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## Published Papers in Journals

1. Dr. Mamoni Mahanta.

### A Historical study of the religious beliefs of the Chutias

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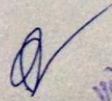
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## A Historical Study of the Religious beliefs of the Chutiyas

Dr. Mamoni Mahanta

### Abstract:

*The Chutiya community is one of the indigenous inhabitants of Assam. They were Mongoloid origin and their original language was closely akin to Bodo. The Chutiya community has their own religious beliefs and customs. The Deoris are the priest class of the Chutiyas attached to the Keshaikhati temple of Sadiya. The Chutiyas were the Mongoloid origin and one of the ethnic tribes of Assam. They were the first Aryanised and Hinduised tribes of Assam and they are one of the most civilised and advanced tribes of Assam. Many people of Chutiya community believe in various religious practices which were prevailing among them from ancient time.*

The Chutiyas were the earliest known indigenous inhabitants of Assam Valley. They were of Mongoloid origin and their original language was closely akin to Bodo. After the downfall of the Palas, the Chutiya emerged on the political scene of Assam. There was also an ancient Chutiya kingdom of Vidarbha with its capital at Kundil Nagar. Their rule probably started from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Chutiyas established a kingdom in medieval Assam was known as Swadhaya or Sadiya. The capital of the kingdom was also named accordingly as Swadhayapur, Sadhayapur, Sadiya or Sindhukhetra.<sup>1</sup> The founder of the Chutiya kingdom of the medieval Assam was Birpal alias Birbar. The Chutiyas ruled in their kingdom bounded on the west by the river Sisi, a tributary of the Suvansiri, on the east by the Brahmakunda, on the north by the hills and on the south by the river Burhidihing.<sup>2</sup> Ratnadhvajpal was one the most powerful of the Chutiya kings. And the last king of Chutiya kingdom of medieval Assam was Nitipal or Chandranarayan. Political relations of Chutiyas with the Ahoms began from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Ahom king Sutufa. During the reign of powerful Ahom king Suhungmung, Chutiya kingdom was annexed to Ahom kingdom in 1522 AD. The Chutiyas who ruled in Sadiya at the beginning of the thirteenth century to the early part of the sixteenth century were very advanced, civilized and cultured who contributed much towards every aspect of Assamese culture.

As we know that Assam is a land of diverse people. From time immemorial waves of people belonging to different ethnic groups poured into the Assam Valley for which Assam

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is defined as 'Anthropological Museum' of different tribes. As every tribe has their own rites and religious beliefs, the Chutiya has also their own religious beliefs and customs. The study deals with the religious beliefs and practices of the Chutiyas.

#### **Aims and Objectives :**

The tribes of Assam have following different religious beliefs and practices. Though there is a similarity among the religious beliefs and practices, yet there are some differences among them. The Chutiyas are one of the tribes, who followed their own religious beliefs and practices. The objective of the study is to identify the religious beliefs of the Chutiyas which are different from other communities of Assam.

#### **Methodology :**

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected from the chronicles belonging to the Ahom period, religious scriptures of the Chutiyas, proceedings of different summits. The secondary sources are collected from different books, journals, newspapers and souvenirs published on the occasion of various *divas* of Chutiya community.

#### **Religious beliefs of the Chutiyas :**

Assam is a land of diverse religions, beliefs and cults. Before Neo-Vaishnavism which was developed as a major religion of Assam only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Savisim and Saktism were the most popular religions of this land. All the kings of the ancient Assam including the Chutiyas were the worshipers of God Shiva and Shakti. The main original deity whom the Chutiya worshipped was called Kundimama. The Chutiyas believed that Kundi was there original father and Mama was their original mother. The eldest son of Kundi and Mama was Pisadema and eldest daughter was Pisasidema or Kesaikhati. It is a fact that every tribe felt proud to have their origin from any divine origin and accordingly the Chutiyas also claimed them as decedents of Kubera, the God of wealth.

From different sources we can get knowledge regarding the religious belief of the Chutiyas. These sources are the Kalika Purana, Yogini Tantra and the chronicles belonging to the reigns of the Ahoms. Besides these, the most important are the archeological remains found in Sadiya, North Lakhimpur and neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.

The Chutiyas who were the stern advocates of saktism worshipped Sakti in various forms. Vishnu worship was also prevalent among the Chutiyas. The quadrilateral image of Vishnu, musical instruments like *doaba*, *kah*, *bell*, palanquin which are still preserved in Ghararasatra of North Lakhimpur belonged to king Dharmadhajpal of the Chutiyas.<sup>3</sup> On one side of the palanquin there engraved a picture of Garura and on the other side there was a wheel or chakra. The Chutiya were stern votaries of saktism can also be proved from the images of goddesses like *Asubhuja Durga*, *Dibhuja Bhavani*, *Chandrika*, *Bhairavi*, *Maha*

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