

The Social Life Of Bhuinmali or Mali One Of The Recognized Scheduled Castes Of Assam

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Abstract

One of the significant elements of the population structure of India, as well as Assam, is the Scheduled Castes and its sub-castes. In Assamese social life, the constituent has recognized sixteen sub-castes existence. Bhuinmali or Malis also one of those sub-castes. According to Allen Buchanan, they were the dwellers of Ayodhya and Kannauj previously. Now they are amalgamated and mixed with the mainstream of the Assamese community. This paper displays one of the scheduled sub-caste of Assam Bhuinmali or Mali community's brief introduction. Along with that, their family ecosystem, marriage system, the economic and financial lifestyle, etc., certain aspects are also brought into the light to shed focus on the societal lifestyle of the community. Furthermore, there is an effort to assess the other elements associated with the sub casts' social lifestyle.

Keywords: Assam, Scheduled Castes, Bhuinmali or Mali, Social Life.

Introduction:

In India, it is observed that a religious angle is associated with the concept of 'Scheduled Caste.' Originally in India, the idea of caste and the caste system has emerged from the Hindu religious aspects. These ideas are imported to Assam in the community system of Assam via India's religious perspective. As a result, just like other states of Assam in Assam, also in 1932, a list was prepared for the socially, economically, politically, and educationally backward or oppressed section and who are recognized as untouchable people. The enlisted communities were termed as Scheduled Castes instead of term untouchable communities.

Compared to other parts of India, in the Brahmaputra valley, the caste system was not orthodox or rigid. Still, in the medieval age, the state-imposed professional and geographical divisions have resulted in the newly emerged caste system during the reign of Ahom. Following the orthodox Hindu religious ideology climbing the ladder of 'Xatriya' the

vanquished or the defeated individuals were considered as 'Paik. Engaged in the subordinate professional fields, these a few 'pikes' are recognized as a 'Khel' or groups. Hence, certain professions are converted into castes in the following period in Assam. For example, Hadi, Jaloi, Koiborto, Sonowal, Kushan, etc.

Thus from the period, the individuals engaged in the subordinate occupations fall in the religious frame and gradually become socially oppressed and exploited. In between the year 1932 to 1934, in association with the British Government and Dr. Ambedkar, the Scheduled Castes were identified, and following the constitutional guidelines (a) of Article 2 under section 341 and 342 of the Indian Constitution, the exploited populace of Assam were offered the identity of 'Scheduled Castes,' providing a secured space by Government of India.

According to the constitutional amendment in 1956, the 16 communities of Assam that are included in the Schedule Casts of

Assam are 1. Basfor, 2. Bhuinmali or Mali, 3. BrittiyalBaniya, Baniya, 4. Dhupi or Dhubi, Dhuba, 5 Dugla, Dhuli, 6. Heera, 7. Jaalkeot, 8. Jalo-Malo, 9. Koibarta, 10. Laalbegi, 11. Mahara (Mohar), 12. Mathor (Mator), Bhongi, 13. Musi or Rishi, 14. Namahsudra, 15. Patoni, 16. Sutradhar. (Census of India, Assam 1991)

A Brief Introduction of Bhuinmali Or Mali:

Among the Scheduled Castes of Assam, Bhuinmali or Malis are one of the native communities. As per the new Assamese dictionary, individuals associated with the occupation of crafting follower garlands, flower trading, people responsible for the maintenance of flower gardens are known as Mali. In the Barak Valley of Assam, people who are engaged in flower production and selling are called Bhuinmali. According to the census of 1931 to 2011, the total population of Bhuinmali was-39000 in 1931, 26396 in 1961, 22,175 in 1971, no data in 1991, 57,978 in 2001, 69,535 in 2011 (Census of Assam). In many of the Indian states, the community is scattered, but only in six Indian states are they recognized as schedule caste. The six states are West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam.

From the geographical location, in Assam, especially in Karimganj(13, 295), Kamrup(11,076), Cacar(7,819), Nagaon (5,58), Barpeta (5,474), Hailakandi (5,035), Bongaigaon (3653), Nalbari (2,529), Naksia (2,516), Kamrup Metro (2,480) and in Dhubri (2,292) individuals live in. (Census of India, 2011). Currently, the Barchapari and South Singara Gaon pf Hajo circle of Kamrup Metro, the number of traditionally live Mali community people is highest.

The Family Ecosystem OfBhuinmali:

In Mali society, nuclear families are prevalent. In such families, the unmarried son and the parents live together. Besides, the unmarried siblings are also live together. In the Mali community, the essence of joining the family is also available. Society is patriarchal. Hence each of the family members is abiding by the head male member of the family. The hereditary property ownership is also only the son of the family can enjoy.

Since the societal structure of the community is patriarchal hence in the societal customs, rituals, and traditional activities, economic and political decisions, females have a very minor role to play. Females of the community are only engaged in daily household activities.

The Marriage Customs OfBhuinmali:

In the Mali community, only intra-cast marriage custom is seen. But now day inter casts marriage is also observed. In society, monogamous marriage is prevalent.

Occupation of Bhuinmali or Mali:

With the word Mali, the occupation of the community is associated. This word, as per the new Assamese dictionary denotes, "a garland maker", a trader of flowers, a gardener, etc., or; a female gardener (Chaliha, 451-452). In regards to the occupation of Mali at different times, different scholars have shared diverse opinions. SarbeshwarRajguru has mentioned the garland makers as Malakar, Mali, or Fulmali. (Rajguru, 128).

On the other hand, Narendra Bhattacharya has shared the opinion in terms of the community that owners who produce and trade flower is Fulmali and who takes care of the garden or engaged in flower décor are termed as Malakar. In that way, from the definition shared by the scholars, it is confirmed that the Mali community is associated with flower production and related activities, and the community that earns their bread and butter from occupation hovers around flower production.

As per the census report in 1891 (Census of India, Assam 1961, P-26) based on the occupation, the Mali community is diversified into two sections, namely Bhuinmali or Bhumimali and Fulmali. Even though the names Mali and Bhunmali are different, there are many similarities; for example, the Gotra of the communities are the same, their work culture is the same, both of the communities follow, and practices Vaishnavism, and their nature is also simple & humble. (Bhattacharya, 36-37) Hence in the census 1931 and the following census, the Fulmali of Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley are considered as the same race or community.

In medieval Assam, different kings handed temple-related responsibilities to the Mali community during the reign of kings. For example, to streamline the work of the Hoigriv Madhab Mandir, King Naranarayana has offered titles such as Baruah, Aaathpariya, Bishwas, etc., and offered the responsibilities of a diverse position to them.

The Mali community can be divided into 16 classes based on the field study. Eg, 1. Fulmali, 2. Bhuinmali, 3. Baniyamali, 4. SutradharMlai, 5. Maliya Baruah, 6. Oja Mali, 7. Bolikota Mali, 8. Ful Kota Mali, 9. Jukali Mali, 10. Mail (Warrior), 11. Bhorali Mali, 12. Sikdar, 13. Sara, 14. Aathapriya, 15. Duwaori, 16. Bishwasi (Journalist: Fonendra Chandra Thakuriya, 64, South Kamrup). The fact to note that the insights extricated from Census report and Data found filed study shows, Mali or Bhuinmali are not different. Both belong to the same Gotra and the community (Bhattacharya, 14). According to Riseley, the one who carries the palanquin and the agrarian as well the individuals engaged in physical labor is termed as Bhuinmali. They are also known as Bhusundar. (Riseley, 105-106)

In the Census 1901, the Bhunmalis are termed as unclean feedees and included in schedule casts. (Allen, 132). Bhuinmali introduced themselves as Bhumimaliinito to use surnames like Das, Bhuyan, Hazarika, Biswas, Sarkar, Poddar was. In the census 1914, Bhuinmali took the surname Mali (Bharali, 55). Hence, it is seen that Bhuinamli and Mali are mixed in the current time. For example, Malis, who lives in HoigribMadab Mandir or the Kamkhya temple of Assam were even now, are associated with their custom profession. But in the Kamrup and the other places, the community is engaged in a wide range of occupations, rather than the flower occupation. As per census 2011, the total number of Mali is 25282, among the numbers 9678 are male, and 5604 are female. (Census of Assam 2011)

Findings:

The social aspect of the community that is observed is mentioned as:
This community primarily lives in the nearby places of different Hindu religious places like temples.

The society notion is nuclear family & patriarchal.

They primarily prefer intra-caste marriage, but now inter-caste marriages are also accepted. [Journalist" Anil Das, (69) Kamrup Mirza] In the Mali community, in term of economic scenario, flower art, and thermocol art has particular demand. Because they have actively delivered to the in-country market of flowers and a massive role can be seen. However, lack of awareness, lack of trained workforce, and missing 'goat' tactics are why the occupational industry is yet to celebrate heydays in the local markets.

Conclusion:

Enlisted as the Assam scheduled caste, the Mali community is backward in terms of social-economical and education grounds, and as in the societal ecosystem of systems due to their untouchability statutes, the community is drafted as scheduled caste in the community. Through this enlisting process, the government has provided security to ensure their right to equality in terms of the political, educational, social spectrum.

The effort is indeed worthy. On the other hand, in the flower culture, flower art and thermocol art are an integral part of the broad Assamese culture. That's why to Assamese culture Mali has offered tremendous offerings making the culture-rich. Uniting with the Assamese community, the contribution of Mali's towards society is incredible. Hence discussing such a rich ethnic community can lead the road of new insights to the future researcher. And an insightful discussion of the classic cultural community can bring a new direction to societal life, opening a new horizon for research.

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