

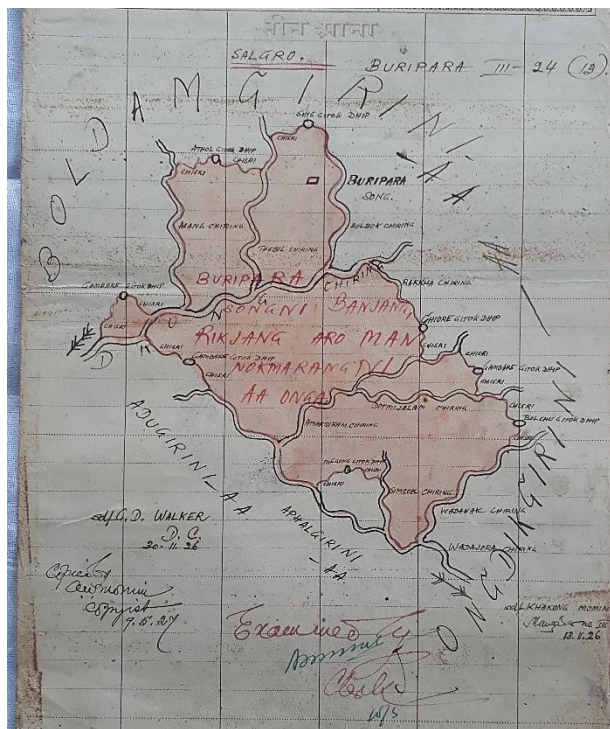
TRADITIONAL LIFE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF BURIPARA CLAN

Case Studies Of Non CLLMP
Village

Ibanri

RONGRAM BLOCK, WEST GARO HILLS, MEGHALAYA

SUMMARY



Buripara is a village situated in Babadam, under Rongram C&RD Block, West Garo Hills in the state of Meghalaya.

The Village is the land of Buripara A-king where the land belongs to three different clans under Garo Tribe namely, Cheran, Mangsang and Raksam .

This clan are all matrilineal society but most of the village affairs are look after by men. Within the A-king, the land is distributed among the clan members. For example, all the children who are from Cheran clan gets the land within the A-king i.e., first preference is given to the members of Cheran clan within the area which falls under Cheran clan Nokma but they are not allowed

to sell the land.

All the land belongs to all the three (3) Aking Norma's. The 'Aking' is an area of land that belongs to a particular clan. It is mapped by using traditional way of mapping called 'Wa-reng'. Wa-reng is a method that uses bamboo to measure the land that belongs to particular clan.

Altogether, Buripara village has 120 households and there is only one Village Panchayat Standing Committee for Education.

The Buripara Village has many wild animals that is extinct due to the expansion of settlement area. Some of the wild animal are - elephant, wild boar (wak bu-ring), deer, tiger, balgitchak (barking deer), matdrong and maraca kilgong (mouse deer).

Also the village is one of the places for elephant crossing zones especially at the area name as Wakagre, Sadolpara and Dabokgre under the Rongram Block

THE HISTORY OF BURIPARA

The British enter Garo Hills and sent their soldiers to scout all the villages. During that time the British soldiers constructed the roads into various villages. The track construction done by the British is called 'Pony Track' which is locally known as 'Raja-Rama'. Upon arrival the British soldiers light the beacon locally known as 'Ganchi So-a'.

According to oral history, when British came to Buripara village all the male residents hide in order to escape from persecution. Therefore, the British did not find any men inside the village. According to their knowledge, only one old woman was found by the British. That is how the village got its name. They named their village 'Buripara'. 'Buri' which means an 'old lady' and 'Para' means village.

The first residents of Buripara migrated from Boldam Wamagre village which is now under Rangsakona Assembly constituency around 200 years ago.

Interestingly, the traditional of Garo Culture is that the headmen or the leader of the community used to store rice and rations in village food bank (Jam Nok) for future crisis. Now every household has their own Rice Storage room individually and some produce they sell in the market. The main markets of their village are Garobada, Babadam, and Rongram weekly markets.

The era of civilization and modern culture has turned the traditional way of farming, cultivating and lifestyle. Hence there are people who are much more into produce food supplies from elsewhere or neighbouring state like Assam.

On collecting the information by the CLLMP Knowledge Management, MBMA it was acquired that only three people have government service whereas majority of them are still dependent on agriculture and farming. And another surprising fact was that the community could count the number of graduates and under graduates, 10th and 12 pass out of the villages.

“ Out of total population three are graduates, one is HSSLC pass, ten are SSLC pass, more than 50 people passed out class eight and more than 100 people passed out his/her middle level education, an elderly man added”.

In Buripara, they have a traditional healer. His name is Mr. Sengchang A. Sangma. He prepares traditional medicines for diseases like diarrhoea, stroke (ma-si rima) and other mild illnesses, etc.

AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT



The community of Buripara Village practiced Jhum cultivation. But now they have stopped and does other activities. However there are few of them who still into Jhum cultivation in a small areas.

The cycle of jhuming is 4-5 years. The soil of east Ranggira is good for crop

cultivation whereas towards the South west they believed that the cultivation is not as good as cultivated in the east.

The community who do not have their own land for farming and cultivation of seasonal crops, they does some kind of rental system where the land were taken on least for Rs 3000/- and Rs 4000/- per year. The main source of their livelihoods is farming such as Arecanut: Arecanut is their seasonal income. Banana: Banana is their perennial income Cashewnut: They used the traditional methods to plant cashew nuts and this is their seasonal income, Ginger and turmeric for their own consumptions.

The least that we could see in and around the village is that the community do not have rubber plantation and tea garden.

LOCALLY AVAILABLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The Garo Hills is the land of all kind of tropical fruits such as jackfruits, wild berries, citrus etc. Besides there are some of the plants available in and around Buripara village that the community keeps it for their own consumptions. Some of the varieties of fruit bearing species are mangoes, bolchrim (duabanga sonneratioides), bolbret, bolchu (silk cotton tree), me·gong (barebinia xariegata), me·cheng (acanthopodium), ki·ring, alot (phlogacanthus thyrsiflorus), adurak (gaultheria fragrantissima) and samsuang (curry leave) etc.

The locally available wild edible vegetables includes –Bitter Gourd (apolka) pakram, gambare, sarat (fiddleheads), songgibiret (elephant foot plant), takrak, tajong, tagong (elephant's ear /colocasia), taring, tabolangchi, tamillong (sweet potatoes), tapiocca (tabolchu), kimka (solanum nigrum/black nightshade), they don't have litchi (letchu) but they did the plantation in another plot of land, ariktak (Terminalia citrina), ambare (gooseberry), spin (sesame), e·ching (ginger), akaru (apple gourd), cucumber, sawil (sponge gourd) and chiror. They also cultivate sticky rice and other local rice. Besides, they also do turmeric farming for local their own consumption.

LIFESTYLE AND OTHER FACILITIES

The era of modern civilization has turned the Garo Culture from traditional to the modern lifestyle. It has changed the way it looks and the dedication and preservice of the Natural Resources. The community now focuses more on bringing and having the easy money making and depends on the outside food produce.

The Village has PHE contributed pipeline for irrigation from Sadapol Bi·sik/ chiring (streams) which falls under Ranggira plateau. They constructed one tank in the source and one tank in the village. This stream is around 6 km far from the village. But most of the time it is non-

functional. For drinking and domestic purpose they used Boldam stream which is 3 km from the main village. Apart from all of that, it was found that 50% of the community are still into indigenous belief (non Christianity) and other 50% are Christianity.

The Livestock of the Village. The villagers also practice cattle farming with some household having 28 cows but hybrid species are available such as Jersey. There are also pig farming and local chicken rearing. In addition none of the household rear goats because it destroyed the other vegetation. They rear cattle and pigs for selling. Fatted calf (livestock) are used during festivals and ceremonies.

The Village Governance

There is a village court in Babadam which has a jurisdiction of 15 villages under it. The head of this village court is Lasker. His name is Kelsu Ch. Marak from A·gisimgre village. One of the main traditional custom followed by the villagers are ‘Kokam’ and ‘Ma·gual’. ‘Kokam’ refers to a committed debt owe by the family which is contributed by the clan members during family occasions; ‘Ma·gual’ is a casual donation donated by guests during family occasions. If ‘Kokam’ cannot be paid back, a plot of land is compensated by the family. Apart from this there are rules and regulations to govern conservation and preservation of forests and other natural resources of the village which is unanimously decided by village elders. Such as fines and penalties for tree felling, fishing from reserved fish sanctuaries.

Other government scheme implemented in Buripara village includes MGNREGA.



Nokma Katchari where day to day village affairs are discussed.



MGNREGA works in Buripara

Conclusion

Buripara Village could be one of the role model villages to document the traditional knowledge of Garo tribe. However there seems to be no one who is knowledgeable to share their stories, cultural values, traditions, and ideas of their village. Besides there are very few elderly

members who could just remember nothing. They have so much more to see and learn from the era of civilization.