

HAJONG SOCIETY : PAST AND PRESENT (A Sociological Analysis)

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The Hajongs are one of the numerically small but colourful tribal communities of Assam. They originally inhabited in the Mymensingh and Sylhet districts of erstwhile East Pakistan. But after independence a substantial number of Hajong population migrated to India due to political and other reasons and settled in different places of Assam and Meghalaya.¹

The Hajongs are found in Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and two districts of West Bengal, viz Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri. But Major portion of the Hajong population live in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. A small number of them are found in Assam and they are mainly concentrated in the district of Goalpara.

The Hajongs were recognised as one of the Scheduled Tribe (Hills) of Garo Hills Autonomous District in 1950. Later they were recognised as Scheduled Tribes (Hills) in Meghalaya, Autonomous districts of Assam (Karbi Anlong and North Cachar Hills) and other Hills States of North-East region as per the North-Eastern (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

On the other hand the Hajongs living in the plain districts of Assam were declared as "Hills Tribes in plains" in 1982 for giving them economic educational and employment benefits.²

Ethnologically the Hajongs belong to the great Bodo family of Indo-Mongoloid stock. But their language belongs to the Tibeto - Burman group of the great Sino-Tibetan family of languages.³

The Hajongs have a distinct social life which differentiates them from the other tribes. The different aspects of the social life of the Hajongs are governed by traditional customary laws and Hindu beliefs.

Acculturation process has become a notable feature in the social structure of Indian society in recent times. This process has been noticed in all the communities. This trend of change has also been noticed in the social life of the Hajong tribes. But the trend of adaptability is gradual in so far as the Hajongs are concerned.⁴

In spite of a tribal community the Hajongs consider themselves to be Hindus. At the same time they still follow some traditional practices. Formerly the Hajongs constructed their dwelling houses in clusters in the courtyard of Adhikari.⁵ But this practice is no longer exist among the Hajongs. The traditional village structure has got radical changes. Hajongs village can now be compared with the other communities. This deviation from the traditional village structure may be due to their rehabilitation in different places by the Government.

Changes are also noticed among the Hajongs in so far as their marriage rites are concerned. They perform their marriage rites in accordance with their traditional methods. Formerly the Adhikari "performed the marriage rites. But there appeared a tendency among the well-to-do Hajong families to perform the marriage ceremony according to vedic methods by the Brahmin priests.⁶ Now the Hajongs, irrespective of rich or poor, use the services of Brahmin priests instead of the Adhikari. They perform the marriage rites according to vedic methods using the services of Brahmin priests. They abandoned the services of Adhikari because the latter does not know vedic methods.⁷

The Hajongs, both "Saktas" and "Bhaktas"⁸ residing in different places of Goalpara district use the services of Brahmin priests in performing marriage rites. Though the services of Adhikari are not used in socio-religious activities, but for the performances of "Harinam",⁹ i.e., "Namkaran", a festival of a new born baby (both male and female) is obligatory in the Hajong society. And this rite must be performed by the Adhikari.¹⁰

Hajong marriage was very expensive. Because besides the relatives of bride and groom, all the people of the village must be invited. So from the beginning till the end of the marriage all the invitees were to be entertained with food. But this practice has got change due to the poor economic condition of the tribe. Now-a-days this arrangement is made according to one's financial capacity.¹¹

Another notable change has taken place in Hajong marriage is "Khalti", i.e., bride price. In the past the parents or guardians of the bride were to be paid a nominal amount in cash as bride price. But now-a-days the case has become reverse. Now the bride groom is to be paid something by the parents or guardians of the bride.¹²

Religion is an important aspect of human society. It also takes a major role in the Hajong society. But the scholars are not unanimous about the religion practised by the Hajong in the past. According to some scholars they were animists like most of the tribals. But now they consider themselves to be Hindus. Besides performing some Hindu religious rites and festivals, they still follow some traditional religious practices.

The Hajongs are divided into two sects on the basis of their religious belief, viz, "Saktas" and "Vaisnavas" or "Bhaktas". But most of the Hajongs belong to the Sakta sect. The Saktas are the worshippers of Durga, Kali, Chamundi, Lakshmi and the Bhaktas are the devotees of Vishnu. Both the sects use the services of Brahmin priest for the performance of their religious rites. Originally the Adhikari performed these rites. In the past the Hajongs worshipped their traditional gods and goddesses by offering rice beer and sacrificing tortoise, cock and pig. They now abandoned their traditional methods of worshipping gods and goddesses in favour of Hindu vedic methods. This is due to their association with the high cast Hindus.¹³ They have been performing various pujas such as - Durga puja, Lakshmi Puja, Saraswati Puja, Kali Puja, Manasa Puja which belong to the Hindus.

In the past the Hajongs propitiated various evil spirits and demi-gods, who according to them cause various diseases. The demi-gods and evil spirits are Moila Deo, Daini, Pretni, Kalpisatch, Bon-Deo, Hudum and Haka, Phul Deo etc. The worship of these demi-gods were very popular and wide spread even 40 years ago. Now these are on the decrease due to the spread of education and influence of the other advanced communities.

Chormaga or Chorkhela is an important traditional festival of the Hajongs. This festival is performed annually. It is known as Chorkhela in Garo Hills of Meghalaya and Chormaga in Goalpara district. The Hajongs of Meghalaya still perform this festival annually. But this has almost been abandoned by the Hajongs of Goalpara district due to poor economic condition. The Hajongs of Dhamor area of Goalpara district perform this festival according to their convenience that too not annually. Bash puja is an important religious festival of the Hajongs. But this puja is not performed by the Hajongs of Goalpara district.

Religious conversion from Sakta to Vaishnava sect has been noticed among some Hajongs of Goalpara district. Some Saktas who earlier performed Durga, Kali and Lakshmi pujas abandoned all these after conversion to Vaishnava. They perform only Lakshmi puja but without using idol of goddess Lakshmi. They use a jar as a symbol of the goddess.

So far as the dresses are concerned the Hajongs have their own traditional dresses. The main dresses used by a Hajong woman include 'Patin' or 'Ranga Patni', 'Passra' or 'Agrun' and 'Kamarbandha'. These are made by the Hajong women in their family looms. Dresses used by a Hajong man include 'Gamosa' or 'Ningti' and 'Kampesh'. Though the Hajongs both men and women still use their traditional dresses, a trend of change has been noticed in this aspect. Educated women are appeared to have used 'Mekhela-Sadar' and 'Saree'. Similarly the young college going girls use 'Churidar'. Educated and college going boys and men working in offices and other institutions use 'Long pant-Shirt'. Of course the aged and old men and women still use their traditional dresses. It is relevant to note that the Hajongs still use their traditional dresses during the performance of socio-religious rites and festivals.¹⁴

In the past the Hajongs had their own language which belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. Mr. Grierson in his Linguistic Survey of India mentioned that the Hajongs abandoned their form of speech and speak a corrupt form of Eastern Bengali.¹⁵ D.N Mazumdar calls the language spoken by the Hajongs as a Jharua Dialect of Assamese.¹⁶ Motilal Barman calls it a branch of Kamrupi language.¹⁷ Whatever might be the original dialect, the present language spoken by the Hajongs is a mixture of Assamese and Bengali. This language is spoken by the Hajongs among themselves. With the non Hajong people they communicate in the local colloquial language. As result of the efforts made by the educated Hajongs of Dhamor area of Goalpara district, 'Dohar' a magazine of the Hajong language and socio-cultural affairs was published in 1992.¹⁸

Another important change in the Hajong society is the establishment of some social organizations in recent years. They are Meghalaya Hajong Kalyan Samiti, Assam -Meghalaya Hajong Kalyan Samiti, Uttar-Pub Bharat Hajong Unnayan Samiti etc. These organizations have been working for the development of the community.

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FUTURISTIC APPROACH IN EDUCATION

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Introduction

Education is a strong tool to bring about social change. With the development of science and technology there came a great change in human living. The world, today is running very fast. In this fast changing world, in which people are to live, a great variety of activities have been adopted by human kind. People's activities now-a-days does not belong to present only but also past and future to a great extent. Activities of the present is bound to march towards a better future. Resultantly human kind gradually develops a tendency followed by future expectations. People are so anxious of future happening that many a times it threatens to existence of realities. We can not predict what is going to happen in real sense, as future happening is a natural phenomenon.

Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow but everybody is conscious of tomorrow's happening. Truly speaking, the growing anxiety of future gives birth to a lot of crises in our thought and actions. Future is not a curse to human kind. Rather, building up a future with a great variety of noble activities may be a noble turn to human kind. So man with high degree of imaginary capacity and powerful thoughts perceives the future with a noble goal. On the other hand, pessimists roam in a world full of anxiety, uncertainty and sorrows.

Future Prediction, analysis and observation has been a natural phenomenon through ages. Philosophers, Scientists and thinkers have developed much time and strength for building up a world where everybody will live in peace, harmony and progress.

In the present paper a noble attempt has been made to trace a picture of futuristic approach in education which receives great attentions from all corner of people.

What is futurology:

Futurology is the philosophy which studies postulating probable and preferable future. Future studies try to understand what is likely to be happened and what is to be continued and what is novel. It seeks to determine the desirable change of future on the basis of past and present study.

Three factors usually distinguish future studies from the research conducted by other discipline. First, future studies often examines not only possible, preferable and Wild cat futures. Second, future studies typically attempts to gain holistic or systematic views based on insisting from a vague of difficult discipline. third, future studies challenges and unpacks the assumptions behind dominant and collections views of the future. The future thus is not empty the fraught with hidden assumption.

Future studies does not severally include the work of economists who forecast the movement of interest rate over the next business cycle. Most strategic planning which develop operational plants for preteled future with horizons of one to three yrs.

Futurology is the study of long term tren in society in order to develop and promote alternative way of dealing with future events or conditions. with the capacity to alert both Govt. and Private industries to feature problems and future opportunities, futurology is directed towards assistives in intellecual making the term future research, future studies and forecasting are also used to describe this field of study.

World war second was the turning point for research on the future. In 1944 Henry Harlay ARNOLD, a general in the U.S. air force intiated the first technological forecasting project and in 1946 he was instrumental in establishing the RAND cor as a think tank. In recent decades the writing of some futurist such as Daniel Bell , Alivin Toffer with the period of transformation to a higher complex, technological global societies have become very popular.

Widely diverse methodolgh are used by futurists to make forecast ranging from simple, informed, hunches complex computer analysis. Two general types of forecasting exist exploratory and norcmative. Exploratory forecasts which began with the past by examining historical date and move into future by projecting probability out come. Normative forecast which includes market analysis and relevanvance trees imagine a desire future in other to facilitate the making of decisions that will achieve a predicted or preferred future.

Methodologies of Future Studies:

Future practitioners use a wide range of models and method to study future. Future Studies takes as one of its important attributes (staring ponits) the on-going effort to analyze. This effort includes collecing quantitative and qualitaive data about the possibility and desirability of change. The plurality of term "futures" in futurology denotes the rich variety (alternative futuresm, the subset of preferable futures) normative), that can be studied.

Future practitioners previously concentrated their attention on present but more recently they have started to examine society and to build question the old views behind such scenarrios.

Future Studies also includes normative or preferred futures, but a major contribution involves connecting both extrapolated (explozratory) and normative research to help individuals and organisations to build better social futures amid (presumed) landscape of shifing social changes. Practitioners use varying proportions of inspiration and research. Futures studies only rarely uses in the sense of controlled, repeatable and falsifiable exeriments with highly standardized methodologies. However, many futurisits are informed by scientific techniques. Some historians observed in past civuilization upon present-day society to anticipate what will happen in the future. Oswald Spengler's "Decline of the West" argued, for instance, that western society, like imperial Rome, had reached a stage of cultural maturity that would inexorably lead to decline, in measurable ways.

Future Studies is often summarized as being concerned with "three P's and a W," or possible, probable, and preferable futures, plus, which are low probability but high impact events (positive or negative), should they occur. Many futurists, however, do not use the wild card approach. Rather, they use a methodology called. It searches for the seeds of change, issues that are likely to move from unknown to the known, from low impact to high impact.

Futures techniques:

While forecasting i.e. attempts to predict future states from current trends is a common methodology, professional scenarios often rely on-i.e., asking what changes in the present would be required to arrive at alternative future states. Practitioners of futures studies classify themselves as futurists (or foresight practitioners).

Shaping alternative futures:

Futurists use scenarios- alternative possible futures-as an important tool. To some extent, people can determine what they consider probable or desirable using qualitative and quantitative methods. By looking at a variety of possibilities one comes closer to shaping the future, rather than merely predicting it. Shaping alternative futures starts by establishing a number of scenarios. Setting up scenarios takes place as a process with many stages. One of those stages involves the study of trends. A trend persists long-term and long-range; it affects social groups, grows slowly and appears to have a profound basis. In contrast, a fad operates in the short term, shows the vagaries of fashion affects particular social groups, and spreads quickly but superficially.

Futuristic Approach in Education:

Education in the field of future studies has taken place for some time. Beginning in the United States of America in the 1960s, it has since developed in many different countries. Futures education can encourage the use of concepts, tools and processes that allow students to think long-term, consequentially and imaginatively. It generally helps students to:

1. Conceptualise more just and sustainable human and planetary futures.
2. Develop knowledge and skills in exploring probable and preferred futures
3. Understand the dynamism and influence that human, social and ecological systems have on alternative futures.
4. Concentrate an action on the part of students toward creating better futures.

Future studies has been relatively a new academic tradition and numerous institutions around the world have adopted courses for futurology. Various formal Masters-level programs exist on six continents. Finally, doctoral dissertations around the world have incorporated futurology. A recent survey documented approximately 50 cases of futures studies at the international level.

The largest Futures Studies program in the world is at Taiwan. Futures Studies is required course at the undergraduate level., with between three to five thousand students taking classes on an annual basis. Housed in the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies is an MA Program in various

countries.. The founder of the progrsm is Clement Chang. As. of 2003, over 40 tertiary education establishments around the world were delivering one or more courses . The World futures Studies Federation has a comprehensive survey of golbal futures programs and courses. The Acceleration Studies Foundation maintains an annotated list of primary and secondary graduate future studies programs.

Conclusion

Future is a long distant dream never to reach its destination from philosophical point of view. We think of tomorrow. All tomorrows become today's. Yet we all try to build up our life for future. Building up a better future is a natural phenomenon. Apart from men all living organism tend to work for future. So it is a biological phenomenon. . In conclusion we are to summarize this write up by mentioning some popular quotation in regard to the depth of the study.

- * Any xuseful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous."(Jim Dator)
- * Take hold of the future will take hold of you." (Patrick Dixon)
- * The future is clear to me. What I don't understand is the present."(Gerhard kocher)
- * There are no future facts." (Fred Polak)
- * A part of our future appears to be evolutionary and unpredictable, and another part looks developmental and predictable is invent the first and discover the second. "(John Smart)
- * The problem with the future is that it keeps becoming the present."(Calvin)

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