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EXPLORING THE FOLK MUSICAL TRADITION OF THE DEORIS OF ASSAM.

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<u>Abstract</u>

In the contemporary society we are constantly struggling to go back to our roots and to maintain our ethnic identity. Culture is the creative expression of a particular society through its symbols, stories, ballads, myths, literature, art, music and for some its institution. The date regarding the historical background of the Deoris is largely wanting due to scarcity of relevant ancient documents and other evidences. Regarding the origin and pre-history of the Deori community few legends as well as traditional songs can be considered as these appear to have represented real facts. Music is one of the most important elements in the transferring of cultural heritage. Traditional forms of music are considered to be the chief carriers of cultural heritage. A tradition is a belief or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meanings or special significance with origins in the past. The folk musical tradition of the Deoris of Assam will be studied from the perspective of ethnomusicology. This falls under the area of folk performing arts in the broader context of folklore. The Deoris belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of Mongoloid stock. They are considered to be one of the communities found in Assam and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh in North-East India. The word *Deori* means the offspring of Gods and Goddesses. The Deori culture is facing danger from the clutches of globalization and striving hard to flourish. Such endangered culture so sprung -up by the nature thousand years past now deserve preservation and propagation by the government itself from being extinct.

Introduction:

The word tradition-a handing over, is used in a more limited way to cover the literary tradition or its oral counterpart consisting of the folktale, legend, song, riddle, and proverb or myths.ⁱ The Deoris or the Deuris are one of the distinct Tribal Communities of undivided Assam ethnically affiliated to the great Tibeto-Burman group. The meaning of the word Deori is, a person abides by high customary rule and having virtuous life, for worshipping God. The Deoris are one of an important minority communities having significant contribution towards the greater Assamese culture.ⁱⁱMusic is an art which uses the medium of sound to express different emotions and sentiment (1980:1). Traditional forms of music are considered to be the chief carriers of cultural heritage because folk music is a sub-division and feature of culture. The study of the music and musical instruments of particular people or community also reflects a lot about their culture, society and history as a whole (2007:19). In the field of ethnomusicology, tradition refers to the belief systems, repertoire techniques, style and culture that is passed down through subsequent generations (1997: 800). The folk musical tradition of the Deoris of Assam is studied from the perspective of ethnomusicology. The term ethnomusicology is said to have been first coined by Jaap Kunst from two Greek words ethnos (nation) and mousike(music) (1983:25). Ethnomusicology may be described as a holistic investigation of music in its cultural contexts. It is the study of music in relation to the society and culture in which it was created(1969: 144).

Aims and objectives:

The study mainly aims to examine the folk musical tradition of the Deoris of Assam under the broader context of folklore. In view of this broad aim, the major objectives of the study are:

- 1. To delve into the origins and the historical background of the Deoris.
- 2. To know about the vitality of the folk music in the Deori society.
- 3. To discern and know the musical instruments of the Deoris.
- 4. To know the importance of an Identity.

Methodology:

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. In this study, data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. With regard to primary sources, the data is collected using the interview methods and non-participant observation.Secondary sources includes published and unpublished works, journals, magazines, newspapers, articles and websites on the Deoris to highlight the works done in the past as well as present about the people and in the musical field of the Deoris. As regards library work, libraries in Shillong as well as in Assam is visited and materials are collected as required.

A close proximity of the Deori community: The Indian Constitution has regarded the Deoris as a Scheduled Tribe of Assam. The present inhabitations of the Deoris are spread in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Majuli Districts of Assam. Other than the state of Assam, the Deori villages are also found in Lohit and Tirap Districts of Arunachal Pradesh.ⁱⁱⁱ As per semantics the word *Deori* means the offsprings of God and Goddess. According to the Deori language deu means great, wise; and o and ridenotes male and female respectively. They like to proudly introduce themselves as *jimo-chan-yaamongst* themselves. ^{iv} The etymological meaning of the Deori word jimochanya is- jimo means the sperm, semen or virile, *chan* means sun and *ya* means moon. The *jimo* is born from the sweet union of *chan* and *ya*, i.e., *purushandprakriti*. The significance of the word *purush-prakriti* is also found to be related to their chief deity kundimama. According to the Deori language, the word kundimamameans kundi- purush or gira which is lord shiva and mamaprakriti or girachiwhich is goddess parvati, (bura-buri) in a derivative form.^v The Deoris were the levite or priestly class and functioned as the priests of the Chutiyas of Assam, who established their kingdom at Sadiya. It has been observed that the original seat of the Deoris was in the region beyond Sadiya. Further the pre-history indicates that the Deoris are said to have come to India in the dim and distant past from North East Asia, i.e., from Chinese and Mongolian Territories. They settled in the valleys of the river Brahmaputra; the Champo, Lacha, Siddhakshetri, Swati, Bidarva or Banzul, Kundil, Changchukul, Laibari, Laphabari, Sadiya etc. It is also significant to note that the Ahom kingdom dispersed all the Chutiyas to the different parts of Ahom kingdom as a state policy, but the Deoris were allowed to stay in their habitat (Sadiya area) and continue their worship in the shrines there. This clearly indicates that the Ahom rulers did not equate the Deoris with the Chutiyas. There are four broad divisions amongst the Deoris. These divisions are- a)Dibangiya, b)Tengapaniya, c) Borgonya, d) Patorgonyas. Each of the division is said to be originated from a particular river's or place's name. The Patorgonya group is not traceable at present and it is presumed that the members of this group might have been amalgamated with the other existing groups of the Deoris or with the other communities.Regarding the origin and pre-history of the Deori community few legends as well as traditional songs can be considered as these appear to have represented real facts. Traces can also be found in the narrative or description of *Rukmini-harana* of *Dvaparyug* (age) regarding the origin of the Deoris. When collated well with the events of the saga of rukminiharana then one can hardly deny the Deoris being called as the progeny of king Bhishmaka, since Deori was the grandchild of king Bhishmaka. Legends had it that, Rukmabir, the eldest son of Bhishmaka, out of humiliation and ignominy left the kingdom forever and settled in Bhujkat. Rukmabir's five sons also followed suit swearing not to return back to the kingdom forever. Due to the going away of his sons and five grandsons king Bhishmakadecided to handover the reign of his kingdom of Kundil to his youngest grandson Deori. Thus, the Deori kings thereafter ruled mightily for many years till the third invasion of Assam by the Burmese when the last king of the DeorisBhadiya raja who inspite of putting up a brave front before the invaders had to embrace death.viThe Deoris were said to be the first worshippers in Assam of the Kamakhya and Sadiya piths. According to one tradition probably the outcome of Hindu imaginativenessthey claim to be descendents of Kshetriyas who fled into Assam for refuge from the subversive arm of Parashuram; the battle axe ram. viiThe Deoris

are the first Aryans who intruded Assam through the North-Eastern point of India, the name Kundil province came into existence from the Deori supreme god Kundilmama, where, one who for the first time rendered the *abarbogeet*^{viii} intoning adyashaktirupevishwaniyantara while worshipping that very sage, was kundilmuni. The historical temples and the ruins of Kundilnagar at Sadiya unmistakably give support to the presumption that the Deoris were the chief priests and their worshipping deities were the same deities of king Bhishmaka.

According to a mythological account, once the MahamayaTamreshwari Mai was floating on the Dibang River in the shape of a stone through, Her spiritual power for the sake of all people of the world. Seeing that the king Bhishmaka, called all the people of the henduvan and ordered them to rescue the Devi-idol of Mahmaya and install it at a certain place. But, they failed to do so. Then, the king invited the especially learned and wise persons from various places and requested them to rescue the idol to her respective place that to be treated as holy one. But all efforts had gone in vain. Having no other means, at last, the king ordered to make an announcement for all by beating drum that one could rescue the idol, would be the priest of the king and also could worship the famous bura-buri, boliyababa, patarshaland tamreshwaritemples. The announcement gathered many people from the various castes, but none could rescue the idol. At last, four numbers of Deoris with pious mind and clean body began praying the mother. Their collective prayer touched the heart of the Devi-mother and she automatically became weightless through her spiritual power. Then these four persons easily rescued the Devi-idol and placed at the concerned holy place. Thenceforth, these four persons were designated and recognized as the priestly class, later on, their offsprings used to worship at the famous four temples located at Sadiya. The said four persons had been designated as chari-deoriwho was conferred with the status of honourable and respectable chief priests of the famous temples of Sadiya region.^{ix} The ancient saying indicated that the Deoris were in Mongolia and later on they settled at jaimal-jaidham, before settling at Sadiya. Some group of writers contended that the Deoris had settled in Yunnan Pradesh of China. Supporting the assumption of the Deoris as the Aryan group it is said, 'the Deoris are a section of Aryan, who entered India through North-East pocket. That section of Aryan had established the Kundil Rajya with name and fame at Sadiya region during the period of Mahabharata'. "Taking into consideration the factors like the Deoris earlier settlements at Sadiya region, the worshippers of kundimama having related to kundilmuni or koundilya gotra, attachment of a section of Deoris to the name of *airiyoxi* and priestly practices in the royal temples, the Deoris may certainly be presumed to be the Aryan group.

Discerning the Folk Musical Tradition of the Deori society:Traditional music is like hidden treasure of our culture. Although there has been an existence of the folk musical tradition and also the musical instruments of more than 10 instruments like *Droom (drum), Kokili (air pipe), Gogona (played by plucking), Sengseng (cymbals or tal), Xutuli (instrument played by blowing), Tokari (string instrument), Toka (bamboo hand clappers), Lurung (flute) bin (a string instrument) etc., yet no proper and detailed*

work has been done on the folk musical tradition and on the instruments which form a big part of the cultural heritage of the Deoris. The Deori musical flow is found mainly during the celebration of their ethnic festivals. And one important festival of Deoris is the Bisu festival. Wednesday of the April month is the most auspicious day for celebrating the *Deoribisu* (2002: 41). There are provisions for the siri-bihu (bihu at night)- amongst their societies. Usually the courtyard of a family preferably *chari-deori*^{xii} 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 *bihukhulaxiii* 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. Although this siribisu which is performed at night, no one could notice the fall of moral character among them. They perform it with pure heart and mind. It is also *buka-bisu* where the people smear mud as to remember themselves as people of soil as they are agrarian society. They splash water on soil and make it muddy and dance over it until the break of dawn.

Music and dance permeates festival, so much so that they set the pace for most activities and key the emotions of the participants. 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). The younger section both male and female arranges husori^{xiv} party or bisuparty. 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^{xv}*house should be visited first. The husori or bisu party blesses the members of the household for a prosperous day and year. In return the party receives a sarai^{xvi} containing locally woven *bonsexvii*, betel leaves and nuts along with some amount of a cash money. Drums, cheng-cheng, toka, kokili,etc., are main musical instruments of the bihu parties. After completion of bihu dance in a particular house, the host offers suje-kajixviii to the members of the husori party. Informally, of course, bihu dance and music starts much earlier than the commencement of the bihu day. Right from the month of chaitra young folks tend to gather at night in the courtyard of one of the four village priests, called chari-deori and enjoy themselves by singing and dancing. This maybe otherwise termed as bihu rehearsals. The bihu songs which the folk sings at the shrines recall their former home at Kundilnagar near Sadiya, about their four shrines there and even the sacred waters of the ParasuramKund in the Lohit division of Arunachal Pradesh. Some of the songs tend to turn into love songs of the bihunam types, but thoroughly steeped in Hindu mythology. The husori songs of the Deoris recall their past. These husori songs are melodious accompanied by rhythmic dance. The male takes two-four long bamboo slices and while singing and dancing, they beat the bamboos rhythmically in turns. In this way, bihu dances are performed in each household. 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 villages. It is done when there is a special need for money, as such some public welfare (2002:42). The bihu-songs relating to love like the *lahariya*songs of husori are an indispensible part of the traditional practices of the Deoris.

In Deori language songs are known as *sajeba^{xix}*. The bisu songs of Deoris are divided into three kinds: i) Descriptive songs: *aborbosajeba*, *hoosorisajeba*, ii) Historical songs: *dusiyapotiyasajeba*, *lahariyasajeba*, iii) Songs of joy: *hurairanguli or dedurasajeba*, *singfaibegarasajeba*, *bisusajeba*. These songs are mainly sung in the temple premises of the Deoris but there are no restrictions if it is sung outside temples during bisu. The Deori people started singing their songs in Assamese aswell as they are a part of the greater Assamese society.

Aborbosajeba: Popular song of the Deoris which includes the ancient days of Deoris, themes of god goddess, religious beliefs, environmental status, day-to-day lifestyles, etc. One example of the *aborbogeet*:

Aborbonahangaaborbose re hei // Abu mokenahangamuregudai // Giumukenahangamuregudai //

Lahariyasajeba: This category of song also includes themes like those of *abarbo*but with little mix of history and origin of their community. And also sometimes it includes themes of repartee, mourning, longing, hopes/aspirations etc. One of such song is:

Loh bai lahariyahai Aharotxolale pate xomoniya, loh bai lahariya Bohagotxolale mate xarilore, loh bai lahariya Otisenehorehator game kharu, loh bai lahariya Japotexamorithoutexarilore, loh bai lahariya Uliyaipindhi jam kanerekeru, loh bai lahariya /

Hurairanguli: Joyous and fun song of the Deoris. These songs are sung in bisu festival of the Deoris. One of such songs: n

Hurairanguli re hei

Hurairangulisiddamedangori

Lagdurreiya seure ja /

Despite of the songs sung in *bisu-pujaxx* or *thanghaarxxi* of the Deoris, there are songs such as *malitai, tokarisajeba, biya-nam, ai-nam, mojaiyasajeba,* which are very rich thematically. There are song such as *malibaigeet* which are very popular. This *malibai-geet* includes stories of love, repartee, mourning, longings of the young lady malibai. One of *malibaisongs*:

Ujaidexotujanuthe, malibailoimonot pore

Hai oi haimalibai, kinukhaipahorim oi Ghuranejorsulijene, malibairkokaltene, Akaxortorajene, malibairsokutene / Bhatidexorkanhorluta, malibairkokalguta, Nodi kaxorbirinajupa, malibairsulirkhupa /

Till few centuries ago, there used to be a *malitai* song very much popular in the Deori society. The popular malitai song included the love story of *kolong knower and knoweri*. Ballads or *malitai*was very much popular in the Deori society and towards the 20th century composition of *Bhimborsajeba* came out and was especially popular amongst the Dibangiya clan of the Deoris. BhimborDeori, was a tribal leader and the founder of Tribal Belt and Block and was an active member of Tribal League in Assam. So, *Bhimborsajeba*, songs revolves around with his glorious deeds to the tribal society. This song was composed in the year 1984-90 such as:

> Xoubasigaiyasigahabasaiyo king Xoubasiriyedaghabayakaking Joudagaronakobe Kobe jar miralazu Kobe jar mirasilazu Jouhigarakobe, joudagarakobe / JaroJimmochanyaBhimborDeoriya Tribal belt blockonledam Ba belt-block oamirijogaram

> > Yobikuyaseure jam /

Towards the mid of 20th century, there was the popularity of *tokaarigeet* in the Deori society, but now this song is in the verge of extinction. Tokaarigeet were mostly sung in the Assamese language. Tokaari an instrument (dotara) which is played while singing thus named after it. One of such songs:

Ye amore samoredukkhonitokaari Aahilbharostoloi name oi, Ye berorejulunganaidiyaparboti Ekhoniloigolmohadevishore Ekhonibharostot role oi / There are songs of separation and repartee of love known popularly as *mojaiyasajeba*. This song is sung by the cattle keeper boys in fond memory of their lovers, it is also sung in the *magiyobisu*^{xxii} late night feasts. Earlier it was only sung in the Deori language but nowadays it is also sung in Assamese language. *Mojaiyasajeba* is an important folk song of the Deoris. One of such songs: (The lover yearns for his lady love):

Diniyaniyosunnaaiyo mon hongkundungna

Aiyomononagijagioo

Burosi mon song nonamotonoo

Sayyabusomayo aa nana mutomayiom doke

Basijimongkuri ho nimakunninah

O kundigiranaangujungna

Lasiri de hoiba o /

The Deoris earlier lived in the place called Kundil Nagar in Sadiya. Thus, they sing in *abarbogeets*earlier, the ruins are still found now. Thus they sing in their song:

Kundiloragaritogudakoiximolu Tate loikuruwaibahekina / Sadiyarajyate oi sarixalguxani Taloike namaskar koru kina /

There are god/goddess invocations locally known as *guxai-guxani naam*. One of such naams:

Amare xarothiamareguxani /

Ga dhuikori jaw xewakina /

Sadiyatase oi sarixalguxani /

Taloimani jaw sage kina /

Hoosorigeet: This category of song includes themes of pastoral life, simple rustic life, paddy field works, weaving, sometimes historical events are also found in the form of songs, specially in this hoosorigeets. One of such historical event traced in hoosorigeets is the Khamti/Mishimi revolt that

took place in and around the Kundil Nagar, where the Deori people resided earlier. Deoris are very peace loving people out of terror they had to flee leaving their properties all behind. Such tragic historical incidents are traced in the hoosorigeets:

> Noraiyenomalenorajongfai Mishimiyenomalejathi Aiisarixalenamiahile Xunorejokholakati /

There is a true incident of the tengapaniya clan of the Deoris establishing the Baliyababa than in the *Jaidamparbat*^{xxiii}. Even this incident is remembered and sung in the hoosorigeet:

Erimoterilukheremotdhorilu,

Joidamotpatilu than /

Joidamporbotorporasaipothiyaw /

Sadiyarputolaghora //

Miri dekhilu, mishimidekhilu,

Aru dekhiluhura /

These husori/hoosorigeets are sung within the village and with the due permission of the *deudhoni*^{xxiv}. These songs are not allowed to sing outside the village boundary. There are rules to be followed while singing husori songs during bisu festival of the Deoris, the folks carry a bamboo (12-16ft) length cut into three pieces and in the courtyard of village people residences they use to make a tri-zone and keeps it open from one end. While performing this hoosorigeets, the one who sings (namati) moves within the space of tri-zone and the rest of the performers stand on the other side of the bamboo tri-zone and beats (slight strikes) on the bamboo following a track. This hoosori is performed with the starting of deudhoni in deoshal and eventually performed in the courtyard of bordeuri, xorudeuri, borbharali, xorubharali then in other common people houses. These songs are sung separately by men and women folk.

Bisugeet: Deoris are mad for *bisu* thus they have abundance of *bisugeet*^{xxv} in their disposal. Before the 20^{th} century, the men and women folk separately used to perform *siribisu* or night bisu for the whole month of April, in the big courtyard of any villagers houses. The themes of *bisugeets* revolves around love, likings amongst youths. One of such songs:

Hanhe hoi sorimgoitumarepukhurit

Paro hoi porimgoisalot /

Ghame hoi ulamgoitumarexorirot

Makhi hoi suma dim galot /

The *bisugeet* of women traces the societal norms, codes and lives of women of the Deoris, such as:

Hate xorubulikando o mure ai Bhorixorubulikando / Kotiyamugareriha boil obi Andharotjilikijabo // Hatotu jetuka bhoritu jetuka Jetuka bariloi jaw, Bortikokaiyeborbou anile

Xolitajolaiye saw //

The above mentioned *bisugeet*, says about the *kotiyamuga^{xxvi}* silk and the *riha^{xxvii}* chadar weaved out of it, the silk is strong and it sparkles and shines in the darkness. How the women put *jetuka* (colours of henna in the hands) and how they have a good knowledge of the silk. This bisugeets are not allowed to perform outside village.

Biya naam: The Deoris have got biya naam to sing in marriages. They sing songs which is more of intonations while giving a bath to the bride and groom aswell. One of such songs sung while the bride and groom were taken out for a bath:

Ram ramprothomepronamu

Ram ramaii nu saraswati

Ram ramditiyepronamuhari oi ram ram //

One another song sung while fetching the water for the bride from river or pond nearby to give her a ritual bath on her marriage day:

Fuliasesenisompa

Oi xokhimeliasetogor /

Utharadhagunowoti

Utha oi xokhinodhoribajogor //

The Deoris have big-marriage (adult marriage), mid- marriage (marriage after elopements or small gatherings), small marriage (puberty attaining celebration) and each have separate *biya naam*respectively sung by the women folk of the society. The greater Assamese society believes in chanting intonations (for goddess) while people falls ill of contagious disease like pox, the same implies in the Deori society aswell, those are

known as *aiinam*(chantings for goddesses) commonly known as *yoyo muxa*by the *girachi*(women) of the village.

Tamuligeet: A fictional tale of love affair for *kolongdoi* a beautiful young lady who charms every youth with her beauty. This song includes every youths desire to have her for life, how everyone stops working as she passes by or how they reluctantly goes back to work if they happens to know if kolongdoicomes. This song also includes themes like memories fades and how beauty fades with time and time waits for none. This song is generally sung by the grandchildren who visits their grand mothers home and to pull her leg the youth used to sing such songs. This song is sung addressing the unseen power named as tamuli (2017:91-92):

Amak par kora girjontamuli oi Ami xipaaroloijawyenu oi..... Kahani ahilanatikumoliya Aha bhitoroloixumainu oi..... Kolongdoibulilemoriboparumoi Sitikapatilelagimona oi..... Eri gole era paatnalagekolongdoi Bela golenalagebhatona oi..../

Potankokaigeet: This song is a fictious tale of two beautiful ladies named *senai*and *modhu* and *potankokai* is a young man, who has given them a knife made by a coppersmith. The knife was too sharp and cut the fingers of both the girls and blood rolled while they tried to cut bettle nuts. Thus in utter pain tears rolled from their eyes and they sung this song in pain (2017: 93-94). This song is:

Senai oi bai modhuyebinai Tamulpaanekhonidiya oi potankokai / nTamulkatiboloikotarigorhalu Dhaare soke mokai oi potankokai / Xonarixalotekotarigorhalu Dapot mina kora biri oi potankokai Kotarimukholoisabokenuwari Souk jol mol kore o potankokai / Tumarkotariangulikatile Rakhibonuwarutej oi potankokai /

Tumarkotariyeangulikatile

Bixotbinaibinaikandu o potankokai /

There are other songs such as *sujesaka* songs mostly sung by the women while brewing their local rice beer, longing for their parents home, recalling their past gone good days in parents place and also they mourn that they do not hold any firm place or identity thus they have to work to gather identity, they are too tired of household chores out of sheer tiredness they use to take refreshments in the evening hours by making and consuming rice beer, thus they use to sing.

Some of the Folk Musical Instruments used by the Deoris: The folk musical instruments forms a big part of the cultural heritage of the Deoris. The boys plays the instruments like: *droom, kokili, sengseng, tokari, lurung, bin* etc., while the girls used to play the *gogona, xutuli, toka* etc.

Droom: The percussion instrument in general. It is basically cylindrical instrument with both the ends covered or stitched with the skin of cow or *lepedur* (goat). It is beaten on both the ends with following certain patterns and rhythmic intervals. This is the drum, a musical instrument, sometimes accompanied by a stick sometimes played by both the hands. The rhythms for each songs are different.

Kokili: It is the air pipe, locally known as kokili/ kokiliyai in Deori language. It is made of buffalo horn and it is concave in shape with one large hole at one end the other with tiny hole through which the player blows air and plays it rhythmically placing the fingers on the hole put on the top of the horn towards the mouth side of the player. The youths play it during the bisu festival in the month of April.

Gogona: It is the headgear the girls used to put on their bun while performing bisu dance. It is made out of soft bamboo which is played by plucking the steep edge of the instrument. It is played by keeping it between the lips and pressed tight one thumb holding the one edge of the instrument the other thumb constantly striking the other end and it gives a (zongzong) sound played with different rhythms.

Sengseng: This is the pair of taals/ cymbals which is made of bronze. Its size varies there are very big *sengseng* to handy ones. It is played useing both the hands in rhythmic orders. The big *sengseng* used in the *naamghars or deoshaals* and generally the handy ones are played while performing *husoori*. The beats for each songs are different.

Xutuli: It is a small musical instrument, a very handy one made of clay. Three holes are made on top of the instrument and it is played whistling on the middle hole while simultaneously fingers from both hands plays the other two holes on both the ends.

Tokari: It is a string instrument, played by strumming the strings, tokari is the (dotara) which is generally identified in the Indian classical musical instruments. The Deoris have tokari*geets*(songs) which is sung

accompanied by tokari instrument. It is made of pumpkin dried skull and bamboo attached with strings.

Toka: This instrument is made of bamboo cut into two slice which is hold by an edge it can be hold by both hands and used as clappers. Thus, it is also known as bamboo clappers. It weighs less easily carried and is mostly played by the girls while performing bisu dance, but men can also play this instrument.

Lurung: This is the flute, it is made of bamboo and played by transferring air through mouth, the player holds it in a slanting way putting one edge of the flute on his mouth on one hole while the other edge is left blocked. The player plays it with fingers on the holes made on the flute while simultaneously playing through mouth transferring air.

Bin: A string instrument, played by strumming the strings as well as accompanied by a bow string. It is played in a rhythmic manner, the player strums the strings with one hand and the other hand holds the bow string and draws it over the strings of the bin simultaneously. It is played to accompany melodious songs.

Two important musical instruments of the Deoris which are in the verge of extinction are as: *Cheketrow and Dentow Dema*.

*Cheketrow:*Deoris make their musical instruments from immediate resources available in the nature. This musical instrument was very much popular in the earlier times, but now a days this musical instrument is hardly been played or seen in the Deori society. This instrument is made of bamboo cut into cylindrical shape and one hole is done on top of the bamboo, one lid is made to cover the hole when needed. And two strings are made parallely on top of the bamboo, the strings are made of bamboo sliced softly so that when strummed it gives the sound of the strings of those like guitar. The lid is opened gives a different sound. A stick is taken to beat the strings in a rhythmic way. It is hold in one hand placing one edge at the collar bone the othe edge hold by the hands, while the other hand holds the stick that strums the strings. This musical instrument was popular in the old society, it was played while singing songs, different *bihugeet*.

Dentowdema: This Deori musical instrument is in the verge of extinction. This instrument once played a vital role in the every musical performance of the Deori society. This instrument is made of bamboo cut in a cylindrical shape the bamboo is sliced until the upper layer turns soft. It is played in a certain rhythmical pattern by pressing one end of the instrument on the stomach of the player while a stick strikes on top of the instrument. The player holds the cylindrical shape on one hand pressing one end after certain period to his stomach, while striking the instrument with a stick holding in the other hand.

Conclusion:Identity is an outcome, a condition created largely through heritage which may or may not be conveyed through rituals as the vehicle

of transmission. xxviii As a whole the term Deori used to designate the recognized priest of religion throughout the races, and this point out to the fact they are essentially what indeed their tribal name implies; a Levite or priestly body. Also, the folk musical tradition of the Deoris traces the simple rustic life of the community. The folk beliefs, the rites and ritualistic beliefs, the daily life struggles, the love stories, youth longings, pastoral lifestyle, farming, woman weaving tales etc., are the themes, that revolves in the songs of the Deori community. Traditional music makes the people conscious of their culture and its value (1991: 37). Despite tremendous challenges the Deoris have been able to maintain their age-old traditions, religious beliefs and practices intact amidst various socio-political trials and tribulations through the centuries. From the above historical observation it is found that the Deoris are completely independent race in the great human society. They possess all sort of required factors like language, religion, culture etc., to become an independent race since time immemorial past. The Deori culture is facing danger from the clutches of globalization and striving hard to flourish. Such endangered culture so sprung -up by the nature thousand years past now deserve preservation and propagation by the government itself from being extinct.

Notes and References:

ⁱJack Goody; *Oral Literature and New Literary History*; New York: Oxford University Press; 1977; pp. 4-17.

ⁱⁱ Sashidhar Deori; *A Handbook on Deori Culture*; North-Lakhimpur: Epitome Offsets; 2007; p. 2.

ⁱⁱⁱSaranan Deori; *Religious Practices of the Deoris: A Book on the Religion and the society of the Deori Community*; Guwahati: Bina Library; 2002; p.3.

^{iv} '*Ibid* '., p. 11.

^v'*Ibid*'., p. 13.

^{vi}J. R. Deori; *Deori Jatir Utpatti*; Guwahati: Jyoti Prakashan; 1979; p. 1. ^{vii} *Ibid*'., p. 35-36.

^{viii}A traditional, devotional song of the Deoris sung in the villages and accompanied by rhythmic steps. Usually sung in festivals in fond remembrance of their past. See, Saranan Deori; *Religious Practices of the Deoris: A Book on the Religion and Society of the Deori Community*; Guwahati: Bina Library; 2002; p. 100.

^{ix}'*Ibid*'., pp. 21-22.

^xSaranan Deori; *Religious Practices of the Deoris: A Book on the Religion and Society of the Deori Community*; Guwahati: Bina Library; 2002; p. 23.

^{xi} A clan of the Dibongiya Deoris. See; Saranan Deori; *Religious Practices of the Deoris: A Book on the Religion and Society of the Deori Community*; Guwahati: Bina Library; 2002; p. 100.

^{xii}The priestly council of the Deoris, consists of four people considered as the village judicial council.

^{xiii}The open space inside the village generally kept isolated and only crowded during bisu festival of the Deoris.

^{xiv}The team that performs bisu dance and songs accompanied by musical instruments by the youths is known as hoosori.

^{xv}The head of the priestly council of the Deoris.

^{xvi}The honour palate given to guests of honour which consists of betel nuts leaves, bonse, and some money. A ritualistic manner performed by the Deoris aswell as the Assamese people.

^{xvii}The towel that is the honour and pride of Deori community locally known as bonse in their language.

^{xviii}The local brew made of rice spirit and medicinal plants and the curry made of meat is known as suje kaji commonly in the Deori language. ^{xix}The songs in Deori language is known as sajeba.

^{xx}The ritualistic offerings and prayer made to the Gods and Goddesses in the holy temples at first before celebrating the bisu festivalof the Deoris. ^{xxi}The holy shrines of the Deoris.

^{xxii}The bisu celebrated in the month of Magh (January), by the Deoris, and is named after the month.

^{xxiii}Jaidam parbat (hills) which is in the borderlines of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh of North East India the original habitation place of the Deoris, the homeland of the Deoris.

^{xxiv}The female holy spirit that appears in every bisu period of the Deoris, who foretells the future.

^{xxv}The songs that are sung during bisu festival of the Deoris are known as bisu geets.

^{xxvi}The golden silk is muga and the kotiya muga/silk is the strong silk that shines very much, it is used to weave out igu or mekhela or the skirt which the women folk use to wear in the Deori society.

^{xxvii}The long shawl which the women use to weave out of golden silk, and use to drape on their body on top of the blouse and mekhela.

^{xxviii}Mazharul Islam; *In the Context of Indic Folklore*; New Delhi: Concept Publishers; 1985; p. 23.

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