

Self-determination and Integration: A Site of Negotiation and a Village Named Panbari

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Abstract

The demand for self-determination of various nationalities has been central to the sociopolitical and cultural life of Assam, a northeastern state of India. The Statutory Autonomous Councils formed under the State Act are a non-territorial arrangement to address the question of self-determination without marking boundaries between co-habiting communities and therefore are a unique model of integration. However, this has led to conflicting situations reflecting how 'integration' emerges as a site of negotiation, redefines inter-community relationships, and challenges the state's intervention in the matter. Drawing from a village study, this article endeavours to probe self-determination as a tool of (dis)integration, as a site of negotiation and argues that the various ways of addressing the question of self-determination adopted by the new nation-state ultimately affect the historically produced inter-community relationships. Methodologically, the article seeks to revisit the promises of 'village study' through the multicultural habitat named Panbari, a village in the northeast of Assam, and reflects how the everyday in a small village establishes a guiding conversation with the everyday in a multicultural nation-state of India.

Keywords

Self-determination, nationality, (dis)integration, statutory autonomous councils, Assam, village study

Introduction

Panbari, situated in one of the easternmost districts of Assam, Lakhimpur, in northeast Assam, is a village inhabited by three tribal communities and caste Hindu Assamese-speaking families. The village's western boundary is determined by the river Dikrang, a tributary of Brahmaputra. It has changed its course in the

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great earthquake of 1950, leaving the stream dead at the village's western border. It is now called 'mori-Dikrang', meaning 'dead-Dikrang'. This dead river is a marker in the sociopolitical geography of the village, as the hamlets of the three tribal communities are situated at the bank of it. Various Assamese-speaking castes who live in Panbari are Kalita, Chutiya, Keont and Konch. These caste communities live in the caste-based separate *Chuburis*, small settlement areas at the centre of the village. All these communities, the Deoris, Misings, Khamtis and the caste Hindus have long historical, socio-economic bonds and according to the local lore, they have been cohabiting for centuries.

Panbari shares a border with Arunachal Pradesh.¹ The radial distance between the Arunachal Pradesh border and the village is around 30 km. The history of the village draws a long connection with the hill tribes, the inhabitants of present-day Arunachal Pradesh. It is believed that before colonial times, Panbari was a part of the Duffala (Dafla) rule called Bangphangh or Banphan.² Various historical accounts like Gait's History of Assam, the first census report of the province, and the census report 1901 (Allen, 1902) have confirmed Panbari's historical geography. They further affirm how tribal communities like Deori and Mising have been migrating for centuries and how the tribal people living in the hills have been in constant touch with the people living in the valleys in Assam marking a unique case of cohabitation and conflict. These accounts mention how these communities had asserted their call for self-determination in the colonial and pre-colonial states and constantly negotiated with the state for their claims for self-rule.

These historical bonds were disrupted during the first Election of the Deori Autonomous Council (DAC) in 2010, and this remote village made a significant appearance in the political landscape of Assam. The primary reasons for this disruption were the demand by the caste-Hindu communities to withdraw their names from the electoral roll prepared for the DAC election and their appeal to the Mising inhabitants of the village not to vote in the election. Despite promising to the caste-Hindu inhabitants, the Misings chose to cast their votes in the election. This offended the caste Hindus, and they attacked the Mising voters when they were marching to cast their votes, causing serious injuries to young voters from the community. The Deori inhabitants saw it as an attack on the democratic rights of the Mising voters and an indirect insult to their right to self-determination. A police case was registered. The FIR held the names of almost all the caste-Hindu male inhabitants from the village. This conflict led to further legal and political conflicts and community distrust, disbanding the historically produced inter-community relationships and disturbing the village ecosystem of Panbari.

The larger context to this conflict was the Assam Government's policy decision to form Statutory Tribal Autonomous Councils for five small tribal communities—Mising, Deori, Rabha, Thengal Kachari and Sonowal Kachari. Responding to the calls for self-determination by various nationalities living in the Brahmaputra valley, the state government formed these Councils under the State Act in 1995. It kept 'advancement' at the core of its promise. It stated that it would provide 'economic, cultural, social, educational, and ethnic advancement of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities living in Core Areas as well as in Satellite Areas covering many districts of Assam'.³ This non-territorial arrangement aimed to address the

question of self-determination without marking boundaries between co-habiting communities and proposes a unique model of integration. However, this has led to conflicting situations in villages like Panbari, reflecting how calls for self-determination emerge as a site of disintegration and how, in the process, integration transforms into a site of constant negotiation, redefining the historically produced inter-community relationships and challenging state's intervention in the matter. Drawing from archives and ethnography, this village study would probe the question of this process of disintegration of a village community in Panbari. It argues that the policy intervention by the state disrupts the 'organic' process of social integration that 'happens' over time and which historically 'integrates' communities. It suggests that demands for self-determination and the roles of the regional/ethnic identity-based political mobilisation, which sought to undo social, political and economic injustices resulting from the new nation-state-making process, pose important questions about historically built inter-community relationships and cohabitation of diverse cultures.

Situating Panbari in the New Nation-State of India

In the wake of India's independence, a sub-committee of the Constituent Assembly was formed under the chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi to study the tribal situation in the Northeast Frontier (Assam) tribal and Excluded areas committee. After extensively touring the parts of the Province of Assam, like Lushai Hills District, North Cachar Sub-Division, Mikir Hills and Naga Hills District, the tribal situation, the committee recommended setting up District Councils for the hill tribes. The committee expressed concerns about certain pressing issues in these tribal areas related to tribal land alienation, immigration, etc.

One of the committee members, J. J. Nichols Roy, insisted on making constitutional provisions for the protection of land owned by the tribes to protect their cultural identity. The tribal question and the protection of their culture were thereby carefully handled through the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.⁴ Nichols Roy, acknowledging Jawaharlal Nehru's effort in the matter, however, argued that this provision had left other tribal people living in the valleys.⁵ A sense of alienation would soon surface in Assam valleys, which would fuel the communal violence in 1950. The tribal people living in the valleys voiced their concern for the differential policies for the hill and the plain tribes.⁶

The public memory of Panbari, however, has no recollection of the reformation of tribal policies in the region. Ganesh Miri,⁷ the oldest inhabitant of the Panbari Miri Gaon said,

I was very young then. We just heard that India had attained independence and the "foreigners" (British) would go away...a meeting was held in the premise of the Panbari Bor-Namghar. I can recall going there and listening to the speakers...the general zeal of the moment was that we were independent, now we would have our government, and we all would live harmoniously in unity. But many of us did not know whether independence is for eating or wearing⁸

Recalling the meeting after the declaration of independence at the Namghar premise, an elderly inhabitant of Panbari shared that the local Congress committee held similar meetings in different parts of the larger area of Narayanpur. He was certain that such meetings were held in all parts of the new India and stated that except for the Miri gaon, other neighbouring tribal villages, including Khamti hamlet, did not come to attend the meeting at the Namghar premise. However, he thought that the Deoris and the Khamtis must have attended the meeting held at the bank of Dikrang. A freedom fighter and a very elderly person of the village, Panbari Nanda Neog, recalled that the Misings, Deoris and the Khamtis did not take a very active part in the Freedom Movement. However, the educated and the elites of the Deori and the Khamti hamlets did take an active part in developmental activities later. For instance, Neog mentioned that a few of the educated and elite persons from these hamlets contributed significantly towards establishing a college in the village in the 1960s.⁹

After 1947, the state of Assam went through various turmoil and transformations, not just in terms of redefining the state but also its people. The hill districts of Assam witnessed a series of protest demonstrations raising a call for self-determination. It led to the formation of separate states of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal communities living in the plains also floated a demand for a separate state during the 1960s. The Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), a newly formed political organisation representing the tribal population living in the plains of the Brahmaputra valley, demanded a separate state, 'Udayachal', in 1966. The next year, the PTCA submitted a memorandum to Y. B. Chavan, Indian Home Minister, articulating a wide range of grievances of the tribal people. In the memorandum, they clearly expressed their serious concern about the 'apathetic attitude of the "Assamese administration" towards protecting the interest of the plains tribes'.¹⁰ Years later, the PTCA had a more clear vision. In November 1972, the PTCA demanded that the northern tracts of the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Lakhimpur along the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal (NEFA) be separated from Assam to create the Udayachal.¹¹

Like the Freedom Struggle, these movements also could not leave an impression in the public memory of the inhabitants of Deori, Mising and Khamti hamlets. An interviewee from Bordeori village shared that he had not heard anything about movements by any tribal communities. However, he recalled that Bishnuprashad Rabha, who was a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, took refuge after the Sino-India war in 1962.¹² The inhabitants of Mising Hamlet could not recall any of the instances of participation in or hear about such protest demonstrations and calls for self-determination. One of the very few educated persons of the habitat shared that they had always participated in the cultural activities organised by the Assamese-speaking caste Hindu youths of the village Panbari. A few of them had become members of the village library, a part of *Nehru Yuvak Sangha*. But they had never participated in any of the political activities. For instance, he mentioned that during the extremely unruly years of the 'Assam movement' and the separatist movement led by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), they refrained

from participating in any way. While asked if it was a political choice, he paused and replied intensely that it was (perhaps) a political choice embedded in the historical process of the village formation. Ajay Mili¹³ pondered and said,

Maybe it was because we had never realised that we too could have had a say in the political matters of Assam...our people hardly had or have any imagination of Assam or India...we have been mostly thinking about our bread and butter, and we rely on the people of Panbari. We cultivate their lands as sharecroppers. We do not have much land. Few of us have land for cultivation, but flood troubles us yearly as we live by the river. The only small road that connects us to the "world" goes through Panbari, and every monsoon, the road "melts" due to rain and almost disappears...we did not have a primary school until 1977...most of us are uneducated...given this situation, development was the only thing we could desire for or had an imagination of...that however also came through Panbari...you see...they (caste-Hindu inhabitants) are integral to our existence....

Mili is a schoolteacher at the *Panbari Mirigaon Prathamik Vidyalaya*. This school was established under the guidance and initiative of some Assamese-speaking educated caste Hindu young men. They took on board a few of the educated young men of the Mising hamlet. Mili said there was no school in the hamlet before that school was established in 1977. The children of the Mising hamlet had to go to the *144 No. Panbari Prathamik Vidyalaya*, situated west of the village. The distance was about 3 km, and during monsoon, the only kuccha road that connected the hamlet with Panbari would distort. Following these challenges, very few could complete primary school with a significant afford and the girl children would hardly attend school. Witnessing the 'development' of various families through 'education', some of the old men of the hamlet expressed their desire and hoped to have a school for their children. Through the landowners of the land they cultivated as sharecroppers, they appealed to the village headman of Panbari to have a primary school in their hamlet. However, the government did not take any initiative.

A three-tier Panchayati Raj system was initiated in Assam in the 1960s after the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, was operated. However, like many of the villages in India, the local self-governance of Panbari draws both from the new Panchayati raj system and the traditional self-governance and customary practices. The census report 2011 maintains,

the present system of local self-government is a legacy of the British Administration, and its origin may be traced to the principle of local taxation embodied in Regulation 13 of 1813. However, some kinds of local self-governance were in existence, like Namghar, in the Vaishnavite period. It was a form of village court where trials of crimes and disputes were held and judged¹⁴

Namghar plays a very significant role. Interestingly, though the Mising hamlet in Panbari comes under the Panbari gaon Panchayat and the inhabitants of the village also follow the traditional practice of self-governance through the institution of Namghar, the Misings of Panbari Mirigaon are not allowed to enter the premise of

the Namghar. There is a strong sense of territory, and the communication between the Misings and the caste Hindus occurs through the village headman of Panbari. Mirigaon has no headman or *gram*, unlike many of the Mising villages in Assam. They go to the village headman of Panbari in a representational group if needed. The Misings have a worship place at the hamlet, where they worship *Doni-Polo*, meaning Sun and Moon. However, that place does not function like Namghar. It is purely a place of worship.

Across the (dead) river Dikrang are two Deori community hamlets, Bordeori and Kinapathar. Bordeori is situated at the northwest border of the village Panbari, and Kinapathar is at the southwest border. Though the hamlets are inhabited by the same tribe and have social linkages, they function as two independent villages. The hamlet Bordeori has closer associations with the caste Hindu families of Panbari. Many from this hamlet work as domestic help in the caste of Hindu families. Sometimes, they also work as agricultural labourers. But unlike Mising people from the Panbari Mirigaon, they are not entirely dependent on the caste Hindu families. The Deori hamlets have an independent socio-economic and administrative structure. These hamlets have a strong kinship bond through marriage with the Mising hamlet of Panbari.

The Deoris have a close cultural bond with the village Panbari and Namghar, the village community hall and the prayer hall for the caste Hindu families. It is the culture hub where these communities meet. Ajit Keot, an actor and a young man from the caste Hindu settlement, shared that during the annual function of Namghar, *Borsobah*, the Deoris and the Misings come to see *Bhaona*, a traditional drama performed in *Namghar*. Though they are not allowed to enter the hall, they are allowed to enter the boundary and enjoy the drama from outside the boundary of the hall. Their participation in such annual functions has become an integral part of the performance, Keot said. Reflecting on his social bonding with the people from Bordeori, Keot said that many of his high school classmates were from Bordeori. He added that the high school situated at the western border of the village receives many students from both Bordeori and Kinapathar.

DC Deori, an interviewee from Kinapathar¹⁵ shared that though in terms of 'resources' the Deoris do not look like poor people, in terms of development, the Deoris of both Kinapathar and Bordeori are 'backward'. He stated they needed support from the 'central government' as the state government did not help the small tribal communities like Deori. While asked about the state government's initiative of providing non-territorial autonomy through Statutory Autonomous Councils, where small tribal groups were given the autonomy to take up developmental activities in the parts of the state Assam, DC Deori maintained that such measures would not help the poor. He said the poor would become poorer, and the rich would become richer. Deori believed that only the intervention by the Central Government or 'higher bodies' like the World Bank could change the situation.

Development was at the core of the desire of the Mising Hamlet as well. While asked the same question about Statutory Tribal Councils, Suraj Mili, another educated young man from Panbari Mising Gaon, maintained that it was only the desire for development that had motivated the Mising people from the hamlet to participate in the movement for self-determination by the Mising people in Assam.

They felt that such calls often appeared to them as an imposition from the ‘top’ as many times they do not address the ‘real’ concerns; rather, they divide villagers in the name of the community.

Call for Self-determination: A Site of Disintegration

I was sitting on my veranda and chatting with Nabin(ko)kaidow, the secretary of our Namghar. We were discussing the strained environment in the village that arose due to the DAC election and hoped that if the day passed without any conflict, we could address the larger concern after the election...though the Caste forum had given multiple memoranda to the district administration and the Member of Legislative Assembly, nothing came out of it... Nabin(ko)kaidow was under immense pressure from various political parties as they were pushing us to vote for the election...

Hiren Dutta,¹⁶ a caste Hindu villager from Panbari, recalled the day of the DAC election. He elaborated that the decision of the caste Hindus not to vote in the election came from a sense of historical unjust. The communities living in Panbari had always been living independently without much political intervention from each other and had negotiated with each other on many fronts creating a tolerant, environment for cohabitation. All the communities maintained a territory, which was not demarcated politically but socially. Dutta believed that the feeling of the caste Hindus was embedded in that historical set-up.

The caste Hindus had a closer socio-economic tie with the Misings. Dutta added, ‘Though we do not give daughters to each other, we rely on each other in many ways...they are like our cousins...but this tie broke on the day of DAC election...’ Dutta paused before he could go back to the day. After a brief pause he recalled,

It was around 12.30 pm...we suddenly heard a noise...responding to it we got up and tried to look towards the road that comes from Mirigaon and connects to the main road at the corner of our house compound...to our surprise we saw that a young boy from my neighbour was attacking Someshwar, a fellow brother from Mirigaon...suddenly the situation became chaotic as a group of people from Mirigaon, including men and women came running towards us and we saw a group of young guys chasing them...I ran towards Someshwar, covered him and tried to stop the young boy who was attacking him...I told him, ‘Boy! How could you even think of touching him...he is like a brother...

Dutta added that Someshwar’s family had been sharecropping their land for generations. Dutta’s father bore the expense of Someshwar’s education until he quit school. It was unimaginable for Dutta that someone from the village could hurt him like that. Dutta stated that the senior people from the caste Hindu settlement took the initiative to stop the fight. The situation came under control within half an hour, and the secretary of Namghor called for a meeting at the Namghar premises. The seniors from Mirigaon were also called. However, before the meeting began, the police arrived, and things went out of the villager’s hands. An FIR was filed and the first name in the FIR was Hiren Dutta’s. Dutta believed that the

Deoris, especially the candidates who were contesting the election, phoned the police and filed the FRI without discussing it with the victims from Mirigaon. He believed the event was politicised to the extent that every community became an enemy to each other turning the tolerant environment of cohabitation into an environment of mistrust.

The conflict manifested during the Election Day was not specific to Panbari. The same problem occurred in the other districts of Assam, where there was a significant population of the Deoris. Moreover, the declaration of the Deori Autonomous Council itself came along with a violent phase as the historical relationship between the caste Chutiya and the Deoris raised questions relating to the demand for the Schedule Tribe status by the Chutiyas.¹⁷ Violence spread in the Deori hamlets of Panbari much before the election was announced. The hamlets of Bordeori and Kinapathar were intensely affected. However, there were no reports of violence in the settlement area of the caste Chutiya in the village of Panbari. The Chutiyas joined the caste Hindu forum, which was created similarly to other parts of Assam; the caste Hindus came under a common platform and initially demanded to delete their names from the roll. Following the very nature of the 'non-territoriality' of the council, the revision could not be done before the election. In many places of Assam, caste Hindu voters boycotted the election who were included in the list.¹⁸

Similarly, the caste Hindu voters of Panbari also created a common platform and staged a democratic protest at the district headquarters of Lakhimpur. Apart from that the villagers of Panbari also held meetings at the premises of *Panbari Bornamghar*. The Bordeori, Kinapathar, Borkhamti and Mirigaon villagers were also invited to discuss the matter. In the meetings, everybody agreed that the names of the non-Deori voters should be deleted from the roll. On the other hand, some pockets of Deori villages were not included in the electoral rolls. The All Assam Deori Students' Union and the All Deori Women's Association gave memorandums to the District Commissioner of Lakhimpur requesting that the names of the remaining Deori voters be included and the non-Deori voters be deleted from the roll.¹⁹ However, after the summary revision of the roll, many of the names of the non-Deori voters remained in the roll. Protesting the roll, the caste Hindu voters of the Panbari village called another meeting at the premise of Namghar, and they invited the Khamtis and the Misings from Panbari Mirigaon. They requested them not to vote in the DAC election, and according to the caste Hindu participants, both the Mising and Khamti representatives agreed.

On the Election Day, however, the Missing voters changed their minds, which later led to the violence. As shared by Dutta, though the immediate conflict was resolved, the incident planted a seed of hatred among the communities, and the shadow of the violence soon spread across the village. The only road, which connected Mirigaon to the rest of the world was blocked. Tun Bhuyan, one of the young protesters from the caste Hindu settlement, said, 'They all promised in front of the God...and they broke the trust of generations...'.²⁰ Ajay Mili said, 'There could be a breach of trust...yet we believed that being a fellow backward tribal community we had to participate...it became like a moral obligation...also

we have kinship ties with them...we have given them (Deoris) our daughters...'. Another respondent from Mirigaon mentioned that almost all the Deori candidates promised to build a bridge on the Mori-Dikrang so that they could have an independent road. Apart from party politics, development was one of the significant promises for which they decided to vote.

The hope of the bridge had never been fulfilled. Instead, the historical bond between Panbari Mirigaon and the caste Hindu settlement broke. The Mising sharecroppers lost their traditional contract as the caste Hindus refused to employ them. The caste Hindus lost trust in Deoris as well. They believed that the Deoris politically manipulated the Misings by saying that they should come out of the historical dominance of the caste Hindus. One of the caste Hindu respondents said,

After the DAC election, they (Deoris) started pushing our territory by mean measures... like they would let their pigs graze our paddy fields. The pigs destroy our cultivation... many of us on the western border have sold lands to them...they have compelled us to do so...we cannot make a police complaint because now they have power in their hands...they have the support of the autonomous council²¹

Mili reiterating his point; said,

this is the problem here you see...it has rectified the historical injustice, but in the process many of us have lost jobs and pushed to become wage labourers... the election for DAC taught us a lesson that to live together we need to cut down third party intervention...we feel sad that our social relationship with our village people is disturbed.

Keteki, a caste Hindu woman, shared,

We miss the support and help of our fellow Miri women, who would help us with household works, especially handloom works...we know that they are suffering as many of them have lost their jobs...but as they had broken their "god-promise" we cannot help them...we all know, the real villain is the "politics", who is a non-villager and the real sufferers are our villagers...

The former secretary of the Panbari caste forum showed the minutes of the meeting held at the Panbari Bor-Namghor premises and shared,

See, these are the points the Missing villagers had said...they had promised that they would not vote...but they broke their promise...is not it natural for the caste Hindus to feel betrayed...yes we agree that there is a sense of alienation and historical injustice that these tribal communities are deprived of developmental measures taken up by the state...but it is the state, not the people of the village...in fact, if we look back, history talks differently...it suggests that in past the caste-Hindus were ruled over by these tribal communities, and we all fought our battles with the state...but this "nationality business" has now become a matter of concern...it appears as a highly politicised weapon imposed on the people who could live together in peace without it...after all how much we break ourselves in the name of it...²²

Conclusion

It is difficult to comment on how far the conflict that had shaken the historically built relationships in the villages would get embedded in the social structure of the village Panbari. However, the conflict certainly shook the existing social structure, transformed everyday life by changing socio-economic relations, and finally raised some important questions about the integration site. The study also showed how often the political narrative around the question of self-determination fails to address the change in social relations and suggested that there is a need to conduct more ethnographic research to meet the gap. The case of Panbari reflected how new models of tribal administration based on the alternative idea of integration have raised questions about their implementation and structuration in the new nation-states. Though the alternative model of statutory tribal councils was designed with the promises of advancement or development intending to address the question of self-determination, it emerged as a site of disintegration. K. S. Singh argues that integration models have introduced economic transformation in tribal societies, leading to various ethnic identity-based solidarity movements (Singh, 1982). In the case of Panbari, we see that the desire for 'development' (read transformation) has inspired participation in self-determination movements. This has significantly altered the historically embedded social relations, making integration a site of negotiation. Alternatively, it showed how various communities have negotiated with the state in historically informed ways and how they raise questions about the structuration of alternative models of integration like the Statutory Tribal Council.

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Notes

1. Lakhimpur district is bounded on the north by Subansiri and Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh; on the east by a portion of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and a part of Dhemaji district; on the south by Jorhat and on the west by Sonitpur district. (*District Census Handbook Lakhimpur, Village and Town Directory*, 2011).
2. Many of the elderly people in the Kherajkhat Mauja...maintained formerly that, the entire area of present-day Narayanpur was known as Bangphang or Banphan. A very elderly and educated inhabitant of the village, Panbari Robiram Konch, stated that

Bangphangh or Banphan was a Dafla or Duffala (this tribe is now known as Nichi) the village headman. Nichis were then called 'chungis', meaning soldiers. They were one of the hill tribes from the former North East Frontier Agency, present-day Arunachal Pradesh. According to the local lore, the Chungis or the Daflas ruled over the regions that were not directly under the control of the Ahom kingdom, and following their periodic exactions, many people fled to other parts of the valley (Souvenir, Seventh Convention of Lakhimpur Sahitya Sabha (1994), Narayanpur Shakha Sahitya Shabha: Narayanpur).

3. <https://wptbc.assam.gov.in/portlet-innerpage/autonomousdevelopment-council>
4. *Constituent Assembly India Debates*, 21 July 1947.
5. *Constituent Assembly India Debates*, 11 February 1947.
6. A Note on Communal Disturbances in Assam- February-May 1950, ACE 1/50 (part) Assam Secretariat, ASA
7. Name changed.
8. Interview with Ganesh Miri, 11 June 2011.
9. Interview dated 15 June 2012.
10. Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, PTCA, TAD/BC/12/73, Home and Confidential Government of Assam. ASA.
11. *ibid.*
12. Interview dated 21 June 2012.
13. Name changed. Interview dated 11 July 2012.
14. Directorate of Census Operation, Assam, 2011, Series 19, *District Census Handbook Lakhimpur, Village and Town Directory*
15. Interviews conducted on 17 June 2012.
16. Name changed; interview dated 11 July 2012.
17. Though there are different opinions about the Deoris being an independent tribal community, Deoris are also recorded as the priestly class of the Chutiyas.
18. <https://assamtribune.com/autonomous-council-polls-amidst-protests>
19. Memorandum submitted by the Deori Women's Association.
20. Interview dated 27 June 2012
21. Interview dated 24 June 2012.
22. Interview dated 1 July 2012.

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