

MORIA COMMUNITY OF ASSAM AND THEIR SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Dr. Snigdha Mahanta

Associate Professor, Department of Assamese.

Dhing College, Assam.

Abstract

The main objective of the study is to know about the language spoken by the Moria people of Assam. Descriptive methods are used in this research paper. The study is based on both primary data and secondary data. Secondary data are taken from books, journals, articles, e-sources etc. The people of the Moriya community which populates eleven districts of Assam speak mainly in Assamese language. The original language of the Moriyas, who accompanied Turbak as soldiers to fight against the Ahom king, is not known. The speech of the Moriya has a typical accent. Generally while speaking they elongate the first letter of a word. Just like other communities the Moriyas too have their own secret language. With slight variation of pronunciation almost all the Moriya people in Assam speak the standard Assamese language. Unlike the Muslims who migrated from East Bengal and Bangladesh, indigenous Muslims use Assamese as their mother tongue and follow and cultural traditions and festivities similar to Assamese Hindus which clearly differentiate them from the migrants. Presently, the Moriyas are a prominent and noteworthy Islamic community of Assam. Socially, culturally and linguistically the Moriyas have their unique identity.

Keywords: Moriya Community, Language, Assamese.

Introduction

Unlike the Muslims who migrated from East Bengal and Bangladesh, indigenous Muslims use Assamese as their mother tongue and follow and cultural traditions and festivities similar to Assamese Hindus which clearly differentiate them from the migrants. Assamese Muslims feel there is a threat to their identity due to Muslim migrants to the state and want measures to protect them and their interests. Their ancestors didn't migrate from East Bengal and Bangladesh, who are not in focus. This group known as indigenous or Assamese Muslims is feeling a threat to their identity due to Muslim migrants and wants measures to protect them and their interests.

The Moriyas are a distinguished community who have been living in the eastern state of India, a meeting ground of diverse communities; Assam, since ancient times. Primarily an Islamic community, the Moriyas are an important section of the indigenous Assamese Muslim population. They are primarily associated with the brass and bell-metal industry of Assam.

Making brass utensils is their traditional business. (Ali, Irshad Page no: 96) Keeping in view the social status of these people the Moriyas are given More Other Backward Classes (MOBC) status by the Government of Assam in 1975. The Moriyas are the most ancient

Muslim inhabitants of eastern Assam. The Moriyas are the descendants of those war prisoners who invaded this land as soldiers of the Muslim king Turbak during the reign of the Ahom king Suhungmung or Dihingiya Raja (1497-1539).

After their release from the Ahom King's imprisonment, instead of returning to their native lands these soldiers stayed back in Assam permanently. They started to earn their livelihood by making brass and bell-metal utensils. In due course of time, these people came to be known as Moriyas. It can be said that they are keeping the cottage industry of making brass and bell-metal utensils in Assam alive. Presently, the Moriyas are a prominent and noteworthy Islamic community of Assam. Socially, culturally and linguistically the Moriyas have their unique identity. Although drawn from a mixed cultural past, with the passage of time, they got integrated in the fabric of the Assamese society and culture. Currently the Moriyas reside in 66 villages of 11 districts of Assam. Approximately they are a population of more than two lakhs.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to know about the language spoken by the Moria people of Assam.

Sources of Data: Descriptive and analytical methods are used in this research paper. The study is based on both primary data and secondary data. For this study, the necessary data has been collected through observation method. Secondary data are taken from books, journals, articles, internet etc.

Discussion

A Language can survive through the Proper maintenance and use. In this case, every speaker should have the proficiency in all of the Language skills. The speaking and writing skills are assessed as the productive skill. Language proficiency depends upon the ability of the above two language skills. A language is used in various purposes, occasions and domains, which are very essential for every language. To keep language alive and the main tool to conserve its history is script. Against afresh with the help of scripture, a language proceeds towards the path of development with a definite identity and the language gets established with the help of the practice of writers or intellectuals. As a consequence, the people also had to be disappointed by not getting proper response from the reader. The people of the Moriya community which populates eleven districts of Assam speak mainly in Assamese language. The original language of the Moriyas, who accompanied Turbak as soldiers to fight against the Ahom king, is not known. Francis Hamilton (1940: 56) has observed that the Moriya sused to speak Bengaliin the beginning. Since the Moriyas came from the erstwhile Goura kingdom it is natural that they spoke Bengali. Keeping in view the origin of the Moriyas, Hamilton's observation can be believed to have some authenticity. But later on when they established matrimonial relationships with the lower caste Hindus, along with accepting other cultural essentials they had also accepted

Assamese as their mother tongue. The speech of the Moriya has a typical accent. Generally while speaking they elongate the first letter of a word. The form in which the spoken Assamese language of the Moriyas exists in present times may be termed as a social dialect specific to that community. The first reason for this is the lexical and phonetic distinctiveness of this dialect from other dialects of Assam. Secondly, there exists uniformity in the use of this dialect although the speakers of this dialect are spread across different linguistic groups. However, it is worth mentioning that this dialect of the Moriyas follow the standard form of the Assamese language. The Moriyas had migrated from the Koliabor area to different parts of Assam at various historical moments. Although they are distributed across different parts of Assam, they still use the rustic dialect of Koliabor in their day to day transactions.

Just like other communities the Moriyas too have their own secret language. With slight variation of pronunciation almost all the Moriya people in Assam speak the standard Assamese language. Therefore the structure of the secret language of the Moriyas is dependent on the standard Assamese language. Syntactically, the Moriya dialect can be can be classified into three categories – 1) Based on structure 2) based on mood and 3) Based on the priority received by the subject and the object. Like standard Assamese language, in Moriya dialect also there are three types of sentences based on mood. Based on structure a sentence can be simple, compound or complex and based on mood a sentence can be declarative, imperative or interrogative. Based on voice the Moriya dialect can be classified syntactically like the standard Assamese language. The three different types of sentences are –Active voice, Passive voice, Intransitive voice. Though, out of these three types use of Intransitive voice is not seen, however in very recent usage this type of usage has been registered among the educated few. Most of the language speakers from this community have shown their positive attitude towards the language. To solve the problems of the spoken languages of Moriyas community of Assam, we should have taken proper language planning as well as implication of the plan covering both corpus and status of the languages. And also give importance to the expansion of the language through mass communication; provide textbook, proper language policy from the primary level of education etc. Literature is the pillar of a race. The mental, intellectual, social, cultural, ethnical dimensions of a society are expressed by its literature. In this connection, Moriya language has no any developed and rich custom of written language. Due to the lack of any written literature, the historical study of the evaluation of these languages to the present form has not been possible. Moreover, written literature has affluent impact on the development and expansion of the language.

Conclusion

Under the umbrella of the indigenous Assamese Muslim community fall three main groups: the Goriyas, the Moriyas (from Upper Assam) and the Deshis (from Lower Assam). While the Deshis are 13th century converts from indigenous communities such as Koch Rajbongshi and Mech, the Goriyas and Moriyas trace their lineage to converts as

well as soldiers, karigars etc who came to the region during the Ahom rule. Smaller groups such as Julha Muslims also fall under this category. For these groups who consider themselves distinct from the Bengali-speaking Muslims who migrated from East Bengal or Bangladesh, the demand for a census is not recent. According to Census 2011, Muslims constitute 34.22 per cent of the 3.12 crore population of Assam. Around 12 per cent of that is indigenous Muslim. Because of migration from Bangladesh, this group has lost its identity and are lagging behind in terms of social and political development. There are government schemes for indigenous communities in Assam like the Bodos, Koch Rajbongshis, Sooteas, Ahoms. Just like those are indigenous groups, so are Goriyas and Moriyas. Since Muslims world over have similar-sounding names, it is important to identify indigenous Assamese Muslims through a census, so that they can benefit from the various developmental schemes in Assam. This includes Clause 6 of the Assam Accord which grants "constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards" to the "Assamese people". The rationale behind this is to help in the development of their identity, their culture, their literature.

References

Ahmad, Imtiaz (1976). "For a Sociology of India." In Muslim Communities of South Asia, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

Ali, A. N. M. Irshad (1979). Hindu Muslim Relations in Assam.

Baruah, Birinchi Kumar, 1988 : Axomiya Kaktga Xahitya (Purani Bhag), Journal Ampiriyam Nalbari, Axom

Bhuyan, Surjakumar, 1988: Axom Buranji, Buranji aru Puratatya Bibhag, Axom, Guwahati

1990: Deudhai Axom Buranji, Buranji aru Puratatya Bibhag, Axom Guwahati.

Dasgupta, S.N. (1960). Fundamentals of Indian Art (Bombay, India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Duarah, A. (2004). Moria Ali aru Moria Pukhuri, Prantik, Vol. XXIII, 16-31st July.

Goswami, Tralukya Nath, 1988: Xahitya Alusana, Bina Prakash, Panbazar, Guwahati-1

Gohain Baruah, Padmanath (Puno: Mudron 1976): Axomor Buranji, Axom Prakashan, Porishad, Guwahati

Guha P.K. (2007). *Moria Muslims of Assam: A Study on the Cultural Variability and Drift*, Delhi.

Malik, Syed Abdul (1958). Asamiya Zikir Aru Zari, Gauhati.

Saikia Bora, Lilawati 1992: Bhaxa Xatiyar Xubax, Chandra Prakash, Tihu- Guwahati.

Sharma, Satyendra Nath, 1986: Axomiya Xahityar Xomixyatmok Itibriti, Xoumar Printing and Polishing Pvt. Lmt, Guwahati

Saikia, Nagen, 1996: Gobexona Padhoti Porisoi, Banalata, Dibrugarh-1.

Thakur, Nagen aru Khagen Sen Deka, Xompadito 2000: Bhaxa Sinta Bisitra, Puberun, Guwahati.