

Chapter IV

Economic Life

In preceding chapter, I discussed profile of Dheyani-Rajbanshi residing in Barak valley for more than four hundred year. Comprehensive life and career study of the community with fact and figure become crucial to develop elaborate and in-depth understanding of economy of the community and its people. This chapter indeed tries to deal with and divulge past/traditional and present-contemporary economic life of the community with special reference to nine Dheyani-Rajbanshi concentrated village in Barak valley.

Economy in Past Mere Occupation only

Economic anthropological study pioneered by Karl Polanyi, George Dalton, Hoseltiz, Herskovits, Homans, Thurnwald, Sol Tax, Godelier, Raymond Firth, Manning Nash, Mauss, Belshaw, LeClair and Schneider etc. in their work already studied past and primitive economic life of communities. Such studies highly borrowed and depended upon classical economic analysis and methodical orientation of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. According to these anthropological source

of database, primitive society and its people only lived subsistence life, where cultivation of crop was limited and scarce. Shifting cultivation to permanent settlement process was unknown to most people in time antiquity. Hence in all aspects pre-literate or primitive economy was unstable, feeble and at subsistence level.

In similar way and according to historical antecedent, Dheyani-Rajbanshi occupation is developed and fixed in a micro regional setting. The community's initial displacement, migration and subsequent settlement in a new place environment did not provide enough avenue and opportunity to earn and meeting its necessity or self-sufficiency.

Agriculture was/is the mainstay of occupation, and all people of the community directly or indirectly, associated with it. Now indeed they are known as peasants and most of them possess, if not adequate acre of land, but definitely up to certain patches of land. Rice becomes staple crop and food for them in general. They presently cultivate three main varieties of rice: *Ahu*, *Sali* and *Bao*. Shifting is usual method of *Ahu* cultivation whose use is most common. But its yield is smaller than that of *Sali* (wet rice), and

it is short maturing. Sali kind of cultivation requires transplantation in field, which normally retain water or could be artificially irrigated from adjacent stream. Dheyani-Rajbanshi knows techniques of proper irrigation. They use to make dams across hill stream and then lead to stored-up water to field through a network of dugout channel.

The community likes to cultivate different varieties of Sali crops (paddy) like *raja, briha, soma, sikhna, banga, rakta, kateki, asok, bara, jaha, mathanga, maigutiya, bar, lahaphari etc.* *Baois* along maturing coarse variety sown in February-March and harvested in November-January¹. Besides rice, most people of the community cultivate different kinds of pulses, fruits and vegetables for their household consumption. Most of the common cultivated fruits are jack-fruit, coconut, orange, mango, olive, bananas, embolic etc. and different kinds of citrus fruits like lemon and shaddock. Hence people of the community being hardworking, they generally try to cultivate varieties of crops and vegetables as part of their grand occupation to mainly meet their daily use and consumption now. The following table (in next page) is going to sketch out name and type of occupation profile of the Dheyani-Rajbanshi in Barak valley of south Assam.

¹. D.Nath, History of The Kooch Kingdom, 1515-1615, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1989, P. 147.

Table-IV.1
Occupation Profile of Dheyant-Rajbanshi

| Sl.No | Occupation | No. of Respondent | | Total | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | Farmer | 86 | 79 | 165 | 55.00 |
| 2 | Weaver | 4 | 28 | 32 | 10.67 |
| 3 | Wage Earner | 18 | - | 18 | 6.00 |
| 4 | House wife | - | 30 | 30 | 10.00 |
| 5 | Unemployed | 14 | 11 | 15 | 5.00 |
| 6 | Student | 15 | 5 | 20 | 6.67 |
| 7 | Govt. Employee | 8 | 1 | 9 | 3.00 |
| 8 | Retired Person | 7 | 1 | 8 | 2.66 |
| 9 | Tea Garden Worker | 3 | - | 3 | 1.00 |
| 10 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

Data indicate 55% of respondents are farmer while 10.67% of them are engaged in weaving, 10% are house wife, 6% are wage earner, 6.67% are student, 5% are unemployed, 3% are government employee, 2.66% are retired person and a little segment of 1% are tea garden worker.

Further, in general context, principal earner in a family is a male adult person who shoulders entire responsibility of his family maintenance and sustenance. Married and unmarried children, either in joint or nuclear family, depend upon senior most member's earning for livelihood. Total

earning members of a family data are shown in table III.2 to represent diversity in income of the community.

Table–IV.2
Principal earning member in family

| Sl.No. | Head | No. of Respondents | | Total | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | Self | 98 | 24 | 122 | 40.67 |
| 2 | Father | - | 72 | 72 | 24.00 |
| 3 | Husband | 36 | 48 | 84 | 28.00 |
| 4 | Son | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1.66 |
| 5 | Brother | 3 | 3 | 6 | 2.00 |
| 6 | Daughter | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1.67 |
| 7 | Mother | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.00 |
| 8 | Sister | - | 3 | 3 | 1.00 |
| 9 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

Data reflect most Dheyān–Rajbānshi 40.67% are sole earner in their family.

While 24% depend on fathers' income, less than one-fourth 24% depend upon husbands' earning, 1.66% depend on son and in remaining cases main earner of family is brother 2%, daughter 1.67%, mother 1%, and sister 1%.

Earning Member in Family Poverty and Subsistence

Dheyman-Rajbansi principally depends upon agriculture as chief source of income and livelihood. Since cultivation does not ensure adequate food-grain and buffer-stock, more than one member in each and every family is engaged in different kinds of work. Even more than one member work in a family; their income do not sufficient for maintenance of family. Minimum or total number of persons in a family engaged in work is represented in the following table:

**Table-IV.3
Total earning member in a family**

| Sl. No | Earning Member in a Family | No of Respondent | | Total | Percentage |
|--------|----------------------------|------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | One | 28 | 26 | 54 | 18.00 |
| 2 | Two | 55 | 53 | 104 | 34.67 |
| 3 | Three | 46 | 44 | 94 | 31.33 |
| 4 | Four | 22 | 22 | 44 | 14.67 |
| 5 | Five | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.00 |
| 6 | More than five | 1 | - | 1 | 0.33 |
| 7 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

Indeed more than one-third of them 34.67% have two earning member and 31.33% have three earning member in a family. Remaining 14.67% have four earner, only 1% has five earner, in 0.33% case more than five earner and 18% families still depend only upon one bread earner.

**Monthly Income of Majority of Family
Disproportionate Average**

Dheyman-Rajbanshi family income, as of now, is guided and drawn from agricultural output. But agriculture often fails to meet their pressing daily and regular expense of most of Dheyman-Rajbanshi families. Hence, they are not financially solvent and sufficient. Monthly family income of most families of the community is produced below the following table:

**Table- IV.4
Monthly income of family**

| Sl.No | Range of income | No. of Respondents | | Total | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | Below Rs. 3,000 | 24 | 20 | 45 | 15.00 |
| 2 | Rs. 3000 – 5,000 | 109 | 107 | 216 | 72.00 |
| 3 | Rs. 5000 – 7,000 | 15 | 11 | 26 | 8.67 |
| 4 | Rs. 7000 – 9,000 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 3.33 |
| 5 | Rs. 9000 and above | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.00 |
| 6 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

The table makes it clear that most 72% come under low family income Rs. 3000 to Rs. 5000 range and among 15% people monthly income is very low- below Rs. 3000. Only 8.67% family have medium income between Rs. 5000 – 7000, while 3.33% possess average monthly income of Rs. 7000 – 9000 and only 1% family income is relatively high and above Rs. 9000 per month. It is rather clear that monthly income of majority of Dheyman-Rajbanshi

families and disproportionate and usually below average level, which do not help them to lead a minimum life.

Now only during recent time some Dheyant-Rajbanshi possess ration card to augment their economic condition as they belong to below poverty line (BPL) and above poverty line (APL) category. Such a scheme is introduced by government and implemented at local/regional level to improve economic condition of some people living in subsistence and poverty level. Data relating to people having access to ration card is presented in tabular/statistical form below:

**Table-IV.5
Ration Cardholder**

| Sl. No | Ration Card Holder | No. of Respondent | | Total | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | Yes | 138 | 130 | 268 | 89.33 |
| 2 | No | 12 | 20 | 32 | 10.67 |
| 3 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

The table reveal majority of Dheyant-Rajbanshi 89.33% possess ration card and around 10.67% do not have access to ration card as they are yet to be enlisted into the category. Further, their type of ration card is stipulated in the next page.

Table- IV.6
Type of Ration Card

| SL. No | Type of Ration card | No. of Respondent | | Total | Percentage |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | APL | 24 | 22 | 46 | 15.33 |
| 2 | BPL | 110 | 108 | 218 | 72.67 |
| 3 | Nil | 16 | 20 | 36 | 12.00 |
| 4 | Grand Total | | | 300 | 100.00 |

The above statistics highlight those who possess ration card 72.67% are BPL members and only 15.33% people have ration card facility as they come under APL category. Further only 12% have no ration card at all and yet awaiting for the same.

Economy and Work Culture Past, Present and Future

Dheyani-Rajbanshi economy and work culture process starting from past, present to future gives a gloomy vis-à-vis divergent picture about the community. However, many old and young people of the community are of the view that some degree or extent of change took place in cultural and religious activity among community of members, but as such no remarkable change is noticed in their economic life and work culture. This trend is

evident as till now agriculture holds primary importance among most Dheyman-Rajbanshi to be their occupation.

Those people who do not have agricultural land work mostly as agricultural labourers. Cultivation of *endi* and *muga* cocoon forms an important part of their living and income too. Hardly any Dheyman-Rajbanshi intends to work in tea garden, which are located near to their habitational village. Youth are seen taking interest in security matter of their respective village and community. Some Dheyman-Rajbanshi people are engaged in different kinds of works at Guwahati, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore. Some serve in schools as school teacher and staff. Few work in different pockets of Barak valley in both central and state government establishment. Some youth own auto rickshaw and used for commercial and transport of goods and human being also.

On the other level, some villagers are active to produce seasonal vegetables mainly for their own consumption and surplus is sold at nearby local market. As most of the villages are close to hill and forest, villagers use forest based produces to make a variety of items of everyday needs like *dala*, *kula*, broom, basket, *dhari*, furniture and even fishing implements. As a major part

of their activity and preservation of forest and ecological balance, none Dheyman-Rajbanshi is ever found to procure firewood from jungle or sold any wood in market-place.

Members of the community are industrious and usually they do not engage in outside work force for agricultural process like ploughing, seedling, reaping, harvesting and so on. Possibly most of them hesitate or do not show interest to work in other non-Dheyman-Rajbanshi houses or fields as daily wage labourer. Most households have tree like mango, jackfruit, orange, banana which fulfill their fruit requirement. In addition to their household duties women act as strong work force in agricultural activity, weaving, fishing, collecting forest based items and making bamboo produces. Such devotion to their work makes the community economically independent though not rich. It has to be mentioned here that in all fields of life – social, economic and cultural Dheyman- Rajbanshi women can take part with man².

Bamboo, which was so essential in day to day life, is widely grown, is utilised by womenfolk to make variety of items like *dala* (round shaped bamboo tray), *Kula* (U-shaped bamboo tray) and *dhari* (bamboo mat) which

². Tanuj Kumar Dey, Role of Folk in Constructing Identity, NERO, Guwahati, Assam, 2011, P.62.

are used at domestic level as well as sold in *hat* (local market). Bamboo work and wood work are noted craft of the community. Different articles like basket, mat and a kind of sunshades called *japi*, as well as fishing appliance like *jakoi*, *peloin* etc. and weaving implements are made up of bamboo.

As sericulture is a common occupation, the cultivation of plants like *era* (*Riccinus communis*) *Chom* (*Antheroea Assama*) *Kesheru* (*Heteropanax*) is popular among Dheyman-Rajbanshi in Barak valley of Assam³.

Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages have a reputation from very early times for its indigenous silk- pat, muga and endi, manufactured from cocoon. There are professional silk spinner and weaver called *katani* in community. It may also be mentioned in this connection proficiency in weaving is an indispensable qualification for a girl for her marriage in Dheyman-Rajbanshi community.

Practice of dyeing of clothes is also prevalent among Dheyman-Rajbanshi. Art or science of dyeing clothes with lac is cultivated by the community of

³. D.Nath, History of The Kooch Kingdom, 1515-1615, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1989, P. 67.

members since their settlement in Barak valley. Materials used are not only lac and indigo, but also root, leave and bark of tree. Usual procedure adopted for such thing is to dye not cloth but thread.

Dheyant-Rajbanshi Habitation Locality, Village and Residence

All the nine Dheyant-Rajbanshi concentrated villages in Barak valley fall within Cachar district centering around Khaspur--capital of ancient Koch principality. The villages are Japirbond, Laburbond, Larshingpar (Larshing Basti) Thaligram, Harinagar, Dewan Basti, Lakhicherra, Narayanpur and Digli. Jhapirbond is the largest village in terms of having maximum Dheyant-Rajbanshi population, while Thaligram becomes the smallest one among the total nine Dheyant-Rajbanshi inhabited villages.

Common Economic Feature Similarity and Difference

The villages are scattered widely from one another fall in Cachar district in Barak valley and no Dheyant-Rajbanshi village is found either in Karimganj or in Hailakandi district. Very rare Dheyant-Rajbanshi people are working here and there particularly in different government and non-government

establishment in Karimganj and Hailakandi district, but their main settlement is within nine villages in Cachar district. Of total nine villages, four are located within Udharbond legislative assembly: the place played an important role in uniting members of the community with an explicit religious and commercial viewpoint. Rest of five villages are situated in diverse corner of Barkhala and Lakhipur, stretching unto Assam-Manipur boarder. The villages, though broadly dotted have some common features that relate one village to the other in different ways. Surprisingly, most villages are surrounded either by tea garden or beside tea gardens but very less number of Dheyman-Rajbanshi people engaged in tea garden work.

Agriculture is main occupation and virtually whole community depends upon it. Most importantly, members of the community, living in villages, are aware of their tradition and show keen interest and active participation for their community in a place of geographical isolation from mainstream. Further every household owns a *loom* for weaving clothes and women are expert weavers. This traditional machine is called *saal* by villagers. The loom is usually placed in front or back verandha. It is made of wood and bamboo especially by women since most of them think it is a women's domain. Length of a loom is 68 inch, breath 58 inch and height 48 inch.

Different coloured threads are used to prepare clothes of attraction. People buy threads from the nearby local or regional market. In their language market is called *hut*. Some of the women rear *muga* and *ari* cocoons after producing cloth from them. Size of cloth is with standard size of Assamese cloth. Deep colour is more preferred by most of them. Pattern of cloth is both floral and geometrical. In every community, be it Assamese, Bengali or any other caste, different families use different surnames. One more common feature is that Rajbanshi living elsewhere too use different surnames after names like Roy, Das, Pradhani, Mondol, Sarkar and Burman title. But Rajbanshi in Barak valley stick to 'Rajbanshi' title only. Pig and fowl are never reared in any Dheyman-Rajbanshi family, household and village. These common features united community members in many ways and made them internally as well as externally strong to protect their interest fighting against any outside force or people.

On the other hand since all most all Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages are economically backward, every village people solely depends upon agriculture without which they have no alternative to earn or generate income. Economic backwardness has become a common fate of village life

and they have become the silent bearer of such misery since their settlement in Barak valley.

Since independence, neither central nor state government has adopted any measure to improve transportation to their village, converting *katcha* road to *pucca* road, irrigation facility and other allied agricultural activities, which are the prime indicators of economic growth and development of a community. As there is no public sector bank located in those nine villages, most of the villagers are forced to depend upon micro financial institutions like 'Bandhan' to meet their day to day urgency.

There is no market facility where they can sell their produce, so ultimately they are getting trapped under swaddle of intermediary. Government pulse polio and other health related programmes are regularly announced and launched in the state but, none of the Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages are able to take advantage of such facilities and are getting deprived of regularly. Both main road and connecting roads within their villages are in miserable condition.

All villages are located in remote area and far from district head quarter. In fact Dheyman –Rajbanshi village in Barak valley and their approximate

distance from Silchar, the district head quarter is quite far off, which are shown in the following table:

**Table – IV.7
Village Profile**

| Sl. No. | Name of district head qtr | Name of village | Approximate distance |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Silchar | Japirbond | 17 Km |
| 2 | | Larshingpar | 19 Km |
| 3 | | Laburbond | 18 Km |
| 4 | | Thaligram | 29 Km |
| 5 | | Narayanpur | 35 Km |
| 6 | | Lakhicherra | 62 Km |
| 7 | | Dewan Basti | 30 Km |
| 8 | | Harinagar | 45Km |
| 9 | | Digli | 60 Km |

These village location exemplifies besides distance, other overt and covert factors contribute enormously for backwardness of the Dheyani-Rajbanshi inhabited villages. Their village road, communication, transport and other related facilities remain very neglected and poor for more than any specific period of time. Ironically only recently some people from other non-Dheyani-Rajbanshi villages started talking about some sign of work to be undertaken in their resided villages in near future.

To understand nature and feature of progress made in Dheyman-Rajbanshi inhabited localities, the following villages are selected for case study, which may unravel empirical fact about Dheyman-Rajbanshi village in entirety.

Case Study

Japirbond

Japirbond (part I and part II) is the largest of Dheyman-Rajbanshi village located under Lathigram post office having a distance of about 17 kilometre from Silchar town. Total population of the community is 1675-male comprises 866 and female no is 809. In the village only a single community that is Dheyman-Rajbanshi lives.

According to some old villagers, the name Japirbond is combination of two words- *Japi* and *Bond*- meaning *Japi* (in Assamese) and jungle respectively. The place is so named because of easy availability of *Japi* or *Tokou* (a kind of palm) tree in their vicinity. This readily available forest resource is used to make *Japi*, which is a kind of big broad-brimmed hat used mainly by farmer as a sun and rain cover while working in paddy field. So the name of

the village is derived from Dheyani-Rajbanshi mythology as well as glorifying work nature of the people.

People of the village are mostly peasants. They take interest to produce seasonal vegetables to meet their needs. People are accustomed to eat rice as main food. Their houses are made of wood, bamboo and cane, but of low height. Floors are regularly washed by women with cow dung mixed water to make their houses hygienic and dust free. Cow-dung has a religious connotation also for them. For education, all Dheyani-Rajbanshi depends upon one high school, named Chilarai High School established in 2005. Presently the school has two parts, a bamboo wall portion inside which high classes are held, and the other part consists of three classrooms, an office room and a veranda made up of tin roof, brick wall and mud floor. It is constructed in rectangular form wherein classrooms have wooden desk and bench. At the back, a wall and a roofless toilet exist. In front yard, lies a playground.

No state sponsored drinking facility is available within the village that force villagers to share one well atleast among five or six families. A single health sub-centre is available to provide minimum lifesaving drugs and support to

villagers. People from other communities like Bengali, Manipuri, Dimasa and tea garden worker, surround the village but majority people of the Dheyman-Rajbanshi community has been living in the village quite for long time. So the entire village, its economy, socio-cultural values, road, transport, communication, availability of health facility and educational profile of most of the Dheyman-Rajbanshi's are not seen in proper or good sense till now.

Larshingpar

Larshingpar is the next-door village located just two kilometer away from Japirbond village. Total village population is 988: male no is 555 and female no is 433. To many dominant voices, the village got its name since a rivulet called Larshing passes through it. It is surrounded by hill and tea garden. Tea garden worker and few houses of Hmar community are found in the villages and its adjoining area. As per local tradition, initially, a very few families lived in Larshing village but gradually people from other Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages arrived and settle down here giving rise to inter-village migration.

For attainment of education, the village has a single basic school. But most people are yet to send their children to the school. Agriculture is the principal occupation for all of them. The villagers share all their socio-economic aspects with Japirbond villagers having close intimacy. The village has nearly two thousand *bigha* of land, which is partly surplus for the present villagers to use for inhabitation and cultivation purpose.

Dheyman-Rajbanshi people use to collect and depend upon potable water collected from ring wells. People do use ponds for domestic work as well as growing fishery. Majority of the people directly dependent upon agriculture but no agricultural allied facilities like banking, irrigation and market have touched their life yet. In true sense of observation and analysis of available data, it is well understood that the village is still remaining very backward encircled by multiplicity of problems.

Thaligram

Thaligram, the smallest Dheyman-Rajbanshi village in terms of land and population located close to Khaspur, the capital of ancient Koch principality fall under Udharbond constituency. Although it is, smallest but played a

significant role in many reasons. Population of the village is 468-male no 243 and female no 225. Ruin of ancient Koch capital are of great importance and is a visiting spot for tourists. At Thaligram a temple of goddess Shyama is situated. The goddess is worshipped by people of other communities. It is said that Bir Chilarai established the goddess temple on his successful campaign and since then tradition of worshipping goddess has been continuing. Annual congregation is a part of a living folklore where participation from each nine villages is compulsory. Thaligram thus has been playing an integrative role in the community life of Dheyman-Rajbanshi living in Barak valley. At present, Manipuri, Dimas, Bengali and plantation worker have made their settlement in and around Khaspur. But it is to be mentioned here that educational backwardness, lack of health service and poor means of communication make the present Thaligram really backward. The village has nearly seven hundred bigha of land. In spite of its tourism characteristic, no step is yet taken by any government to make it a tourist spot. Indira Awas yojana, MNREGA, Prime Minister Sarak Yojana, ICDS, Mukhya Mantri Anna Yojana is still a mere name to most villagers.

Leurbond

Leurbond is the only village that fall under Barkhala assembly constituency surrounded by Bengali speaking people. Total village population is 1095. Male population is 596 and female occupy 499 number. There is one more village Gorerbond adjacent to Laburbond and just a P.W.D road divides physical distance between the two villages. But the two villages fall under same panchayat as per government record and thus separate village status is not given. The village got its name because the place lore connect the place with abundance of lemon. Senior citizens at age of seventy or eighty say that present population of Leurbond and Gorerbond are decedent of two sanapatis called Sonaram and Purnaram, who occupied dignified position during the Koch rule. The two villages have a single prayer house whose altar is installed as a replica of Jagannath and which is again built in pattern of Manipuri Mandop. This offers the villagers a platform to different socio-cultural and religious functions.

Economic condition of both the villages is comparatively good than other Dheyman-Rajbanshi agrarian villages. Basic health services are still a cause of concern to the villagers. Tube well and ring well are the basic source of drinking water. Together the two villages have nearly two thousand bigha of

land. Most villagers are cultivators but due to shortage of own cultivable land, they are compelled to do *bagi* cultivation.

Although old people are engaged in agriculture but new generation of the village, prefer to engage in different kinds of works. Some are engaged in their own business establishment. Tendency of migration from their age-old settlement to urban centre is noticed particularly among new generation of young people.

Harinagar

The village is covered by nearly one thousand seven hundred bigha of land and falls under Lakhipur assembly segment. In the village total Dheyran-rajbanshi population is 802-male is 428 number and female number is 374. People from various other communities like Bengali, Manipuri, Nepali, Dimasa and Khasi surround the village. Today the village has become a business hut. Once upon a time the inhabitants were mainly Rajbansi but gradual commercialisation of the locality has forced some inhabitants to sell property and resettle in neighboring place close to forest that could assure them a peaceful life and provide forest based produces. Agriculture yield is

high among the people. Some landless farmers earn their living by working as day labour, rendering household work and work in small business house. Bamboo and cane work support a lot to their living condition. Assamese medium high school caters need of other two Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages Lakhicherra and Digl. Most teachers are appointed from Brahmaputra valley, who are always regarded esteem. Such practice has partially influenced the community culturally.

Lakhicherra

It is the furthest Dheyman-Rajbanshi village close to Assam-Manipur border, whose total population is 666. In the village male number is 373 and female number is 293. It is very difficult to reach the village as it remains virtually cut off for most time of a year. Literally, Lakhicherra means the place where the goddess of wealth freely moves and such is belief of the people since the land is fertile and it yields very good harvest year after year. On tradition, custom and ritual the villagers come across with frequent communication bottlenecks and dilapidated road condition. Hence, frequent movement is not possible for them.

The village surrounded by medium hills and forests, nearly seventy percent families of the village are directly engaged in agricultural work for their livelihood. Forest produces are plenty to sustain different domestic requirements including bamboo and firewood. But since it is educationally backward, parents are compelled to send their children to Harinagar or Labok for high school education. It has only one lower primary school and teaching is imported in Assamese language. At present, the village has around one thousand and five hundred bigha of land. Possibility of agricultural product has not come up to expectation due to lack of irrigation, scientific method of cultivation and no bank facility.

Digli

Digli, also popularly known as Diglang is nearly sixty kilometer from Silchar. The village has total population of 498-male number is 284 and female number is 214. Over all condition of village is poor in comparison to other Dheyman-Rajbanshi villages. The village is inhabited by Dheyman-Rajbanshi while surrounding is inhabited by people of Bengali, Naga, Burman, Kuki and Khasi community. They have only one lower primary (LP) school having Bengali medium but for high school study, they move to Harinagar or Joypur villages. In terms of custom, tradition and ritual they

adhere to trend of neighbouring Dheyant-Rajbanshi village. It is a hilly place with less paddy field, which compel the village dwellers to search earning avenue from other sources like exploring forest-based produces and working as labourer. The village has nearly eight hundred bigha of land. So, as Dheyant-Rajbanshi never liked to work outside of their village because of their past glory, but people of the village became victim of circumstance, and situation compel them to work as manual labourer now.

Dewan

Dewan is the oldest as well as historically important village close to Pailapool, an upcoming town. Total Dheyant-Rajbanshi population of the village comprises 1012-male occupies 521 and female number becomes 491. Some people say that Chilarai's Dewan had his settlement in the area which in course of time became Dewan. Women are expert weavers and spend maximum hour in their looms. The village has a weaving society by name 'Dewanbasti Weaving Federation'. Agriculture is the main stay and seasonal vegetables help them earn bit extra money. Dewan tea estate and people from various communities like Dimasa, Bengali, Tea tribe and Manipuri surround the village. As the village is close to Pailapool, some educational

institutions like schools at level of LP, ME, High, Higher Secondary and English medium schools and a college are found in the village.

Some parents send their children to Pailapool to study in English medium. A very few villagers work in government agencies and some in security service. Youth are seen interested in business and some earn by driving their own auto rickshaw. Existence of several water bodies provide the villagers fishing opportunities. Most households have fishing implements like *jakoi*, *peloin*, and *jaal*. The families share Two thousand bighas of land. Road condition, availability of Bus, Sumo, Fare Taxi and other means of transportation is comparably better than other Dheyant-Rajbanshi villages. An activity of self-help group is seen in Dewan basti.

Narayanpur

The village falls within Lakhipur assembly segment and it is backward in terms of education, health and communication and in other facets of development parameter. The village is having total population of 904, where male are in 489 and female in 415. The village is surrounded by tea gardens from all sides. The surrounding hills help to retain rain water which in turn yields good harvest year after years. The village has about two thousand

bigha of land. A small rivulet running across the village offers some relief for domestic work. Potable water is a major issue of the village that has over a thousand people. Though situated at a distance of eight kilometer from Pailapool and nearly 35 kilometer from Silchar, the district head quarter, reaching the village even during winter is a challenging job and inhabitants cover such long distance of eight kilometer on foot to reach Poilapool, the nearest market. Rich in folklore material including hustling narrative, the villagers proudly recollect oral narrative concerning the community's long march from Mazargram to Narayanpur. As such, Narayanpur can be called a later addition since the villagers retreated to this village under compelling circumstance at a later date. Good harvest combined with rearing of animal adds economic incentive to the villagers. In addition to four prayer halls, villagers have deep devotion and faith in the Bhairav Baba temple situated on a hillock, which provides magical cure. The village is also famous in the neighborhood for presence of *Ojha* whose folk medicine and method of treating diseases draw people from other areas. The villagers still fondly recall observance of Chilarai Divas at this village. Like other villages, bamboo, cane, and other forest-based products are given finished shape both for domestic and trade purposes.

Conclusion

From ongoing discussion and analysis of data it is understood Dheyant-Rajbanshi community has been living an uncertain life. Though, they have been living in nine different villages but their occupation and work culture is almost same and further deteriorating very fast. The entire community lives on agriculture as prime occupation and also taking other manual works for their maintenance and sustenance of livelihood. Out of nine Dheyant-Rajbanshi village, seven located close to tea garden but no Dheyant-Rajbanshi people found working there. It also understood that though the community has had a long association with the land, a sense of deprivation, frustration and neglect is observed in their collective psyche and there are reasons for such kinds of turmoil en masse. Historically, though the community has been living in different pockets of Cachar district in Barak valley, but still they are looking for their livelihood. In the process, the community has remained neglected vis-à-vis marginalised for so long in different fields – road and communication, health, potable water, education – without which a meaningful existence is almost impossible at present juncture of so-called post-modern society. To understand about them more, the next chapter is going to devote to socio-cultural milieu of the community.