

Family and Kinship among the Barman of South Assam

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Family and kinship form the core of social structure of tribal society as their social life revolves around these institutions. Therefore, the sociologists and anthropologists have paid special attention on understanding of the social structure of tribal societies and focused their analysis on family structure, marriage patterns, and system of descent among the tribal. Radcliffe-Brown (1955) considers social structure is one of the central concept in sociology. According to M. Gensberg, "social structure is a complex of principal groups and institutions which constitute societies" (Gensberg 1939 :98).

In North-Eastern region, most of the tribes migrated from China, Burma and Tibet. These people took shelter in mountains of the region, where pressing on one another in their struggle for existence, they developed into isolated tribes varying widely in appearance, customs and language. It is believed that the particular geographical position and physical contour of the region explain to a large extent the extreme isolation of the wider tribes and their subdivisions into innumerable clans (Gohain 1977). The northeast Himalayan region of India has attracted the attention of British administrators, foreign missionaries, military officers and officers of Census operations during the colonial period in order to understand the fabric of their sociocultural life. A systematic study of the region, however, was undertaken under the auspices of administration by Verrier Elwin and his

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team of anthropologists. Their contributions about the tribes of this region can be seen in the form of handbooks, ethnographic glossaries and district gazetteers. The monographs to appear in this series were on the Dafla (Shukla 1959), the Tangas (Dutta 1959), the Idu Misimis (Barua 1960), the Sherdukpens (Sharma 1961), the Gallong (Shrivastava 1962), the Akas (Sinha 1963). It was followed by a number of studies on different tribes of the region. Some of the pioneer works in this area are represented in the works of Hutton (1923; 1924), Smith (1925), Furer-Haimendorf (1947), Bose (1934a, 1934b, 1934c, 1935, 1938, 1941), Guha (1952), Goswami (1960), Mazumdar jr. (1972), Danda (1977) Sarkar (1987), Gohain (1994). These studies reveal certain specific characteristics of a number of tribes in the region. But some of the tribes have not attracted the attention of sociologists and social anthropologists at all despite of their specific social and cultural traits. One of such tribes of the region is the Barman tribe of South Assam which has hardly attracted the attention of the sociologists and anthropologists due to a misconception that it is an integral part of the Dimasa tribe. The present paper is aimed to analyse the dynamics of social structure in terms of the institutions of family, marriage and kinship among the Barman. The paper is based on the data collected from three villages- Kumacherra, Dormikhal and Nikama- of Cachar district of Assam.

Historically, the Barman had been part of Dimasa-Kachari society who ruled different parts of Assam under different names and at different points of time (Bhattacharjee, J. B. 1984). Although, history of the tribe is traceable only after the advent of Ahoms in the Brahmaputra Valley in the 13th century A. D. Dimapur was the capital of Dimasa Kingdom at that time. But due to continuous warfare with Ahoms, who ruined Dimapur in the later part of 16th century, they shifted their capital to Maibang (N.C. Hills) and finally to Khaspur (a place near Udharband in Cachar district). The *hinduisation* of the tribe, which started at Maibang reached to its peak at Cachar and the Kachari rulers and their subjects in the plains of Cachar became the champion of Hinduism. The people in the N.C. Hills did not appreciate the *hinduisation* of the Dimasa society and under the leadership of Tularam Senapati revolted against the King Govinda Chandra. As a result, Dimasa Kachari society bifurcated into two tribes, namely, Dimasa (mainly found in N. C. Hills) and Barman (mainly concentrated in plains of Cachar). Despite of many similarity with the Dimasa, the Barmans of Cachar maintain their separate social and cultural identity.

Family

Family is the core unit of social structure. The elementary family unit is the strongest structural and functional unit of Barman social organization. According to rule of residence of the Barman, women of different matrilineal cannot live in the same household which leads to separation of new nuclear units from the original one within one year of marriage (Barman 1977). Therefore, nuclear family pattern has been a common phenomenon among the Barman of Barak Valley. But under the impact of Bengali Hindu society some families have joint family system as well. The structure of family among the Barman can be analyzed in terms of size of family and the type of family.

Size of the Family

For analytical purpose, on the basis of size, the family can be categorized into three categories; (i) Small size family, comprising of one to five members; (ii) Medium size family, comprising of six to ten members; and (iii) large size family, having more than ten members. The distribution of the families according to their size reveals that in all the villages most of the families have medium size families. It was found highest in Kumacherra with 64.86% percent followed by Nikama with 63.79 percent. In case of Dormikhal the percentage of medium size family was 59.68 percent. As far as the cases of large size family are concerned in all the villages almost similar pattern was observed and variation was between a range of 13.79 percent (Nikama) and 16.22 percent (Kumacherra). As far as cases of small size family are concerned, it was found highest in Dormikhal (25.81 percent) and lowest in Kumacherra (18.92 percent). It suggests that most of the Barman have medium size family. The large family pattern is observed in few cases only (Table 1).

Type of Family

The traditional family type among the Barman has been because of their peculiar rule of residence which restricts the living of women of two different matrilineal under the same roof. Thus after marriage son is supposed to construct his own house (Danda 1977). But after adoption of Hinduism this tribal rule of residence has also gone under transformation and highly Hinduised families do not followed this rule in strict sense. As a result, the pattern of joint family also emerged among the Barman. But under the influence of modern forces the pattern of joint family system has not gained much momentum.

Table 1 Size of the Family in Study Villages

S. No.	Name of the Village	Size of the Family			Total
		Small No. %	Medium No. %	Large No. %	
1.	Kumacherra	21 18.92	72 64.86	18 16.22	111 (100.0)
2.	Dormikhal	16 25.81	37 59.68	9 14.52	62 (100.0)
3.	Nikama	13 22.41	37 63.79	8 13.79	58 (100.0)
Total		50 21.64	146 63.20	35 15.15	231 (100.0)

Table 2
Types of the Family in Study Villages

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	Family Type		Total
		Nuclear No. %	Joint No. %	
1.	Kumacherra	99 89.19	12 10.81	111 100.0
2.	Dormikhal	57 91.94	05 8.06	62 100.0
3.	Nikama	54 93.10	04 6.89	58 100.0
Total		210 90.91	21 9.09	231 100.0

In Kumacherra village, 89.19 percent households have nuclear family type and only 10.81 percent have joint family system. In Dormikhal, 91.94 percent have nuclear family type while joint family system is found only in 8.06 percent cases. While in Nikama, the nuclear family pattern is observed in 93.10 per cent cases and joint family system in only 6.9 per cent cases only (see table 2). Thus nuclear family pattern is still a dominant pattern among the Barman of Barak Valley. In all the three villages there is only marginal variation in case of family type.

Descent

A descent group is any social group in which membership depends on common descent from a real or mythical ancestor. Generally, two types of descent system patrilineal and matrilineal are found in tribal society. But it has been reported by social anthropologist that in some of the tribal societies double descent is also found (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1955 ; Fox 1967).

The Barman of Barak Valley represent to a society, which has double descent. In India double descent is found only among the Toda tribe of Nilgiri Hills and Dimasa tribe of North East India. Barman is a tribe segregated from wider Dimasa-Kachari society during the early part of nineteenth century. Therefore, there are a number of similarities in their family and kinship system. Like Dimasa, Barmans have both patrilineal and matrilineal system of descent. The descent of a man is primarily ascertained from his grandfather and concurrently from maternal grandmother. A woman, however, reckons her descent from her maternal grandmother and secondly, from her paternal grandfather. Thus, among the Barman a system of double descent, i.e., patrilineal and matrilineal is followed.

Among the Barman, marriage relationship is strictly prohibited between three clans, namely, father's clan, mother's clan, and father's mother's clan of both the boy and the girl. Thus, marriage can not take place in the *matrilineal* and *patrilineal* clans upto third order in case of both the boy and the girl.

Origin and Order of Clans

The early history suggests that the root of the Barman is found in the Dimasa-Kachari dynasty which ruled from Dimapur as its capital. But later on, they shifted their capital to Maibong and finally to Khaspur in the plains of Cachar. Therefore, the order and origin of the clans among the Barman is somewhat similar to the Dimasa as they also had been a part of the greater Dimasa-Kachari society till the early part of the nineteenth century. The Barman have a system of double descent i.e. matrilineal and patrilineal are maintained simultaneously, the new male member attains the clan of his father primarily and mother's clan secondarily. The female child, however, attains her mothers' clan primarily and father's clan secondarily. The male clan is called *semphong* while the female clan is termed as *Julu* or *Juddi*. Thus, *semphong* and *Julu* are important units of the social structure of the Barman society.

The *semphongs* were not formed at one point of time but added at different points of time. At Dimapur, it is believed that they had only seventeen *semphongs* namely: (1) Ardao, (2) Mither (3) Diphusa (4) Chengyung (5) Thaosen (6) Fonglosa (7) Hagier (8) Bodosa (9) Rajiyung (10) Baderblyga (11) Daolagajao (12) Daolagupu (13) Hojai (14) Kempri (15) Zeedgung (16) Bando (17) Akher. Later on, the other *semphongs* were added to these seventeen *semphongs* and the number of *semphongs* increased up to 42. But as a result of segregation in Dimasa-Kachari society, two separate tribes, namely, Dimasa and Barman came into existence in the early part of nineteenth century. There is variation in the number of clans among the contemporary Barman and Dimasa society. In a significant anthropological study of Dimasa tribe Danda (1978) reported that there are altogether 42 patrician and 42 matrician among the Dimasas. But she listed name of 42 patricians and only 34 matricians among the Dimasa. Barman (1978) also prepared a list of Barman *semphongs* and *Julus*. He found altogether 40 *semphongs* and 42 *Julus* among the Barman. In order to resolve this contrary observation an attempt is made to prepare comparative charts to show not only common *semphongs* and *Julus* among the Dimasa and Barman but also *Dimasa specific* and *Barman specific semphongs* and *Julus* (see Chart 1 and 2).

The data presented in Chart 1 reveal that there are 34 common *semphongs* among Barman and Dimasa tribes while there are 7 *Barman specific semphongs* namely *Akher*, *Baindo*, *Dhirva Giricha*, *Hacham*, *Rajiyung* and *Johrasa*. It has been appeared from the data that although the *Hangchengcha* is one among the oldest royal clans but it is now found only among the Barmans. The reason for this may be that at the time of shifting of capital from Maibong to Khashpur there might be total migration of this royal clan from N.C. Hills to Cachar as it was the clan of the king Harish Chandra. Among the other three clans *Rajiyung* is a royal clan and it might have also migrated in toto when the capital was shifted to Khashpur. That is why it is not found among the Dimasa. Remaining two *Hacham* and *Johrasa* are non-royal clans and perhaps added at a later stage in Barman society. As *Johrasa*, was allocated the occupation of dresser by the king Krishna Chandra. The *Hacham* clan is mainly constituted by agriculturist section of the Barman society.

As far as the case of *Dimasa specific clans* is concerned there are nine (9) such clans which are found only among the Dimasa, these are *Daiyasanta*, *Daidungsa*, *Disausa*, *Lamphusa*, *Londisa*, *Longmailaisa*, *Raisa*, *Surumfansa* and *Phurusa*. As any of these clans do not appear in

the list of first seventeen clans of Dimasa-Kachari society (see above at page 6), it can be assumed that these clans were introduced among the Dimasa at a later stage. Thus there has been sufficient dynamism in the patrician structure of the Barman and Dimasa society as some elements of the structure continued and some elements have changed during the course of time.

The Chart 2 shows that there are only 10 *Julus* or *jaddi* which are commonly found among Dimasa and Barman. These are *Bairengma*, *Banglaima*, *Mairangma*, *Mairongma daoga*, *Meyungma/Meungma*, *Meeyugna daoga*, *Pachaindi*, *Saidima*, *Saidina daoga* and *Saikudi*. Although Danda (1978) mentioned that there are 42 matricians among the Dimasa but she presented in her list only 34 *Juddis*. Of these, only 24 *juddis* are found specifically among the Dimasa. However, according to Barman (1978) there are 42 *Julus* among the Barman. Thus, there are 32 *Julus*, which are specifically found only among the Barmans as shown in the Chart 2.

An analysis of the name of the ancestors of these *Julus* reveals that the name of the ancestor of most of the oldest matrician seem to be tribal in appearance and some of them are commonly found among the Barman and Dimasa. While a number of matricians were originated from Hinduised ancestors as reflected from their name. Some of the matricians, such as Khumbasi (originated from Kanchani a Koch prince married to King Laxmichandra - 1778-80 A.D.) were originated from the princess married into royal family. Thus, extension of the marriage ties beyond the boundary of the tribe has been a source of change in the structure of matricians. Thus, it can be said that the structure of patrician is relatively stable among the Barman but structurally matricians are relatively more dynamic. Recently two new matricians have been introduced among the Barman which reflects the capacity of adaptation in the social structure of the Barman. In recent past there have been some marriages outside the tribe. It has posed a problem before them in the sense that when a non-Barman woman marries to a Barman man she does not have any matrician, therefore, there is a need to create a new matrician for the offsprings of such a couple. Instead of giving separate matrician for each such woman recently *Nikhil Cachar Haidembo Barman Samiti* (a political organization of Barmans) decided to allocate a new matrician namely, *Phaijindirao* in all such cases. Another problem, which has been faced by the Barman society is that a number of Barman girls have got married to non-Barman boys. As per rule of Barman society such women are to be excommunicated from the Barman society but if such instances increase it may pose a

CHART 1: A Comparative Chart of Semphongs among Barman and Dimasa Tribes

COMMON SEMPHONGS AMONG BARMAN AND DIMASA TRIBES	BARMAN SPECIFIC SEMPHONGS	DIMASA SPECIFIC SEMPHONGS
01. Adaos/Ardao 02. Baderbagia 03. Bodosa 04. Daudunglanta 05. Daulagajao (sa) 06. Daulagupu 07. Diphu (sa) 08. Jibragedesa/Dibragede 09. Golosa/Gorlocha 10. Halflongfansa or Halflongbar 11. Hagier 12. Hakmaosa 13. Hapilasa 14. Hasnusa 15. Hojoi 16. Johrisa 17. Kharigaph (sa) 18. Khersa 19. Khemprai (sa) 20. Lafthai (sa) 21. Langthasa/Langtadaoga 22. Laobangdi (sa) 23. Maibongsa 24. Mither (fangsa) 25. Naben (gsa) 26. Naidingsa 27. Parabsa 28. Phonglosa/Fonglosa 29. Warisa/Chhrong 30. Seingyuns/Chengyung 31. Thaosen (sa) 32. Mramsa/Irambsa 33. Nonsia 34. Zeedung	35. Akher 36. Bando 37. Dhiru 38. Girisa 39. Hacham 40. Hachengsa 41. Rajiyung 42. Johrasa	35. Daliyasanta 36. Daudungsa 37. Disausa 38. Lamphusa 39. Londisa 40. Longmailaisa 41. Raiusa 42. Surunfansa 43. Phurusa

Chart 2: Julus among the Barman and Dimasa Tribes of Assam

Coomon Julus	Barman Specific Julus	Dimasa Specific Julus
1. Saikudi 2. Banglaima (Mailungdi) 3. Pachaindi 4. Mairongma (Thangjadi) 5. Saidima (Kashidi) 6. Humlaidi-gumundi (Dehblaidi) 7. Meeyungma Daoga (Rehmadi)	1. Saikudi Gedeba (not known) 2. Saikudi Kachheba (not known) 3. Banglaima Gedeba (Ambika) 4. Banglaima Kachheba (Binsmudi) 5. Banglaima Pachaindi (Jambubati) 6. Pachaindi Gedeba (Omabati) 7. Mairong Pachaindi Kachheba (Thubangdi) 8. Mairong Prainsoh (Yashomati) 9. Mairong Gedeba (Kousalya) 10. Mairong Kachheba (Zaludi) 11. Mairongdi Kachheba (Zaolaidi) 12. Mairongdi (Duhani) 13. Mairong (Doorabati) 14. Mairong Gedeba (Lakhidi) 15. Mairong Kachheba (Wain Shrung-di) 16. Mairongma Zoolu (Samodi) 17. Mairong Kache (Doobangdi) 18. Mairon Daoga (Jahirundi) 19. Maironma Gedeba (Bishnupriya) 20. Mairon Gedeba (Nairungdi) 21. Mairon Kachheba (Gungadi) 22. Maironsam Degaswao (Gainchandi) 23. Mairong Gedeba (Daomadi) 24. Mairongma Gedeba (Dehchandi) 25. Mairan Gedeba (Loomaidi) 26. Saidima Gedeba (Basoodi) 27. Saidima Kachheba (Maimoondi) 28. Saidima Dagao (Kashimati II) 29. Saidima Sgaochhong (Thailoodi) 30. Meeyung Kachheba (Arjana) 31. Meeyungma Gedeba (Kashimati) 32. Bairangcha (Yashoda) 33. Ranchaindi (Rukshini) 34. Deeyungma (Chandrabati) 35. Khumbasi (Kanchani) Recently added Julus 36. Phaigindirao (For incoming Women from other communities) 37. Phaifindiaro (For Female descendants of the	1. Againaju 2. Anumajilu 3. Bairingma 4. Banglaima dauga 5. Buguma 6. Desrikni 7. Draingsongma gedeba 8. Draingsongma Khasiba 9. Gachauma 10. Gomi 11. Hamthaidi 12. Kalachanma 13. Longmaisajilu 14. Madaima 15. Maibong gojodi 16. Mairangma 17. Miungma 18. Pakhaju 19. Panthaobarjilu 20. Rajama 21. Ranima 22. Sagaodi 23. Saidima dauga 24. Samder sagaodi 25. Thaliju 26. Tharaju 27. Yamthaidirao

problem for the society as a whole. Therefore, the samiti decided that the male offsprings of such Barman woman will bear their father's clan which will be naturally non-Barman and they will remain part of non-Barman society but female offspring of such woman may inherit a matriclan as per Barman customary law and will remain the part of the Barman society and marriage can take place with these girls in normal course. Therefore, for all such cases a new matriclan namely *Phaifindirco* has been introduced. Thus the inclusion of two new matriclans in Barman society very recently is sufficient to infer that social structure of the Barman society has not been static but passed through a gradual process of social change since the time of Dimasa-Kachari King. It also shatter the impression that the social structure among the Dimasa and Barman is identical as both of them have similar origin. In fact, both the tribes have significant differences in their social structure despite of a number of similarities in their patriclan and matriclan structure.

Genetic Root of Clans

After adoption of Hinduism an attempt was made during the period of Raja Krishnachanda (1780-1813 A.D.), to correlate the Dimasa semphongs to Hindu genetic root. The Brahmins tried to relate the semphong with Hindu *rishi* from whom the genetic root (gotra) started. This idea of genetic root system was introduced by the Brahmins, who were called by Raja from Banaras and then Barnans discovered the genetic root of their patriclans in Hindu mythology. The above mentioned Brahmins were called *Baroghoria* and they enjoyed the highest status among the priests of Barman society because they rendered their services to the king and other royal families. As a result the traditional tribal priests lost their importance in royal court but continued to render their services to the common people. The genetic root of different Barman semphongs is shown in table 3. The effect of Hinduisation among the Barman was so massive that they began to identify themselves with the Hindu *Munies*. But during the field work of the present study, it was observed that most of the Barman people were unaware about their genetic root (gotra).

Patterns of Marriage

In order to understand the kinship structure an attempt is made to analyse the patterns of marriage in the study villages. As Barnans follow

Table 3
Genetic Root of Semphong among the Barman

S.No.	Genetic Root	Name of the Semphong
1	Agnibasya	Ardao
2	Apcharan	Mither
3	Biswamitra	Diphusa
4	Katyayan	Hagier
5	Vargab	Thaosen
6	Gautom	Fonglosa
7	Bharadhwaj	Chengyung
8	Agasthya	Rajiyung
9	Chandra Koushik	Baderbhayga
10	Kashyap	Daolagajao
11	Oitikya	Daolagupu
12	Sabarni	Hojai
13	Shandilya	Kemprai
14	Angira	Zeedgung
15	Madkulya	Baindo
16	Batsya	Akher
17	Baiyagrapadma	Riphasgao (Hasnusa)
18	Paitimasi	Riphararain (Halfong bar)
19	Karna	Bodosa
20	Krishnarjun	Hapila
21	Gorga	Dihreoa
22	Sartayan	Naiding
23	Naidurba	Daodunglangta
24	Krishnavan	Kharigaph
25	Barpatya	Johrasa
26	Sounak	Hacham
27	Ourba	Naben
28	Krishnakoushik	Dibragede
29	Sakti	Langtadaoga (Langthosa)
30	Gotakarna	Giricha
31	Otri	Parbat
32	Batsya	Maibongcha
33	Brishagan	Jahorisa
34	Parasar	Chrong
35	Jaimini	Golocha
36	Aptaban	Hakmaosa
37	Swarna koushik	Mramcha
38	Basistya	Zamboo
39	Deval	Labtai
40	Jamadagni	Laobangdi

In Dormikhal village also the rule of patrilian exogamy is strictly maintained.

In Nikama village, there are eight patrilineal clans, namely, *Halflongbar* (2), *Thaosan* (2), *Johsisa* (5), *Khersa* (9), *Johrasa* (6), *Hojai* (15), *Fonglosa* (13), and *Warisa* (15). These clans are connected with 21 clans by 67 marriage ties. In this village, one can find solid evidence of patrilineal exogamy. Thus in all the three villages, namely, Kumacherra, Dormikhal and Nikama the rule of patrilineal exogamy is strictly maintained.

Matrilian Exogamy

The Barman maintain matrilineal exogamy as well. At the time of negotiation of marriage, it is required that matrilineal of the girl and matrilineal of the boy should not be the same. Therefore, marriage can take place only among those who have different matrilineal clans as well as patrilineal clans. In order to analyse the matrilineal exogamy an attempt is made to study respondent's mother's clan (Mo Clans) and his wife's clan in case of 121 marriage cases in Kumacherra, 70 cases in Dormikhal and 67 cases in Nikama. In Kumacherra village 121 marriage cases were distributed over 21 Mo Clans and 23 wife's clan. In case of Mo clan highest frequency is observed in *Saikudi* with 18 cases closely followed by *Pachaindi Gedebe* (14), *Saidima Gedebe* (12), *Baanglaima* and *Bairengcha* (11 each). Others have relatively low representation. In case of wife's clan highest representation was found in *Bairengcha* (10), *Baanglaima* (10) and *Mecyung Kaecheba* (9) other clans have relatively low representation. Thus in all cases matrilineal exogamy is maintained both at the level of Mo clan and wife's clan in Kumacherra village. In Dormikhal village 70 cases of marriage were studied. An analysis of relationship between respondent's mother's clan (matrilian) and his wife's clan reveal that in this village 20 cases were identified in case of respondent's mother and 21 cases in case of wife. In all the cases respondent's mother's clan and his wife's clan were found different. It suggests that in Dormikhal also matrilineal exogamy is followed in a strict sense. In Nikama village 67 cases of marriage were studied and 19 cases were identified in case of respondent's mother and 18 cases in case of his wife. A cross analysis of mother's clan with wife's clan indicate that in this village also matrilineal exogamy is strictly maintained. Thus, the existence of 31 cases in Barak Valley of Assam is also confirmed at empirical level in the present study.

double descent system, this analysis may provide concrete evidence in support of patrilineal exogamy, matrilineal exogamy and village exogamy.

Patrilineal Exogamy

One of the important characteristics of the Barman is patrilineal descent which restricts them to marry within their patrilineal. Therefore, a Barman is expected to marry outside his or her patrilineal. Therefore, husband's clan is analysed in relation to wife's father's clan. As per rule of marriage among the Barmans both the husband and wife must belong to separate patrilineal.

In Kumacherra village 121 marriage relations are studied in order to analyse the relationship between husband's clan and his wife's father's clan. In Kumacherra village, there are seven patrilineal clans namely *Kemprai*, *Bodosa*, *Zeedung*, *Fonglosa*, *Diphusa*, *Hasnusa* and *Langthasa*. These clans are connected through marriage relations to twenty two patrilineal clans. The data show that the rule of patrilineal exogamy is maintained in all the 121 cases. In Kumacherra 16 marriage relation of *Kemprai* clan are studied, these marriage relations connect this clan to other clans of the Barman's namely, *Halflongbar* (1), *Langthasa* (3), *Naiding* (1), *Bodosa* (2), *Thaosan* (2), *Khersa* (2), *Jeedung* (1), *Warisa* (2), *Fonglosa* (2) and *Hojai* (1). Similarly *Bodosa* clan is connected through marriage to *Langthasa* (1), *Fonglosa* (1) and *Kemprai* (1) clans. *Zeedung* clan in this village is connected with four clans *Langthasa*, *Warisa*, *Fonglosa* and *Kemprai* having one case of marriage in each clan. In case of *Fonglosa*, five marriage ties were found in five different clans, namely, *Langthasa*, *Bodosa*, *Naben*, *Daolagupu* and *Hagier* with one case in each clan. The *Diphusa* clan is connected with four other clans, namely, *Halflongbar*, *Thaosan*, *Warisa* and *Johrisa* with one marriage tie in each clan. In *Hasnusa* clan ten marriage relations are studied of which three were in *Langthasa*, two in *Kemprai* and one each in *Bodosa*, *Khersa*, *Zeedung* and *Warisa*. The dominant patrilineal in this village is *Langthasa*. Out of 79 marriages taken place in this clan ten are in *Halflongbar*, nine each in *Thaosan* and *Kemprai*, eight each in *Warisa* and *Fonglosa*, Seven in *Thaosan*, four in *Diphusa*, three each in *Naiding*, *Bodosa* and *Daolagupu*, two each in *Zeedung*, *Hojai*, *Johrisa* and *Rajiyung* and one each in *Hugier*, *Johrisa*, *Johrwa*, *Hapita* and *Kharigupu*. Thus this largest clan of the village is connected with 20 clans of the Barman society.

In Dormikhal village total 70 cases of marriage distributed over 6 clans, namely, *Fonglosa* (14), *Halflongbar* (22), *Rajiyung* (3), *Khersa* (2), *Kemprai* (1) and *Langthasa* (28) were studied. These clans have a wider linkage with 29 clans of the Barman society through marriage ties.

Table 4

Patterns of Clan and Village Exogamy

Sl. No.	Name of village	Total no. of marriage covered	Within the village	Within the Cachar district	In Karimganj district	In Hailakandi	In N.C. Hills
1.	Kumacherra	121	-	116 (95.87)	1 (0.83)	5 (4.13)	8 (6.61)
2.	Dornikthal	70	-	62 (88.6)	-	3 (4.29)	5 (7.14)
3.	Nikama	67	2 (2.99)	57 (85.07)	1 (1.40)	3 (4.48)	4 (5.97)
4.	Total	258	2 (0.77)	235 (91.09)	2 (0.78)	11 (4.26)	17 (6.59)

Village Exogamy

The village exogamy refers to the restriction of marriage within the village. Traditionally, one village was generally inhabited by a single patrilian and therefore, there was restriction on marriage between a boy and a girl of the same samphong and marriages were taking place with the boy or the girl of some other village inhabited by a different samphong. As Barmans are patrilineal, the male respondents were asked to mention the native place of their spouse.

A comparative picture of the patterns of clan exogamy and village exogamy in the three study villages is shown in the table 4. The data indicate that out of 258 marriage relations studied in the three villages in as many as 99 percent cases the village exogamy was maintained. Only in case of Nikama village two cases of village endogamy were observed. As this village is a developed village and has a high degree of urbanisation, these two cases are result of love affair between the boy and girl of the village, which shows that the modern education and exposure to urban institution is sufficient to initiate the process of social change in Barman society. In other two villages, village exogamy is, however, strictly maintained. After the division of Dimasa-Kachari into Dimasa and Barman, the marriage ties between the two groups also ceased for about hundred years. The first marriage tie between the two tribes was restored in 1950. When an administrative elite of Dimasa, Joyvadra Hagier of N.C.Hills married Nirupama Barman of Cachar plains. Both were highly educated and it was a case of love marriage. They were having two daughters, one of them

again married with a Barman boy. This case worked as a role model for the educated youth of the Dimasa and Barman society. Therefore, some attempts have been made to restore marriage ties between the Barman and Dimasa tribes particularly by the educated youth. Another important feature is that all the villages covered in the present study have established some marriage ties in N.C. Hills district. It suggests that the process of restoration of marital ties with Dimasa has already been started even in rural areas.

In all the three villages there are few cases of marriage held with the Dimasa girl of N.C. Hills district. Barman, a broken tribe of Dimasa, accepted Hinduism and maintained its structural identity by restricting marriage of its member within the tribe. The field evidence also suggests that some marriage ties between the Dimasa and the Barman exist. But occurrence of such marriages is very low. Another reason for this process is that the Barman of Barak Valley are facing a crisis of their social and cultural identity. They had lost political power in 1832 and in Cachar they now constitute a minority group as the Bengalis attained a dominant position in all spheres of social life. Before independence the Bengalis were not having a dominant position in Cachar but after partition of the country there was a massive influx of Bengali population from East-Bengal into Cachar and it was further intensified in 1971 at the time of formation of Bangladesh and as a result Cachar is now dominated by the Bengalis. The original inhabitants of the areas, Barmans have turned into a minority group. Thus a fear of identity crisis emerged amongst the Barman and it gave rise to the process of *retribalisation* among them. They found themselves more near to Dimasas as far as their tribal identity is concerned and some efforts for integration of both the tribes were initiated by Dimasa leadership after getting the status of autonomous district council in N.C. Hills district in 1984. Thereafter a movement for the formation of Dimaraji State also launched in this zone and an attempt was also made to integrate the broken tribes of Dimasas namely Barmans of Cachar, Rukni Barmans of Karimganj, Hojai Kacharis of Nagaon, Kacharis of Nagaland. The occurrence of some marriages between Bengali boys and Barman girls in recent past also contributed to strengthen the process of re-tribalisation among them as generally these marriages are not recognised by the Barman society. Therefore, instead of giving their girls to Bengali boys they prefer Dimasa boys so that their tribal identity can be secured.

Re-marriage and Divorce

The system of re-marriage was in existence among Barmans. In case of male, the marriage was not very uncommon but in case of females it was very rare. Earlier amongst them, younger brother was allowed to marry the widow of his elder brother but he could never marry widow of his younger brother, similarly in case of female, she was not allowed to marry her younger sister's husband but she could marry her elder sister's husband. This type of marriage took place in a very simple ceremony where few relatives were called. But after adoption to Hinduism, this type of re-marriage discontinued among the Barman.

Divorce is very rare phenomenon among the Barman. There is no customary law for divorce. The divorce is allowed only on the ground of adultery, physical disability, Lunacy and impotency etc. At the time of divorce *Khunag* (village chief) and others are called to settle the matter and the accused is given some punishment in the form of fine.

Conclusion

The structure of Barman society has a dynamism, which is evident from the changes in the structure of both the patrilineal as well as in matrilineal over the years. A comparative analysis of Dimasa and Barman tribes reveals that although both the tribes have some common structural elements in terms of *Semphong* and *Jutu* but after segregation significant elements in their patrilineal and matrilineal structure are included which provided them two distinct structural identity. The present study also corrects the view both in academic and non-academic fields that Barman is a sub-tribe of Dimasa. There is sufficient historical and empirical evidence to infer that structurally and culturally Dimasa and Barman are two separate tribes, although, they have some common elements in their structure and culture. The analysis of patterns of marriages at empirical level indicates that marriage relations of the Barman are confined to a great extent within the Cachar district. Only recently some marriages have been taken place in N.C. Hills but in such cases also the marriage ties are confined only to those clans, which are commonly found among the Dimasa and the Barman. In no case marriage relationship was established with a Dimasa specific clan. Another important aspect of social change among the Barman is that the matrilineal structure has more dynamism in comparison to patrilineal. It suggests that the structure of Barman society has the capacity to absorb new elements in its social structure as well as in its cultural milieu.

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Women and Development in Garhwal Region

Vija Kumar Sisodia
Asha Sisodia

The development of Garhwal region in the newly formed state of Uttaranchal has become a matter of great concern for policy makers, planners, social scientists and administrators as this is comparatively more underdeveloped region in an already underdeveloped state. Hill areas form a class by themselves because of their peculiar nature in terms of geographical, cultural, economic and ecological conditions. These peculiarities have incapacitated the region to cope up with the normal process of development. Past experiences have shown that all too often plans designed for the country as a whole have been implemented in the hill region too without any regard to their specific requirements. Inevitably the results have fallen short of their goals, and the region continues to be in a state of economic backwardness and poverty. This slow pace of development and the neglect of the interests and specific requirements of the region has transformed the once 'Kingdom of Gods' into a 'Kingdom of Poverty'.

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