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**"KABAN" THE REVELATION OF THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN OF
THE MISING COMMUNITY IN THE FORM OF FOLK SONG.**

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ABSTRACT :

Folklore is a part of age-old tradition consisting of the traditional beliefs, customs and stories of a community passed on through the generations orally. The messages/informations are delivered in the form of folktales, ballads, hymns or chants. It is an essential part of every tribal culture/society.

The Misings which are the second largest indigenous tribes of Assam has primitive traditions and customs and are also very rich in folk literature. This paper is therefore a study on one of its variant called "KABAN", which is an umbrella term used to express deep sorrow and pain in the form of soulful melodious songs. It is sung only by the elder women of the tribe residing in a particular community. Kaban plays a lenient role in depicting the social conditions of the women as the song itself is a summation of various social and familiar issues faced by or has been affecting the day-to-day lives of the women.

The paper uses various indicators and findings based on primary and secondary data.

INRODUCTION :

The traditional beliefs, age-old practices and customs, story-tellings, jokes, folksongs etc. which are transmitted orally or behaviourally from individual to individual through the generations are the distinct identity of any community

and helps in the preservation its culture. The folklore and other expressions indicate the dynamic and creative nature of a particular tribal culture.

The Misings which are the second largest Indigenous tribe in the state of Assam has preserved well its distinct traditions and cultures. In this article the main focus is on "Kaban", a well tuned folklore dictated to depict social status of women of the Mising community expressed in the form of songs.

Folklore plays an insight view of the customary Mising way of life. The Misings have a very rich culture passed down the generations through folksongs and other poetic compositions orally. Unfortunately there are not a single manuscript of the Mising community of their social history and the only means through which their social history and cultures are being preserved is through oral narratives and traditional practices, customs, folksongs etc. Women thus tried to express their hope and aspiration and life experiences through songs. Amongst which the most popular aged old practices to preserve socio-cultural history of the Misings are through songs called 'Kaban and Oinitom' in which a particular tone is tuned to identify it from other.

OBJECTIVES : The study would aim to describe the insight view of the age old tradition of the practice of 'Kaban' of the Mising Tribe.

METHODOLOGY : The paper uses various indicators and findings based on primary and secondary data. Primary sources includes personal interviews and Secondary sources are collections from different Books, journals, newspaper, articles and publications.

'KABAN' are of different kinds and can be broadly classified under two categories:-

i) Doying Kaban; ii) Keejar Kaban:

Doying Kaban:

Doying is a segment of Kaban, here the contents are in the form of rhythmic song and are tuned into traditional folk song. The song depicts the history of the orator or the writer in brief but the conclusion part of the song goes to extreme sadness which touches everybody's heart and draws their attentions which is extraordinary. Doyin Kaban are also protected and preserved in the form of stories and songs.

Keejar Kaban:

In simple language it is also known as the descriptive Kaban. This folk songs are depicted in the form of describing the ups and downs of the present life. Songs are mainly introduced in a scattered manner includes memories which are ruminated in one of its quality. The tone of the songs are heart-touching which presents the sweet and sour moment of their life.

Further Keejar kaban is divided into five parts:

a) Daba Kaban, b) Meba Kaban, c) Yaban Kaban, d) Yamne Kaban, e) Mepa Kaban;

Daba Kaban: The songs are composed to express their pathetic life going through hardships and the moments of her unsuccessful life. In this part of the

Kaban she dreams of a colourful life which she wants to live. But reality always distance away from dreams.

Usually the singer sings to describe a story of her own in which she accuses her fate and thinks of her miserable ill-fated life and curses her parents for giving birth to her for which she is having an unjustified life full of sufferings. All the sufferings and pathetic life is described in this Daba Kaban.

Meba Kaban: In this part the songs are composed to express the futile love affair they had in their youth life. 'Meba' which is Yamme in Mising language means youth or young people. Youths in their youthfulness fall in love with their loved ones and dream of having a sweet and happy life. But luck doesn't come easily and instead the dreams are never achieved in real life and ultimately the loved ones get separated. Only their fond sweet memories remain and thinking of those moments make them happy for a short span of time and are expressed in the form of songs. The songs are melodious and heart-touching. Meba Kaban is also called Sisang Kaban.

Yaban Kaban: This folksong which is sung in remembrance of the good deeds done of a dead person or one of their family members is expressed in Yaban kaban. The songs are melodious and heart-touching. Generally it is sung only when someone lost her near and dear ones. As thinking of losing her near and dear ones, her heart fills with pain and emptiness and cannot accept the fact that she had lost someone. Thus the grief-stricken songs when someone is dead are expressed in Yaban Kaban. It is also called as Medir (sorrow, grief) kaban, because here pain reaches its extreme point which gets expressed in a song.

Yamne Kaban: Yamne means bride, but the Yamne Kaban is not a marriage folk song. From the time of a daughter's birth to the time of her marriage, she and her mother share a personal and a very close relation and are comparatively very deep. A mother after bringing her daughter up with a lot of love and affections, going through the bad and good times, the realization of her daughter getting married one day makes her feel sad. Because of this, grief strikes both of them and as a result, the mother sings a sorrowful song expressing all the moments of life they spent together till the time of their separation. This is expressed in Yamne Kaban. It has further three divisions- Giyak Kaban, Meyak Kaban and Meter Kaban.

When the daughter sings in a painful tone remembering her good old days with her mother is Giyak Kaban and when the mother sings thinking of separation from her daughter it is Meyak Kaban.

On the other hand when the husband marries a second wife (not so common), the first wife weeps in deep agony. The sorrows are expressed in the form of song and is called as Meter Kaban, Meter means end of the last hope.

Mepa Kaban- Mepa Kaban is in remembrance of good old memories. Mepa means to remember or collection of the old memories. A brother gets separated from his sister due to her marriage and when they do not meet each other for a very long time they remember their childhoods and the sweet old days they had together and remembering those moments, both of them weep or cry. This is expressed in the form of song is called as Mepa Kaban.

FINDINGS- Women through the ages has always been an active participants whether in the maintenance of families or in the social spheres, without whom the life on earth would be impossible. Their roles in the family and society are indispensable. Through Kaban, a woman reveals the misdeeds happened to her and her unfulfilled dreams, because of family pressure or social pressure. It basically depicts the struggle of a woman faces in a patriarchal society and the sexiest comments she receives when they try to pursue their dreams. It also reveals the pain and responsibility dumped on the woman of the house after marriage and how on the process she recalls her carefree days, living with her parents. It shows a woman smartly expresses her feelings in all the spheres of her life and ultimately overcomes all the fears and hurdles and carries the life forward.

CONCLUSION :

Kaban is a unique way of expressing a life history which exists only in the Mising society. It is an age-old practice passed down the generations and is practiced only by the Mising women. But now a days it is seen that male section of the community also performs these folk songs. No written documentation exists of Kaban and the beauty of the song can be felt only after its presentation i.e. only after sung. The women of the society learn it through seeing and experiencing it from their elders and automatically flows in the blood.

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PERSONAL INTERVIEWS :

Name- Sinu Pegu

Sex- Female

Age- 50

Designation- House wife

Date- 08/03/2020

Time and place of interview : Jengraimukh, Majuli, Assam;

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