



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

CODEN: IJRSFP (USA)

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 9, Issue, 9(A), pp. 28716-28718, September, 2018

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

DOI: 10.24327/IJRSR

Research Article

THE SOCIO- CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF THE TARAO TRIBE IN REFERENCE TO FAMILY, DRESS, ORNAMENT, MARRIAGE, INHERITANCE AND DIVORCE

AlitaTarao M¹ and Gina Shangkham²

¹South East Manipur College, Komlathabi. P.O.Pallel, Chandel District Manipur, India. 795135

²Sr.Grade Lecturer

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2018.0909.2512>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th June, 2018

Received in revised form 11th

July, 2018

Accepted 8th August, 2018

Published online 28th September, 2018

ABSTRACT

The Tarao is one of the smallest tribe of Manipur with just few hundred souls. The present study is to identify the unique and distinct socio-cultural traditions of the Tarao from the rest of the other major tribal communities of Manipur. It also examine the practices which includes high respects of the father who is the decision makers, marriage bride price called 'Meiloushek' for 6years, and marriage ceremony 'Mouhai' at the early age, and divorce. This study is undertaken to implore the socio-cultural traditions of this tribe to other parts of the world.

Key Words:

Examines, smallness, socio-cultural traditions, practices, Unique.

Copyright © AlitaTarao M and Gina Shangkham, 2018, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

The Tarao tribe is one of the least protected indigenous tribes mainly concentrated in the hills of Chandel District, Manipur, in the North Eastern part of India, who belong to the Mongolian stock of Tibeto-Burman race. Originally, the Taraos are highlanders living in a compact area and are mentioned as early as 1073-1122 AD in the Royal Chronicle, Ningthourol Kumbaba, reflecting their involvement in the Manipur state affairs.

According to the legend, the Tarao believed that they emerged out of a hole or cave called *Tukleihkhur* at the foot of *Enthohna* hill or Houbi hill located in the southern part of Manipur. They are located only in five villages namely Bukthrol, Leishokching, Khuringmul, Heikakpokpi and Sanaphai in Chandel District. Though, the tribe is one of the smallest, yet they possess a unique and distinct identity compared with the other tribes of Manipur. The Tarao society is patriarchal type and patrilineal descent.

The Tarao lived in a well-organised social life under the leadership of the village chief. They are simple and honest, ready to admit their own fault, but never a coward rather ready to sacrifice their life for the welfare of the society. Basically,

the Taraos are classless society where rich and poor mingle together in all the activities. Social cohesiveness is very strong among the tribe and there is no discrimination between them. Although there is no written rules and constitution of the village, every villagers paid due respect to their administrators and as such society always remains peaceful and tranquility.

Family

In the socio-cultural life of the Tarao, family is the basic unit and the oldest social institution. It is appropriate to say that family is the backbone of the socio-cultural life. It is the family- in its comrade and playmate aspects that the first movement of social impulse is felt. Family consists of husband, wife and their unmarried offsprings. Family extends when eldest son marries and stays with his parents. This group together forms the household and stays under the same roof and protection of the male head of the family. The father is the head and takes all the major roles and responsibilities of the entire affairs of the family. The eldest son is next to the father and therefore he assists his father in all matters relating to the family from his young age. In the Tarao society, men and women are treated equally however there are division of work among them. Daughters are assigned lighter works like cooking, washing, cleaning, husking of paddy collecting of fire

*Corresponding author: **AlitaTarao M**

South East Manipur College, Komlathabi. P.O.Pallel, Chandel District Manipur, India. 795135

woods and vegetables from the nearby jungles, weaving and other necessary lighter household works whereas sons were assigned to hard works like house building, clearing and burning of jungle for the shiftingjhum site for cultivation, hunting, fishing, etc. Children help their parents in minor works in the household activities. The social recognition of a man is measured by his capacity and efficiency in the maintenance of his family in the Tarao society.

The Tarao being patriarchal, all decisions lie in the hands of the father yet mother plays equal important role in the family. Indeed the position of women in the Tarao society is not far from secondary. All the majority domestic works are in her hand.

Inheritance of Property

Being a Tarao patriarchal society, inheritance of property is governed by the customary practices and ownership of inheritance of family property gives limited rights to women as it descends through male line only. The sons get all moveable and immoveable properties whereas daughters never inherit properties like land and house. Apart from that, unmarried daughters have absolute rights over her own earnings derives from activities like weaving but after marriage the ownership of her properties is generally shared by her husband. She has the absolute rights over the properties that she get when married from her parents and relatives such as ornaments, utensils, clothing, animals etc.

The eldest son is fully entitled to inherit the properties of his parents according to the customary law of the Tarao. In the absence of male heir, either his close kin relatives like his brothers or the eldest male of the clan will inherit the properties but they have to look after the welfare of the family until the girl children were fully grown up and get married. Ancestral property is greatly valued and never sold it to anyone. Daughters never inherit ancestral property but in some cases, parents share one paddy field out of the four or five paddy fields with the consent of the eldest male inheritor. This shows that the Tarao give due importance of females in the family as well as in the society.

Dress and Ornaments

The Tarao used various types of dresses and ornaments from time immemorial. The dresses are very colourful and attractive. The appearance and attractiveness of women depend on the dresses and ornaments that they use. They rarely keep the ornaments away from their bodies. Dresses without ornaments are incomplete among the Tarao women. Ongala days the only addition to the costume is the headdress called *seikang* worn by females while dancing. every shawls and *sarongs* is patterned with beautifully designs and checked with different colours which have immense cultural significance. There were shawls and sarongs for every group of people. Some restrictions on some shawls and ornaments are imposed to be used, for instance, *Leizing puun* (shawl) which is designed as python are used only by elderly persons. On the other hand, *Luphai puun* are used only by the married men and *puunthleh lohna puun* are meant only for the young boys and girls. Besides there are also clothes used only by the female and are strictly prohibited even to be touch by the males.

The Tarao people can be easily differentiated by observing their dresses whether married or unmarried. The unmarried female cut their hair in front of their ear and eyebrow. But this custom is no more existed now a days. Women of different Naga tribes used various ornaments such as brace bangles, earrings, armlets, and necklace etc. Necklaces are generally many stringed and are made of cornelian beads. The women wore different types of ornaments made of silver, bronze, bones teeth of animals etc. ornaments were part and parcel of their life and were worn in their fingers, arms, wrist, neck, forehead and ears. Besides, unmarried girls wore on their waist a type of belt called *arkhah* and on their wrist and arm they wore *kolpum*, *kolchao*, *harngou* but once married they were not permitted to use these ornaments instead she will change her hair style. Her hair should be tied in a bunch at the back of her head. In case of male, unmarried male tied a small bunch of thread called "*shang-khrui-naam*" at his forehead as a sign of bachelor. Moreover, the Tarao who got engagement has to blacken her teeth. These colours are taken out from the fruits like *Changneithe*, *kiritandmittehari*.

Marriage Ceremony

Among the Tarao society, marriage is an important form of institution and the most important ceremonies in the life cycle of every one. It is a social institution that enables persons to live together and co-operate with one another in an orderly social life. Marriage is also considered as a sacred institution for the Tarao society. Though children were engaged in their early stage, marriage took place only when they attend marriageable age. Usually boys got married at the age of 20 and above and girls after 18 years. Although marriage is agreed upon, one has to always choose his or her partner according to the customary law of the Tarao. At the time of marriage and engagement comes, mother plays a great role in the tribal society, and permission of marriage is centred round the women, thus enforcing her role as the person in charge of the family. It also conferred on her a higher social status then in most other societies. After selecting the partner, the boy and the girl approached the mother which she granted after consulting her husband. Once engaged, they will be regarded as husband and wife. The formal marriage could come much later according to the convenience of both families and the elders of the village.

The best qualities prefer among the husbands and wives in the societies are-

1. To have a good moral character
2. Free from all kinds of sickness
3. Capable of working efficiently in and outside the society

Marriage permitted according to customary law;

1. Cross cousin marriages were preferred between sister's son and brother's daughter. In these regard, Dutta writes, 'in the cross cousin marriage mother's brother daughter is considered to be the potential wife of the father's sister's son, marriage with the father's sister's daughter which is strictly prohibited'.
2. Marriage between different clans.
3. Marriage between sister's children was possible only after three or four generations.

Restricted Marriage

The Tarao is an endogamous community and they practice clan exogamous marriage system. Marriage within the same clan is known as *kjur*, it is considered as great crime and this is not persists among the Taraos. In such case, they were forcefully annulled and fined with a cow or a pig and a pitcher of rice beer called *juthahgbel* to both the parties by the village councillors '*phungreiya changreiya*'. In case of having a baby, the boy has to pay *Nao jokman* (a yearly allowance) to the girlfour years and handed over the child to the father.

Elopement '*tilaan chong*' is one of the acceptable form of marriage and an age old practice though not sanctioned by the social norms. In such case, both the parties were fined equally, a pitcher of rice beer a pitcher of rice beer (*juthlangbel*) and a pig or a cow which were consumed by the villagers *Khupu leipu*, and the concerned persons who settled the case they are then they are permitted to live together. If pre-marital took place leading to pregnancy, then the village elders, khupu leipu along with village *chotnu*, (women wing) will question the girl to expose her counterpart and were fined equally. They can either live together or get separated. If separated the boy has to give taking care of (*nao-jokman*) to the girl whatever required for upbringing the child till she give back to the father.

According to the customary law, bride price was given at the time of marriage in the form of a pig or a cow, ora gong measuring eight feet. In case if the groom could not comply with the price then he has to serve his in-laws for 6 years which is called '*Meilousheh*'.

Divorce

Divorce is a rare occurrence among the Tarao community and also strictly prohibited. However, it does not mean that divorce is absent in the society. Polygamy but under certain circumstances it is relaxed. There are several reasons which leads the family to divorce. The main factors responsible for divorce are barrenness, extra-marital affairs, incompatible between husband and wife, ill treatment by husband etc. If the husband seeks divorce, then he has to return the bride price along with jhum land to his wife and also a fined has to be imposed by the village elders in terms of a pig and a *juthlangbel* for settling the case.

If the wife seeks, then she has to return all the expenses incurred during their marriage. She too also has to pay a *juthlangbel* and a pig to the village elders for settling the case.

Reference

1. Gangumei Kabui (1976). The Tarao, A Forgotten Tribe of Manipur. In Resistance, Imphal. 1976
2. Singh, Khelchandra, N. and Iboongohal,L., 1967 Cheitharol Kumbaba, Manipur Sahitya Parishad, Imphal.
3. Colonel Hudson, Man in India, vol.1. cited in Sk. Chattopadhyaya, the Jaintias.
4. J. Macunn. In the making of character. Pt. ii death with interestingly
5. John Adams. (1915.) P-3.The evolution of educational theory. London: Macmillan and Co.,
6. Agarwal Meenu, (2007) Women Empowerment, Today's Vision for Tomorrow's Mission, Mahamaya Publishing House, New Delhi.
7. Dash, B.N 1991): Development of Education in India, Anjanta Rakashan, New Delhi.
8. Das Ira, Status of Women, (2013) North Eastern Region of India versus India. *International Journal of Environmental Engineering and management*, ISSN 2250-3153. Volume 3 Issue 1 January,
9. Devi, M.S, (2001): Development of Education in Manipur, M.L. Gupta, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi.
10. Chaube, Ramesh, Dr. Saini, Krulpana, Dr,(2002) Status of women in Rural Societies Delhi, Abitya Publication
11. Shanoi Moses, T. (2011):The political and Educational conditions of the Tarao; A paper presented during two days community retreat of the Tarao Baptist Association held at Star children Home, Chandel Manipur.
12. Desai Nerera. (1975) Women and society in India. Madras CLS.
13. The Tarao Custom(2009); published by Tarao Tribe Union, Ist edition.
14. L. Morre (1992): A brief account of the Tarao, Unpublished article,

How to cite this article:

AlitaTarao M and Gina Shangkhram.2018, The Socio- Cultural Traditions of The Tarao Tribe In Reference To Family, Dress, Ornament, Marriage, Inheritance And Divorce. *Int J Recent Sci Res.* 9(9), pp. 28716-28718.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2018.0909.2512>
