

Changing Context of Bangladesh's Matrilineal Khasi Ethnic Group: A Critical Evaluation from a Sociocultural Perspective

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Abstract

This research examines the reality of women experiencing changes in their traditional matrilineal social order, namely the women of Magur Chara Khasi Punjee in Bangladesh's Moulvibazar district. This research focuses on the Khasi ethnic group, with an emphasis on the analysis of the reality of women in a shifting traditional matrilineal social structure and the comprehension of the deviating role of women in their sociocultural transformation. In other words, it will attempt to comprehend the shift that occurs and the alterations to their way of life, culture, norms, traditions, value systems, and beliefs. The study examines the changing trait of the Khasi women of Bangladesh. The vibrant lives of Bangladesh's many ethnic groups have greatly enhanced the country's overall culture. Different ethnic groups have resided in Bangladesh for ages. Due to their distinctive social and cultural practices, languages, and customs, these people are referred to as "Adivasis" by themselves. They are officially referred to as the state's minor ethnic community. The Khasi community is one of the most marginalized and at-risk ethnic communities in Bangladesh, who reside in the districts of Sylhet and Moulvibazar, identified as the Khasi Mongoloid race. They moved from Assam to Bangladesh some 500 years ago, most likely from Tibet, and now they make up one of the largest matrilineal tribes in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

The Khasi women are undergoing many changes in their cultural lives nowadays. This work is an attempt to comprehend the women's changing power structure. The history of the Khasi community's transition from a subsistence economy to one controlled by the market is as well as examined at the same time. It is essential to chronicle the effect of modernity in the guise of technical intervention that leads to cultural loss and the transformation of an ethnic group into a market-based society. The Khasi's battle for subsistence and preservation of their ethnic identity will aid in comprehending the socioeconomic components of a community's history. It is pertinent to learn that one of Bangladesh's ethnic groups is the Khasi. People from Khasi used to reside at the Sunamganj district's northeastern boundary. They are currently dispersed over Sunamganj's Bishwamvarpur, Tahirpur, and Chhatak. The majority of Khasis reside near borders. Children from Khasi are frequently seen working in Kulaura's tea gardens. According to the 1991 census, there were 12,280 Khasis in Bangladesh. However, the Bangladesh Khasi Society believes that figure to be closer to 30,000. The Khasis have a relatively high birth rate. The Khasis have narrow, slanting dark eyes, high jaws, and flat noses. They prefer mountains, rocks, and rainforests. The living circumstances of the Khasi people in our country are appalling. They have distinct sociocultural practices that are specific to them. One of the most remarkable matriarchal tribes in Bangladesh came from Assam to Bangladesh about 500 years ago, perhaps from Tibet.

Literature evaluation:

The Khasi society has a wide range of opinions on how women ought to be treated. A matrilineal group, the Khasi of Moulvibazar, Bangladesh, are. This indicates that after marriage, women maintain track of the power, titles, inheritance, and residence of those in their maternal lineage. A woman in Khasi culture can pick her mate, live with him, and marry him. The second rule connected to Khasi materialism is post-marriage residence in matrilocal areas. Other cultures don't often do this. In this society, there is no such thing as an illegitimate child, leaving a child behind, a dowry, or burning the bride. Understanding women's economic importance forms the basis of the bride price tradition within a tribe. In Khasi society, women do trades that men normally perform. The Khasi woman in Meghalaya has relative independence, although to varying degrees. Overall, the civilization is exceptional. In natural resource management and environmental preservation, women play an active role. One might infer from the above that women's freedom is manifest in all its splendor in the Khasi women-centered culture. The issue now is why the hereditary power structure of Khasi women has shifted.

In order to comprehend the dilemma of the Khasis and the recent shift in the power structure of women, namely the erosion of the matrilineal system of inheritance and the reversal of the male's position in communality, I analyzed the reports of many scholars and ethnographers. In addition to the material on the Khasis, I encountered other Bangladeshi ethnic communities, which helped me comprehend the lives of other Bangladeshi ethnic groups. In addition, several of these publications helped

me comprehend the approach of community research. However, the following is a list of the principal contents of many works:

Hamlet Bareh published *A Short History of Khasi Literature* in 1962. Shilong covers almost every aspect of the prehistoric Khasi tribe and its offshoots. The author's first-hand understanding of the lives and lifestyles of Khasi people was gained via a decade-long, extended research voyage across the many tribal areas of the Eastern Khasi highlands. It was an effort to find every nook and corner of the Khasi people's history in India and their spread into surrounding regions. Therefore, the brief book history of Khasi literature by Bareh Hamlet has been extremely valuable for studying the Magur Charra Khasi, people from a historical viewpoint.

The Khasis of Bangladesh: A Socioeconomic Survey is a 60-page English book produced by Society for Environment and Human Development-SEHD in Dhaka in 2007. This book concentrates only on the socioeconomic situation of Khasis. It attempts to describe the economic function of Khasi males and females in their homes. It is crucial to focus on the socioeconomic status of Khasis residing in the mountainous region of the Sylhet division. How the Khasis manage their everyday economic operations, their means of subsistence, economic restraints, and the outlook for their day-to-day lives. What roles do Khasi men and women play in family matters regarding economic contribution, and what distinguishes them from one another when their perspectives shift?

Major P.R.T. Gurdon's study of the Khasis in eastern India in 1907 is one of the best examples of a thorough investigation. The Khasis include a preface by Sir Charles Lyall, K.C.S.I. According to Lieutenant-Colonel P.R.T. Gurdon. During Gurdon's time as the Deputy Commissioner of Eastern Bengal and Assam, Commissioner, and Superintendent of Ethnography, publications were made based on orders from the Assam Administration. This was the first thorough study of Khasi to be published in India. The book was afterward repeatedly published in India and London. The book was mostly about the history and origins of the Khasis in India and the surrounding areas, as well as their way of life, culture, religion, family, marriage, and taboos and customs related to the caste system.

The Study's Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the impact of the modernization process on the life and living style of the Khasi Community, especially the Khasi women, their familial, economic, professional and sociocultural lifestyles, religious beliefs, practices and change perspective.

1. To know about the Khasi traditional matrilineal family system, the dignity of women in the past and present, the pattern of domestic leadership, organization and community platform;
2. To find out the nature and extent of their conversion to Christianity;
3. To find out their educational status and changes due to the access of modern amenities of life;
4. To learn the status of Khasi women in the community;
5. To learn about their quality of living;
6. To understand the changing perspective of this community;
7. To understand their socioeconomic status;
8. To understand how modernization and other sociocultural developments have affected Khasi community;
9. To be aware of the issues Khasis are facing.

Limitation of the Research

The study was subject to various constraints as follows:

1. Interviewees were too busy to liaise with information
2. Language barrier hindered the work;
3. Scarcity of time to interview Khasi people;
4. They occasionally felt fearful;
5. The community was drowsy as they continuously face the fieldworkers from different GOs and NGOs at their setting;

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study was carried out using a case study and participant observation techniques. The study's primary goal is to examine the Khasi community's sociocultural situation. In performing this study, primary and secondary data were also utilized. Three case studies within the Khasi community were carried out to gather primary data. Secondary data is gathered from numerous reports of online content, articles, books and journals. The study design is as follows.

Study area

Methodology of the study and study area

The main survey technique was examined to talk about how Khasi women are treated in society. Through the direct questionnaire approach and in-person interviews with various groups of district residents, preliminary data have been gathered. For their convenience, the Punjees were deliberately picked at random. But most aspects of Moulvibazar's Khasi society share a lot in common with those of the aforementioned chosen Punjees. Even though Moulvibazar's Khasi society is frequently referred to as matrilineal and current social patterns appear to maintain this organization on the outside, the underlying structure has changed due to several social changes. The research region is in the Lawachara beat restricted forest area of the Moulvibazar Forest Range of the Sylhet Forest Division, some 30 kilometers south of Moulvibazar, and is defined by the coordinates 24019' north latitude and 91047' east longitude. Many small, isolated hillocks, ranging in height from 100 to 200 feet, dot the landscape. The Moulvibazar area is home to the majority of Khasi Punjees. The village of Magur Charra Punjee was chosen as the survey area out of the seven Khasia Punjees in Kamalganj Upazila, one of the five Upazila in the Moulvibazar district. To find out how women's position was changing in the Khasi society, a set of questions was developed. In the research region

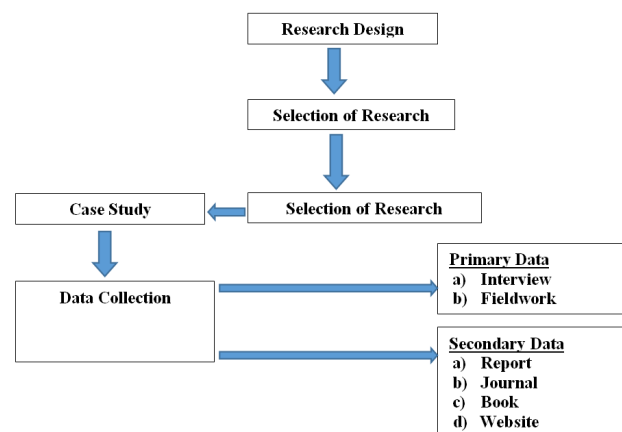


Figure 1: Research methodology

Table 1: Demography of Magur Charra Khasi Punjee

Number of population	425
Number of families	45
Male-Female ratio	40: 60
Literacy	100%
Main occupation	Betel leaf farming
Religion	Converted Christian: 90%, Tradition Khasi Religion/Animism: 10%

(Source: Rahman)

of Komolgonj Upajela in the Moulvibazar district, Magur Charra Khasi Punjee, this ethnographic study was done in July–August 2018. A list of every household among the Magur Charra Punjee was created to gather information for this ethnographic study. All of the 45 families in the Punjee were taken as samples of the study. Considering the women interviewees' dignity, honor and security, some disguised names were used as conditions in the research work. Because it is a practice of the dwellers that, without consent of the Punjee Minister, Women are not supposed to talk or communicate any stranger. That is why; with the kind permission and cooperation of the Minister following all formalities, this research was undertaken.

Demography of Magur Charra Khasi Punjee

Observation about fieldwork area

1. The socioeconomic environment is not favorable;
2. The majority of people in this region work in agriculture, particularly in the production of betel leaf and betel nut;
3. The minority population has very low levels of education;
4. The majority of the homes in this neighborhood are built of brick, while some are also made of wood and bamboo;
5. The sanitation system in this neighborhood is satisfactory;
6. The residents of this region are particularly concerned about the education of their children;
7. The area's medical resources are insufficient;
8. They ingest water from deep water pumps.

At this stage let's analyze the livelihood and socioeconomic condition of the Khasi community of Bangladesh:

Study Detail

The Khasi tribe, which may be found in Bangladesh and India, is widely recognized for its matrilineal tradition, in which women reign over the family unit. The Khasis were among the earliest people to inhabit India between 10,000 and 20,000 years ago. They are also among the first matrilineal groups in Bangladesh and northeast India. There are about 30,000 Khasis in Bangladesh, while there are more than a million in India. The Khasi people were part of a single nation before 1947 saw the division of India and Pakistan. The Khasi people still uphold the custom of women inheriting an ancestor's possessions, including land. In the Khasi culture, the monogamous marriage system is rigidly observed. The groom is supposed to live at the bride's home following the wedding, but fewer men do so these days. The genesis narrative of the Khasis has mostly been based on conjecture and myth up to this point due to a paucity of historical documentation and written sources. According to Chowdhury (1998), the Khasis do not appear to have kept any tradition on the origin of their ancestors, and a highly particular and genuine ethnic history of these people has not yet been established.

Origins of Matrilineal Khasi

The Khasis are said to have Mongoloid heritage. According to historical accounts, they originate in the East and migrate from area around Cambodia and the banks of the Mekong River. In reality, there is still a small matrilineal Khasi tribe in Laos. According to historical evidence, the Austric-speaking Mons took control of Burma in the 11th century and maintained it for a short period of time. Because they utilized a system based on women's lines, they were considered to be the ancestors of the Khasis (Bareh, 1974). Mons moved to Assam after the Burmese defeated them. History has shown that the Mon-Khmer civilization is a very old one. The Mon-Khmer civilization has a long history in Vietnam. The Khmer of Cambodia and the Mon-Khmer people of Laos, Thailand, Indo-China, Indonesia, and Malaysia are linked to the Khasi megalithic civilization (Bareh, 1974). Meghalaya has always been home to the Mon-Khmer language of Khasi-Jaintia. Gurdon (1996) came to the conclusion that the Khasis are a branch of the Mon people based on the history he looked at. Because of their strong links to language and culture of the Mon-Khmer group, the Khasis, according to Chowdhury (1998), are intimately related to the Mon, Palaung, and Burmese Wars. He also claimed that the Khasis in British India's Assam district were the only members of the Mon-Khmer Group to have left Burma.

Few anthropologists were able to draw comparisons between the Khasis, Synthengs, and Nagas. They discovered that some Naga customs may have been passed down to the Khasis or vice versa from the Nagas, whose land the Khasis may have traveled through on their way to their current location. The Khasis have a prehistoric lineage with people who lived in Chota Nagpur and the Malay Peninsula, claims Gurdon (1996), who references Aymonier. Dutta (1982) describes the Khasis as a pale mongoloid race that speaks Mon-Khmer, an Austric language that they are claimed to have picked up throughout their travels before settling in their current location.

Khasi settlement in Sylhet

The majority of the Khasi people in Bangladesh reside in the broader Sylhet Division. In 90 villages around Bangladesh, there are estimated to be 20,000 Khasis (Rahman, 2004). In the Sylhet district, the Goainghat and Jaintapur upazilas have 5 and 3 each, respectively, while the Kulaura, Barolekha, Sreemangal, and Kamolgonj upazilas in the Moulavibazar district have 38, 11, 7, and 4 apiece. There is one Punji in each of Bahubal and Chunarughat, and one Punjee in Taherpur Upazilla in the Sunamgonj district. Unknown are the exact circumstances and timing of the Khasi migration to Sylhet. 12,280 Khasis were enumerated in the 1991 Bangladesh Census in the whole country. Most people believe that the Khasi people are made up of four sub-tribes: Khyrniam, Pnar, Bhoi, and War. The people living in the higher parts of the Khasi Hills District are called Khyrniam, Pnar, or the Jaintia Hills are the Syntengs. The Bhoi live on the lower slopes of the Jaintia and Khasi Hills, which slope north and northeast into the Brahmaputra Valley. The war is located on the rocky southern slopes that go to Bangladesh. It is frequently divided into War-Jaintia in the southern Jaintia Hills and War-Khasi in the southern Khasi Hills. The Lyngngam people, who reside in the western Khasi Hills, have been influenced by the Garo people to the west and the Khasis to the east.

Genetics and physical character

Khasis are short people with a high jawline, dark eyes that are straightened, flat noses, and big lips. The Sylhet Division of Bangladesh has 11 upazilas and is home to this matrilineal ethnic

group. The Khasi have modest yet distinct differences across their various locations. According to recent genetic studies, the Khasis are more closely linked to their Garo neighbors than any other community in northeast India. Many Khasis have skin tones that range from being earthy to those that Anglo and other Eurasian ethnicities influence. They don't have the typical traits of people from the Indian subcontinent, and they might even look like people from Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan. East Indian or North-East Indian traits apply. The differences, though, continue to be large. One of Bangladesh's most notable matriarchal tribes, the Khasis, came to Bangladesh from Assam some 500 years ago, perhaps from Tibet. Khasis have high jaws, small, straight black eyes, flat noses, and thin lips.

Khasi social structure

Khasi culture is matrilineal and matrilineal. The father is a key figure in the home, children often take their mother's last name, and maternal uncles frequently impact the family. According to Khasi law, a woman has the right to own her children and property and cannot be forced into marriage. According to Khasi tradition, the property must also belong to the youngest daughter, known as the khaduh. This is so that she can protect her family's heritage. Without the husband's approval, a woman has the discretion to end a marriage.

Khasi socialization process and inheritance system

A name is given to a kid the day after birth. The major objectives of family activities are to maintain and enhance family bonds, conduct religious rituals, and care for the family's possessions. These and other labor-related activities are carried out by men and women as well as children. But women are mostly responsible for socialization.

The Khasis' most significant social structure is the matrilineal one. It is absent from all other races or tribes in Bangladesh, with the exception of the Garos. The passing of the family's assets to the youngest daughter, known as KaKhudduh in Khasi, distinguishes Khasi matrilineal (Dutta, 1982). Even if more sisters are permitted to get a portion of the inheritance, the youngest child often receives the lion's share, while brothers are not permitted to receive anything. For Khasi males, having property is a tradition that results from their level of income. The youngest daughter has a lot of influence over inherited assets. She must observe customary family rituals and duties and care for her elderly parents, unmarried siblings, or other dependent family members who reside in her mother's home with her husband and kids (Bareh, 1974). In the event that there is just one daughter, she will inherit the whole inheritance. If there isn't a daughter, the elder sister's family will inherit the ancestral home and property.

Marriage and living arrangement

Marriage is only a legal partnership. Men marry between the ages of 18 and 35, while women wed between the ages of 13 and 18. Parents sometimes arrange their children's weddings, but this doesn't seem to be the norm. Young men and women have a lot of freedom when it comes to choosing partners and engaging in premarital sex. According to Khasi law, a woman has the right to own her children and property and cannot be forced into marriage. Without the husband's approval, a woman has the discretion to end a marriage. Monogamous unions are strictly upheld in the Khasia community. The groom is supposed to live at the bride's house after the wedding, although fewer men do so now. They are matrilineal and have monogamous families. In their marriages, there is no place for dowry, mohoror, or any other type of exchange system.

Khasi religious beliefs

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist mission started Christian missionary work among the Khasis in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Their efforts have made a considerable difference, as have those of other Christian groups. Today, Christians make up more than half of the Khasi population. Nearly all spheres of culture may be seen to have been influenced by missionaries. However, the core of the traditional Khasi religion is still present. The Khasi have a female creator goddess (U BleiNong-thaw) that they worship (Ka lei Synshar). She is summoned in times of adversity and while providing sacrifices. Making both good and evil spirits pleased as well as paying respect to the deceased, are also part of this philosophy. Significant spirits venerated include O Ryngkew or U BasaShnong, UleiMuluk (god of the state), UleiUmtang (god of drinking and cooking water), UleiLongspah (god of wealth), and (tutelary deities of the village) (Sen 2004).

Khasi woman rights

Khasi women have a high social position and play an important part in socioeconomic and home management problems. In addition to agriculture, many Khasi women have pursued careers in government service and industry.

DISCUSSION

Analysis & finding

This research comprehends the Khasi community in Bangladesh in the context of its contemporary transformation below:

1. Greater patriarchal social structure is impacting the matrilineal Khasi culture;
2. The globalization process is influencing Khasi cultural practices;
3. Religious conversion is occurring;
4. Under the influence of Christianity, the Khasi are creating property wills for male offspring;
5. Despite their expertise in agroforestry, their ancestors' dependence on betel-leaf agriculture reduced significantly.

Although the Khasi culture is matrilineal, the traditional practice is not practiced at all levels, and men seem to dominate the public arena of the Khasi society. Therefore, the study is to answer the following questions:

1. What changes have taken place in the traditional matrilineal Khasi social system?
2. What is the status of women in Khasi economy?
3. What is the socio-political role of Khasi women?

Today, around 95% of the Khasi accept Christianity (Magur Charra Punjee, 2013), yet their old pantheistic beliefs have by no means vanished, judging by appearances. In the Khasi highlands, there is a renaissance of pride in folklore heritage, and ancient traditions of ancestor worship are seeing a resurrection. As with other groups, the Khasi have not been immune to the "dominant ideology" of colonialism, globalization, the market economy, and the state-run political and economic system. This study endeavored to comprehend the prevalent social backdrop in order to comprehend "dominant ideology."

These forms of societal dominance are observed:

1. Cultural domination;
2. Economic domination;
3. Religious domination and;
4. Social domination

In addition to the dominances stated before, this study also identifies the presence of interventions inside the Khasi society. These interventions take the form of globalization, Christian missionaries, and non-governmental organizations. As a consequence, the Khasi community has seen several transformations. Observed alterations in the community are as follows:

The participation of women in the agricultural process has decreased

1. Women no longer make the social decisions as they did in the past;
2. Daughters frequently lose property inheritance;
3. Changes in the family and marriage system;
4. Religious conversion;
5. Educated Khasi youth defend and discourage the matrilineal social system as a barrier to their advancement.

Changes to the marriage system

In Khasi culture, intra-caste and same-blood marriages were rigorously outlawed. A social institution such as marriage was highly dependent on family approval. In this respect, it was necessary to complete a number of requirements. However, Magur Charra Khasi Punjee is now suffering the opposite of tradition. The caste system of marriage does not seem to be practiced now, since cross-cultural patterns of marriage are more prevalent. In this instance, the Magur Chara Khasi community has developed its own set of norms. If a family accepts a bridegroom in this environment, the community as a whole does not raise any objections. However, the Khasi culture is very harsh if the bridegroom's family opposes his choice. They decide that the pair is undesirable in the neighborhood. Premarital coitus is forbidden in Khasi culture, however, it may occur if the bride and groom prefer one other and the bride's mother approves of the groom. In conclusion, it has been shown that the power structure and culture of the Khasi are undergoing a fundamental transformation owing to the marriage integration of men and women from many religious and cultural backgrounds. The Minister of Magur Charra Khasi Punjee, Giddison, has acknowledged that such changes are ongoing in his community. For these reasons, ancient Khasi customs, culture, and animism are on the verge of extinction.

These alterations in Khasi society's fundamental structure are the outcome of those developments. Matrilineal society has been divided into several phases due to modernity in terms of educational attainment, socioeconomic traits, and developmental variables, which have profoundly changed the Khasis' perspectives and attitudes toward the old system. Examining the situation of Khasi women in great detail is required in order to place things in their right social perspective.

Social change

Individual choice is currently more prevalent than parent-arranged marriages when it comes to weddings. Additionally, it is becoming usual for parents and children to live apart from their extended relatives. The power of clan (Kur) on land is likewise waning; uncles who once represented the clan no longer had the same authority. Additionally, the Khasis progressively acquire private land ownership, facilitating significant economic transformation.

Current reality of the matrilineal Khasi community

Khasi women have come to understand that the matrilineal system itself is what keeps them behind. This is because they are

part of the process of modernization, the growth of education, the influence of the church, and other things. Thus, the traditional social and political structure of Khasi society is fast shifting, with men getting the upper hand in gender relations. In this manner, several Khasi traditions are disintegrating. Traditionally, Khasi people lived with their wives' families after marriage. However, Khasi men no longer do this. Instead, they bring their wives to their own homes.

Women are succumbing to modernization and patriarchy as an ideology as well. Many of them say that even though women have always been at the top of society, men have always been in charge of the law and the court system. Additionally, men have dominated the public realm. Moreover, the maternal uncle has always had a preeminent position even in matriarchal societies. The Khasi women we talked to thought that their lives would have been better if patriarchy had been in charge of their culture. However, they were afraid to say this in public. All Khasi women the researcher talked to were educated and part of conservative groups. In the ethnographic research, it has been found that the influence of the church is one of the primary elements in altering the thinking of the Khasi women. In my ethnographic study, the effect of the church is quite clear. The Khasis are frequent churchgoers.

[Case-1]

Name: Sheuli Shuong

Age: 32

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

Sheuli Shuong, a 32 year-old housewife from Magur Charra Khasi Punjee, only received a fifth-grade education. She described the most recent changes to her family and home. "Our days are not like the ones we formerly had. In our household, dominance is not a big issue. In the past, we handled the family finances, used to work outside the home, and made decisions that the entire family followed. However, things aren't like that anymore since we don't go to work and we don't have access to any money. Thus, we are unable to decide.

[Case-2]

Name: Tina Niang

Age: 20

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

A housewife named Tina Niang (20) shared her personal story on how her life changed against the backdrop of the matrilineal social structure in Magur Charra Khasi Punjee. As the youngest siblings, we are obligated to watch after our older siblings as their guardians, provide for their needs, and inherit our parents' possessions. I'm also expected to take care of my other sisters or plan for their housing after they get married. However, I have only heard about this job; I do not observe things occurring in that manner or taking any of these actions. No, to my knowledge, none of these things are happening; they are only outmoded current theories.

[Case-3]

Name: Shiron Lee

Age: 25

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

A married lady living in Magur Charra Khasi Punjee is Shiron Lee (25). She spoke about her place in the family and where

women stood in the hierarchy of power in her society: “I don’t live with my parents; I live in my husband’s home. I am entitled to reside in my mother’s house as her youngest daughter and as part of my inheritance. And did my parents give me the property? No, despite having a traditional heritage, I don’t have it. In addition, my brothers split the land among themselves. Naturally, I don’t worry about it, although it does hurt a bit. However, I frequently question the value of thinking about the problem.

[Case-4]

Name: *Nasima Surong*

Age: 23

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

23-year-old Nasima Surong has completed up to Class 7 of her education. She said that she had wed a Hindu man who was not a member of the Khasi community. She does not understand Khasi customs, women’s place in the Khasi family, and society’s power structure. She believes that, compared to other women in most of society, she is doing fine.

[Case- 5]

Name: *Dimon Susiang*

Age: 30

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

The age of Dimon Susiang is thirty. She opposes the Khasi tradition to some extent but is in favor of adapting to societal change. In her words: “I think that because we are matrilineal, we are trailing behind. See how much better-developed households with working male members are than ours. Can we do much? I definitely cannot because I don’t have the same physical strength as my spouse. Because they can exert more physical effort and are stronger than women, men can earn more money for the household. We prepare meals as a family, process betel nuts, build fences, and market it. We ought to stay at home. Furthermore, we notice that non-matrilineal societies are significantly more developed than ours. We will inevitably fall behind if we adhere to the outdated ideals.

[Case- 6]

Name: *Monika Khongla*

Age: 29

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

Monika Khongla is in her late twenties. She stated, “See, no one in the Khasi Punjee will be nominated as minister if he does not belong to the genealogy of “Doloi” or “Lodong,” expressing some resentment at the political system and the current state of Khasi society. This Khasi tradition. But is this tradition still in use today? No. People who are not of “Doloi” or “Lodong” heritage are now being ordained as ministers. You never know. The next ministers may be educated or knowledgeable. They might be able to decide what is good or wrong. Of course, not everyone will be able to distinguish between good and wrong. Consider a “Doloi” or “Lodong” lineage member who is illiterate and hence unsuitable to serve as a minister since he cannot make decisions. The current alteration has this as its cause.

[Case- 7]

Name: *Bonifais Kongla*

Age: 32

Marital Status: Married

Village: Magur Charra Punjee

Bonifais Kongla (32) is a Magur Charra Khasi Punjee woman who is aware. She stated, “We usually accept these developments naturally, yet it hurts to witness the changes regarding the plight of Khasi women. Our influence has really diminished, and we’ve strayed from our customary relationships and cultural practices. However, we welcome these modifications. People from the outside ask us why we should be cultured or why we should progress simply because we are Khasi. However, I’d want to point out that men don’t change of their own volition; rather, their surroundings force them to embrace change. So, we must adjust with the times. However, it is regrettable that our authority would be restricted just due to a change in matrilineal lineage or property rights. The fact that we can now communicate openly and reach agreements is a reality. We have the option to further our education beyond the classroom, so we should consider this part of positive change as well.

Challenges to the Khasi matrilineal system:

1. Young people are becoming more aware of the patrilineal structure as they become more interested in Western culture;
2. Because of the competition for business and economic growth, a Khasi man who works might become more independent and use his money to get what he wants from his family;
3. Male rights organizations have started to use Christianity as a catalyst for change in Khasi society.

The Khasi matriarchs ‘custodian of a culture

The matriarchal system is the central pillar of Khasi society, and the chief matriarch (lawbei) is the vice-regent of the clan’s patron deity, who is the guardian of their culture and religion. They still try to protect their history from the effects of time. This is a tradition that has survived storms, snow, and the harsh north Indian wilderness for generations. The matriarchal system is the fulcrum upon which the whole structure and superstructure of Khasi civilization depend. From a religious standpoint, the lawbei is the direct vice-regent of the clan’s patron deity. Consequently, the whole bloodline becomes her duty. The fact that the Khasi have always been in fights is a more practical reason why matriarchal institutions have grown over time. This meant that there needed to be a more consistent part at home to keep the line going.

Social Reality

The Khasis are impacted by foreign concepts in the form of globalization, the market economy, and the engagement of government and non-government groups, much like every other community in the contemporary world. Whether they do it consciously or subconsciously, they must adapt to the changing circumstances. This change also affects the conventional position of women in that community. The changing lives of Khasi women are shown in this researcher’s anthropological study of Magur Charra Khasi Punjee.

Adaptation with Technology

Even with all of these changes, the Khasi community prioritizes keeping their rich cultural heritage, the matrilineal society on which their society is based, and the development of a broader concept of Khasi unity and oneness through the creation of larger local and national forums and associations. While they prioritize preservation, they are also receptive to new, helpful concepts, ideas, approaches, technologies, etc.

CONCLUSION

The power structure of women is changing in the Magur Charra Khasi community in Bangladesh. While cultural change is

occurring in the neighborhood, mostly as a result of religious conversion, additionally, it has both beneficial and harmful effects. Globalization and the modernizing process often disrupt the elderly's traditional matrilineal social structure. The change has hurt their social structure, language, clothing, behavior, fine arts, and other things. Due to the advent of modern education and religious conversion, the traditional Khasi mother tongue has lost much of its value. Educated and observant parents seem to be more concerned with teaching their children Bengali and English. Thus, the Khasi language has evolved into a simple vernacular, and even singing in the Khasi language has declined. Today, there is also a noticeable shift in the way people dress. Currently, men in the Khasi community wear two Western garments. Social leaders, prominent figures, and ministers are not seen wearing their beautiful traditional attire. Khasi women have kept wearing clothes from a long time ago, making them stand out from other people. A revolutionary change is also clear, especially in the way educated young men and women think and act. In most cases, they appear to have abandoned their flawless sociocultural ideals in favor of assimilating into pompous Western society.

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