhunaguri, Akajan and Raipather area of Dhemaji district.

**Table: 3.21 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Sibsagar District (in %)**

District	Revenue Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-scheduled to total population	Deoris to total Population
Sibsagar	Demow	2.71	11.33	85.96	5.67
	Sibsagar	8.46	6.07	85.47	0.06
	Mahmora	0.74	2.89	96.37	0.84

Source- Department of Plains Tribe and Backward Classes, Assam- 2007

*Deori* population is concentrated in Demow Revenue Circle in the district. The fertile valley of river Demow and Disang provided suitable land for agriculture to the villages. Number of *Deori* population in Kokilamari village (23.50%) is highest among different *Deori* villages in Sivsagar district.



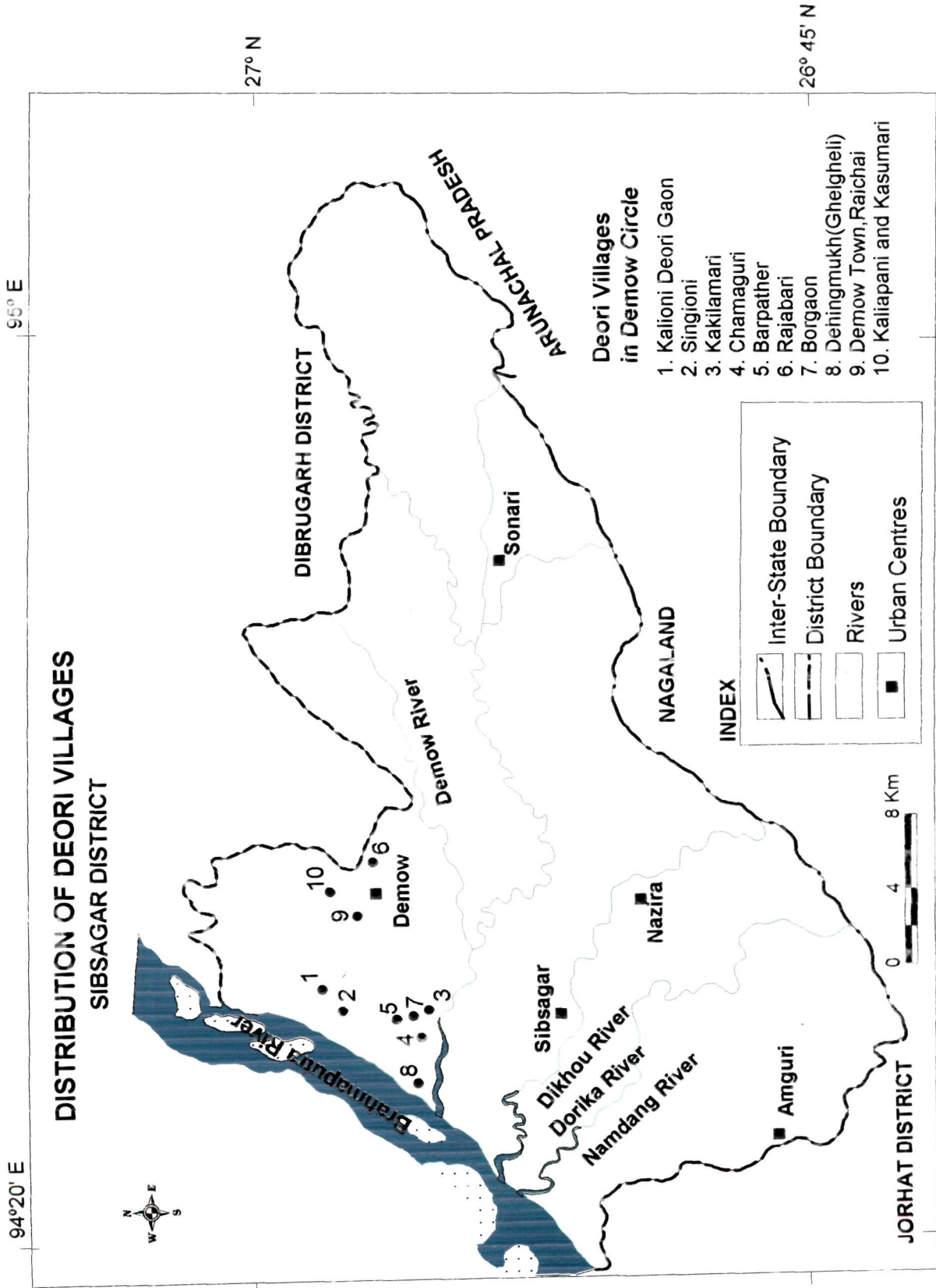
**Figure: 3.7**

At present Sivsagar district has a good number of *Deori* villages and most of them are restricted in the Demow-Dihingmukh Area. Most of the *Deori* villages are dominant by *Tengaponia foia* and some Borgoyan villages are also identified scattered apart from *Tengaponia* villages.

**Table: 3.22 List of Deori Villages in Sivsagar District**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Sivsagar	Kalioni Deori Gaon	2047	16.88
	Singioni	2023	16.68
	Kakilamari	2850	23.50
	Chamaguri	1234	10.17
	Barpathar	1023	8.43
	Rajabari	515	4.24
	Borgaon	1024	8.44
	Dehingmukh (Ghelgheli)	486	4.00
	Demow town	386	3.18
	(Kaliapani and Kasumari)	320	2.63
	Raichai	215	1.77
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,123</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher- 2007



Map No.-15

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

The *foids* do not speak their language anymore and they interact with common Assamese language. Their culture is influenced by the nearby Ahom and Mising community. Highest percentage of *Deori* population of the district (16.88%) is found in Kalioni Deori Gaon in Dihingmukh area.

### 3.10.4 Deori Villages in Jorhat District

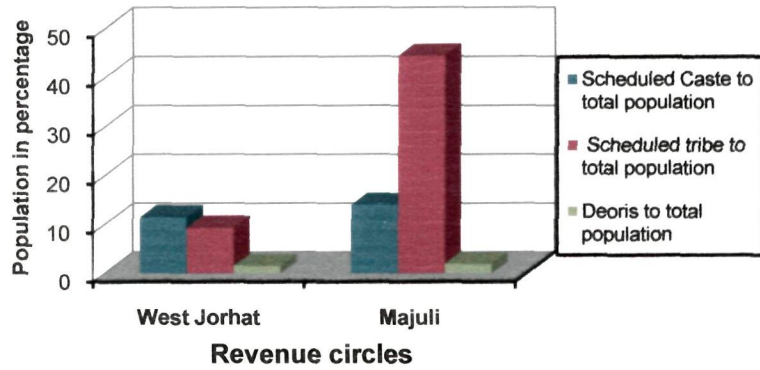
Jorhat district is bordered by River Subansiri to the north, Golaghat and Sibsagar districts to the west and east respectively. A part of Nagaland makes the southern boundary. There are nine villages in Jorhat district and all the villages belong to Tengaponiya and Borgoyan *foid*.

**Table: 3.23 Distributions of Population in the Revenue Circles of Jorhat District (in %)**

<b>District</b>	<b>Revenue Circle</b>	<b>Scheduled Caste to total population</b>	<b>Scheduled tribe to total population</b>	<b>Non-scheduled to total population</b>	<b>Deoris to total population</b>
<b>Jorhat</b>	West Jorhat	11.48	9.34	79.18	1.52
	Majuli	14	44.46	41.54	1.93

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam- 2007

**Distribution of Population in Revenue Circles  
Jorhat District**



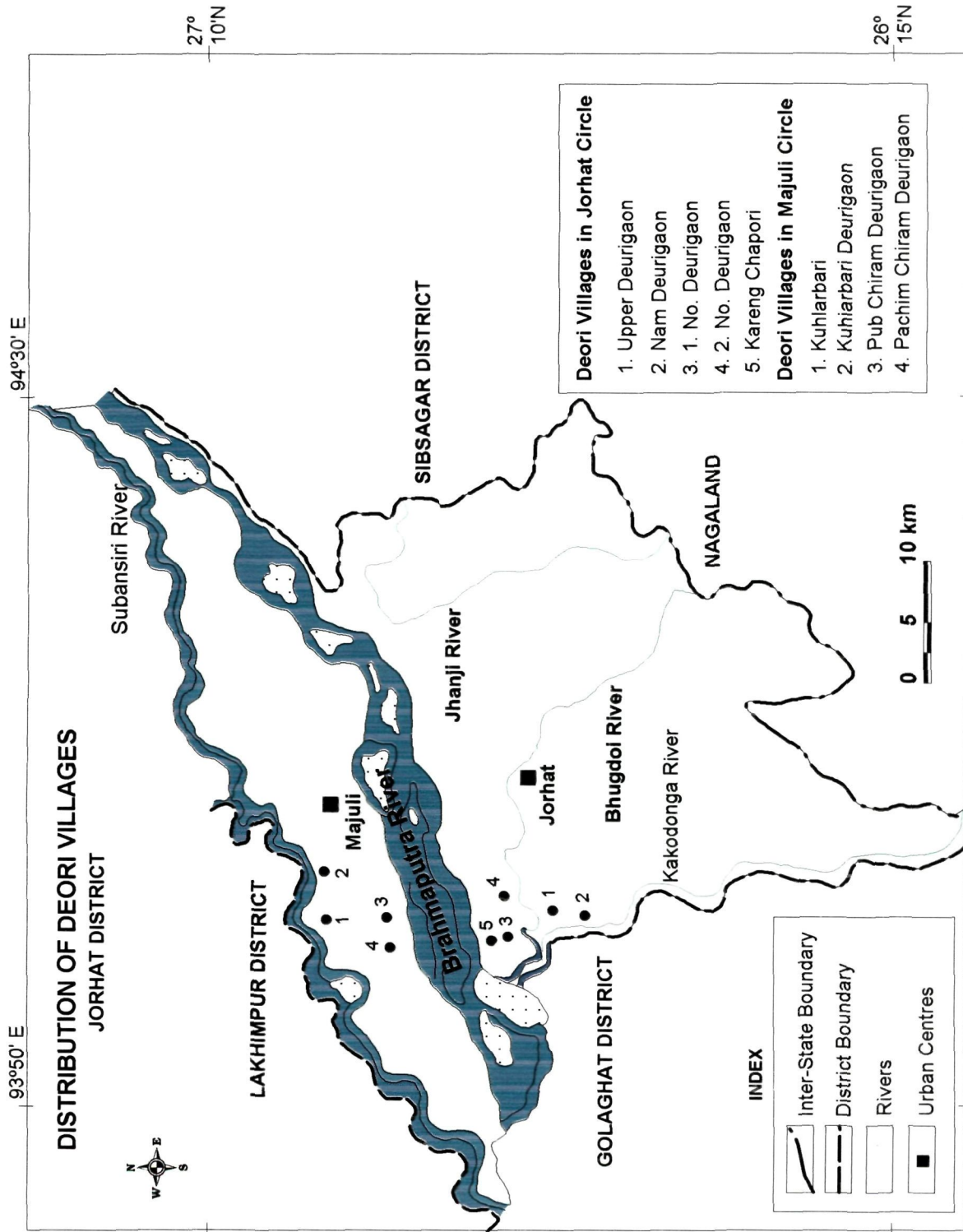
**Figure: 3.8**

The villages in the Jorhat west circle are distributed near Kokilamukh in the bank of Brahmaputra. The ecology in and around the river attract the people to settle near the river. People from Dergaon (migrated from Sadiya) came and settled in Upper *Deori* Gaon and Nam *Deori* Gaon in this region during the British period. The *Deori* population in Jorhat west circle holds 62.47 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district.

**Table: 3.24 List of Deori Villages in Jorhat West Circle**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Jorhat (West Circle)	Upper Deurigaon	2,111	23.83
	Nam Deuri gaon	2,935	33.14
	1. No. Deurigaon	37	0.41
	2. No. Deurigao	411	4.64
	Kareng Chapori	40	0.45
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5,534</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007



93°50' E

94°30' E

27° 10' N

26° 15' N

**DISTRIBUTION OF DEORI VILLAGES**  
JORHAT DISTRICT

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

SIBSAGAR DISTRICT

GOLAGHAT DISTRICT

NAGALAND

Subansiri River

Jhanji River

Bhugdol River

Kakodonga River

Majuli

Jorhat





**Deori Villages in Jorhat Circle**

1. Upper Deurigaon
2. Nam Deurigaon
3. 1. No. Deurigaon
4. 2. No. Deurigaon
5. Kareng Chapori

**Deori Villages in Majuli Circle**

1. Kuhlbarbari
2. Kuhlbarbari Deurigaon
3. Pub Chiram Deurigaon
4. Pachim Chiram Deurigaon

**INDEX**

-  Inter-State Boundary
-  District Boundary
-  Rivers
-  Urban Centres

0 5 10 km

Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-16

There are four *Deori* villages in Majuli Circle and all the villages belong to Dibongiya *foid*. The earlier settlement in Majuli was taken place during the early part of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later, all of the three *foids* settled in Majuli. Dibongiys settled on the bank of Borpukhuri, Tengaponiyas on the banks of Morisukan Suti and the Borgoyans near the pond of Borganga. Encircling all sides by Brahmaputra River except north, Majuli is the largest river island of the world flourishing ‘Vaishnavism’ movement of Sri Sri Sankardeva. Frequent river bank erosion, channel changes create panic to the people during monsoon. Fertile land is suitable for agriculture and people are engaged in such type of livelihood activities. Majuli shares 37.49 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district.

**Table: 3.25 List of Deori Villages in Majuli Circle**

District	Name of the villages	Deori Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Jorhat (Majuli Circle)	Kuhiarbari	2,742	30.96
	Kuhiarbari Deuri gaon	37	0.41
	Pub Chiram Deurigaon	346	3.90
	Pachim Chiram Deurigaon	197	2.22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,322</b>	<b>37.49</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

### 3.10.5 Deori Villages in Kamrup District

Kamrup district shares insignificant *Deori* population as compared to the other *Deori* distributed districts of Assam. Two revenue circles i.e. Guwahati and

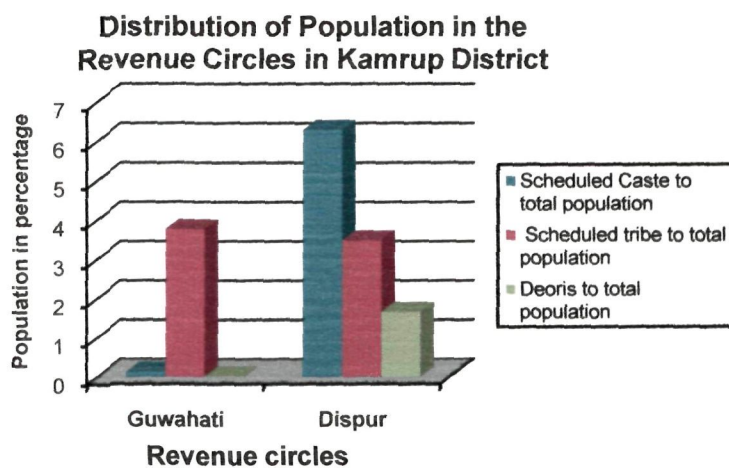
Dispur contribute to only 0.02 and 1.66 % *Deori* population to total population.

They are urban dwellers.

**Table: 3.26 Distribution of Population in the Revenue Circles of Kamrup District (in %)**

District	Rev. Circle	Scheduled Caste to total population	Scheduled tribe to total population	Non-scheduled to total population	Deoris to total population
Kamrup	Guwahati	0.13	3.77	96.1	0.02
	Dispur	6.29	3.48	93.68	1.66

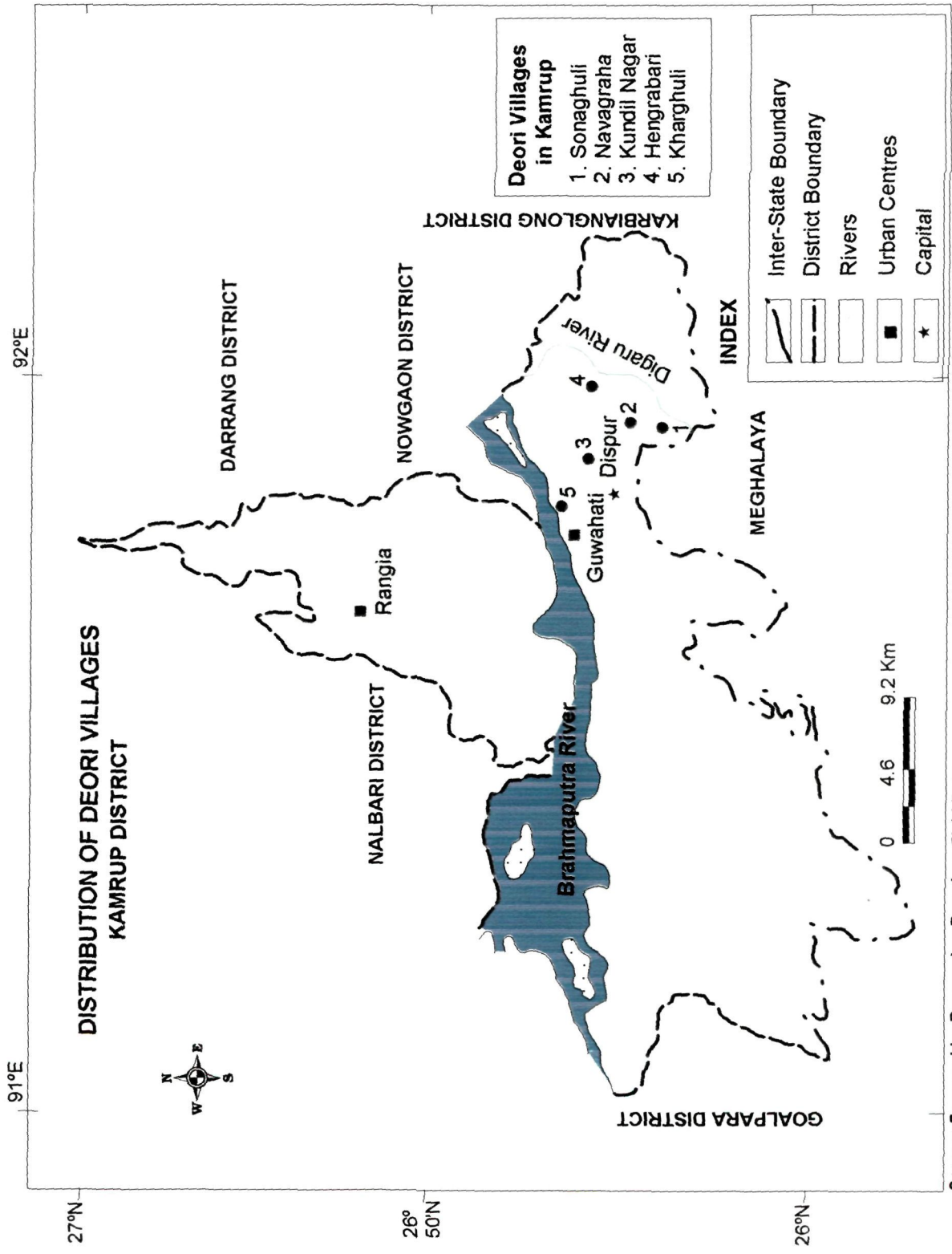
Source- Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2007



**Fig-3.9**

There are three *Deori* villages in Kamrup district (Guwahati area) and they have settled at this point after coming from different parts of Assam in order to carry out either secondary or Tertiary activities.





Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-17

**Table: 3.27 List of Deori villages in Kamrup District**

District	Name of the villages	Population	% of Deori population to total Deori population of district
Kamrup	Kharghuli	212	13.73
	Hengerabari	327	21.13
	Dakhingaon part 1	1004	65.07
<b>Total</b>		<b>1543</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007

### 3.11 Concluding Statement:

The above discussion enlightens the present distribution of *Deoris* in the eight districts of the Brahmaputra valley in Upper Assam that bears the socio-political crisis and natural calamities that passed over their life when they inhabited in Sadiya and continued during the long drawn process of migration.

The chapter shows a detailed picture of *Deori* villages in eight districts of Assam and the percentage of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the concerned districts. A number of families from the villages reside in the urban centers also share the total *Deori* population of the districts.

The distribution of the community is largely governed by the existing physio-cultural condition of newly settled areas. It has been observed that the *Deori* community has a preference to inhabit in isolation apart from other ethnic groups to maintain their age old tradition. The ecology in the present settlement has changed their traditional lifestyles which may even lose their ethnic identity.

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**Chapter-IV**

**Socio-Cultural Traits**

## Chapter-IV

### SOCIO-CULTURAL TRAITS

#### 4.1. Generalities

The North Eastern Region of India indeed presents a glorious example of diversity which is very well reflected in the mosaic of socio cultural traits which are followed by myriads of distinct aboriginal tribal communities inhabiting this region. The *Deoris* amongst them are no exception to this rule. They too have been maintaining their distinct identity vis- a- vis social, religious, cultural and traditional practices from the hoary past and all these have made a define imprint on the socio-cultural landscape of this region. Moreover, these very traits are being handed down to generations of their like in their pristine and unalloyed form for which they can proudly identify themselves as *Deoris* (Deori, 1988). This chapter analyses Socio-Cultural Traits of *Deoris* that were firmly practiced in the pre- independent period and is recognized as Traditional *Deori* Culture.

#### 4.2. Society and Culture

A society is an organized group of human individuals possessing a distinct culture. Perhaps it is simplest to say that a specific culture is the total way of life of a people or community. Culture is a people's design for living. The content of each culture includes systems of belief (ideology), social institutions (organization), industrial skills and tools (technology), and material belongings (resources). A composite and more explicit characterization of a culture is a

historically derived system of standardized forms of behavior, which is acquired by the individual as a member of a society. Cultures are dynamic; they are in constant process of change.

### **4.3. Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Deoris**

Almost all the three divisions of Deoris, viz., *Dibongiyan*, *Tengaponiyas* and *Borgoyans*, are maintaining their beliefs and practices concerning to the field of religion. The fourth division, i.e., the *Patorgoyan* group has become almost extinct. The study deals more with the first three divisions.

Amongst the first three groups, the *Dibongiyan* have, as far as possible, preserved their traditional socio-ritual organizations along with their language. The *Borgoyan* and the *Tengaponiya* groups have altogether given up their traditional dialect in favour of Assamese. The socio-cultural characteristic by a traditional *Deori* society is discussed below.

#### **4.3.1 Importance of Deities**

Social system of *Deori* community is governed by the Priestly council of the *Thanghar* (Temple). The priestly council is again directed by the active 'Deo's (Deities). Only the Deities directed work culture was known as 'Deori Culture'. *Deoris* believed that the Deities ruled their society through the commands of the *Deodhwoni*. The works which were not included in 'Deori

culture' were considered as forbidden works in their society. Identity of *Deori* was completely attached to *Deori* culture and is associated with the *Thanghar*.

#### **4.3.2 Agricultural Practices**

Agriculture and domesticate animals are the main means of income. Two types of rice in a year are sown in two times i.e. Aahu and Shaali. Potato, Seeds, Mustard, Vegetables, *Kath Aloo* (a local type of potato) etc. are the main Rabi crops. Besides this, Sugarcane and cotton are planted. Separate gardens are prepared for Banana, Beatle-Nut, and Bamboo etc. Pig, Goat, Hen, Duck, Pigeon, Cat, Dog, Cow, Buffalo, and Elephant are the main domestic animals. They produce agricultural products for their own consumption. Now-a-days youths of the community are emerged as small tea planters in Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.

#### **4.3.3 Self-Dependency**

There is no significance difference between the works of man and women and both are engaged in all economic activities in the society. Community participation is one of the important ways of livelihood arrangement of *Deoris*. In general, each of the households is self dependent. If someone in the village has short of food in one year, this matter is informed secretly to the oldest man or women of that particular clan. After understanding the matter the senior person affords the required food stuff for the suffered family.

#### **4.3.4 Judicial System**

*Deoris* have adopted a system of traditional judgment and never went for other authority regarding any controversial matter especially before the independent (Deori, 2002). Crime related all cases are judged in the *Dewalayas* (Temples) and if it is established punishable, the accused himself has to confess before the god about the crime and expected punishment for him. The god or the deity punished as the accused wanted for him. Harming in one of the eyes or breaking of one leg or hand of the accused are considered as the punishments triggered by the deities. The remaining controversial matters are judged in the '*Morong Ghar*' (Common Hall in the village). Insurgency, injustice and anguish are very rare in the society.

#### **4.3.5 Education and Educational Center**

The traditional education of Deori society is oral or non-written and '*Thanghars or Dewalaya's* (Temples) are the main centers of education. Eight male members take *Sharan* (Disciples) near the *Pujari* (Priest) in the '*Dewalayas or Thanghar*'. These persons have to learn instruction of *Deori* culture as well as *Deori* religion for about three years under the guidance of the *Pujari* (Priest) in the *Dewalayas*. Later these eight members are known as '*Pariya*'. These *Pariyas* also have responsibility to provide necessary belongings to the *Pujaris* in every month of the year in the time of performing

*Puja*. The education of *Deori* culture is secret. Non-Deoris are not allowed to know about the teachings.

Written education was forbidden in their society before independence and they did not send the children's to the schools in fear of intermixing with non-Deori cultures. Later, some guardians started to send their children's to the schools influenced by the government education policies.

#### **4.3.6 Influence of Mongolotis**

In the traditional Deori culture, when a member of the family suffered from severe fever, they went to the '*Mongoloti*'s (Local quacks) for its treatment. After observing "*Mongol*" in the banana leaves, the *mongoloti* says that the "*Deo*" (worshipping god) is offended by some of his (patients) works or there are some defects in their house which offends the "*Deo*". For example, the "*Mongoloti*" will ask him to remove a part of his boundary fencing standing in a particular side of his house or to cut the chili tree which is placed in a particular point of the garden, because these resist the free movement of the "*Deo*" within the area. That is why he is offended.

Vegetable garden is prepared keeping in mind the way or path of movements of the deities, every family of the village plants their seedlings especially like Chili, Ginger and Mustard seeds considering routes or paths of movement of active deities. If the villagers ignore their paths and plant such trees on such places, the deities harm (creating stomach pain, headache, fever etc.) to

the family which is known as *Hemejui*. Deoris believed that they can get rid of the *Hemejui* only by removing the obstructions from the routes of the deities.

#### **4.3.7 Morong ghar**

*Morong ghar* (Common Hall in the village) is located outside of “*Deoshaal*” (Temple) and in the middle of the village. This *ghar* (house) is higher than the residential *chang ghars* and very big in size. In this *Morong ghar*, village meetings are held and also used for feasting purpose.

#### **4.4 Village and House Types**

*Deori* villages are settled on the riverbanks of Brahmaputra and its tributaries so that they can use the river water and can stay separately from Non-Deori villages. The roads that were used by non-Deoris were kept in the backside of the villages and never allowed them to go through the villages. *Deoris* are pile dwellers (*Chang Ghar*). The traditional houses are built with bamboo, wood, cane and thatch which are locally available. The houses are rest on piles at 5 –7 feet height from the soil. The granary is located in front of the main house. Facing to the main house, cows and buffalos are kept in a little away in front of the house. Houses, gardens, court yards etc. are arranged in such a way that it will be suitable for performing worshipping activities of prevailing god and goddesses.

The open place, which is found just stepping up of the *Chang Ghar* is known as *Misong*. *Dhekishaal* (wooden rice grinder) is common equipment that is

found in each of the house and it is attached to the granary. Separate house is made for weaving in a household and several weaving sets are arranged (according to the number of females).

The first room of a *Tengaponiya* house is reserved for worshipping *Suwosoni Devi* (Goddess of *Deoris*). This room is known as *Suwosoni* Room. Such room is not common in other divisions of *Deoris*. One square shaped *Thipai Shaal* (fireplace) is found in every house. They use typical cane made equipments for taking food and is called *Mehenga* (Small Table). The room in the last end of the house is used for cooking purpose. One small *Chang* is kept which is attached to the *Misong*. Wooden step is used to climb the *Chang Ghar* and a bamboo *Hetamari* for support to the hand.

#### **4.5 Dress Pattern of the Community**

*Deoris* use hand weaved traditional clothes which is a part of their age-old culture. For this purposes they domesticate *Endi/Muga /Silk* worms in their houses. Females of the community know how to weave different cloths for members of the families. The females generally wear *Igu* (long cloth from the chest to the toes), *Jokka Chirba* (cloth encircling the waist), *Gatigi* (clothes that wear in the head), *Baiga* (long cloth for the upper part of the body), *Luguru Icha* etc. The dress pattern of the married is different from that of the unmarried women. The girls wear *Phuru*, *Baiga*, *Luguruia*, *Icha*, *Phuru Gathiki* during social functions. The males wear 'Iku' (long cloths for waist) 'Bose' or *Jema*

(kind of towel) *Deicha* (big cloths), *Churu Icha* (small cloths) etc. During *Bisu Puja* while performing *Husori* (Bihu dance), the girls were *Changira*, *Changira Gathiki*, *Muga Iyo Igu*, *Muga Iyo*, *Luguru Icha* etc. White, red, and green are the main colours that are common in their dress pattern. In the past all, the people of the community used to wear typical cotton shirt known as *Jimochya Jima*.

#### **4.6 Food Habit of the Community**

*Deoris* are habituated to prepare their food in traditional way. They prefer boiled items. Rice, vegetables, meat, fish, egg, are the main source of food. However, they prepare these in different ways from that of the other ethnic groups likewise *Meroku Jubura* (curry of fried rice powder), *Merkuji Jubura* (broken rice curry), *Miduji Jubura*, *Ujungon Niyom* (curry of bamboo shoot), *Kemotu*,. They use *Mikkochi*, (*Dhekia*, A typical fern), *Michchimi* (*Hengonua*), *Miyochu* (*Khutura*), *Mikok* (*Laskosi*), *Miyod* (*Jilimili*), *Miruli*, *Nefafu*, *Dijju* (leaves of *Urium*), *Betgash*, (*Cane soot*), *Banhgash* (*Bamboo soot*) *Tagodiya* (leaf of sweet potato), etc.

*Suje* is a traditional drink prepared by rice and different leaves found in nature. Each of the houses of their society use *Suje*. It is a part and parcel of any festival and social or religious rituals of *Deoris*.

#### **4.7 Language of the Community**

*Deoris* have their own language which is known as *Deori* language. It is resembled to the Tibeto-Burmese language (Pnaging, 2003). In this regard, Dr. G. Grierson Sahib writes 'This is by no means the case, for although the *Deoris* all speak Assamese fluently and incorporate good many Assamese words in their own vocabulary, still speak their own language and are-rather proud of it'.

#### **4.8 Nature of Religion**

*Deoris* are *Saktas* (worshippers of power). in view of the fact that the major source of livelihood of *Deoris* is agriculture and as such, accepting the beliefs of supernatural origin, the religious rites and rituals seem to be performed mainly for ensuring better agriculture and bumper crops. In fact, all the deities are worshipped for the well-being of the masses and for agricultural improvement. The chief deities of *Deoris* are *Kundimama* or *Gira-Girachi* or *Burha-Burhi* (Lakshmi-Narayan), *Pisa-Dema* or *Baliababa* ( Lord Shiva) and *Pisachi Dema* or *Tamreswari* or *Kechaikati* (Goddess Kali) which are worshipped by *Dibongiya*, *Tengaponiya* and *Borgoyan* groups of *Deoris* respectively.

#### **4.9 Role of the Priests in the Society**

*Deoris* performed the worshipping activities as main priests of the Chutिया and Ahom kingdoms. The word *Deori* itself indicates the people of priestly class. Having deep devotion to religion and belief in super natural power

*Deoris* passed their lives by performing priestly works in the temples (Bharali et. al. 1993). It can be easily understood the role of the priests in *Deori* society from the above facts. The priests and the priestly council of the *Thanghar* is the key controller of religious rituals of *Deori* villages. The priestly council is the traditional head of the *Deori* villages, whereas the village *Gaon-Burha* is the administrative head with links to the government. The latter system has been incorporated in their village societies during the British period. The socio-cultural rituals of *Deoris* are governed by the shrines and the priests play important roles in the rituals.

#### **4.10 Clans of the Deoris**

Each of the *foids* (clans) of *Deoris* has several clans (mentioned in Chapter III) among themselves. Marriage is prohibited within the same clan but can be done among different clans of the three *foids*.

#### **4.11 Worshipping Deities and Places Worship**

*Deoris* have a common place of worship. The common place of worship amongst the *Dibongiyas* is known as *Midiku*, while the *Tengaponiya* and the *Borgoyan* sections call it *Than* or *Shal*. In some *Deori* villages such common place of worship is popularly known as *Deoshal* or *Deoghar*. According to the *Deori* Language-*Midi* denotes God and *Ku* means abode of the God or Goddess.

Therefore, it has been observed that the meaning of the word *Midiku* carries the equivalent meaning of the word *Deoshal* or *Deoghar*.

The original place of *Gira-Girachi* or *Burha-Burhi* temple was between the river Dibang and Kundil in Sadiya. The derivative form of the word ‘Dibang’ and ‘Dihang’ is found somewhat related to the *Gira-Girachi* or *Burha* (old man)-*Burhi* (old-woman).

*Den + Bang > Den – bang > Debang > Dibang*

*Den̄ + Yong > Den̄ – Yong > Deyong > Dihang*

According to the *Deori* language ‘*Den*’ means aged, great; and ‘*Bang*’ and ‘*Yong*’ means father and mother respectively. The etymological meaning of the word ‘*Den-bang*’ (Dibang) and ‘*Den-Yong*’ (Dihang), therefore, is aged father and aged mother respectively. In another term they are known as *Gira-Girachi* or *Burha-Burhi* (old man-old woman).

The temple of *Baliababa* or *Balia-Hemata* worshipped by the *Tengaponiya* group was on the bank of *Tengapani* River. The Temple of *Tamreswari Mai* (The Mother of the copper temple) or *Kechaikhanti* (The eater of raw flesh), worshipped by *Borgoyans* to whom human sacrifices were offered was somewhere about Chunpura on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. Saikia (1971) remarks, ‘The *Dibangiyas* propitiate all the deities, including the main deities of the *Tengaponiya* and *Borgonyas* groups’. Strict rule of avoidance is maintained between the *Tengaponiyas* and the *Borgoyans* in their ritual performances in the

village shrine. Though the hierarchical arrangement of deities is found in the field of propitiation, there is no hierarchical difference in *Deori* Society.

The *Patorgoyan* group, which has reportedly become almost extinct, propitiates the deity of the *Patorshal* at *Pat-Sadiya*.

#### **4.12 Priestly Council and its Officials**

*Deoris* generally worship their deities in a temple that is erected in each village (Deori, 2002). The site of such temple is always located either on the eastern side of the village or in the center of the village. To conduct their religious functions well, they have built up a neat and democratic system. The villagers select the priests and their office bearer in a systematic way.

##### **4.12.1 The Chari-Deori (Four Deoris)**

There are two sets of religious functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in their villages. One important set is called *Chari-Deori*, consisting of *Bordeori* (*Boderi*), *Sarudeori* (*Saderi*), *Borbharali* and *Sarubharali* (Deori, 1976). Among them only *Bordeori* and *Sarudeori* are entitled to perform sacrifice and worship; and they alone enter into the main temple and sing hymns which are scarcely understood by the common people. The *Bordeori* is the respected person of the village. *Sarudeori* and *Sarubharali* stand only to accompany *Bordeori* and *Borbharali* respectively during the performances of the rituals. They can also perform the duties assigned to *Bordeori* and *Borbharali* respectively, in the

latter's absence. The duties and responsibilities of *Chari-Deori* relate to the settlement of disputes of the villagers.

#### **4.12.2 Other Officials of Priestly Council**

In addition to the *Chari-Deori*, there are a set of officials consisting of *Bora*, *Barik*, *Ladani*, *Telia* and *Dupia* etc. Moreover, *Pariyas* selected from the *Pashakial Paik* (Revenue collectors) are also engaged to assist the priests in conducting *Shrine-Pujas* as the probationary pupil of the priests. These office bearers are needed in all the religious practices. *Barik* announces the news about the ritual date to the villagers a day before it is to take place and also he assists the priests on the occasion of the ritual. *Bora* employs special workers to clean the premises of the temple and also supervises the feast. Moreover, he collects money from the villagers and from the *Midiku* and deposits it with the village priestly council. Another duty of the *Barik* is to collect domestic rice-beer, rice, fowls etc. from the villagers for the *Bisu-Puja* or any rituals meant for villagers as a whole. The *Ladani* prepares the ritual food (*Bhug*). The duty of supplying of the ritual food lies with the *Ladani*. The duties of the *Telia* and *Dupia* are to supply oil and incenses respectively at the time of ritual held in the temple. The *Deodhai*, who by virtue of long experience in religious lore's occupy the same status. The following chart shows the name of clans from which the priestly posts are filled up in different sections.

**Table: 4.1 Clans of the Deori Priest**

Division of Deoris	Name of the clans for the post of		
Dibongiya Tengaponiya Borgonya	<b>Bordeori</b>	<b>Sarudeori</b>	<b>Borbarali &amp; Sarubharali</b>
	Sundario	Patriyo	Airiyo
	Machiotika	Bikarmiyatika	Kutiatika
Borgonya	Ikucharu	Chimucharu	Hizaru
Patorgonya	Not traceable now-a-days.		

#### 4.13 The Shrine and related Rituals

It is already indicated that there are two sets of religious functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in the village (Dutta, 2005). One set consists of *Chari-Deori* and their assistants; and the other set is the *Deodai*. The most important aspect in this regard is that any member of *Chari-Deori* can perform the role of *Deodhai* whereas all the *Deodhai* (excepting *Chari-Deori*) in no case can perform the role of *Chari-Deori* unless he is enlisted by the villagers to the rank of *Chari-Deori*.

There are three phases to perform *Deo-Pujas* (Worshippment of Deities) (1) *Sattik* - the *Pujaris* (Priests) take the *Prasad* after *Puja* offering with the help of lighting few incenses and lamp wicks along with betel-nut and *Mah-Chaul* (Pea-uncooked rice etc.) inside the altar of the shrine called *Monikut*. (2) In the second phase, i.e., *Rajashik*, after presenting the aspirations of all the attendants to the deities, they take a mark in their foreheads with *Rakta-Chandan* (Red *Chandan*) and give similar mark to all the villagers present and sprinkle *Suchi-Ji* (Pure-water) to them; and after that only, the decapitation of goat, chicken, pigeon etc. starts. (3) In the third phase, i.e., *Tamashik* a community feast is arranged with the

decapitated flesh of buffalo, goat, duck, pigeon etc. where all the villagers participate. The rituals performed by *Deoris* in the Shrines are mentioned below-

#### **4.13.1 Bhakat Makan Ritual**

The *Bhakat Makan* ritual is held during the month of *Aghun* (November) for starting consumption of *Sali* rice. Each family can take *Sali* rice after performing the ritual at the shrine. The chief priest *Bordeori* sacrifices chickens and offers their blood and decapitated heads to the deities of shrine. He prays to the deity for the well being of the villagers.

#### **4.13.2 Chak-Chik or Chua Labiruba Ritual**

This is an annual purificatory ritual of the shrine. The *Bordeori* sacrifices four chickens and prays to the deities and their associates for the well being of the villagers. Later on, a feast is held in the *Morong*. This ritual is generally performed during the month of *Saun* (July).

#### **4.13.3 Makan Chiban Ritual**

*Makan Chiban* ritual is performed collectively at the shrine, especially by the priestly council in the month of *Aghun* (November). Firstly, seven fowls are collected from the villagers and are sacrificed later. A community feast is organized at the *Morong* precincts. It is obligatory to perform this ritual before having the newly harvested rice by all the general people of a village.

#### **4.13.4 Metua (Bor) Ritual**

This ritual is performed thrice a year, viz, during the months of *Bohag* (April), *Ahin* (October) and *Phagun* (February). But *Bormetua* is performed in the month of *Jeth* (May). The rituals are performed to get rid of the physical calamities. To worship *Metua*, one non-castrated he-goat (white or black colour) is necessary for sacrifice.

#### **4.13.5 Rajkebang or Rajkema (Midi Deruruba) Ritual**

The *Rajkebang* or *Rajkema* ritual, which is popularly known amongst the *Dibongiyas*, as *Midi Deruruba*, is the most important and significant ritual of *Deoris*. In this ritual 64 (sixty four) deities are worshipped collectively during the month of *Bohag* (April). This ritual is performed for the welfare of the villagers, domesticated birds and animals and for bumper crops, especially on Wednesday. In addition to these, 14 (fourteen) deities are propitiated at a place in the western direction and outside the compound of the shrine.

#### **4.13.6 Sat Labiruba Ritual**

*Sat Labiruba* ritual is performed during the month of *Ahar* (June) to purify the shrine polluted due to *Sat* (Ambubachi). The functionaries prepare the offering and later on, such sacrificial foods are consumed similarly.

#### **4.13.7 Sauna Puja Ritual**

The priestly council of the village observes this *Puja* (Worshipping) during the months of *Saun* (July). The village priests first dig a ditch within the compound of the shrine and introduce a bundle of green bananas and cover the ditch with loose earth for ripening. After that, the *Bordeori* offers *Ewan* such as bananas, areca nuts, and betel vine leaves incenses etc. at the altar of the shrine and sacrifices chickens for welfare of the villagers as well as for a successful harvesting of paddy .

#### **4.13.8 Bisu-puja**

*Deoris* observe the *Bihu* festival, which they called *Bisu* and generally start in their temple. *Bisu* festival is preceded by *Bisu puja* in the *Thanghar*(Shrine). The *Bisu* is started after performing religious activities in the Shrine. All the members of the priests and priestly council and all other office bearers of the Shrine arrange the required items for *bisu-puja* many days before commencement of *Bihu*. All the villagers enjoy *Bisu* festival for one week and the festival come to an end in the *Thanghar* again.

#### **4.14 Some other Rituals Performed in the House or in the Village**

Apart from the Shrine there are many rituals of *Deoris* which are performed in their house or some specific place of the village. These rituals are arranged by the respective family or house. Generally *Deodhais* perform the worshipping

activities in such rituals. The rituals performed in the house or in the village are pointed below.

#### **4.14.1 Achira or Achia (Achar/Bor) Ritual**

This ritual is generally held in the months of *Ahin* (October) and *Kati* (November). It is performed privately for bumper crop and for the welfare of the villagers. The *Deodhai* prays to the deities for increasing wealth and giving bumper crops of the host.

#### **4.14.2 Bhakat Midi or Purushiya (Na-Janiya/Akoish Janiya)**

This ritual can be divided into two types, viz., *Na-Janiya* (nine persons) and *Akoish-Janiya* (21 persons) on the basis of number of *Bhakat* or *Purush* (Man) engaged and invited for completion of this ritual. In this ritual 9 (nine) and 21 (twenty one) *Bhakat* or *Purushs* are engaged respectively besides the other general invitees. That is why, the ritual is also known as *Na-Purushiya* or *Akoish-Purushiys* ritual. They collectively bless the host and appease the deities for well being of the forthcoming days. The most significant aspect of this type of ritual can be performed in any month of the year, even during the month of *Push* (December) and *Chaitra* (March).

#### **4.14.3 Bebaraja Ritual**

*Bebaraja* is generally worshipped at the time of acute illness. When a man or woman is supposed to be possessed by *Beba*, he or she is easily identified by an expert *Deodhai* or priest. A possessed man or a woman falls seriously ill and becomes unconscious; and his or her tongue is noticed to be of abnormal length. The *Deodhai* appeals to the deity to leave the innocent person and cure him or her of the illness early.

#### **4.14.4 Borchuan Ritual**

This ritual is generally performed during the month of *Aghun* (November) for the purpose of bettering agricultural productivities. This is performed with a sow and seven chickens, generally, in an open paddy field.

#### **4.14.5 Chan-Ya Ritual**

*Chan-Ya* ritual is performed basically for satisfaction of the *Chan* (Sun) and *Ya* (Moon). This ritual is generally solemnized out-side the house.

#### **4.14.6 Dangaria (Bura/Rangason) Ritual**

This ritual is performed in all the months of the year except the months of *Paush* (December) and *Chitra* (March). The ritual place considered fit may be a spot in the nearby field and generally under a bushy tree. This ritual is divided

into *Gujaya Dangaria* and *Guhunia Dangaria*. Both the rituals are performed in the event of sudden illness of a person.

#### **4.14.7 Dua Chitere or Borkin Ritual**

*Dua Chitere* ritual is performed during all the months of the year avoiding *Paush* and *Chaitra* months. When a particular household is believed to be polluted or is believed to have invited ill-luck by any ominous birds or animals then the concerned household has to arrange this ritual for well being of the household.

#### **4.14.8 Hamkia Midi Ritual**

This ritual is generally performed during the month of *Aghun* (November). Since this ritual is to be arranged secretly, it is performed at night somewhere in the *Tinali* (road junction). The household engages a *Deodhai* and two to three *Bhakat* for performing the *Puja* for household's well being. A *Deodhai* is particularly selected from a particular clan, especially *Chario* clan of Dibongiyas.

#### **4.14.9 Jalkai Ritual**

*Jalkai* ritual is performed during the monsoon season, as this deity is believed to be residing in water. When a man or woman suddenly falls ill near the river or rivulet, then it is believed that *Jalkai* deity is responsible for it. The

*Deodhai* offers the cooked food and meat to deity and appeals him for the welfare of the victim.

#### **4.14.10 Jal Narayan Ritual**

This ritual is also performed during the monsoon period, as the deity is believed to be residing in the river. When the deity of water cause illness and harms any member suddenly, then in order to emancipate from the illness, the family performs this ritual.

#### **4.14.11 Ji-Iban Ritual**

It is a ritual, which is performed for satisfaction of *Jaleswari Ai* or *Jiha-Duyan-Yoi* who is also believed to the residing in the river water, generally during the monsoon season.

#### **4.14.12 Kalika (Bor) Ritual**

This ritual is meant for the well being of the domestic buffaloes and cattle. For better health of the domestic animals and for increasing their production the household performs this ritual with an *Arshibadia* (Who blesses) along with some goals in the courtyard of the household generally in the evening time.

#### **4.14.13 Kania Jalpan Ritual**

*Kania Jalpan* ritual is regarded as the annual ritual of a family, which is observed for driving out the evil of the household.

#### **4.14.14 Kin-Dabeba Ritual**

*Kin Dabeba* ritual is performed by the engaged *Deodhai* in the backside of the granary of the household. Rice-beer, an egg, etc. are the few important articles for this ritual.

#### **4.14.15 Minuchi or Miruchi Ritual**

This ritual is observed for the prosperity of wealth for which the deity is known as 'Goddess of wealth'. This kind of ritual is performed inside the *Biban* (Granary) of the household by the head of the family.

#### **4.14.16 Mora or Mimo Ritual**

The important items of this ritual are – a sow, four chickens, *Merku Jubura*, (specific green leaves) vegetables, *Tulashi* (plant used in worshipping) *Kapogujun* (Cotton), *Achi Iban*, *Kimaru* (a typical plant) *Aakhoi* ( form of rice) powdered rice, un-grind turmeric etc. special shape of *Dirbu-Punji*, *Mei-Musu* made of banana bark are required for this ritual. This ritual is performed by an engaged *Deodhai* along with the help of a group of *Pachani* (helper).

#### **4.14.17 Risto Ritual**

This ritual is performed generally in all months of the year. *Risto* is propitiated with pig or turtle or fowls or fish inside the household for well being of the family members. No special priest or *Deodhai* is required for this type of ritual except an *Arshibadia* along with three to nine *Bhakats* who are invited to perform the ritual.

#### **4.14.18 Suwosani Midi (*Yanyo Midi*) Ritual**

This is worshipped generally is the month of *Bohag* (April) especially by the *Luparu*, *Chitigayo* clans for well-being of their family members. The front room of a house of the *Luparu* and *Chitigayo* clans is the abode of the *Suwosani* or *Yanyo Midi*. The members of that family generally treat that room as 'protected room'. This ritual is generally not found in the *Dibangiya* group.

#### **4.14.19 Yan Teruba Ritual**

This is a kind of household purificatory ritual. When a household gets temporarily polluted by ominous deeds; and the house is polluted by ominous animals, viz., snake, vulture, owl, crow, etc. then for sake of purification the household performs this ritual. This tiny ritual follows each of the important ritual generally.

#### **4.14.20 Yoi-Chagaduba or Midi Chagaduba**

This ritual is generally held inside the house offering a small packet consisting of areca-nuts, betel-vine leaves and a coin promising to propitiate *Yoi* or any such ritual in due course by the household. The purpose of this kind of ritual is nothing but the mitigation of bad times.

#### **4.14.21 Yoi Midi Ritual**

*Yoi Midi* ritual is performed for satisfaction of *Yoi* i.e., 'Ai'. Three to five experienced old women known as *Gopini* (Women) perform the '*Yoi-Midi*' ritual generally inside the household. The ritual is performed in order to get rid of any illness of the inmates.

#### **4.14.22 Yoi-Nigi-Numa Ritual**

*Yoi-Nigi-Numa* (*Ai Sabah*) ritual is performed during the month of *Ahin* (October) at a selected place generally on the bank of a nearby river. The *Bordeori* distributes green areca nuts, betel vine leaves, powdered rice; ripe bananas etc. on banana leaves and offer them on a model of canoe, specially constructed for the purpose. Later on, the canoe, along with the offerings is carried to the river where they leave that canoe in the current of the river. They believe that the deities of small-pox and other diseases leave the village along with the current of the water sitting on that special canoe. The ritual is performed collectively for bidding farewell to the '*Yoi Midi*'.

The above-mentioned forms of rituals have been performed almost by all the three sections of the *Deoris*. But minor deviation in the propitiation system from village to village and section to section cannot be ruled out. At present, some additions as well as omissions in the propitiating systems in various rituals are also observed in the greater *Deori* society.

#### **4.15 Birth Rites of Deoris**

As regards births and death, the traditional *Deoris* have some traditional rites to perform like few other orthodox societies. The birth and death rites are occasioned by the imposition of '*Chua*', i.e., pollution. Birth pollution is regarded more important than death pollution.

*Deoris* generally regard seven days to ten days after the birth of a child as the polluted period. Such emerging force of impurity extends to their natal *Jaku* or clan and covers all around the villages without any territorial boundaries. The womenfolk near and dear to the family visit such household with few articles, like 'Suje', fowl, bundle of fire-wood, vegetables, black-pepper etc. meant for the mother as a token of love and affinity. On the other hand, the new-born baby is also given due importance and care. The household, along with the new-born baby and the mother, remains impure till the *Chua Labiruba* or *Hudi Labiruba* (purificatory ritual) is performed. The most significant aspect of the birth ritual is that seven members from seven different clans are generally necessary as attendants for purifying a new-born child, the mother and the household.

#### **4.16 Death Rites of Deoris**

Death in the family, normally, is considered to be the most tragic incident in the family. For disposal of the dead body the *Deoris* observe some specific rules and systems and they believe that the non-observance of those may lead the family to great trouble in near future (Deori, 2006). Generally, elderly men and women dying natural death are cremated. On the other hand, deaths in delivery, death of children, un-natural deaths, death from epidemic and suicide, the deceased are buried in the cremation ground instead of being cremated. There are some traditional restrictions in respect of disposal of dead bodies depending upon the division of the Deori community in which the death occurred. If a Tengaponiya villager dies in a Borgoyan village or vice-versa, the guardians of the deceased must purchase a piece of land for disposal of the dead body. Otherwise, the dead body is to be carried to his / her native village territory for disposal purpose. This traditional restriction is still prominent amongst the Tengaponiya and the Borgoyan groups.

#### **4.17 Marriage and its Rituals**

Like the other communities, marriage is an indispensable part of the *Deori* society, which can be regarded as a social institution (Samanta, et. al. 1988).

The *Deoris* have four different forms of marriage, viz., *Borbiya*, *Mājubiya*, *Sarubiya* or *Bhakatrupia* and *Gandharbabiya* which are generally known to them as *Denbiya*, *Sashiobachi*, *Bhakatrupia* or *Sarubachi* and *Janegna*

*Laharuba* respectively (Borthakur, 1980). Distinctions of the marriage are made according to the expenses incurred in the marriage and also depending upon the mode of performances.

*Borbiya* (large marriage), is an expensive affair and it is normally solemnized with much pomp and ceremony which is continued for three to four days and *Majubiya* (Moderate type of marriage) is slightly lesser than the *Borbiya* with duration of two days. *Surubiya* (small type) is also a popular type of marriage performance without much fun and merry-making.

The most widely prevalent type of marriage is *Gandharbabiya* or marriage by elopement. In this type of marriage, the couple concerned takes initiative themselves. Here no formal ceremony is performed except a simple feast called *Biya-Lagaruba* at bridegroom's residence on the same day or on the following day of elopement. However, once during the lifetime of the couple a ceremony called *Suje Luguruba* or *Meloni* has to be performed at a time and day convenient to the bridegroom. The couple can perform such ritual in any year, even after passing of several years of their marriage by elopement. Since this marriage ritual in such cases is performed generally after the couple who normally attain the old age, this kind of marriage ritual is also popularly known as *Buri-Biya*.

The most significant aspect of a *Deori* marriage is the voluntary contribution of essential items by each household of the village, which they call *Dali* or *Bhujani*, The important items of their marriage feast constitute fish, pork, rice-beer, rice, vegetables, betel-vine leaves and areca nuts, etc. which are

contributed by the villagers. Rice-beer and betel nut are the most inevitable items for a *Deori* marriage ceremony.

#### **4.18 Bihu festival of Deoris**

The *Deoris* observe the Bihu festival, which they called *Bisu* (Deori, 1974), and generally starts in their temple. They observe two major *Bihus* during the year, which fall in the months of *Bohag* (April) and *Magh* (January). According to the *Deori* Language, the term *Bisu* denotes 'Extreme Rejoicing', where 'Bi' means extreme and 'Su' mean rejoicing. The *Bihus* are popularly known amongst them as *Bohagio Bisu* and *Maghio Bisu*, perhaps named after the respective months in which those fall (Saikia, et. al. 1969-71).

*Deori* culture is related to agriculture. Agriculture is related to the seasons of the year. So with the views to increase production of agriculture and to expect welfare of the country, society or domestic animals and for worshipping the deities, they perform the *Puja*.

##### **4.18.1 Bahagio Bisu**

To observe the Bihu all necessary arrangements are to be made much ahead of the day of the Bihu. It has been indicated above that the *Bohagio-Bisu* is observed in the month of *Bohag* (April). The importance of lunar-phase as well as special day of the week is generally taken into consideration in respect of

celebration of the Bihu. Wednesday is the most auspicious day for celebrating the *Deori Bisu*.

The Bihu is the most important festival having relation with their agricultural activities. Seasons of sowing and harvesting periods are also taken into consideration in these festivals, as the *Deori* Society is predominantly agriculture based. The most significant feature of Bihu is that a *Puja*, which they termed as *Bisu-Puja*, must precede each Bihu. The *Bisu-Puja* is generally performed in their shrines located in every *Deori* village. The *Bihu* festivals are observed before starting the agricultural operation to facilitate the villagers in merry making. Before starting the agricultural operation, especially Sali (Kharif) crops, the *Deoris* observe this festival for seven to fourteen days with unrestricted joy and merry-making.

Towards noon of the *Bisu-Puja* day, all villagers irrespective of age and sex gather at the shrine. They are purified by the sacred water prepared by the priests of the temple in a copper container. The *Bordeori* (chief priests) along with the three priests offer prayer inside the temple. In *Bohag-Bihu* festival, girls and married women are allowed to perform dance and music on the courtyard of the temple. Only the *Midi-Girachi* (*Deo-Dhani*) can enter into the shrine when she is possessed by a supernatural power and spirit. The *Midi-Girachi* generally appears during the *Bohag-Bisu* festival.

The younger section, both male and female, is busy in arranging *Husori* Party or *Bisu* party. Separate groups of male and female are arranged for performing *Bihu*

dance. The dancing starts on the temple and after that the parties visit each household. Here also, the *Bordeori's* house should be visited first. The *Husori* or Bihu party blesses the members of the household for a prosperous day and year.

There are provisions for the *Rati-Bihu* (Bihu at night)-amongst their societies. Usually the courtyard of a family preferably *Chari-Deori* of the village or center place of the village is selected for making these provisions. In such places, the boys and the girls do not perform Bihu jointly by the *Tengaponiya* and *Borgoyan* sections. Separate *bihu khula* (open platform for dance) is arranged for boys and for the girls. . They dance and sing in the whole nights. The boys and the girls can perform Bihu jointly in *Dibongiya* society. The themes of *Rati- Bihu* are generally of amorous subjects of a restrained nature.

Another significant point is that *Husori* (Collective Bihu dance in each of the household of the village) is not performed every year . It is performed only after having the general approval of the priestly council of their respective village. During the seven days of Bihu, in the afternoon and at night young people spend a considerable time singing and dancing in front of their shrines (Deoghar).

#### **4.18.2 Maghio Bisu**

The *Maghio Bihu* is observed during the month of Magh (January). During this Bihu a grand feast is arranged on the first Wednesday of *Magh* in the premises of *Morong* attached to the temple (Deori, 1964). Early in the morning of the next day, i.e., on the Thursday the youth put fire in the *Meji* (Wooden piles)

especially erected by them well ahead of the day. The ceremonial fighting of buffaloes, eggs, cocks and even men is arranged during the *Bihu*-seasons.

#### **4.19 Concluding Statement**

As a whole the term '*Deori*' used to designate the recognized priest of religion throughout the races, and this points out to the fact they are essentially what indeed their tribal name implies; a Levite or priestly body, and one in earlier days possessed of large influence which even yet has not been wholly lost. Due to the fact, even till date it has been observed that the term '*Deori*' is attached to the religious or priestly functionaries of various tribal as well as non-tribal communities of the country. They undoubtedly placed the *Deoris* as the priests in their respective religious functions throughout the ages. In course of time, some portion of the population with vested interest perhaps tried to degrade the original priestly status of the *Deoris* by limiting their functions. As and above, it is also observed that the *Deori* priests perform religious functions for their own community and also for non-*Deoris* irrespective of castes. Such type of inclusionary practice in respect of religious functions perhaps led the *Deoris* to be regarded as priestly community amongst all communities around them. From the short outline it is apparent that the *Deoris* were held in esteem and be accorded a special status in respect of religious functions and rituals etc. all throughout the North-Eastern part of India.

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Deoris at a Glance: Plate-I



Deori Woman with Traditional Dress



Deori Couple



Deori Man and Woman with Traditional Dress



Traditional House



Deori Village



Granary



Misong



Weaving



Weaving Sets



Women busy in Weaving



Foodstuff drying on the Misong

Deoris at a Glance: Plate-II



Traditional Marriage



Performed Marriage Song



Community Feast



Deori Bihu Dance



Singing Bihu Song



Bihu Husori



Preparing Suje (Rice Beer)



Hamkia Midi Ritual



Community Feast during  
Magh Bisu



Kundimama Dewalayas  
(Sadiya)



Tamreswari Mandir  
(Bormuria Deori Gaon)

**CHAPTER- V**

**Socio-Cultural  
Transformation**

## Chapter- V

### SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

#### 5.1 Generalities

In the previous chapter a detailed study on migration of *Deori* is depicted with the help of secondary as well as primary information. *Deoris* are known for conservative in nature. It is evident from their profession while working as priests in the temples of Sadiya during Chutiya and Ahom kingdom. To know them well it is very important to study the present and past socio-cultural life. The present chapter deals with the socio-cultural transformation as a result of acculturation with different ethnic groups and adaptations in the new ecology where they have settled.

#### 5.2 Cultural Transformation among Tribes in the Past

The history of Assam bears testimony to the merger of little traditions with great traditions undergoing the process of acculturation and assimilation. The process was slow but accommodative. Ethnic group like 'Tai Ahom' is a classic example of acculturation and assimilation. The Moran, the 'Matak', the 'Koch' also followed in the same path forming a major chunk in the great Assamese society in the distant past. There were tribes who preferred to shift their abode in to the remote hilly and inaccessible riverine areas. The process of acculturation was accelerated when the British occupied Assam as per Yandabo Treaty on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1826. The inflow of people from other

provinces continued unabated and the social and economic life of the indigenous people was largely affected (Baruah, 1976). There was practically no resistance from the local non-tribal people but the Kachari, Khamti, Singpho people revolted against the administration on this issue of acculturation.

The post independence national reconstruction process through the planned development could not keep the tribes aloof in their hitherto secluded areas. The plains tribes particularly the 'Sonowal Kachari' of upper Assam, 'Lalung' of the plain district of Morigaon, 'Barman' of Cachar district, the 'Boro Kachari' of Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang, Kokrajhar, Nalbari districts were under the process of acculturation and assimilation. The 'Sonowal Kachari' and 'Lalung' were mostly assimilated to the fellow Assamese way of life of the plain districts even before the Independence (Bordoloi, 1987). It was not uncommon to find non-Sonowal titles like Bora, Saikia, Hazarika etc. suffixing their names. They become disciples of the famous '*Auniati Satra*' of Majuli (Jorhat). Another example of assimilation is the Barman of Cachar, a plains tribe of Barak Valley. The 'Barmans' are a part of the 'Dimasa Kachari' and history of Assam is replete with reference of their migration from North Cachar Hills to the plains of Cachar (Wade, 1972). They have also discontinued their traditional culture of performing dance and music. The traditional '*Khram*' (Drum) is replaced by Manipuri '*Khol*', '*Suphiu*' (flute) by modern Manipuri flute. The 'Barmans', however, do not observe *Bihu* (a festival of Assamese culture) festival due to influence of Bengalis (Deori,

1994). The Barmans speak Bengali when they talk to non-Barmans but their mother tongue remains to be Dimasa language.

Change is the nature of culture. Thus, changes have been noticed particularly in material culture among the tribes, more particularly among the plains tribes like 'Boro Kachari', 'Rabha', 'Deori' and 'Mishing'. However these changes have not affected the core of the cultures of these tribes. Even then for all practical purposes there is acculturation among them and there is no vertical division of the community.

Similar characteristics are more or less evident among the Deoris, a riverine tribe who can be called 'Saktas'. Due to long association with the non-Deori population in the plains, it is not unnatural to find non-tribal elements particularly in respect of material culture. The Tengaponia and Bargoyan section of Deoris embraced Assamese language while the Dibongiya section has maintained their own dialect. Change is also seen in respect of health care and traditional medicine. Enriched Ethno-botanical and traditional health care system of the community is compressed by the modern health care facilities which have lagging behind the age-old tradition that was dependant on *Mongolotis* (local quack). Like wise cultural assimilation and amalgamation has taken place with other community as a result of influence of the modern society.

The socio-cultural traits discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter IV) are practiced by Deoris before 1950s, which is a traditional Deori culture. After the independence till 1970s, they were performing their rituals in

traditional culture but with lot of flexibility. After 1970s substantial changes have occurred among their traditional culture. The ecological environment in the present settlement has influenced their traditional culture to a great extent. The developmental activities adopted by the Assamese society also persuade their life significantly. So, these factors are mainly responsible for large-scale cultural transformations of *Deoris*.

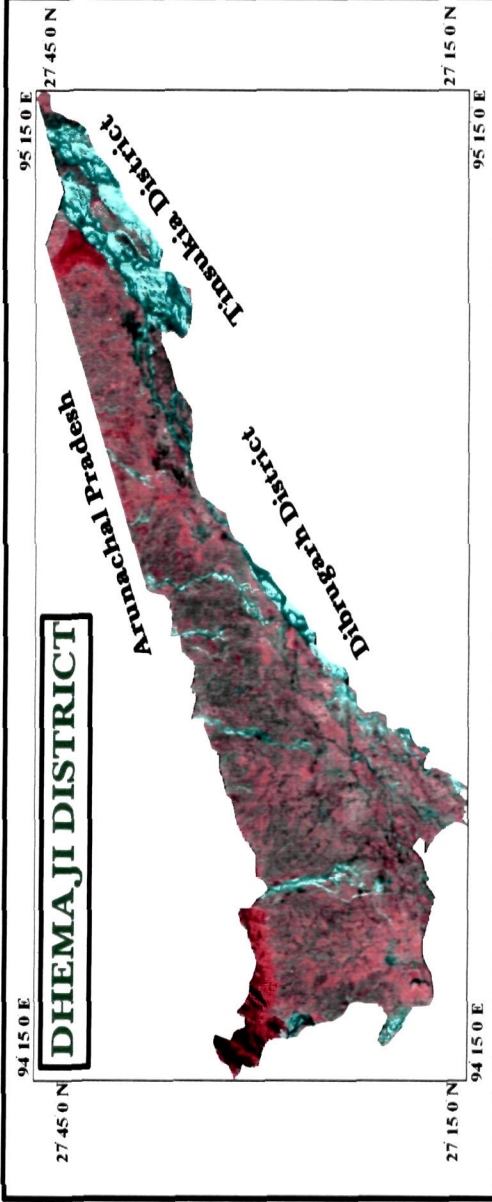
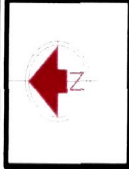
### **5.3 A Case Study in Dhemaji District**

Deoris are mostly settled in eight districts of Assam and have three subgroups called *foids* (Clans). Although most *Deoris* are settled in all eight districts, all the three *foids* are not found together in one district except Dhemaji. Most of the people of Dibongiya *foid* are found in Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, and Jorhat districts. The majority of Tengaponiya people are found in Sibsagar district. Dhemaji is the only district where all the three *foids* (Dibongiya, Tengaponiya and Borgoyan) are found to be settled. Hence the present research work is deliberately chosen for Dhemaji district so that it provides a better understanding of their socio-cultural change and transformation of *Deoris*.

### **5.4 Location and Physical Setting of the District**

Dhemaji district of Assam occupies the North-Eastern part of the state .Dhemaji sub-division came into operational as a district on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1989. It comprises of erstwhile Dhemaji and Jonai sub-divisions and part of

**ASSAM**



‘Machkhua Mouza’ and ‘Bordoloni’. Forted by arch shaped Arunachal hills in the north and east, the district emerges from the foothills and stretches to the Brahmaputra River with Subansiri in one side and the other side with river Siang. Geographically situated between the 94<sup>0</sup>12’18” E longitudes and 27<sup>0</sup>05’27” N and 27<sup>0</sup>57’16” N latitudes, the district covers an area of 3237 sq .km and is basically plain area lying at an altitude of 104 meter above the mean sea level. It occupies 2, 63,701 hectares of land area which accounts for 3.36 percent of the state. It is bounded in the east and north by Arunachal and partly by Tinsukia district, in the west by Lakhimpur district, and in the south by river Brahmaputra. The three mighty rivers i.e. Dihing, Dibang and Lohit joins together before entering in to the valley and exerts tremendous impact at the eastern most corner of Dhemaji district and makes the district flooded during rainy season. The district has a total cropped area of 100237 hectares while 63665 hectares are covered by forest land. The district receives high annual rainfall accompanied by flash floods in the summer season.

The district has two subdivisions and five revenue blocks with 1205 inhabited villages. The river Brahmaputra flows from east to west in southern part of the district. Different tributaries viz., Dihingia, Jiadhal, Moridhal, Telijan, Kaitangjan, Laipulia Nadi, Kapordhowa, Sisi, Gai, Tangani and Gutung originating from Arunachal Pradesh in the north, flow southwest carrying enormous amount of alluvium through the district before meeting the river Brahmaputra (Gazetteers, 1971).

### 5.5 General Characteristics of the Sample Villages

Udoypur *Deori* Gaon is a customary Tengaponia *Deori* village in Sisiborgaon block under Silapothar police station in Dhemaji district. Ramyapur borders the village towards north, Udoypur & Barua towards west, Barhoiting in the east and Rupahi pathar in the south. There are numerous rivers or streams around the village. River Lepeng, Kamseng, and Hao flow to the north through the southwest corner of the village. River Gutung and Misamari are also flowing through the village. The village is located at a distance of 19 km. from the district headquarter of Dhemaji. After the 1951 great earthquake of Assam, the settlement took place in those villages. In the initial stage, only three families came there in search of cultivable land from Ghelgheli in Sibsagar district. At present the number of families increased to 65. They worship *Balia Baba* as their chief deity and there is a *Than Ghar*, a worship place in the remote corner of the village. During rituals wearing of traditional dresses and eating traditional dishes are an important part. Selectively 26 households have been surveyed in this village. The village is frequently affected by flood during rainy season and at that time boats are the major mode of transport. The houses are bamboo base floors constructed on pillars above the ground and are known as *Chang Ghars*.

Borbam, the second sample village is basically inhabited by Dibongiya *foid of Deoris*. They use *Deori* language as their mother tongue. The village is located in Bordoloni block and fall under Gogamukh Thana area and at a distance of 35 km from district headquarter of Dhemaji. Arunachal Pradesh

borders the village to the north; National highway 52; Maisa M.V. School and Lalung Gaon are located to the south. Kumotia, and Jiadhhol River lie to the east; Borbam higher secondary school and *Deori* Pathar make the western boundary of the village. The first settlement in Borbam *Deori* village was occurred in 1900 and only 12 families have settled there migrating from Kopoughuli. Now the number of families increased to 80. Most of the families are performing traditional rituals and use traditional dress and food in their day-to-day life. The villagers worship *Kundimama* or '*Gira-Girachi*' as their chief deities in the *Than Ghar* (Place of worship). There is a Lower primary and a higher secondary school within 1 km of distance from the village. The approaching road to the village is graveled and is not suitable for movement during rainy season. Although construction of the road is going on, it does not provide facilities for smooth running in dry season also. Total 32 households were selected for household study.

Dhunaguri village is located at distance of 35 km. from Dhemaji district head quarter. This village is under Sisiborgaon development block and Silapother Thana. Dhunaguri is inhabited by Borgoyan *foid* of *Deoris*. Sisiborgaon borders the village to the north, Sisi River to the east, Singimarijan to the south and Dhemaji block to the west. The approaching road is black topped and motorable in all season. The road is connected to the national high way 52. The first settlers migrated and settled here from Muktiar in 1938. Only three families settled in that time and now the number of families is increased to 90. The people worship *Pichashi Dema* or *Tumreswari*

96°30' E

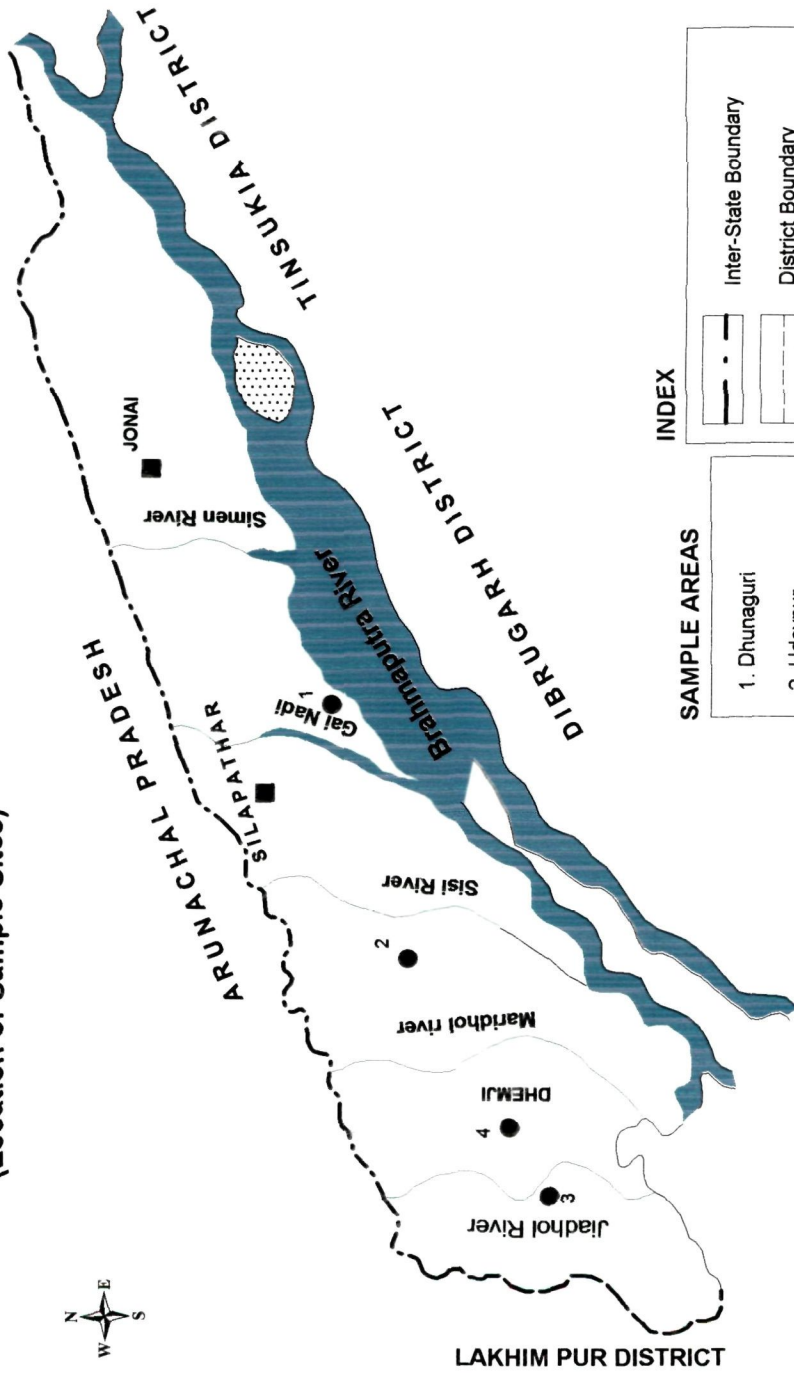
94°15' E

# DHEMAJI DISTRICT (Location of Sample Sites)



27°45' N

27°15' N



### INDEX

	Inter-State Boundary
	District Boundary
	Rivers
	Urban Centres

### SAMPLE AREAS

1. Dhunaguri
2. Udoypur
3. Borbaim
4. Dhemaji Town



Source: Prepared by Researcher Based on Field Data

Map No.-18

as their chief deity in *Than Ghar*. On selective basis survey, 36 households were identified as sample household.

The fourth sample area is Dhemaji town having population of 11,863 (2001) in Dhemaji block under Dhemaji Thana. Total number of households of the town is 1977, out of which *Deori* households are 30. Among them, 52 percent belongs to Dibongiya *foid*. Tengaponiyas constitutes 24 percent and the Borgoyans also shares 24 percent of the total households. They migrated to Dhemaji town from different villages of upper Assam for service and other secondary activities. To perform rituals they visit their native villages. All the 30 families were considered for personal interview for the study. Out of the 30 households nine families don't follow their traditional culture at all.

**Table: 5.1a Selected Background Characteristics of Sample Villages**

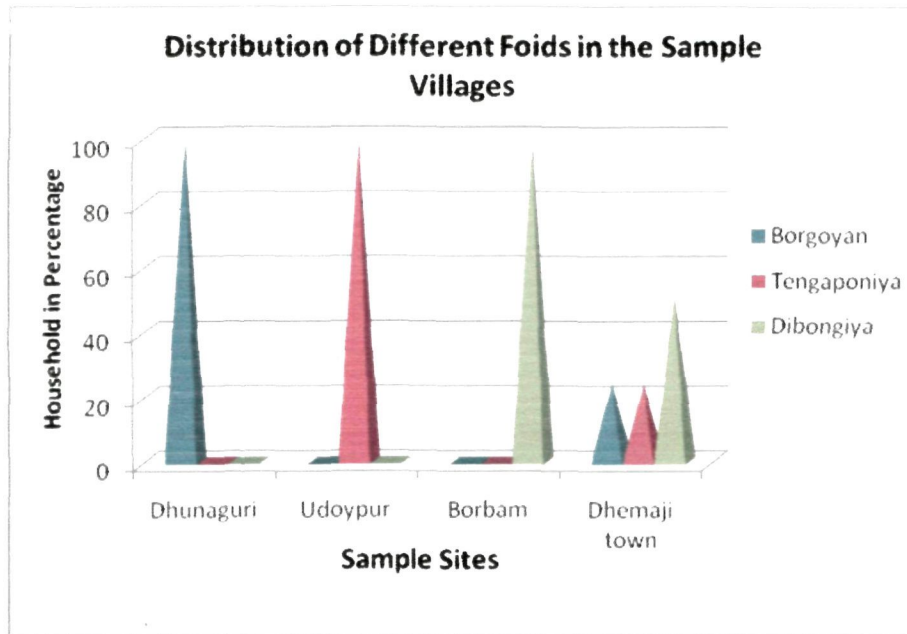
Sample Villages	Sub group ( <i>Foid</i> or <i>Khel</i> )	Language Spoken	Worshipping Deity	Nearest town (Km)
Dhunaguri	Borgoyan	Assamese	Exclusively <i>Pisachi Dema</i>	35
Udoypur	Tengaponiya	Assamese	Exclusively <i>Pisha Dema</i>	19
Borbam	Dibongiya	Deori	Dominantly <i>Kundi Mama</i>	36
Dhemaji town	Mixed of three <i>foids</i>	Deori and Assamese	<i>Pisachi Dema</i> , <i>Pisha Dema</i> , <i>Kundi Mama</i> and Lord Krishna (Mixed)	0

Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007

**Table 5.1b Distribution of Different Sub-Groups (*Foids*) in Sample Villages (in %)**

Sl. No	Village	Khel/ <i>Foid</i>	Borgoyans to total Deori population of the village	Dibongiyan to total Deori population of the village	Tengaponiyas to total Deori population of the village
1	Dhunaguri	Borgoyan	100	0	0
2	Udoypur	Tengaponiya	0	0	100
3	Borbam	Dibongiya	0	100	0
4	Dhemaji town	Borgoyan, Tengaponiya & Dibongiya	24	52	24

Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.1**

## 5.6 Study of the Sample Villages

The following study shows the aspects where transformation is taking place and the degree of transformation among them.

### 5.6.1 House Types

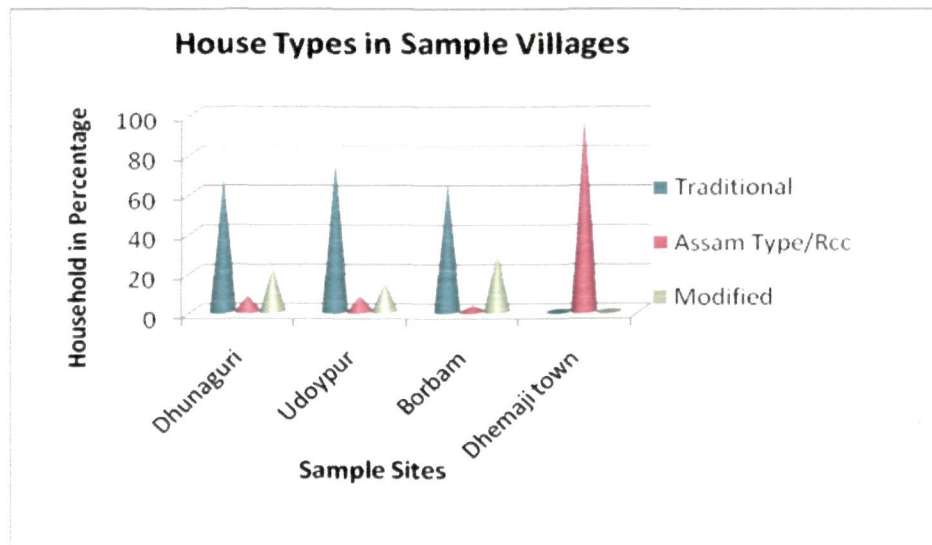
Traditional *Deori* houses (*Chang Ghar*) dominate the villages but in Dhemaji town Assam type or RCC type of houses are replacing the traditional houses. The traditional houses are built with bamboo, wood, and thatch which are locally available. The houses are rest on piles at 5–7 feet height from the soil. The percentages of traditional houses in Dhunaguri, Udoypur and Borbam are 69 percent, 77 percent and 66 percent respectively (Table: 5.2 & Fig-5.2). On the other hand the percentages of modified traditional houses are

23 percent, 15 percent, 31 percent, for the same villages. In the modified traditional house corrugated tin sheets, concrete posts and bricks are used for walls. Some houses are using thatch, bamboo, cement, and mud as building materials.

**Table: 5.2 House Types in the Sample Villages**

Village	No. of houses	Traditional ( <i>Chang Ghar</i> )		Assam Type or RCC		Modified Traditional		Total
		No	%	No	%	No	%	
Dhunaguri	36	25	69	3	8	8	23	100
Udoypur	26	20	77	2	8	4	15	100
Borbam	32	21	66	1	3	10	31	100
Dhemaji town	30	0	0	30	100	0	0	100

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.2**

Some new houses are built in the modified form of traditional house. The main reason of preferring such house type is the durability of it and it preserves their culture also. The building of Assam type and RCC type houses are influenced by the Assamese culture.

The villages are located near the rivers and are frequently affected by flood water during the rainy season. A highly piled *Changghar* can save their houses from flood water. The granaries are rested on higher piles than that of the houses so that the food stuff may be protected even during the high flood. Majority of the households have long entrance and vegetable gardens within their premises. In many traditional type houses boundaries are not fenced. But the Assam Type and RCC Type house have well fenced boundary.

### 5.6.2 Family Types

About 69 percent of the total families of Dhunaguri village are nuclear type and remaining 31 percent are joint family type. But in Udoypur 50 percent are nuclear and another 50 percent are joint family type .In Borbam village, 81 percent of the total households are nuclear type while 19 percent have joint family system (Table: 5.3 and Fig-5.3). There is an increasing trend in nuclear family type among the people of the villages. In Dhemaji town, there are 83 percent families are nuclear and 17 percent are joint family type.

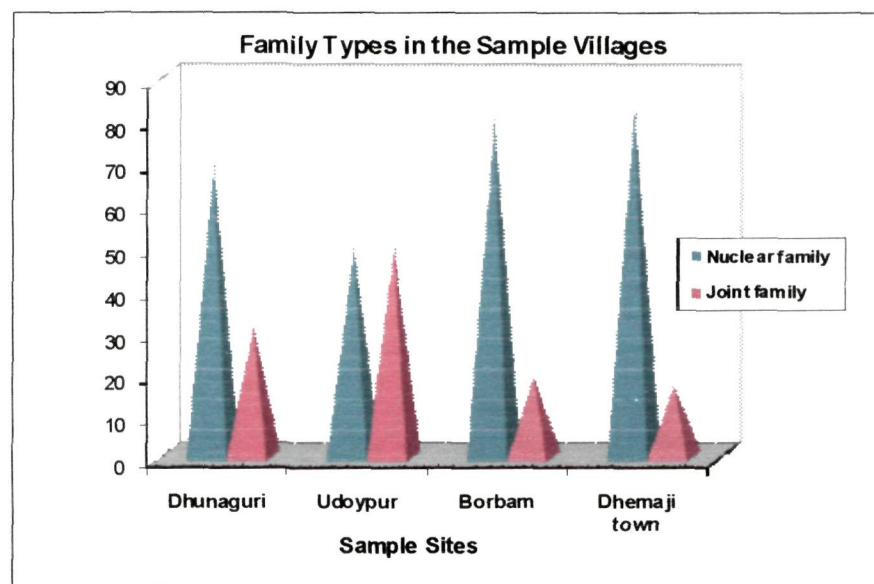
**Table: 5.3 Family Types in the Sample Villages**

<b>Village</b>	<b>No. of nuclear family type</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No. of Joint family type</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dhunaguri	25	69	11	31	100
Udoypur	13	50	13	50	100
Borbam	26	81	6	19	100
Dhemaji town	25	83	5	17	100

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007

Generally, in traditional joint family system, there were more than 50 members in a household. But, at present it rarely exceeds 15 members. So the

structure of joint family system is also changed. A nuclear family includes average 5 persons in a household. It may be mentioned that nuclear family type is not a traditional system of *Deori* society which is now dominating the overall family system. The reason behind is that many families from the villages went to the urban areas and also to another suitable areas for occupational purpose. The economic advantage of a nuclear family is also an attracting factor. The size of land holdings becoming smaller after dividing them among the sons and the limited land can support only single family.



**Figure: 5.3**

### **5.6.3 Causes of Migration to the Present Settlement**

Different causes are found in the history of human migration. The following table (Table: 5.4 Fig: 5.4) shows some of the causes of migration among the community in the sample villages from their past settlements to the

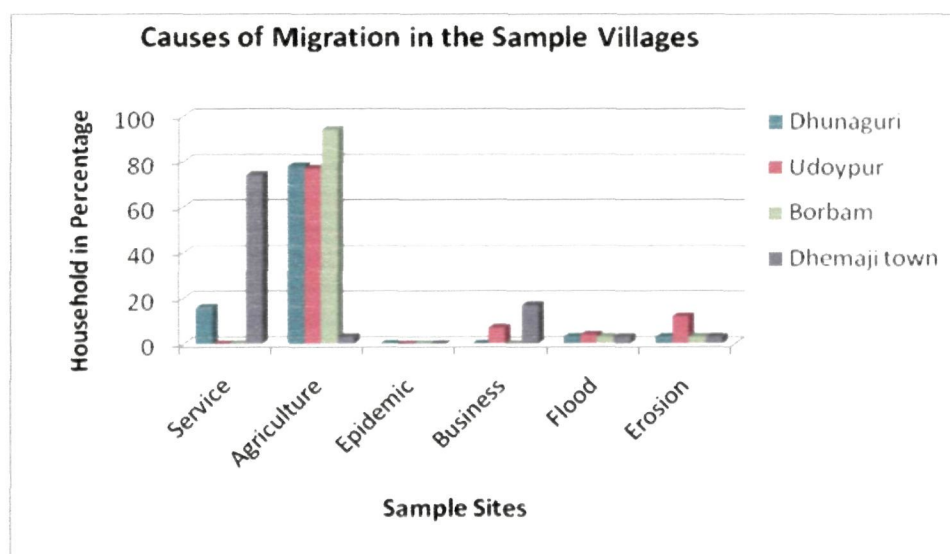
present locations. Agriculture is the main cause of migration in the three villages except Dhemaji town.

**Table: 5.4 Causes of Migration**

Causes of Migration	Number of Families							
	Dhunaguri	%	Udoypur	%	Borbam	%	Dhemaji town	%
Service	6	16	0	0	0	0	22	74
Agriculture	28	78	20	77	30	94	1	3
Epidemic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business	0	0	2	7	0	0	5	17
Flood	1	3	1	4	1	3	1	3
Erosion	1	3	3	12	1	3	1	3

**Source:** Based on Field Survey-2007

Out of the total households in Dhunaguri 78 percent had migrated there in search of cultivable land and 77 percent of Udoypur and more than 90 percent of the households in Borbam had migrated from the previous settlements in search of cultivable land.



**Figure: 5.4**

Out of the total sample households, 74 percent have migrated to Dhemaji town in search of service and 17 percent came as businessman.

Migration from one place to another place was continuing till the last century. They left those places where cultivation is not suited and the migrated to uninhabited new lands. They settled in such places where land is fertile, water is sufficient and a peaceful livelihood may exist. The forefathers of the present villagers in Dhunaguri, Borbam Udoypur and in Dhemaji town settled in different places in the Brahmaputra valley after the mass migration from Sadiya (in 1829). Before migrating to Dhunaguri (during 1938), they had lived in Muktiar, on the south bank of river Brahmaputra. Due to low productivity of land they could not successfully practice the agricultural activities there. People in Borbam had migrated from Kopoughuli during 1900. This village was frequently affected by flood & that is why they had left that place.

The first settlers of Udoypur Deori gaon had migrated from Ghelgheli during 1951 which was located on the south bank of river Brahmaputra. After the earthquake in 1950, this village was eroded away by the river Brahmaputra.

The first settlers in Dhemaji town had migrated from Tengapani village in Sibsagar district during 1956. Tengapani village was severely affected by flood and soil erosion.

So, the migration of *Deoris* was greatly influenced by the geographical as well as environmental condition existing in their earlier habitats.

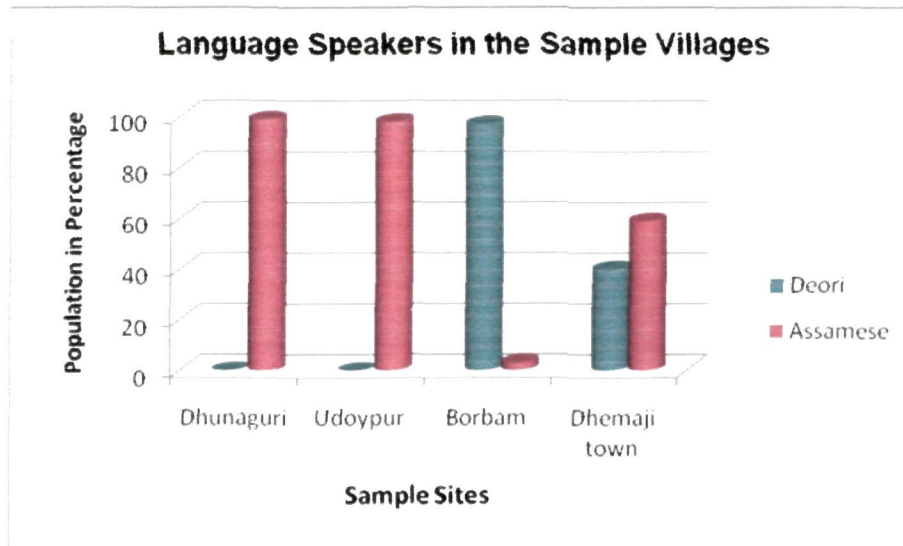
#### 5.6.4 Changes in Languages

Historically Deori language was the medium of interaction among the four *foids* of Deoris in the past. Presently the Borgoayn and the Tengaponiya groups are not using their traditional dialects since are assimilated to Assamese culture. The Dibongiyas on the other hand, are trying to retain their traditional culture. Even among the present three *foids* of *Deoris* Assamese become the main language of communication. It is a huge difference between the number of Deori population and number of speakers of *Deori* language (Table: 5.5 & Fig: 5.5). No one speaks *Deori* language in Dhunaguri and in Udoypur villages. In contrary 97 percent of the population of Borbam village speaks *Deori* language as their mother tongue. In Dhemaji town about 40 percent of the sample households speak *Deori* language while 59 percent speaks Assamese language.

**Table: 5.5 Languages Spoken by Deoris in the Sample Villages**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Deori as mother tongue</b>	<b>Percentage to total population</b>	<b>Assamese as mother tongue</b>	<b>Percentage to total population</b>
Dhunaguri	0	0	169	99
Udoypur	0	0	170	98
Borbam	170	97	5	3
Dhemaji town	53	40	77	59

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure 5.5**

After migrating from Sadiya to diverse vicinity of Assam, they were exposed to different communities and in the new socio-cultural environs. Borgoyans and Tengaponiyas have forgotten their own language. Udoypur *Deori* village is surrounded by non *Deori* communities'. Nearby Ahom and Kachari villages have influenced their culture including their language.

It is established that only one language (either *Deori* or Assamese) is used even in *Deori* dominated areas. In the periphery of the villages both Assamese and *Deori* languages are spoken among the *Deori* people.

### **5.6.5 Levels of Education**

In the post independent period, due to introduction of new developmental activities of the Government *Deori* society in Assam is also benefited. The children of the community got the opportunity to go to the schools.

Education facilities were extended to the rural areas under the developmental plan activity. After so many years of spread of schools in the villages, the people of the community still lacks qualified educated people. But only consolation in this aspect is that the people of the community could achieve contemporary education and increase in literate people. The highly qualified people are concentrated in Dhemaji town. The (Table: 5.6) shows the number of educated people in the sample villages.

**Table: 5.6 Levels of Education in Sample Villages**

Village	Persons	Educational Levels						
		Illiterate	Primary	Matriculate	Higher Secondary	Graduate	Post Graduate	Any other
Dhunaguri	Total	7	30	36	25	29	0	8
	Male	1	14	21	15	10	0	4
	Female	6	16	15	10	19	0	4
Udoypur	Total	13	35	37	23	13	3	13
	Male	5	18	19	12	11	2	8
	Female	8	17	18	11	2	1	5
Borbam	Total	19	30	35	41	16	10	8
	Male	8	17	21	25	11	5	4
	Female	11	13	14	16	5	4	11
Dhemaji town	Total	0	23	20	21	43	13	12
	Male	0	10	6	9	26	6	12
	Female	0	13	14	12	17	7	0

Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007

#### a. Educational Levels in Dhunaguri Village

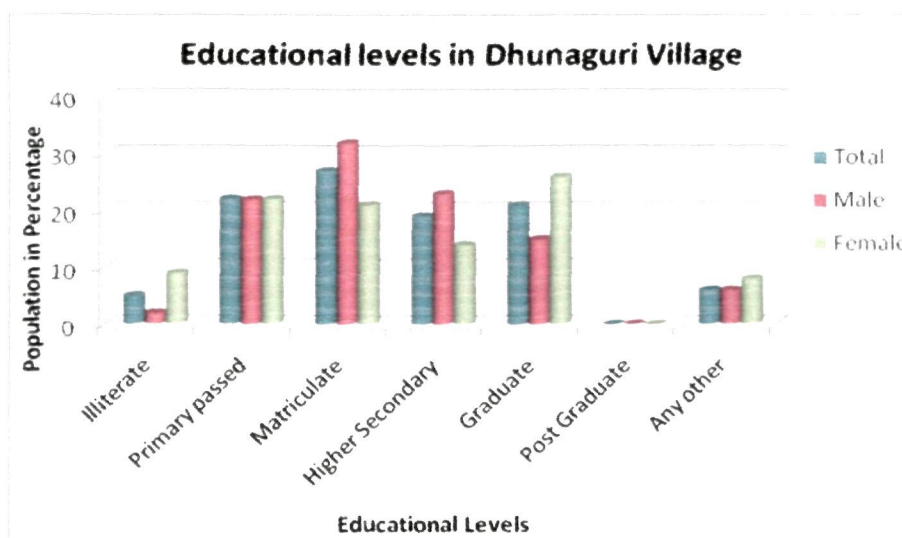
Educational pattern in Dhunaguri village (Table: 5.7 & Fig: 5.6) reveals that Matriculate males (32%) occupy the highest percentage in different educational levels. Among the females 21 percent are Matriculate. 22 percent of the literates are Primary passed. About 19 percent of the population passed higher secondary education whereas the figures for male and female are 23 percent and 14 percent respectively. Graduate degree holders account

21 percent. There is no any Postgraduate degree holder in the village. There is 6 percent among the total literates who attained professional/vocational qualifications like, ITI Diploma, Nursing Diploma and Homeopathic Diploma.

**Table: 5.7 Educational Levels in Dhunaguri village**

Educational levels	Total	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Illiterate	7	5	1	2	6	9
Primary	30	22	14	22	16	22
Matriculate	36	27	21	32	15	21
Higher Secondary	25	19	15	23	10	14
Graduate	29	21	10	15	19	26
Post Graduate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other	8	6	4	6	4	8

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.6**

#### **b. Educational Levels in Udoypur Village**

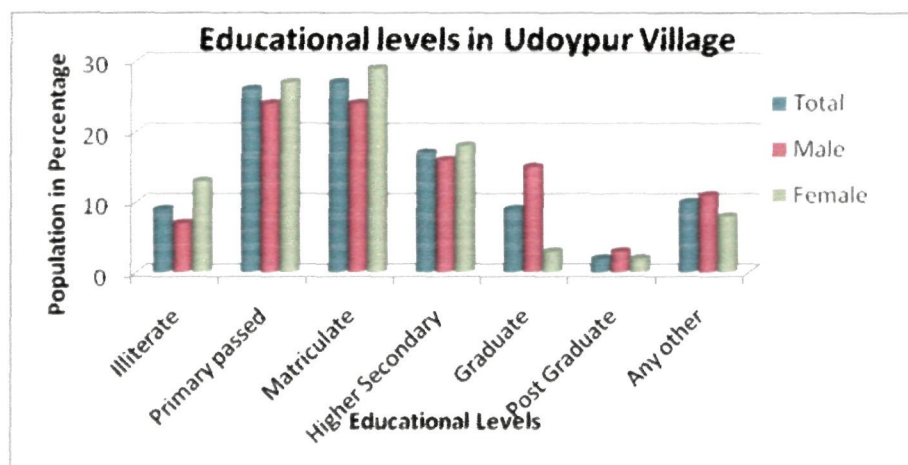
In Udoypur village (Table 5.8 & Fig 5.7) the number of Matriculate individual is highest (27%) among the literates. Among them, Males account for 24 percent and females 27percent.

**Table: 5.8 Educational Levels in Udoypur Village**

Educational levels	Total	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Illiterate	13	9	5	7	8	13
Primary	35	26	18	24	17	27
Matriculate	37	27	19	24	18	29
Higher Secondary	23	17	12	16	11	18
Graduate	13	9	11	15	2	3
Post Graduate	3	2	2	3	1	2
Any other	13	10	8	11	5	8

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007

Postgraduate degree holders represent only 2 percent. Out of the total literates 26 percent have attained primary level of education and Higher Secondary occupies 17 percent. Another 10 percent people have attained qualifications like ITI diploma, electrician diploma etc.



**Figure: 5.7**

**c. Educational Levels in Borbam Village**

The (Table: 5.9 & Fig: 5.8) represent the educational levels of the people of Borbam village. The percentage of Higher secondary passed is highest i.e. 26 percent (males 27 % and females 22%). Less than 6 percent have obtained Postgraduate degree. In the village, Matriculates and Primary

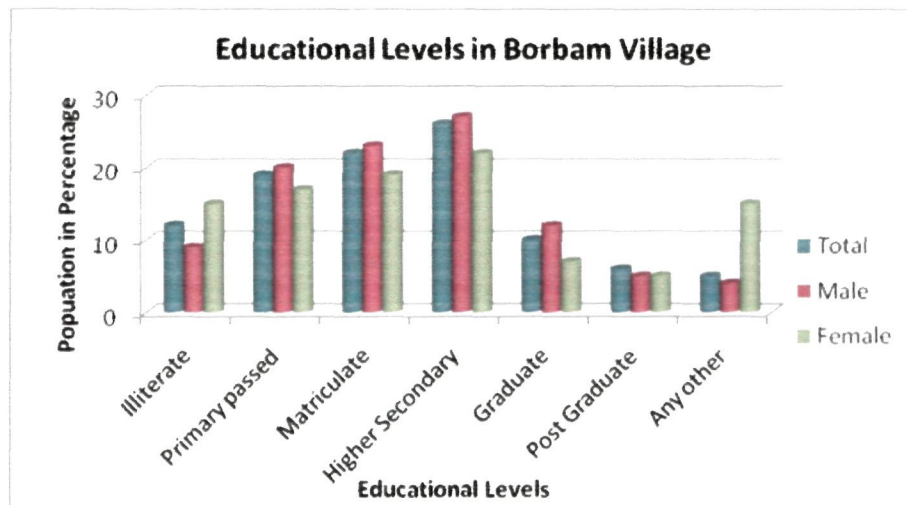
passed contribute 22 percent and 19 percent respectively and 5 percent (15% females and 4% males) of the total literates have acquired other qualifications like nursing, ITI, Stenography etc.

Only 10 percent persons have acquired graduate degree in the village sharing 12 percent males and 7 percent females. The 12 percent are illiterate from which 9 percent are males and 15 percent are females.

**Table: 5.9 Educational levels in Borbam village**

Educational levels	Total	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Illiterate	19	12	8	9	11	15
Primary	30	19	17	20	13	17
Matriculate	35	22	21	23	14	19
Higher Secondary	41	26	25	27	16	22
Graduate	16	10	11	12	5	7
Post Graduate	10	6	5	5	4	5
Any other	8	5	4	4	11	15

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.8**

#### **d. Education Levels in Dhemaji Town**

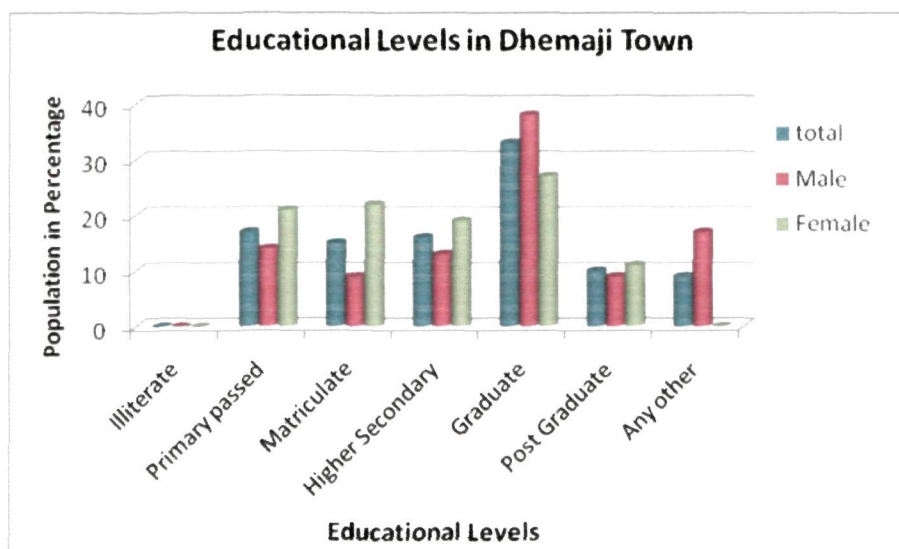
The educational scenario in Dhemaji town (Table- 5.10 & Fig- 5.9) reflects the greater percentage of graduates among all educational levels which

accounts for 33 percent of the total literates of which 38 percent males and 27 percent female.

**Table: 5.10 Educational Levels in Dhemaji Town**

Educational levels	Total	Percentage	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Illiterate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary	23	17	10	14	13	21
Matriculate	20	15	6	9	14	22
Higher Secondary p	21	16	9	13	12	19
Graduate	43	33	26	38	17	27
Post Graduate	13	10	6	9	7	11
Any other	12	9	12	17	0	0

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.9**

The percentages for Higher Secondary passed and Matriculates are 16 percent (19% females and 13 percent males) and 15 percent (22% females and

9% males) respectively. 17 percent of the literates attained other qualifications. Not a single illiterate person is found in the urban locality. Number of educational institutions is high in Dhemaji town and students are more conscious about their future goal.

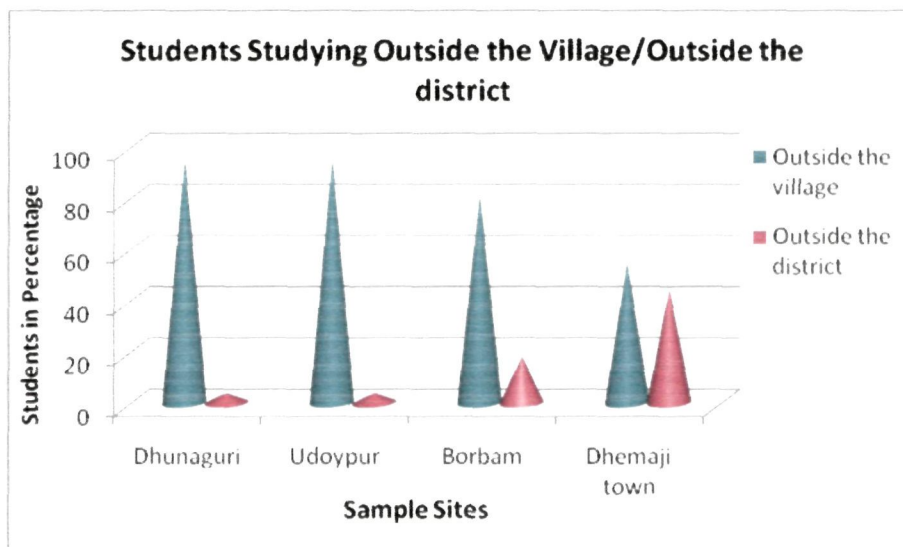
Traditionally, *Thanghar* was the centre for education, and only eight members were selected at a time to educate in *Deori* culture. They simply learnt how to perform the religious and social rituals in their society. But today, in the new ecology, the age old traditional education system is totally replaced by modern method of educational system. Assimilation with nearby ethnic groups has broadened their concept of education. They have understood the importance of modern education system during the long drawn process of migration and adaptation in different geographical environment.

The number of students studying outside the villages or outside the district is reflected in the (Table- 5.11 & Fig- 5.10). The percentages of numbers of students studying outside the villages are high in all the three villages than that of the students studying outside the district. On the other hand 51 percent of the students of Dhemaji town are studying outside the district. In Dhunaguri village 58 percent of the students are studying outside the village, and 11 percent are studying outside the district.

**Table: 5.11 No of Students Studying Outside the Village/District**

Village	Student studying outside the village	%	Student studying outside the district	%	Student studying in Assamese medium	%	Student studying in English medium	%
Dhunaguri	30	58	6	11	50	96	2	4
Udoypur	20	44	18	40	43	96	2	4
Borbam	22	39	20	36	46	82	10	18
Dhemaji town	0	0	25	51	27	55	22	45

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007

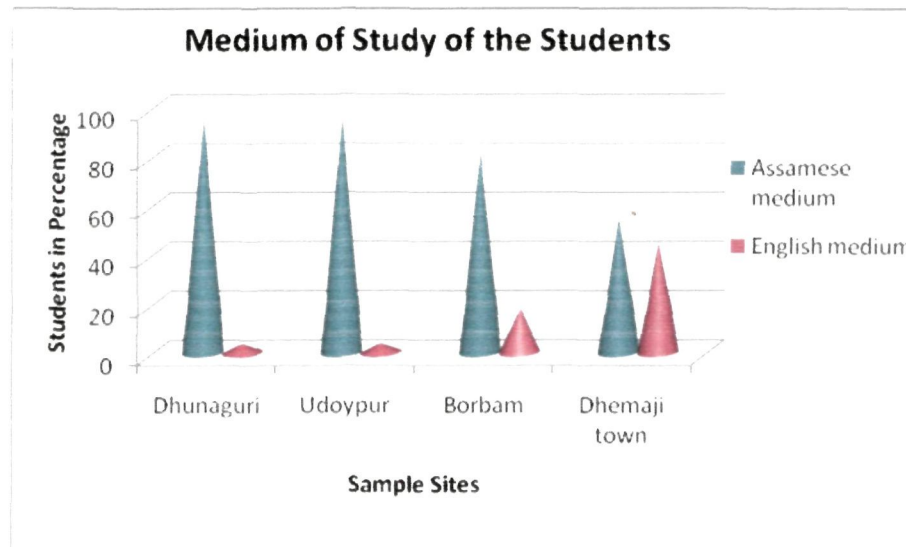


**Figure: 5.10**

### 5.6.6 Medium of Education of the Students

Most of the students in the sample villages are studying in Assamese medium. About 96 percent of the students in Dhunaguri and Udoypur villages are studying in Assamese medium while 4 percent are studying in English medium. In Borbam village 82 percent are studying in Assamese medium and 18 percent are studying in English medium. In Dhemaji town 55 percent of the students are studying in Assamese medium, and 45 percent are in English medium. As there is no school in English medium in the villages, most of the

students studies in Assamese medium. It is demanded that primary students should be educated in *Deori* medium in the village schools in *Deori* dominated areas, practically it is not followed.



**Figure: 5.11**

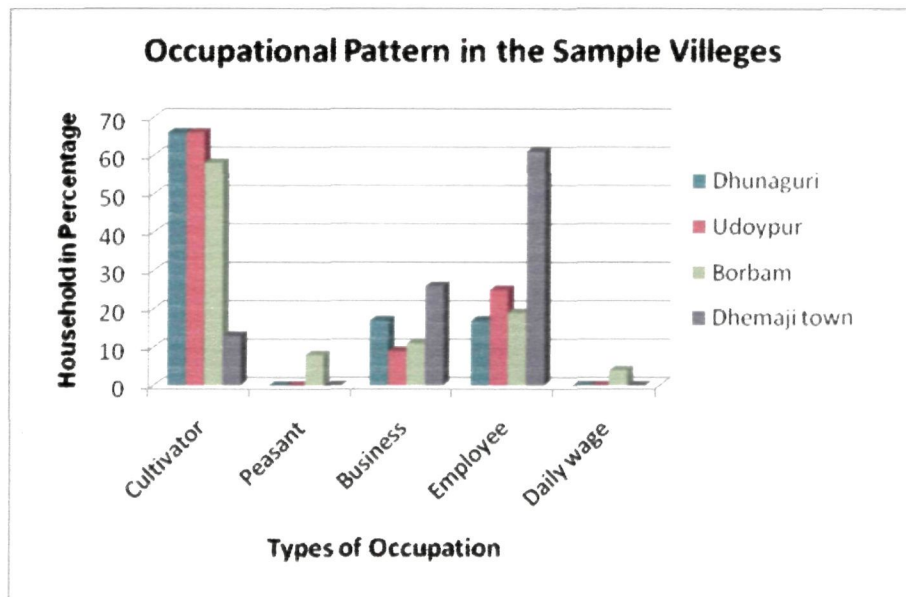
### 5.6.7 Occupational Pattern

The occupational patterns that dominate the villages are mainly agricultural activities. The first group of settlers came there in search of cultivable land and cultivating since then generation after generation. In the (Table 5.12 and in figure 5.12) shows cultivators occupy more than 50 percent of the households in the three villages. But in Dhemaji town number of employed in service sector is 61 percent. In Dhunaguri, and Udoypur villages, 66 percent of the total households are cultivators. In Dhunaguri village businessman and services sector occupies 17 percent each. In Udoypur, business occupies 9 percent and service occupies 25 percent. There are no daily wage laborers in the villages.

**Table: 5.12 Occupational Patterns of the Sample Villages**

Occupational pattern	Number of families							
	Dhunaguri	%	Udoypur	%	Borbam	%	Dhemaji town	%
Cultivator	24	66	21	66	15	58	4	13
Peasant	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	0
Business	6	17	3	9	3	11	8	26
Employee	6	17	8	25	5	19	18	61
Daily wage labour	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
Total	36	100	32	100	26	100	30	100

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2007



**Figure: 5.12**

In Borbam village the main occupation is cultivation (66 %). Businessman and employed accounts for 11 and 19 percent respectively. In the village only one person was engaged as daily wage labour.

Agriculture was the main cause of migration to the villages of Dhunaguri, Borbam and Udoypur. The people settled there for considering the advantages of the vast fertile land and water of near by rivers. That is why even now most of the villagers are cultivators. Some persons are engaged in

service in the local schools and some are engaged in business like grocery shop within the village.

In Dhemaji town 61 percent people are engaged in services, 13 percent in cultivation and 26 percent in business. As there is more opportunity for employment in the urban area, most of the population is engaged in service and business in Dhemaji town. Interaction with other ethnic groups like Mishing, Ahom, Sonowals, Marwary, Bengali, etc. has encouraged the *Deori* youths to engage themselves in diversified activities.

### 5.6.8 Transformation in Occupation

The traditional Deori livelihood system is gradually replaced by diversified activities in the villages and in urban areas. After analyzing the data it is established that occupation is changing from past to present in following manner.

**Table: 5.13 Transformations in Occupation**

Village	Types of Occupation	Occupation of Family Head					
		Grand father	%	Father	%	Present head of the family	Percentage
Dhunaguri	Agriculture	32	89	29	81	24	67
	Business	0	0	2	6	6	17
	Service	0	0	0	0	5	14
	Other	4	11	5	13	1	3
Udoypur	Agriculture	23	88	22	85	21	66
	Business	0	0	1	4	2	6
	Service	0	0	1	4	9	28
	Other	3	12	2	7	0	0
Borbam	Agriculture	30	94	30	94	15	58
	Business	1	3	2	6	3	12
	Service	1	3	0	0	5	19
	Other	0	0	0	0	3	12
Dhemaji town	Agriculture	24	80	23	76	4	13
	Business	4	14	2	7	8	27
	Service	1	3	3	10	18	60
	Other	1	3	2	7	0	0

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, 2007

Data on occupational pattern was collected on three different categories from each household by identifying grandfather, father and present head of the family. The data reveals that in Dhunaguri village 89 percent of the grandfathers were engaged in agriculture and 11 percent were engaged in other activities. In business and services, number of the grandfather is insignificant. Among the fathers, no were engaged in services, but 81 percent were engaged in agriculture, 6 percent in business and 13 percent in other occupations.

The occupation of the present head of the households records 67 percent in agriculture. The present scenario of occupation shows 17 percent, 14 percent and 3 percent among the heads of the families engaged in business, services and other occupations respectively.

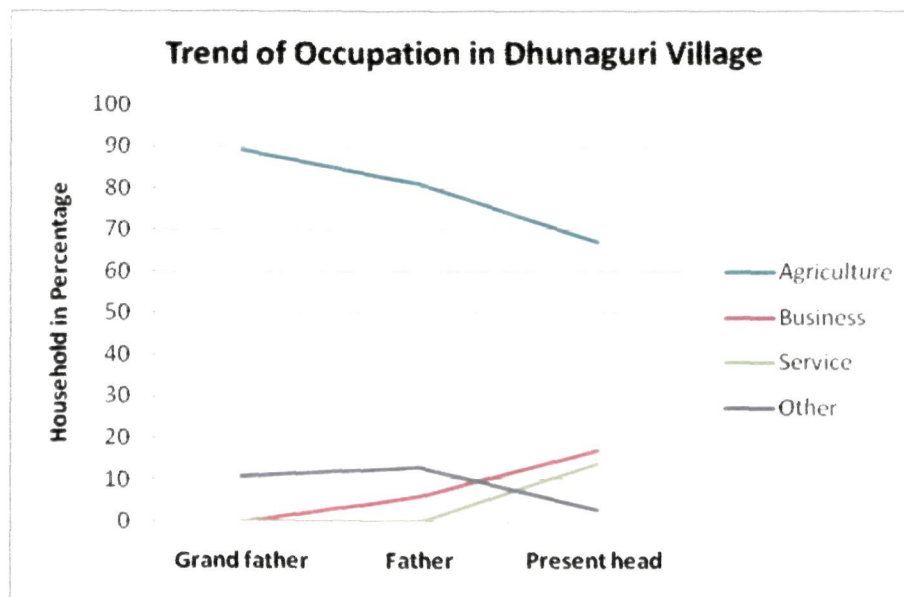
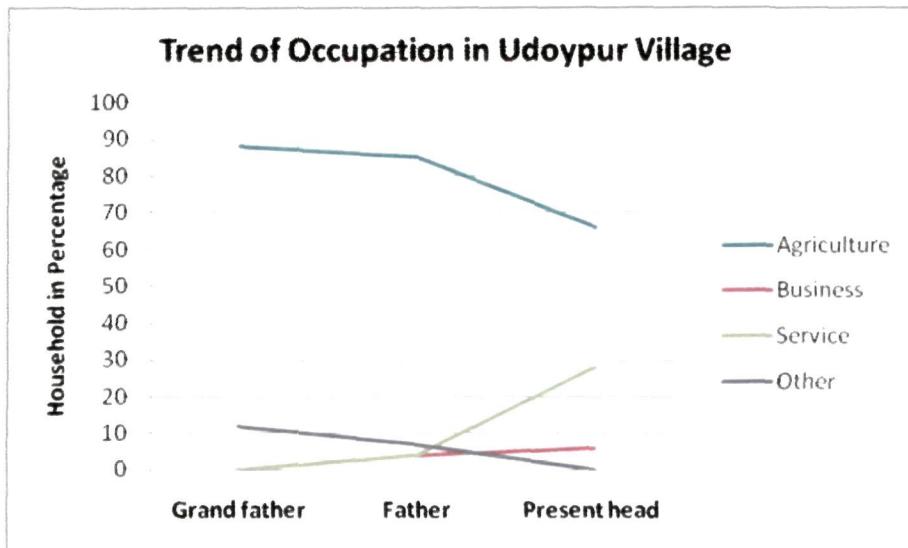
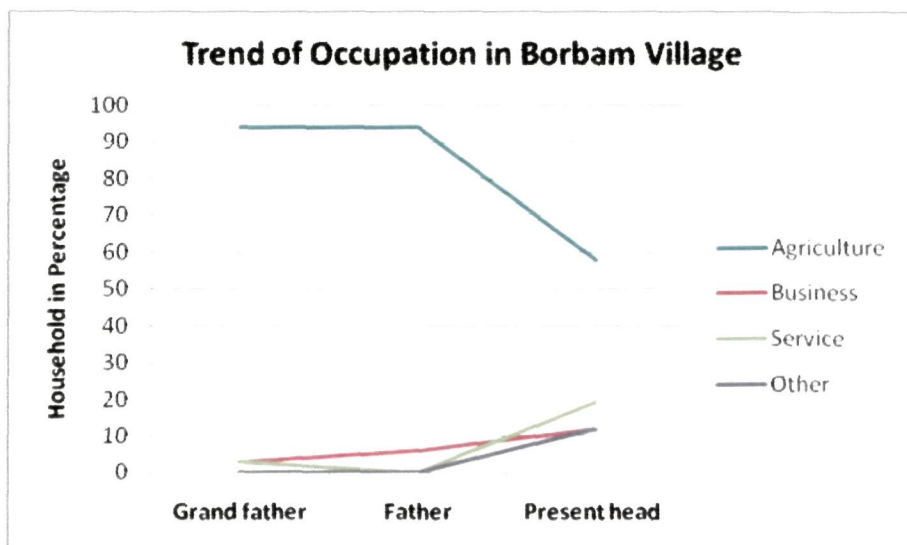


Figure: 5.13



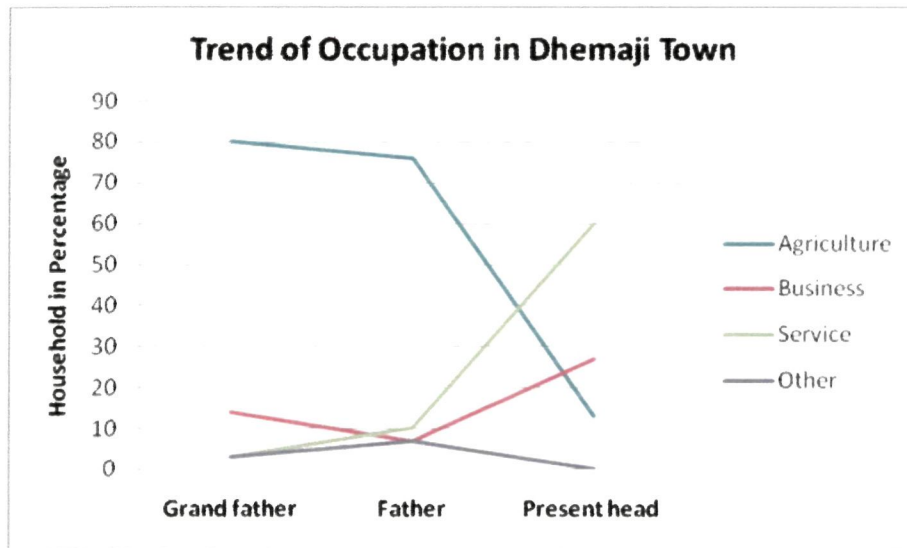
**Figure: 5.14**

It is also a similar situation in Udoypur village where there is a declining tendency of livelihood system from agriculture to other systems from grandfather, father to the present head of the family (88%, 85% and 66% respectively).



**Figure: 5.15**

There is a change in occupational pattern from one generation to next generation, which is much more prominent in Dhemaji town. Sharp decline in agricultural activities is found from father to present head (76% to 13%) of the family, whereas the grandfather shows 80 percent. On the other hand service sector shows higher percentage than that of the father to the present head (10% to 60%). The number of grandfathers engaged in service sector was only 3 percent. In business sector, percentages for grandfather, father and the present head of the family were 14, 7, and 27 respectively.



**Figure: 5.16**

The prevailing environmental condition as well as the overall economic condition of the state government has influenced the occupational change of *Deoris*. Extensive land was available for cultivation on the fertile areas of Dhunaguri, Udoipur and Borbam for the earlier settlers of the villages. So, almost of them were engaged in cultivation.

But, now Udoipur village is severely affected by flood water. The channels of the rivers are frequently changing resulting in damage of the crop fields and roads. The new generation is looking for other economic activities rather than merely depending on agriculture. In Borbam, as a result of increasing population pressure on the cultivated field, people are searching for other occupations. Many of the educated youths are engaged as shopkeepers, transporting agents, goods suppliers to the foothill areas of Arunachal Pradesh. Some people serve in the local schools. Since Dhemaji is the district head quarter, opportunity for various economic activities is more than that of the three sample villages. Adequate education facilities, scope for business, interaction with different societies have provided suitable occupations to the people. That is why abrupt change in occupation from previous generation to next generation (Father to Present head) is found in Dhemaji town.

#### **5.6.9 Changes in Health Care Facilities**

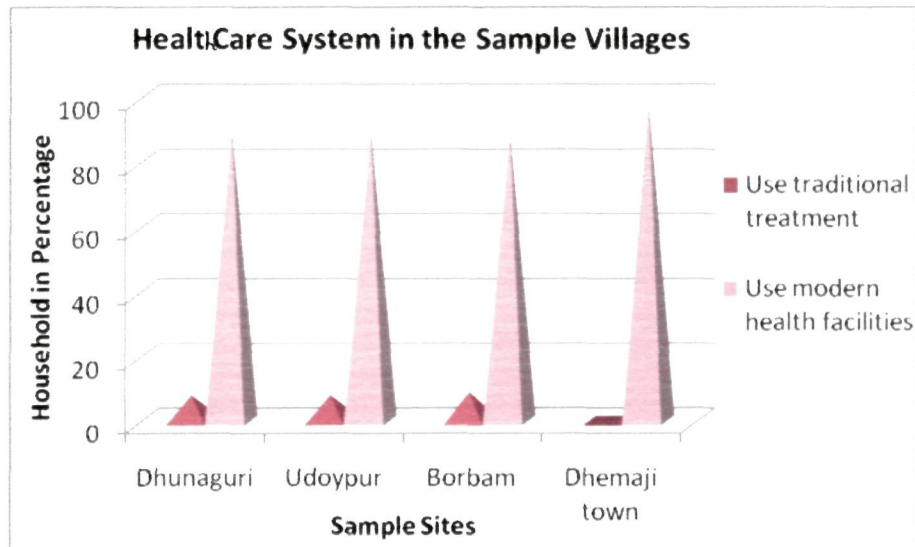
A significant change has been noticed in the medical care among *Deori* population. In the earlier century most people depend on local quacks called '*Mongoloti*'s for curing all kinds of diseases and sickness. But today going to those quacks were almost missing among the *Deoris* for any kind of diseases and sickness. This was mostly due to the spread of modern health care facilities available within the reach of the people provided by the government.

**Table: 5.14 Treatment of Patient in the Sample Villages**

Name of the villages	Use traditional treatment (No. of households)	%	Use modern health facilities (No. of households)	%
Dhunaguri	3	8	33	92
Udoypur	2	8	24	92
Borbam	3	9	29	91
Dhemaji town	0	0	30	100

**Source:** Based on Field Survey, 2007

The data reveals that more than 90 percent of the households have adopted modern health care facilities. It is seen that only three families still depend on *Mongoloti* in Dhunaguri and Borbam and two families in Udoypur for treating their patients. The people residing in Dhemaji town are more assessable to modern health care facilities; therefore all family members are availing modern healthcare facilities.



**Figure: 5.17**

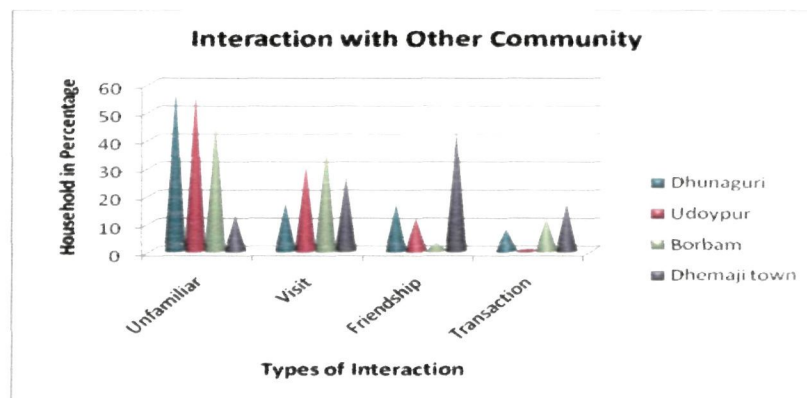
### 5.6.10 Interactions with Other Community

Traditionally *Deori* social system is very conservative. They had very little interactions with other ethnic groups before independence. In that period *Deori* culture was centered on *Thanghar*, a traditional worshipping house which did not allow them to interact with other communities. Therefore they had very little knowledge about other societies.

**Table: 5.15 Interaction with other Community**

Village	Interactions with other community (Number of households)							
	Unfamiliar	%	Visit	%	Friendship	%	Transaction	%
Dhunaguri	21	58	6	17	6	17	3	8
Udoypur	15	57	8	31	3	12	0	0
Borbam	15	47	12	38	1	3	4	12
Dhemaji town	4	13	8	27	13	43	5	17

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.18**

Due to the spread of education to the remote villages and assimilation with other ethnic groups, the *Deori* culture gradually started losing its rigidity and importance. Their interaction with other ethnic groups increased because of livelihood change and social relations. The cultural differences are being reduced everyday due to the day to day close interactions with other

communities living very close to each other since there are no contiguous households of the same communities in the urban areas. Thus they started to learn to live together in great harmony and cohesive manner. This type of interaction was not conducive during the olden days due to lack of education and easy interaction among communities. The migration to these areas and diversified economic activities in the new settlements also made them frequently interacted with other communities. In Dhemaji town 43 percent of *Deori* households are friendly to other communities and 27 percent frequently visits their houses for social occasions. 17 percent experienced transactions with them indifferent purposes.

On contrary, only a small portion of the people of the sample villages make transactions with neighbouring communities such as Mishing, Ahom, Sonowal, Kachari, Hajong and Nepali. More than 50 percent of the villagers of Dhunaguri and Udoypur (58% and 57% respectively) hardly experienced in hosting other communities for any other occasions. The main reason behind it is that as *Deoris* are still performing social and religious rituals in traditional way in the villages where involvement of other community doesn't required. But the overall interaction (in many other fields) with other communities is gradually increasing as compared to the past.

#### **5.6.11 Inter-Community Marriages**

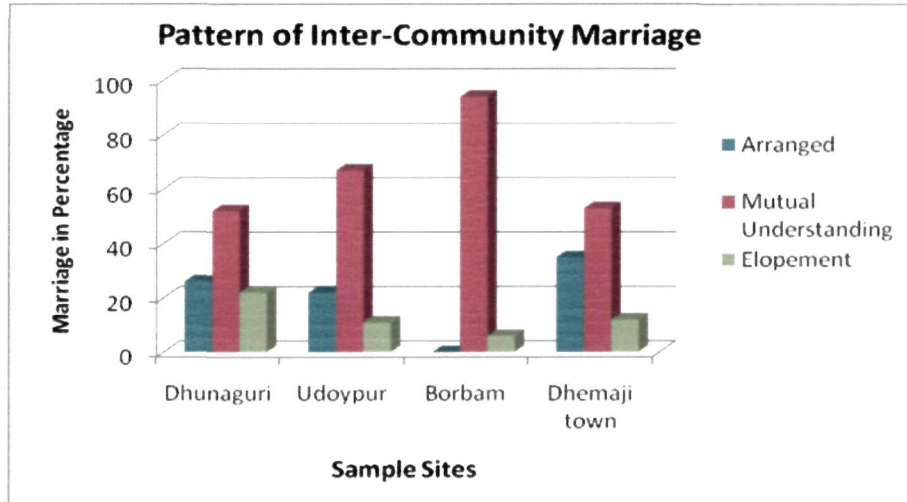
A Traditional *Deori* society never permitted inter-community marriages in the past. In those days they did not even allow other communities

entering to their houses. This traditional culture of taboo system has lost its importance due to the cultural assimilation and frequent interactions with other communities. Today the villages are experiencing many inter community marriages which was not even thought of in the olden days. There are 23, 18, 16, 17 numbers of inter community marriages in Dhunaguri, Udoypur, Borbam villages and in Dhemaji town respectively. Among these, marriages after mutual understanding between the boy and girl is recorded highest having 52 percent in Dhunaguri, 67 percent in Udoypur, 94 percent in Borbam and 53 percent in Dhemaji town. Inter community marriage is increasing among different communities as a result of liberal education system. Most of the intercommunity marriage was occurred with Ahoms ,Chutias and Kochs . In Dhunaguri village, one marriage with Bengali and another with Muslim was also recorded.

**Table: 5.16 Nature of Inter- Community Marriage of Deoris**

Village	Number of inter community marriage			Percentages of total inter community marriage		
	Arranged	Mutual understanding	Elopement	Arranged	Mutual understanding	Elopement
Dhunaguri	6	12	5	26	52	22
Udoypur	4	12	2	22	67	11
Borbam	0	15	1	0	94	6
Dhemaji town	6	9	3	35	53	12

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.19**

### 5.6.12 Religious Perception

Traditionally *Deoris* are the worshippers of *Kundimama (Lakshmi Narayan)*, *Pisha dema (Shiva)*, and *Pishachi dema (Kali)*. In the study also it is found that significant numbers of *Deoris* follow their traditional religious rituals. In Udoypur 100 percent, in Dhunaguri 97 percent and in Borbam 84 percent of the sampled households perform traditional religious practices.

In Dhemaji town 67 percent of total *Deori* households follow traditional religion. The rest 33 percent are followers of *Vaisnavism* trend of Sri Sri Sankardeva, *Ek Saran Naam Dharma*, *Krishnaguru*, *Saivism* and Lord *Shiva* under the sphere of Hinduism.

**Table: 5.17 Followers of Traditional and Non-Traditional Religion**

Village	Followers of traditional religion (No. of families)			Followers of non-traditional religion (no. of families)	Percentage of religious transformation from traditional to non-traditional
	<i>Tamreswari</i>	<i>Baliababa</i>	<i>Kundimama</i>		
Dhunaguri	35	0	0	1	3
Udoypur	0	26	0	0	0
Borbam	0	0	27	5	16
Dhemaji town	4	5	11	10	33

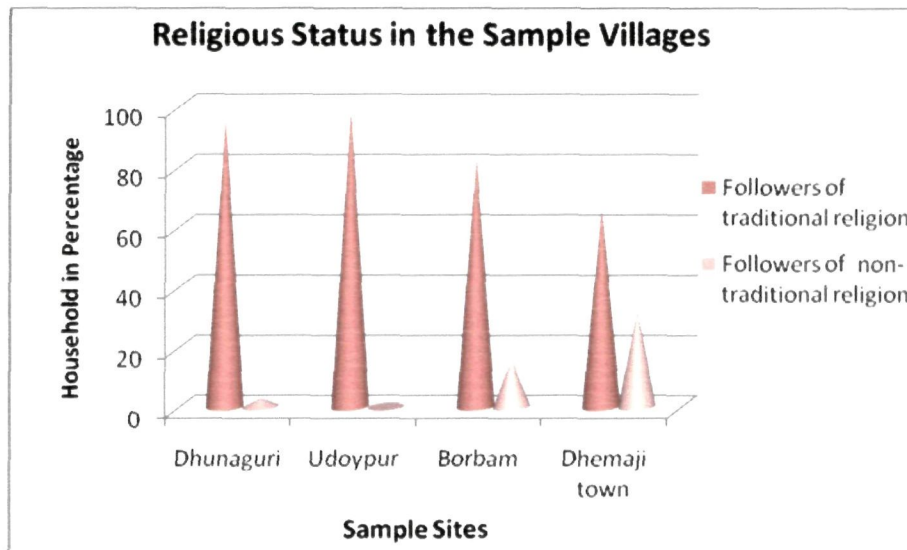
Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007

**Table: 5. 18 Percentages of Traditional/non-traditional Followers of Religion**

Name of the villages	Followers of traditional religion (in %)	Followers of non-traditional religion (in %)
Dhunaguri	97	3
Udoypur	100	0
Borbam	84	16
Dhemaji town	67	33

Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007

A trend of adopting non-traditional religion among the highly educated *Deori* people is noticed especially in the urban areas. This religious transformation is no doubt as a result of acculturation with other societies in the new environment. Influence of Sri Sankardeva's view among different communities of Assam is very positive. On the other hand, many conscious *Deori* people seek religious reforms in traditional *Deori* religion owing to its expensive and irrelevant rituals.



**Figure: 5.20**

### 5.6.13 Dress Habits

Deoris have their own traditional dresses for man and women that are distinct from other ethnic groups. During the pre-independent period all of them wear only traditional dresses. During the period of migration to different places of Upper Assam they came in to contact with other communities like Ahoms, Chutias, Mishings, Kacharis etc. Due to assimilation with other culture dress habit of *Deoris* is influenced to a great extent.

**Table: 5. 19 Dress Habits of Deoris**

Name of the villages	Male in percentage				Female in percentage			
	Outside the village		Home		Outside the village		Home	
	Traditional	Modern	Traditional	Modern	Traditional	Modern	Traditional	Modern
Dhunaguri	35	65	86	14	41	59	97	3
Udoypur	42	58	91	9	58	32	95	5
Borbam	33	67	93	7	46	54	96	4
Dhemaji town	7	93	3	97	5	95	3	97

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007

Male members of the villages use modern dresses when they go outside the village (to the towns). In Dhunaguri, 65 percent of the males wear modern dresses and 35 percent wear traditional dresses outside the village. Generally the aged group wears their traditional dresses in the outdoors. In the villages, most of the males feel comfortable in their traditional dress while working in the home. In Borbam 96 percent of the females wear traditional dresses in home and 41 percent use traditional dresses outside the village. 54 percent of the females wear modern dresses outside of the village.

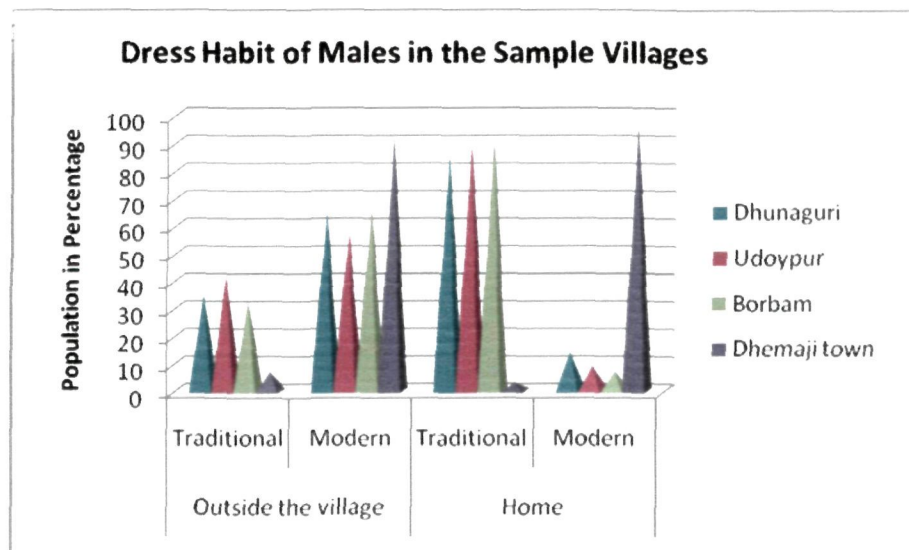
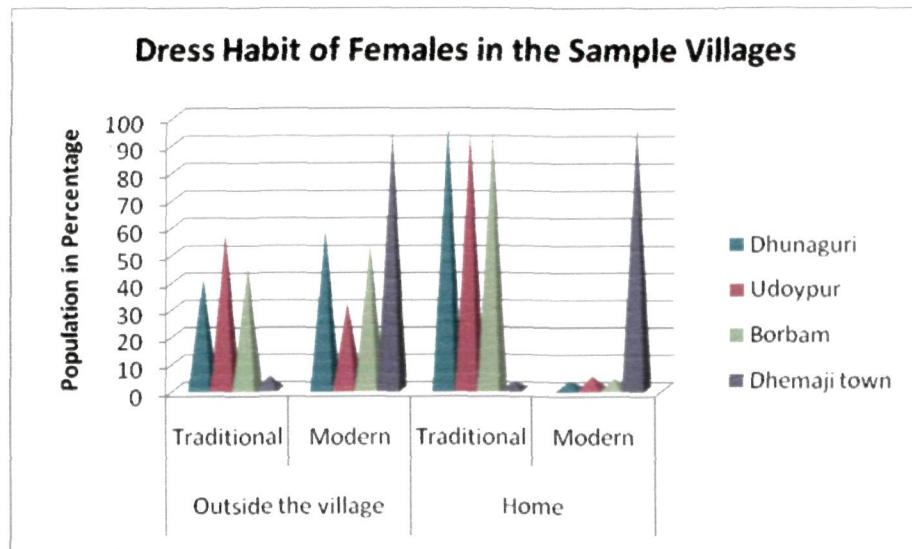


Figure: 5.21

In Dhemaji town, more than 95 percent of the males and females wear modern dresses in and outside the home. Only a few aged persons wear traditional dresses in some occasions.



**Figure: 5.22**

Significant changes have taken place in dress habits of *Deoris* from traditional to modern and rural and urban areas experience different magnitude of change. General Assamese dress like *Mekhela-Chador* is now commonly used by the females. Another national dress like *Churiddar* and *Saree* are also used by the girls while going to outside. In the modern dresses, use of Mishing design is becoming very popular. Males wear pent shirts as modern dress. The process of acculturation and assimilation among different ethnic groups influence the present dress habits of *Deoris*.

#### 5.6.14 Changes in Bihu Puja

*Bihu* or (*Bisu Puja*) is one of the important socio-religious festivals of *Deoris*. The *Bisu-Puja* is generally performed in their shrines located in every *Deori* villages as advised by '*Deudhai*'. It is a general tradition that a *Bihu* must start on Wednesday. And if in a particular month of the year the first

Wednesday happens to be *Samkranti* or *Ambaichya*' (New-moon) then the *Bisu-Puja* must be deferred to the next Wednesday. But at this instant in time *Bisu Puja* is observed without any consent of the priest and is observed without considering the day also. The tradition of performing '*Bihu Husori*' (Group dance during *Bihu*) in time-honored way is lessening amongst the youths and in the villages as well.

### **5.7 Cultural Transformation Index**

After analysing the primary data collected during the field study we are now able to see the changes in different attributes of a traditional *Deori* society. On the basis of this analysis 'Cultural Transformation Index' (CTI) for different attributes of socio-cultural aspects and also for each of the sample villages is found out.

The transformation index is calculated by considering the values of non-traditional facts for every attribute. For example, in case of family type two categories are recorded from the field study .One is nuclear type and another is joint type. Here, the value i.e. percentage for nuclear family type is taken for calculating the transformation index. Because this type is non-traditional in *Deori* culture whereas the joint family system is a traditional one. In such way, after taking the non-traditional values of each of the attributes of the four sample villages; these are summed up and divided by the grand total value. This value is shown in percentage, which is the required Cultural Transformation Index.

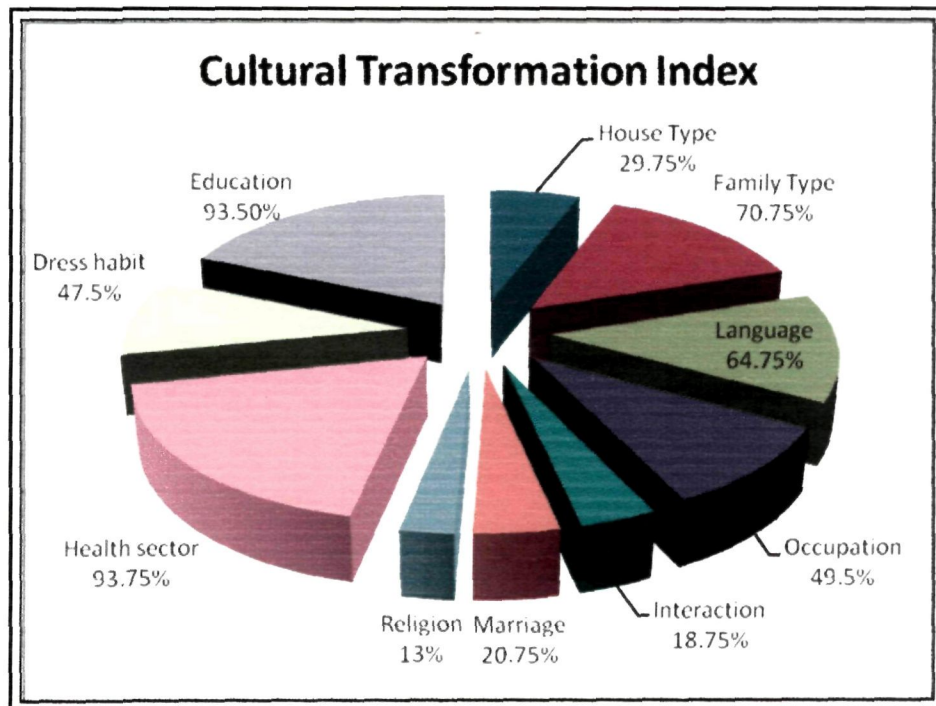
**Cultural Transformation Index = C.T.I.**

$$\frac{\text{Sum total value of the attribute}}{\text{Grand total value of the attribute}} \times 100$$

**Table: 5.20 Cultural Transformation Index**

Name of the village	House Type	Family Type	Language	Occupation	Interaction	Marriage	Religion	Health sector	Dress habit	Education
Dhunaguri	8	69	99	34	17	26	3	92	35	95
Udoypur	8	50	98	34	12	22	0	92	26	91
Borbam	3	81	3	43	3	0	16	91	33	88
Dhemaji Town	100	83	59	87	43	35	33	100	96	100
<b>C.T.I.</b>	<b>29.75</b>	<b>70.75</b>	<b>64.75</b>	<b>49.50</b>	<b>18.75</b>	<b>20.75</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>93.75</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>93.50</b>

Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.23**

The Transformation indices for different cultural aspects show that higher degree of transformation occurred in the health sector with 93.75 percent. This change is due to extension of medical awareness to the interior villages in the post independent period especially within two decades. The development of medical sciences has attracted the people to go for modern medical treatment instead of following 'Mongolotis' (local quack). It may be mentioned here again that in traditional *Deori* culture the villagers always went for *Mongolotis* to get cured from any disease. Now only about 7 percent of the people are dependent on *Mongolotis*.

Secondly, there is a significant change in education for which Transformation Index is 93.50. Traditional education system of *Deoris* is replaced by modern education system both in the rural and urban areas.

Another major change is found in family type (70.75%), because most of the families are nuclear type in character. Joint family system is gradually decreasing even in the rural societies. Transformation in language (64.75%) is also noticeable because two *foids* (*Tengponiya* and *Borgoyan*) forgot their own language and are using Assamese language as mother tongue.

Cultural Transformation Index for occupation is 49.50 percent. Because of the present populace are engaged in diversified activities in the new ecology of their settlements. The value of Cultural Transformation Index for dress habit is 47.5 percent and marriage is 20.75 percent. It is found that although the men and women generally wear traditional dresses in the villages, they often wear modern dresses outside the village. Only the aged group wears

traditional dresses both inside and outside the village. *Deoris* living in the urban areas don't wear traditional dresses, except a little aged portion. The transformation in occupation pattern is found regarding the number of service holders and businessmen. The Transformation index for occupation is 49.50 percent.

The conservative *Deori* culture did not allow close interactions with other ethnic groups before independence. Now this strictness is gradually smoothing and people are interacting with other societies, although the degree of interaction in *Deori* villages are still quite low than that of the towns. The transformation index for interaction is 18.75 percent.

Another transformation is found in adopting views of non-*Deori* religion (13 percent). The excessive costs in the rituals and prevailing superstitions in the religious practices of traditional religion diverted the educated *Deoris* to follow non-traditional religions within the sphere of Hinduism.

After finding out the index value for different attributes five classes are prepared and categorized them to show the degree of cultural transformation.

**Table: 5.21 Category of Cultural Transformation**

<b>Transformation Index</b>	<b>Cultural Attributes</b>
Below 20	Religion
20-40	House type, Marriage, Interaction
40-60	Occupation, Dress habits
60-80	Language, Family type
Above 80	Health sector, Education

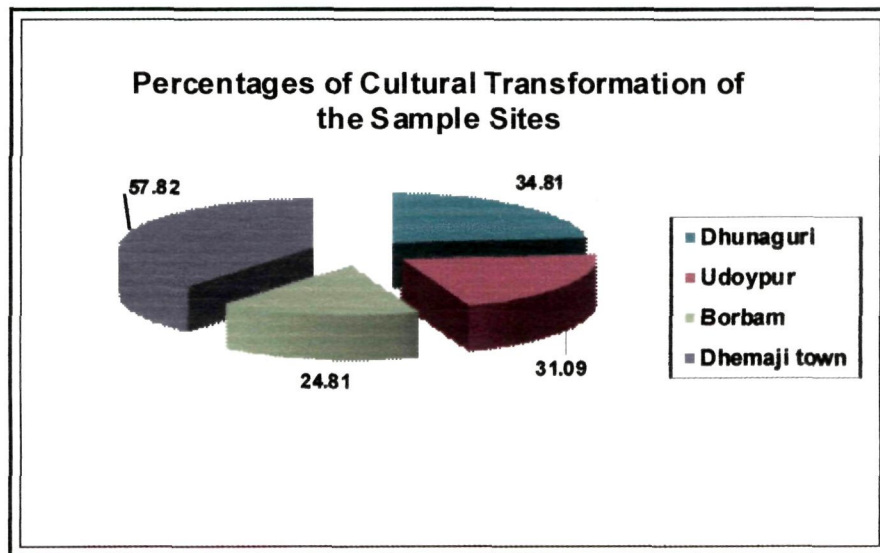
Source: Based on Field Survey- 2007

Cultural Transformation index for each of the sample villages is also found out by the same procedure mentioned above. The values are-

**Table: 5.22 Cultural Transformation Index for the Sample Villages**

<b>Name of the Villages</b>	<b>Transformation Values (%)</b>
Dhunaguri (Inhabited by Borgoyans)	34.81
Udoypur (Inhabited by Tengaponiyas)	31.09
Borbam (Inhabited by Dibongiyas)	24.81
Dhemaji Town (Inhabited by all the three groups)	57.82

**Source:** Based on Field Survey- 2007



**Figure: 5.24**

The Cultural Transformation Index for Dhunaguri, Udoypur and Borbam village (Borgoyan, Tengaponiya and Dibongiya foid respectively) are 34.81 percent, 31.09 percent and 24.81 percent respectively. The important character of the cultural transformation among the *foids* of *Deoris* is below 50

percent. The highest degree of transformation is found among Borgoyans in Dhunaguri village (34.81 percent). Lowest transformation is found in Borbam village inhabited by Dibongiyas (24.81%). On the other hand 57.82% percent cultural transformation is found among the Deori families in Dhemaji town.

### 5.8 Concluding Statement

After the study, transformation is seen in every attributes (dress habit, family types, language, house types, occupation etc. etc.) of *Deori* culture. Now, *Deori* culture means a little amount of work culture in the form of tradition only. So it establishes that *Deori* culture is changed significantly and all those 'Forbidden' works in the past now become suitable works for *Deoris*. As a result of the rapid change within a short period, "*Deughar*", the educational center of *Deori* culture, and the priests (*Pujari*), both have lost the previous characteristics, which were found prior to 1950. Now the *Deori* culture is about extinct, it is preserved only as a traditional manner among them. The *Than* or *Deughar* and priests or *pujaris* are now only the representative tradition of *Deori* culture and nothing more than that and their influence on *Deori* society is also negligible.

There is an evidence of conversion of religion among *Deoris* that one family has given up their traditional religion and converted to Christian. India is a democratic country, that is why *Deoris* also have to participate in political issues and joined in different regional and national political parties and some of them are active members of these parties. Lately *Deoris* become

conscious about their ethnic identity and 'Autonomous Council' in *Deori* habitat areas is formed by the Government of Assam after considering their demand for it.

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**Chapter-VI**  
**Summary and**  
**Conclusion**

## Summary and Conclusion

The pattern of present distribution of ethnic groups in different geographical locations is the outcome of their migrations from their original habitat areas during different periods under some specific circumstances. The existing ecology of their settlement has a great influence on their social and economic activities. There is an adjustment of their culture with the prevailing geographical environment. In North-East India as well as in Assam, there are many ethnic groups who had migrated during distant past with their traditional culture and are distributed in different geographical areas of the region. During the long drawn process of migration, distribution and interaction their socio-cultural life is affected in a great extent. The tribes living in the valley areas of Assam have been living with other non-tribal communities since time immemorial and there has been a great amount of cultural give and take between the tribes and the neighboring non-tribal communities. Transformation has taken place from traditional to non-traditional or modern culture, as a result of assimilation and acculturation with other ethnic groups. Many Scheduled Tribes in Assam like Tiwa, Rabha, Lalung, Dimasa, Kachari, Bodo, Mishing, *Deori* are no exception to this rule.

The present research is an attempt to understand the migration and cultural transformation of *Deoris* in Assam. The attempt here is to examine the issue more specifically related to the community in the areas.

Chapter-I encompasses the research problem, its goal and significance. It also includes the relevant review of research in the related fields, which forms the basic foundation and direction of the study. Methods and approaches thought to be appropriate for the present study have been applied including field observations.

A study of the distribution of different ethnic groups in Assam is made in Chapter-II. State and district level patterns show comparative population distribution of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Non-Scheduled population from 1951 to 2001. An increasing trend of Non-Scheduled population (percentage to total population) is seen from 1951 to 1991 whereas the percentage to total state population of Scheduled Tribe population is decreasing from 1951 to 2001. The decadal growth of the populations of different ethnic groups is almost proportionate from 1951 to 2001. Share of Scheduled Caste population is below 10 percent in all the decades while, Scheduled Tribe population is between 10 to 20 percent (except 1951) and Non-Scheduled population is highest in all the decades except 1951(72.84%) and 1961(76.41%) having more than 80 percent.

Among 23, Scheduled Tribes (Hills & Plains) of Assam Boro, Boro-Kachari group has the highest proportion of population among all the tribes throughout the three decades (1971, 1991 and 2001). They shared 44.08 percent of total tribal population in 2001. Mishing is the second largest group having 16.27 percent of tribal population in 2001 and Mikir (Karbi) is the third largest group with 9.94 percentages in the same year. *Deoris* share 1.25 percent in 2001.

The highest percentage of, Scheduled Tribe (plain) population to District total population is found in Dhemaji district having 47.29 percent and lowest in Hailakandi district with 0.15 percent in 2001 census.

District wise distribution of *Deori* population for 2001 is tabulated for *Deori* distributed eight districts of Assam and it is found that Lakhimpur district has the highest percentage of *Deori* population (61% ) to state's total *Deori* population and Kamrup has lowest percentage of *Deori* population (0.71%). Three zones of concentration of *Deori* population is found out by considering the data of The Total population, number of Scheduled Tribe population and number of *Deori* population of the districts. Degree of concentration of *Deori* population is highest in Lakhimpur (47%) following Dibrugarh (23%), Sibsagar (13%), Sonitpur (11%) and other three districts namely Jorhat, Tinsukia and Kamrup and Dhemaji below 10 percent. Kamrup district has the lowest degree of concentration only (0.46%).

The chapter-III deals with the migration of *Deoris* and the causes and also the ecological pattern of distribution in the present locations. *Deoris* had four *foids* namely Dibongia, Tengaponiya, Borgoyan and Patorgoyan lived in and around Sadiya of present Tinsukia district since the sixth century. Patorgoyan group is now extinct. They might be amalgamated with other ethnic groups. They performed priestly functionaries during Chutia, Ahom and Kachari kingdoms. They served as priests in the Tamreswari, Kundi-Mama, Baliababa and Pator Shal temples in Sadiya. *Deoris* migrated to different areas of Brahmaputra valley from Sadiya during 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century under natural and socio-political causes. During the British period different *foids* of *Deoris* migrated in

different places of upper Assam in search of cultivable land. They preferred the banks of the tributaries of river Brahmaputra. They made settlements in Choikhuwaghat, Ghunasuti, Dihingmukh, Kokilamukh, Ghelgheli, Majuli, Kolouluwa in different times.

Another major flow of migration of *Deoris* occurred after devastating Earthquake in 1950. The consequent flood and bank erosion in every year made the life of *Deori* people very miserable. The big villages of Borgaon, Tengapani, and Ghelgheli of Dihingmukh region were completely eroded away by the bank erosion of river Brahmaputra. The *Deoris* had to migrate again in search of cultivable land. They settled new villages in Kurukani, Sunpura, Dhunaguri, Akajan, Raipather, Panidihing, Medela etc. In such way they are distributed in different places of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and Kamrup districts of Brahmaputra valley by the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Deori* villages are found in Gohpur and Helem revenue circles in Sonitpur district. The villagers migrated to there from Chenia of Dhemaji district after 1950. There are 7.11 percent of *Deori* population to total population of Gohpur revenue circle and 2.72 percent in Helem revenue circle.

Highest concentration of *Deori* population is found in Lakhimpur. About 95 percent of *Deori* village of the district belongs to Dibongiya *foid*. *Deori* villages are found in Laluk, Narayonpur, Bihpuria and North Kherajkhat mouza. Laluk mouza contains 19 *Deori* villages, 20 villages in Bihpuria, 25 villages in Narayonpur mouza and in north Kherajkhat mouza, there are 33 *Deori* villages.

Dhemaji is the only district that contains the villages of each of the three *foids* of *Deoris* i.e. Tengaponiya, Dibongiya and Borgoyan. There are 20 villages of Dibongiya *foid*, 4 villages of Tengaponiya *foid* and 5 villages belonging to Borgoyan *foid*.

In Jorhat west circle of Jorhat district there are 4 *Deori* villages. Total *Deori* population in Jorhat west circle is 62.47 percent of *Deori* population to total *Deori* population of the district.

*Deori* villages are distributed in Demow, Sibsagar and Mahmora revenue circles of Sibsagar district. *Deoris* are concentrated in Sadiya, Dumduma and Margherita revenue circle in Tinsukia district and East, West and Moran revenue circles in Dibrugarh district. In Kamrup district *Deori* population are found in Dispur and Guwahati revenue circles. Two revenue circles i.e. Guwahati and Dispur contribute to only 0.02 and 1.66 percent *Deori* population to total population, which is the least concentration of *Deori* population in the state.

The traditional socio-cultural rituals of *Deoris* are discussed in chapter- IV. Almost all the traditional rituals of the society are in indigenous forms. They perform religious functionaries in every month in the shrines as well as in the houses.

It is established that there are different religious functions observed by the *Deoris* since time immemorial. The priests and the priestly council of the shrines governed the religious as well as socio-cultural rituals of the society. Those works in *Deori* culture were considered as sacred duties.

*Deoris* have two traditional courts for judgment in their society. Crime related all cases are judged in the *Dewalayas*. The accused get punishment indirectly by the

deity. The remaining disputes and conflicts are judged in the *Morong ghar*. Example of Insurgency, injustice and torture are very rare in their society.

Education of traditional *Deori* society is oral or non-written and *Dewalayas* (Temples) are the main center of education. This education of *Deori* culture is secret and non-*Deoris* are not allowed to know it. Eight persons become disciples of the priest in the *Dewalaya* or *Thanghar*. They have to learn education of *Deori* culture as well as *Deori* religion for about 3 years under the guidance of the Pujari (priest) in the *Dewalaya* and later they are known as *Pariya*. These *pariyas* after learning *Deori* culture become 'real *Deori*' and they play important roles in cultural activities of the society.

Written education was forbidden for *Deoris* before independence and they did not send the children to the schools. Later, some guardians started to send their children to the schools influenced by the government education policies.

The worshipping deities are considered alive in their society that they don't fence the boundaries of gardens and house by obstructing the paths of the movement of the deities. The plants like Chili, ginger, garlic etc. get annoyed the deities if these create obstruction in their path of movement and may harm the host which is called *Hemejui*. The host may get rid of the *Hemejui* only by removing these plants from that place.

*Deoris* were away from modern health facilities in their traditional culture. People of the community take advice from *Mongolotis* (Local quack) during the time of treatment.

*Deori* villages are found on the banks of Brahmaputra and its tributaries. Houses are rest on piles and made up of thatch, bamboo, mud, wood, cane etc. that are locally available. Houses, gardens, court yards etc. are arranged in such a way that it will be suitable for performing worshipping activities of prevailing god and goddesses. Joint family system is traditional family type and all the members reside in the same house. *Deoris* have their own traditional dresses made in own handlooms. There are separate dresses for married and unmarried women. White is the major colour of their dresses. Muga and Endi clothes are extensively used. In the past all *Deori* people used to wear typical cotton long shirt known as '*Jimochya Jima*'.

*Deoris* have their own dialects but can speak Assamese fluently. There are several clans among *Deoris*. Dibongiyas have 12 clans while Tengaponiyas and Borgoyans have 7 and 6 clans respectively.

*Deoris* follow traditional Sakta religion. The chief Deities of *Deoris* are 'Kundimama' or 'Gira-Girachi', 'Pisa-Dema' or Baliababa and 'Pisachi' or Tamreswari or Kechaikati which are worshipped by Dibongiya, Tengaponiya and Borgoyan groups respectively. The shrine is called *Deoshal* or *Deughar* or *Thanghar*. Dibongiyas call it *Midiku* while Borgoyans call it *Gosanishal*.

The villagers select the priests and their office bearer in a systematic way. There are two sets of religious functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in their villages. One important set is called '*Chari-Deori*', consisting of '*Bordeori*' (Boderi), '*Sarudeori*' (Saderi), '*Borbharali*' and '*Sarubharali*'.

In addition to the 'Chari-Deori', there are a set of officials consisting of 'Bora', 'Barik', 'Ladani', 'Telia' and 'Dupia' etc. Moreover, 'Pariyas' selected from the 'Pashakial' (Paik) are also engaged to assist the Priests in conducting Shrine-Pujas as the probationary pupil of the priests. There is another set called 'Deodhai' who performs the private rites and rituals of the households.

There are some principal rituals which are performed in the village shrine, viz., (1) Bhakat Makan ritual, (2) Bisu Midi Munuma (Bahagio Bisu/Magio Bisu), (3) Chakchik ritual (4) Makan Chiban ritual, (5) Metua (Bor) (6) Sat labiruba ritual, and (7) such Sauna Puja. The other two rituals are Rajkebang or Rajkema (Midideuruba) ritual and Yoi Nigi-Numa or Bur Utuaba ritual. *Deoris* perform many other rituals in their houses or fields or near the rivers with the help of Deodhais.

*Deoris* have four different forms of marriage, viz., 'Borbiya', 'Majubiya', 'Sarubiya' or 'Bakatrupia' and 'Gandharbabiya' which are generally known to them as 'Denbiya', 'Sashiobachi', 'Bhakatrupia' or 'Sarubachi' and 'Janegna Laharuba' respectively. Distinctions of the marriage are made according to the expenses incurred in the marriage and also depending upon the mode of performances.

*Deoris* observe two types of Bihu festival. One is Bohag Bisu (in the month of April) and another is Magh Bisu (in the month of January). According to the *Deori* Language, the term 'Bisu' denotes 'extreme rejoicing', where 'Bi' means extreme and 'Su' means rejoicing. The most significant feature of Bihu is that a *Puja*, which they termed as 'Bisu-Puja', must precede each Bihu. The 'Bisu-Puja' is generally performed

in their shrines located in every *Deori* village. It is a general tradition that a Bihu must start on Wednesday.

The socio-cultural transformation of *Deoris* is examined in the chapter V. it has been observed that Acculturation leads to transformation. Through this process of social change, certain changes voluntarily or involuntarily occur in a society but by and large the core of the culture remains intact.

Due to long association with the non-*Deori* population in the plain the Tengaponia and Bargoyan section of *Deoris* embraced Assamese language while the Dibongiya section has maintained their own dialect. Another change is noticed in respect of health care and traditional medicine. Traditional health care system of the community is trampled down by the modern health care facilities, which are lagging behind the age-old tradition of *Deoris*. They have adopted modern education system and the age –old traditional education system bears no more important for them. Likewise cultural transformation has taken place by assimilation and amalgamation with other community and also by the influence of the modern society.

For case study of the research Dhemaji district of Assam is selected. The reason of such selection is that only Dhemaji district consists of the villages of each of the three *foids* of *Deoris* among the eight districts of *Deori* distribution. In this chapter the degree of socio-cultural Transformations among *Deoris* are examined by compiling field data collected from three sample villages and one urban center (Dhemaji town) located in the district, based on stratified sampling method for household survey using the pre-designed questionnaire . Following are the major findings of the research.

## Major Findings of the Present Research

1. Highest concentration of *Deori* population is found in Lakhimpur District and it shares 61 percent of total *Deori* population in the state. About 95 percent of *Deori* village of the district belongs to Dibongiya foid.
2. Dhemaji is the only district that contains the villages of each of the three *foids* of *Deoris*. There are 20 villages of Dibongiya *foid*, 4 villages of Tengaponiya *foid* and 5 villages belonging to Borgoyan *foid* in the district.
3. The present sample villages in Dhemaji district are latterly settled and the ascendants of first settlers of these villages settled in different places after migrating from Sadiya.
4. Agriculture is the main cause of migration (search of suitable land for cultivation) of the people in the villages (83%) whereas service is the major cause in that of Dhemaji town (74%) and 17 percent came on business purpose.
5. Traditional education system is replaced by modern education system both in the rural and urban areas and high transformation value is found 93.50 percent. Most of the students of the villages are studying in Assamese medium (Dhunaguri and Udoypur : 96% each, Borbam: 82%) . In Dhemaji town is 55 percent of the students are studying in Assamese medium. Another major transformation is recorded in Health sector (T.I. 93.75%). All these changes are the results of acculturation and assimilation in the social ecology of the present distribution of *Deoris*.

6. Transformation is noticed in family type (T. I. 70.75%) of the sample villages. It is earlier mentioned that traditionally *Deoris* stay together in a joint family system. But now most of the households are adopting nuclear family type. It is highest in Dhemaji town with 83 percent and second in Borbam village with 81 percent.
7. A major transformation is found in language. In Sadiya all of them used to speak in *Deori* language. But now, only Dibongiya *foid* speaks the language. The Borgoyans and Tengaponiyas have embraced Assamese as their mother tongue. The Transformation Index for Language is 64.75 percent.
8. One language (either *Deori* or Assamese) is dominated in the core areas of *Deori* occupancy. In Dhunaguri (Inhabited by Borgoyans) and Udoypur (Inhabited by Tengaponiyas) 99 and 98 percent of the population use Assamese as mother tongue respectively. On the other hand 97 percent of population in Borbam village (Inhabited by Dibongiyas) speaks in *Deori* languages.
9. Traditional house type is dominated in the villages (Dhunaguri: 69%, Udoypur: 77%, and Borbam: 66%). The number of modified traditional house is also increasing day by day. A few percent of Assam type or RCC is found in the villages. On the other hand in Dhemaji town all the *Deori* families have either Assam type or RCC type house (100%). Transformation Index for house type is 29.75 percent.
10. The *Deoris* were originated from worshipping activities of Gods and Goddesses during the reign of King Bhismaka (During the time of Mahabharata). Since then

they performed priestly functionaries in the Temples of Sadiya till the end of Ahom kingdom.

But it is established that the earlier trend of worshipping has been changing. Priestly functionaries no more remain as occupation for them. More than 60 percent of the villagers practice agricultural activities and the present generation is embracing diversified occupations including business and service. Total 87 percent of *Deori* households in Dhemaji town are engaged in service and business sector. The Transformation Index of occupation is 49.50 percent.

11. The traditional conservative nature of *Deoris* is loosening gradually and it is noticed in interaction with other ethnic groups and in number of inter-community marriage. The Transformation Index of marriage is 20.75 percent and of interaction are 18.75 percent correspondingly.
12. Traditional religious practices are prevailing in Udoypur (100%), Dhunaguri (97%) and in Borbam (84%). Transformation in the religious beliefs is more significant in urban areas than the rural villages. In Dhemaji Town 33 percent of *Deori* households follow non-traditional religion. Transformation Index of religion is 13 percent.
13. Regarding Transformation in Dress habit, the Index is 47.5 percent. Most of the people in the village wear traditional dress in the home and wear modern dresses outside the village. More than 95 percent of the people in Dhemaji town wear modern dresses in all occasions.

In spite of the influence of various religious views and cults in *Deori* society the trend towards traditional beliefs is still found prominent amongst them and that is why a lower degree of transformation (13% only) regarding religion is found in the research study. Due to conservatism in respect of their religious beliefs, strong and deep reverence to the religious practices of its masses, the *Deoris* carry out those practices especially in the villages. As the worshippers of Sakti cult, sacrifice of animal forms, viz., buffaloes, goats, ducks, pigeons and fowls, is offered in the name of deities. Although *Deoris* are simple living and are adapted to their surrounding ecology; they are now seeking upliftment of their society by demanding autonomous council for them and consequently it is already declared and formed by the Assam government.

Transformation or any kind of change in traditional culture of ethnic groups is a natural process in course of time; every society always welcome reforms in the superstitions of the age-old traditions without harming the own identity. It is necessary to adopt modern views and give up evils from the societies. But while doing such type of reforms one should never forget to preserve own culture in an appropriate manner.

The study reveals that socio-cultural life of *Deoris* are changed in a considerable way as a result of migration and resultant interaction and assimilation with non-Deori societies in different districts of Assam.

The degree of cultural transformation of various aspects has been found out and it shows that greater is the loss of cultural identity, greater is the socio-cultural transformation. The proposed hypothesis for the present research is found to be true.

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**Appendix-I**  
**Assam: District wise Scheduled Tribe Population (1991 and 2001)**

Districts	Total Population of district, (1991)	ST population (1991)	% of ST Population to total district (1991)	Total population (2001)	ST Population (2001)	% of ST Population to total district population (2001)
Barpeta	1385659	110452	7.97	1647201	123266	7.48
Bongaigaon	807523	141542	17.53	904835	110696	12.23
Cachar	1215385	16563	1.36	1444921	18631	1.29
Darrang	1298860	224957	17.32	1504320	249861	16.61
Dhemaji	478860	210312	43.92	571944	270496	47.29
Dhubri	1332475	32260	2.42	1637344	32523	1.99
Dibrugarh	1042457	82920	7.95	228438	9507	4.16
Goalpara	668138	115099	17.23	822035	131800	16.03
Golaghat	828096	84916	10.25	946279	93920	9.93
Hailakandi	449048	715	0.16	542872	821	0.15
Jorhat	871206	105307	12.09	999221	123134	12.32
Kamrup	2000071	214340	10.72	2522324	250393	9.93
Karimganj	827063	1430	0.17	1007976	2901	0.29
Kokrajhar	800659	329461	41.15	905764	304985	33.67
Lakhimpur	751517	177156	23.57	889010	208864	23.49
Morigaon	639682	98483	15.40	776256	120730	15.55
Nagaon	1893171	69848	3.69	2314629	89394	3.86
Nalbari	1016390	179641	17.67	1148824	202577	17.63
Sibsagar	907983	34496	3.80	1051736	41533	3.95
Somitpur	1424287	152498	10.71	1681513	195083	11.60
Tinsukia	962298	51493	5.35	1150062	67234	5.85

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2001

**Appendix-II**  
**Percentage of Literacy of Scheduled Tribes in Assam, (1971&1991)**

Name of Scheduled Tribes	Population (1971)	Percentage of Literacy (1971)	Population in (1991)	Percentage of Literacy in (1991)
Barman in Cachar	10,210	30.45	13378	60.44
Boro-Boro Kachari	6,40,459	20.51	1267015	37.01
Chakma	396	23.48	4187	11.84
Dimasa (Kachari)	39342	18.84	65009	22.3
Garo	9139	22.89	17998	32.72
Hajong	385	10.88	1633	26.19
Hmar	5380	44.4	11189	61.43
Hojai	2298	27.72	4582	14.9
Kachari including Sonowal	198619	27.33	251725	58.49
Khasi and Jayantia	6487	18.27	11358	24.56
Any Kuki Tribes	13524	28.51	21883	50.29
Lekhar	1	1.00	36	44.4
Lalung	95,609	21.43	143746	39.3
Man (Tai speaking)	964	7.99	2582	50.81
Mech	2570	30.58	6738	56.53
Mikir (Karbi)	177194	13.18	285811	32.18
Miri (mishing)	259551	23.20	467740	36.30
Any Mizo tribes (Lushai)	711	57.95	1031	66.53
Any Naga Tribes	8481	15.51	15354	36.29
Rabha	138630	22.24	236931	39.37
Pawi	6	25.67	777	39.51
Synteng	611	9.91	368	22.28
<b>Deori</b>	<b>23080</b>	<b>27.72</b>	<b>35849</b>	<b>54.13</b>

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-1991

**Appendix-III**  
**Growth of Scheduled Tribes in Assam (1971, 1991 and 2001 Census)**

Name of Scheduled Tribes	Population in (1971)	Percentage to total ST Population	Population in (1991)	Percentage to total ST Population	Population in (2001)	Percentage to total ST Population
Barman in Cachar	10,210	0.53	13,378	0.47	17,181	0.52
Boro-Boro Kachari	6,40,459	33.36	12,67,015	44.07	14,58,334	44.08
Chakma	396	0.02	4,187	0.14	4,819	0.15
<b>Deori</b>	<b>23,080</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>35,849</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>44,262</b>	<b>1.34</b>
Dimasa (Kachari)	39,342	2.05	65,009	2.26	80,099 (including Hojai)	2.42
Garo	9,139	0.48	17,998	0.63	20,716	0.63
Hajong	385	0.02	1,633	0.06	14,764 (including Hmar)	0.45
Hmar	5,380	0.28	11,189	0.39		
Hojai	2,298	0.12	4,582	0.16		
Kachari including Sonowal	19,86,19	10.34	2,51,725	8.76	2,89,735	8.76
Khasi and Jyantia	6,487	0.34	11,358	0.39	13,073	0.39
Any Kuki Tribes	13,524	0.70	21,883	0.76	2,51,87	0.76
Lekhar	1	0.00	36	0.00	-----	
Lalung	95,609	4.98	1,43,746	5.00	1,65,452	5.00
Man (Tai speaking)	964	0.50	2,582	0.09	3,972	0.12
Mech	2,570	0.13	6,738	0.23	9,750	0.29
Mikir (Karbi)	17,7194	9.23	2,85,811	9.94	3,28,968	9.94
Miri (mishing)	25,9551	13.52	4,67,740	16.27	5,38,333	16.27
Any Mirzo tribes (Lushai)	711	0.04	1,031	0.04	2,228 (Including Lekhar)	0.07
Any Naga Tribes	8,481	0.44	15,354	0.53	17,672	0.53
Rabha	13,8630	7.22	2,36,931	8.24	2,72,707	8.24
Pawi	6	0.00	777	0.03	1,318 (Including Synthang)	0.04
Synteng	611	0.03	368	0.01		
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,19,947</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,74,441</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33,08,570</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2001

**(Appendix-IV)**  
**Assam: District wise Distribution of Population by Ethnic Groups**  
**1991-2001 (in percent)**

Name of the District	Scheduled Caste to total population		Scheduled Tribe to total Population		Non-scheduled to Total Population	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
Kamrup	7.54	6.76	10.72	9.93	81.75	83.31
Sonitpur	5.69	5.23	10.71	11.60	83.61	83.17
Lakhimpur	8.03	7.88	23.63	23.49	68.34	68.63
Dhemaji	6.37	5.33	43.92	47.29	49.71	47.38
Tinsukia	2.61	2.72	5.35	5.85	92.04	91.43
Dibrugarh	4.02	6.36	7.95	7.45	88.02	88.49
Sibsagar	3.56	3.40	3.80	3.95	92.64	92.65
Jorhat	7.61	7.87	12.09	12.32	80.30	79.80
<b>State</b>	<b>7.40</b>	<b>6.85</b>	<b>12.83</b>	<b>12.41</b>	<b>79.77</b>	<b>80.74</b>

**Source:** Department of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Assam-2001

**Appendix-V**  
**Category of Population in the Areas of Deori Distribution**

Sl. No.	Districts	Rev. Circle	Total population	S.T. Population	Deori Population	Total non-tribal population	Total non-Deori population
1	Lakhimpur	Bihpuria	169,179	24,566	15564	144613	153615
		Naraynpur	122,853	22,128	10523	1,00725	112330
		Naoboicha	121,946	15,607	2555	106339	119391
		Kadam	104,831	43,838	16762	60993	88069
		N.Lakhimpur	217,048	44,990	2729	172058	214319
		Subansiri	51,262	17,217	4603	34045	46659
		Dhemaji	123,017	41,299	40	81718	122977
		Gogamukh	94898	44,326	3617	50572	91281
		Sisiborgaon	184,173	73,868	6113	110310	178060
		Jonai	143,199	98,977	2693	44222	140506
3	Sonitpur	Gohpur	111,337	46,065	7920	65272	103417
		Helem	130,048	19,160	23541	110888	106507
4	Jorhat	West Jorhat	187,782	17,546	3405	170236	184377
		Majuli	153,400	68,198	3357	85202	150043
		East	239,786	5,986	1882	233800	237904
5	Dibrugarh	West	135,179	24,236	1852	110943	133327
		Moran	150,471	17,822	2342	132649	148129
		Demow	139,722	15,836	12123	123886	127599
6	Sibsagar	Sibsagar	181,050	10,990	119	170060	180931
		Mahmora	120,453	3,483	1058	116970	119395
		Sadiya	92,012	21,889	7105	70123	84907
7	Tinsukia	Dumдума	363,495	20,923	1067	342572	362428
		Margherita	319,885	15,394	4550	304491	315335
		Guwahati	809,895	30,519	212	779376	809683
8	Kamrup	Dispur	16,140	563	331	15577	15809

Source: Data Collected and Computed by Researcher-2007



17. Occupation:-

- a) Cultivator having own land
- b) Peasant without own land
- c) Agricultural tenant
- d) Petty business
- e) Employee
- f) Any other

18. Occupation of the grandfather:-

19. Income of the family (annual)

- Below Rs. 10000.00
- Rs. 10,001.00-----Rs. 20,000.00
- Rs. 20,001.00-----Rs.30,000.00
- Rs. 30,001.00-----Rs.40,000.00
- Rs. 40,001.00-----Rs. 50,000.00
- Above Rs. 50,000.00

20. House type:                      Traditional                      Modern                      Modified

21. Health Care System:              Traditional                      Modern

22. Educational status: -

<b>Educational status</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Illiterate			
Literate without educational qualification			
Primary			
Matriculate			
Higher secondary			
Graduate			
Post graduate			
Any other Professional course			



37. Religion:-

a) Traditional b) Christianity c) Hinduism

38. Is there any evidence of conversion of religion in your family? Specify-

39. Are you a member of any NGO, Voluntary club, Shahitya Sabha or other associations?

40. Articles written in Assamese subscription of Assamese Newspapers? Yes /no

41. Do you subscribe Assamese newspapers / magazines? Yes /no

42. Do you have any equipment in the following:-

a) Dhekishaal

b) Ural

c) Weaving/handloom set

d) Stitching machine

43. Do you feel that people of your caste/ tribe are lagging behind the other tribal or non-tribal people? Yes/ no

44. Investigators observation:-

## **Resume of Sujata Deori**

SUJATA DEORI

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Email: sujatadeori@yahoo.com

### **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION**

- 2005 Cleared National Eligibility Test (NET) for Lectureship
- 2005 Cleared State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) for Lectureship
- 2004 Cleared National Eligibility Test (NET) for Lectureship
- 1998 B. Ed from Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam (India)
- 1997 M.A. in Geography from Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam
- 1994 B.A. from Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam (India)

### **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION**

Examination Passed	Year	Board/University	Class	% of Marks	Specialization
H.S.L.C	1989	S.E.B.A.	I	64.8%	
H.S.S.L.C.	1991	A.H.S.E.C.	I	60.4%	
B.A.	1994	Gauhati University	I	61.7%	Geography
M.A.	1997	Gauhati University	I	62.2%	Geography (Social Geography)
B.Ed	1998	Dibrugarh University	II	54.7	Mathematics & Assamese (Method)
NET (Lectureship)	2004	University Grants Commission			Geography
NET (Lectureship)	2005	University Grants Commission			Geography
SLET (Lectureship)	2005 (May)	NE-SLET Commission			Geography

### **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Working on the topic 'Migration and Cultural Transformation of Deoris in Assam-A Geographical Analysis' for the attainment of Ph.D. Degree under the supervision of Prof. B.S. Mipun, Department of Geography, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong-INDIA

## **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

- Field Experiences on Socio-economic evaluation of community in selected areras in Assam (Majuli, Moridhal and Rahdhala).

## **EXPERIENCE**

- Worked as a Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Moridhal College (Dhemaji) for a period of 5 (five) years.
- Worked as District Programme Officer (DPO) in Dhemaji District under Sarba Sixa Abhiyan.
- Currently working as a Lecturer (Sanctioned) in the Department of Geography, North Gauhati College, from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2003 till date.

## **EXPERIENCE IN COMPUTER APPLICATION**

- Well acquainted with working environment of WINDOWS
- Working experience with GIS based software's
- Completed CCS course in computer application from APTECH (Dhemaji Branch).

## **AWARD ACHIVED**

- Received Centrally Administered Doctoral Fellowship for North-Eastern Region From **ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research)** under Ministry Human Resource Development, Government of India from May 2006 to April 2008

## **PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOP**

- Participated in three days workshop on "*Research Methodology & GIS Application in Scientific Research*", November 28<sup>th</sup> –30<sup>th</sup> 2002, NEHU, Shillong.
- Participated in three days workshop on "*Recent Techniques in Geography-with special reference to use of Remote Sensing, GIS and GPS and NDC,NRSA users meet*" March 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> 2004 NEHU, Shillong.

- Participated in two day's workshop on "*Application of Statistical Techniques in Basic and Social Science Research*" held on May 9-10, 2004 at Gauhati University, Guwahati.
- Participated in "*Workshop on Geography Syllabus for Three year Degree Courses (TDC)*", Gauhati University held on 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> December 2003, Dimoria College, Khetri.
- Participated in *Workshop on GIS applications* held from 16<sup>th</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006, sponsored partly by Indian Council of Social Science Research- NERC, Shillong

## PAPER PRESENTATION

### INTERNATIONAL

- Presented Paper in the XXIV Institute of Indian Geographers Meet 2003, Entitled "*Socio-Cultural Status of Deori Tribe in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam- A Geographical Analysis*", in the International Conference on Mountain Environment and Natural Hazards Management, 2003, NEHU. Shillong.
- Presented Paper in the XXIV Institute of Indian Geographers Meet 2003, Entitled "*Ecotourism for sustainable mountain development in Eastern Himalayas*", in the International Conference on Mountain Environment and Natural Hazards Management, 2003, NEHU. Shillong.
- Presented Paper entitled "Redistribution and Cultural Transformation of Deoris in Assam" in the International Seminar on Tai, Tribal and other Ethnicities of Northeast India, South East Asia and Yunnan, China, held at Dhemaji, Assam, India on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> march, 2007.

### NATIONAL

- Presented paper in National seminar organized by Department of political science, Bihpuria College, Entitled "*Impact of Globalization in India in Respect of Education*" on 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> January 2003.
- Participated in the National Seminar on "*Our Present Crisis: Its nature and Roots*" Organized by Gugamukh College, Gugamukh, Dhemaji on February 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002.
- Presented Paper in the State level Seminar on "Prospective Modalities of Teaching Learning Process in Collegiate Education of Rural Assam" entitled "*Teaching Learning Process in Geography*" organized by Rangapara College on May 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

- Presented Paper in UGC Sponsored National Seminar in Human Impact on Environment and Resulting Consequences in Northeast India, Organized by Department of Geography Tezpur College, Tezpur on December 6-8, 2004 Entitled “*Distribution Pattern of Deori Tribe in Brahmaputra Valley, Assam- A Geographical Analysis.*”
- Presented Paper in the UGC sponsored National Seminar on Bio-diversity in Northeast India and its impact on employment generation entitled “ *Use of organic Manure for Sustainable Land Productivity*” organized by Department of Geography, Guwahati college, Guwahati Assam, on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2005
- Presented Paper in *State Level Seminar on ‘Improving Communication Skill Among the Under Graduate Level Students’* Entitled “Models in Geography for Improving Communication Skill”, Organized by Department of English, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 in Rangapara College, Rangapara, Sonitpur, Assam.
- Presented Paper in *State Level Seminar on ‘Improving Communication Skill Among the Under Graduate Level Students’* Entitled “Teaching Learning Process in Secondary Education”, Organized by Department of English, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 in Rangapara College, Rangapara, Sonitpur, Assam.

#### PUBLICATIONS

- Published Paper in *Proceedings of the UGC sponsored National Seminar on Environment & Sustainable Development*, Organized by Rangia College 2005. Entitled “Ecotourism as a means for Conserving Bio-diversity and Employment Generation –A Case study of Nameri National Park, Assam. pp 187-197
- Published Article in North Gauhati College Teachers Academic Journal entitled “Components of an Ideal Research”, Vol. I. No.2, January 2004. pp 1-5.
- Published Paper in *Proceedings of the UGC Sponsored National Seminar on the Role of Biodiversity and Environmental Strategies in North East India, Organized by ST. Mary’s College, Shillong*, and Entitled “Ecotourism for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity- A potential renewable Resource Based study of Assam. pp 222-230.
- Published Article in edited book- *Population Dynamics in North East India* entitled *‘Redistribution and Cultural Transformation among the Deoris of Assam* (Eds. Roy and Sengupta), pp 183-197, Om Publication, New Delhi-110055.

- Published paper in Hill Geographer entitled “*Ecotourism as a means for Conserving the Wetlands-A Case Study of Deepar Beel in Guwahati, Assam*”, Vol.XXIII (2007-2008), No. 1&2. pp 61-67.
- Published Article in Journal of North-East India Council for Social science Research entitled ‘*Migration and Cultural Transformation of Deoris in Assam- A Case Study of Dhemaji District*’, Vol 32:2 (October 2008), pp 75-83.

### EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Life member of North East India Council of Social Science Research
- In charge of National Cadet Crops (NCC) in North Gauhati College Unite.

### LANGUAGE KNOWN

SPEAK	READ	WRITE
Assamese	Yes	Yes
English	Yes	Yes
Hindi	Yes	Yes

### CURRENT OCCUPATION

Working as a permanent Lecturer in the Department of Geography, North Gauhati College, College Nagar (North Guwahati)-781031 from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2003 till date

#### *References:*

1. **Professor B.S. Mipun**, Department of Geography, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong-793022, Meghalaya, India  
Phone: +919436102075
2. **Dr. Sarbananda Das**, Principal, North Gauhati College, College Nagar (North Guwahati), Pin-781031,  
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3. **Mr. R.M. Deka**, (Selection Grade Lecturer), Department of English Rangapara College, Rangapara  
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**Working Experience:** 11 years as Lecturer

## PERSONAL DETAILS

*Name* : **SUJATA DEORI**

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*Permanent address* : C/O Niranjan Das  
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Lecturer, Department of Geography  
North Gauhati College  
College Nagar-781031  
Kamrup, Assam

*Nationality* : Indian

*Religion* : Hinduism

*Mother tongue* : Assamese

*Blood group* : B+

*Date of Birth* : 09-12-1973

*Sex / Caste / Community* : Female / ST/ Assamese

**Personality:** The most important aspects of my personality are positive attitude towards life, openness towards learning new skills and my ability to work hard in adverse circumstances, tenacity to work well in aggressive schedules.

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