
UNIT 3 MONGOLOIDS

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction: the Mongoloid tribe
- 3.2 Case study: the *Garo* tribe of North East India
 - 3.2.1 House and utensils
 - 3.2.2 Weapons
 - 3.2.3 Agriculture
 - 3.2.4 Food
 - 3.2.5 Dress and ornaments
- 3.3 Festival and ceremony
 - 3.3.1 Music and dance
 - 3.3.2 Musical Instruments
 - 3.3.3 Games
- 3.4 The Nokpante or the Youth Dormitory
 - 3.4.1 Marriage
 - 3.4.2 Divorce
 - 3.4.3 Adoption
 - 3.4.4 Laws of adoption
 - 3.4.5 Birth
 - 3.4.6 Funeral
- 3.5 Religion and belief
- 3.6 *Garo* etiological tales
- 3.7 Let us sum up
- 3.8 Activity
- 3.9 Reference for further readings
- 3.10 Glossary
- 3.11 Check your progress: possible answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- write about the Garo tribe;
- discuss social and cultural life of the Garo tribe in details;
- explain about the bachelor's dormitory and its importance;
- describe about matrilineal society; and
- discuss about the original myths of the Garo tribe.

3.1 INTRODUCTION: THE MONGOLOID TRIBE

A large number of Mongoloid tribes of India are located in the North-eastern states of India. These tribes of North-East may be conveniently being grouped under certain heading like the Boro, the Khasi, the Naga, the Luchai-Kuki, the Arunachal tribes and “other”. The basis of these groupings is the one or the other factor like linguistic affinity, cultural similarity and common territory.

3.2 CASE STUDY: THE GARO TRIBE OF NORTH EAST INDIA

The Garos belong to the Garo Hills from one of the major constituent tribal population the state of Meghalaya in North East India. Apart from the Garo Hills, there is large number of the Garos live outside the Garo Hills district. They are found in the all over the Brahmaputra valley and other hill districts of north-east India. Other than these they are also found in Mymensing district of Bangladesh.

They are sub-tribes of the Bodo group of Mongoloid origin, speaking a language of the Tibeto-Chinese family. Originally, there were eleven groups among the Garos, each inhabiting a districts part of the Garo Hills districts. Each group lived in isolation and thereby evolved their own distinct culture and language.

Check your progress 1

- Note:** 1) Your answers should be about each 30 words each;
 2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

1) Where do the Garo tribe of India belong to?

.....

3.2.1 House and utensils

The Garos build their houses on wooden piles on the slopes of the hills, but the piles are constructed with very little regard for regularly. Therefore, some of the piles are longer than others. These are platform houses: on the top of the floor posts, crossbeams are placed; over these a layer of whole bamboos, and lastly, a covering of rough bamboo matting. The walls are made of same matting, and the roof is constructed of thatching grass. If the thatching grass is not available, the bamboo leaves of a species of a cane are also used. The houses are quite long; they are divided into three principal parts. The first part is called Nokkra, which is a small patio near the front door. The Nokkra is used for mortar and pestle for pounding paddy, a stock of firewood, miscellaneous household articles

and even keeping cattle. The second part is called Nokcanchi. This is the public living room of the family and usually taken up about two-thirds of the whole building. Here, they have a fireplace, space for meals and space for unmarried women of the house to sleep. The last room of the house is called Nokoring, which is the sleeping room of the husband and wife.

The Garos use limited utensils mainly of cooking pots, large earthen vessels for brewing liquor, the pestle and the mortar with which paddy is husked. They have bamboo baskets of different shapes and sizes and few cutters and knives. Dry gourds are used for carrying water from streams and for drinking; a number of these gourds are of various shapes and sizes. The gourds are allowed to dry and are then converted into water-bottles by the process of cutting a hole and shaking out the seeds.

3.2.2 Weapons

The Garos have a number of indigenous weapons. One of the principle weapons of the Garos is a two-edged sword called Mi'lam, which has a blunt arrow-shaped point and made of a single piece of iron from hilt to point. Mi'lam has a decorative handle. It is useful for long journeys to clear the jungle, split firewood, cut up food and also for defense. Other weapons are the shields and they are two kinds; the *Sepi*, which is made of wood, or flat lengths of wood bound together and covered with very thin strips of cane or bamboo. The other is called *Danil* which is made of bearskin or cowhide stretched on a wooden frame. Both of them are of the same shape and size. They are fitted with handles made of cane. Apart from these, bows and arrows are also well-known to the Garos.

3.2.3 Agriculture

The Garos are mainly agriculturists. An important practice is that of jhum (shifting) cultivation of rice, fruit (like pineapple), and different vegetables. They construct a small hut known as a *Borang* or watch hut on top of the tree in the jhum field to guard the cultivation from birds and animals. These huts are often used for taking rest in the afternoon and for sleeping in the evening. The harvest is kept in granaries, located on the side of the village. The custom of building granaries away from the center of the village has its origin in the fact that the grain is more safe in case of fire breaking out in the homes.

3.2.4 Food

The staple foods of the Garos are rice, millet, maize, vegetables and fruits etc. One of their favorite foods is dry fish known as Na'kam. Tapioca is another main food article of the Garos. They also eat some forest produce like yams, bamboo shoots, and roots. They eat all kind of animal and bird meat like goats, pigs, cows, fowls, and ducks. Some Garos eat non-poisonous snakes and lizards. The Garos drink local liquor called Bek or Pongsim, prepared from rice, millet, or maize.

3.2.5 Dress and ornaments

The principle garment of the traditional Garo men is the Gando. The lower half of the body is covered by strips of woven cloth about six inches wide and approximately six or seven feet long. The cloth is passed between the legs, brought

up behind and wound around the waist; the end is tucked under the back folds. The other end of the Gando is hung in front. The Gandos is decorated with several rows of white beads made of conch-shells, along the end of the flap. Western-style shirt/pants are rare. However, the modern Garo men will sometimes wear shirts and pants. Turbans, made of blue or white cotton, are common types of headgear. On some important occasions like the Nokmas and the Laskars the Garo will wear silk turbans.

The Garo women wear a dress known as Re'king. It is a piece of cloth 18 by 14 inches. It is tied at the top, either on the left or right side by the strings, which allow it to remain open on the thigh. The modern Garo women have a great variety of dresses. They often wear a dress known as Marang-ja'sku, for ceremonies or dances. The dress is worn wrapped round the body passing under the right arm, and tied in a knot on the left shoulder. It hangs down to the knees and is open at the left side.

The Garo men and women are fond of ornaments; most of the ornaments are commonly used by both men and women. Some of the ornaments worn by both men and women are *Nadongbi* or *Otongga* or *Sishas* earrings, which is a brass ring worn in the lobe of the ear. Nadirong is another ornamental earring, which is small brass ring worn in the upper part of the ear. Other ornaments include the Natapsi, a long string of beads, and the Ripok, a necklace made of long, barrel-shaped beads of cornelian or red glass.

3.3 FESTIVAL AND CEREMONY

The Garos observe various festivals, closely related to agricultural cycles. All festivals are held annually, and consist of two parts, one religious and the other social. Here is some of the most common festivals:

O'pata: a ceremony celebrated before a man decides to clear and cultivate a plot of land for agriculture.

Den'bilsia: the festival marks the completion of the clearing of the new jhum field. It is celebrated sometime between the months of January-February.

Mi Amua: this festival is performed usually by the end of June or early July to ensure the good harvest.

Rongchu gala or Ginde gala: a thanksgiving ceremony to God for giving a good harvest.

Wangala: the most important festival of the Garos. It is performed in connection with the jhum cultivation. It is usually held in the month of October, but each village sets its own time for celebration. Wangala is celebrated in with great pomp and grandeur after the harvest. The Garos offer sacrifices to their highest god Saljong (sun god), and to seek his blessing for the future. By the evening the villager get together in the Bachelors' house and celebrates the festival with music and dance. After the sacrifice they take food and drink local liquor " Chu Rugala".

3.3.1 Music and dance

Music and dance is integral part of life for the Garos. They have mainly two types of dance, which are ceremonial and recreational. The former is performed

only on religious festivals where as the latter can be danced at any time when the boys and girls dance not to please the gods but to please themselves. The Garo have various folk and martial dances, which are performed during ceremonies like *Gana*, *A' song Kosi* or annual worship at the site of the sacrificial stones, agricultural, mangona or the post-funeral rituals etc. Other than this, the *Nokdongga* or the inauguration of a new house, *Nokpante Nokdongga* or the inauguration of a bachelor's house.

The Garos people of the Rugas and the Chiboks divisions sing and dance only during funeral ceremonies, not on the normally expected times of celebration. John Elliot (Observations on the inhabitants of the Garrow Hills, Asiatic Researches, Vol.III, pp. 17-37) who visited Garo Hills in 1788, gave a vivid description of the general pattern of the Garo dances as follows:

“20 to 30 men stand one behind one another, holding each other by their belts on each side, they go round in a circle, hopping first on one foot, then on the other, singing and keeping time with the music, which is animating through harsh, and quite pretension to distinct notes. The musical instruments are *tomtoms*, beaten by old people, and brass gongs, by young people, with marvelous precision. The women, modestly apart from the men, dance in rows, hopping on their feet like the men, but with arms, outstretched, and raising first one arm, then the other, to the clash of the musical instruments, and occasionally turning round rapidly”. Generally, each dancing group has a leader who leads the group with sword and shield in his hands, and adds to the melody by cries of “*Kai Kai*”. This kind of dancing is known as *Grika* and the leader as *Grikgipa*, and undoubtedly owes its origin to its old fighting day, when on occasions of public rejoicings the warriors wanted to dance and recount their deeds of valour to the audience.

One of the interesting dances performed during the *Gana* ceremony or the investiture of a *Nokma* is known as “*Gana Nokma*”. This ceremony can be performed by a man when he becomes very rich, which mainly a feast is given liberally to all the villagers. In the evening, the host wears *Kotip* or turban, *Jaksil* or elbow ring and holds the shield in his left, *Mi'lam* or sword in his right hand and dances with the rhythm of the drum. This is a solo dance by the host, no other relative or friends are allowed to dance with him. The *Gana Nokma* dance generally lasts for about three days but sometimes it may continue for several days. If the *Gana Nokma* dance continues giving such a feast and provides amusements for the people once every year, then some fresh bamboos with and without leaves will be planted every year in front of the host's house. That shows how successful he has become over the years. But in case it becomes opposite then he discontinues the annual feast and gives the feast according to his convenient or forever. Such *Nokmas* usually wear red turban and the elbow ring.

3.3.2 Musical instruments

The Garos have variety of musical instruments like drums, gongs or rang, cymbals etc.

Drums types: There are several big and small types of drums played by the Garos and they are *dama* (long narrow drum), *kram* (larger drum than *dama*), *Nadik* (small wooden drum), *nagara* (large drum).

Flute types: The Garos play different types of bamboo flute such as Otokra (long bamboo flute), Ilongma (small bamboo flute) and Bangsi (bamboo flute much smaller than Otokra and Ilongma), Imbingi (flute made of short piece of thin bamboo).

Gongs or Rang: the Rang or gongs are brass metal plates or basins. Besides playing as musical instruments, they are also used as a Gold reserve, because in the Garo society men of wealth and social standing are measured by the number of Rangs one possesses.

Cymbals types: the Garos play two kinds of cymbals: Kakwa (small brass cymbals) and Neggilsi (smaller than the former one, made of brass).

Besides these musical instruments, there are Gongmina or jews' harp (made of thin slit of bamboo), Adil (small wind instrument made of buffalo horn) and Singga (another type of buffalo horn).

3.3.3 Games

The Garos have some traditional games and sports. These games are held every year in the village ground. Some of the games and sports are:

Wa' pang ka'la (played by two men, by using a bamboo pole and big stone)

Garo makal pala (kind of wrestling, played by two men)

Sue goa (played the with big round bean, by two groups of player kind of marble game),

Ja'kol ka'la (played in groups, kind of chasing and catching game).

Other games are different types of wrestling and cock fighting, which include A'ding sala, Jakdia, Akkaru-bidil-sala etc. Besides these games, the young boys of the Nokpantas also enjoys long jumps, high jumps, throwing big or small stones, running up and down the hills, climbing the hanging ropes, tug of war, pushing each other by means of piece of bamboo. The Garos also play modern games like football, volleyball, basket ball, table tennis and number of other games.

Check your progress 2

Note: 1) Your answers should be about each 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

2) What are the utensils the Garo tribe uses for cooking?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3) What kind of musical instruments the Garo people play?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.4 THE NOKPANTE OR THE YOUTH DORMITORY

The Nokpante or the bachelor's dormitory is one of the commonest institutions of the Garos. Almost every Garo village has its own Nokpante or Nokpantes. In the big villages, each clan has its own Nokpantes for the young boys, but in some small villages there is no Nokpante and the bachelors sleep either with their parents or in the house of an old widower. The Nokpante is entirely the dwelling house of the unmarried young men. Women are not allowed to enter the Nokpante, only on certain occasions like socio-religious festivals.

The construction of the Nokpante is a little different from that of the ordinary family houses. The special features of this construction are that it is very strongly built and usually much larger than the family houses. There is no sidewalls from the front up to about the half of its length, only rear half of the building has sidewalls connected with the backside walls. There are two doors; one in front and the other in the back side of the house. The bamboo floor is ten or twenty ft. high from the ground and a ladder helps one to climb up in Nokpante. Along the ladder a big and long cane stalk is hung from the roof of the house and it is used as support for climbing up and down. The ladder is a big log of wood with steps cut on it. Big timber posts of big trees are used for construction of the Nokpante. These posts are crossbeams. They are decorated with colored paint or carved designs of male and female human figures. In some Nokpante, pig heads and elephant tusks are also hung from the beams. In side the Nokpante house, a rectangular hearth is constructed where fire is lit during the winter to keep themselves warm and also to roast pork and other meat products.

The Nokpante is divided into two parts-one in the rear with enclosed walls forms the sleeping room and the other part is the verandah. The verandah is used as a sort of school room for learning various arts and crafts such as woodwork, cane carving, and bamboo design. Young boys about the age of seven or eight years are sent to sleep in the Nokpante at night. They usually go there after supper and spend the time chatting about their agricultural works, their experience in the weekly markets, love affairs etc.

In the Nokpante, young boys learn to play musical instruments, dance, sing from their older ones. There is also regular practice of gymnasium, wrestling, high jump and other games. Other than these, young boys are taught to be discipline and sense of duty. Tasks include collecting firewood, and fetching water. They are also told not to travel outside their family houses at night except on festivals.

Besides being used as an entertainment center, learning institution and community hall, the Nokpante is also used as a courtroom where the Nokma or Laskar holds his court. The villager hold important social meetings in the Nokpante. The married men of the village go to the Nokpante at leisure also some time to make baskets, mats, fishing nets. The Nokpante is also served as a place to entertain visitors of the village.

3.4.1 Marriage

There are various forms of marriage among different divisions of the Garos, out of them the **Do'sia** marriage happens in the presence of the parents, relatives of the both bride and groom. The priest takes a cock and a hen, holds them up so that their heads are close together and strikes them with a piece of wood. Then they are dropped on the ground. If both the birds lie on the ground with the beaks pointing towards each other, it is a good omen and if they lie the beaks apart, it is considered that marriage will be an unhappy one. Another type of marriage is **Marriage by capture**: in this type of marriage, when a girl attained the age of marriage and want to marry a particular boy, gives an indication to her parents or relatives. Then they would watch movements of the boy carefully and whenever they find an opportunity, capture him unaware and bring him to the house of the girl where he is kept confined along with the girl for more than one night. If he makes noise, yells and tries to escape, then they consider it to be a good sign and that he would make a good and prosperous husband. But if not then they do not approve of it favorably.

3.4.2 Divorce

Divorce is valid in the Garo society under the following circumstances;

- 1) when the husband and the wife cannot live together any more. They desire separation by mutual consent.
- 2) when either party is guilty of adultery or having a love affair with someone outside the marriage.
- 3) when either the husband or the wife refuses to work for the support of the household.

Besides these, disregard and unruliness on the part of the wife, incompatibility of temper and negligence of domestic duties are some other grounds for divorce. When a divorce is sought, compensation is taken in kinds like a *dakmanda* (a garo cloth worn by the women) and brass gong in olden times. Since, the British times, money has replaced the old Garo custom, the rate has been fixed at Rs. 60/-.

3.4.3 Adoption

The Garo customary laws permit parents to adopt children under the following conditions:

- 1) when the parents have no daughters at all
- 2) when the parents have no suitable daughter to become a heiress
- 3) when the daughter, selected as a heiress, quarrel with her parents and run away and there is no other suitable daughter available.
- 4) the parents can adopt either a boy or girl, not necessarily for inheriting

3.4.4 Laws of adoption

Male children can not receive or even claim any part of the property which they themselves may have acquired by their own labour. After marriage, the right of the possession of the family property is passed down from mother to wife; she becomes the “women” of the new home and its future mother. On the day of marriage the groom leaves his parents house and goes to his wife to form a new family. Their children will take their mother’s surname.

3.4.5 Birth

The Garos observe the birth of a child, in a ritual known as A’kawes. This ceremony takes place after a child is born. In this ritual an animal or a fowl is sacrificed by the priest. The priest recites a long incantation to avert the influence of evil spirits. The priest sprinkles rice in the floor of the house and around the child, then chant to remove evil spirits. The name the child after their ancestors but some cases they do not give the name of the relative who dies recently.

3.4.6 Funeral

The Garos usually burn their dead and the ceremony takes place at night. But there are certain funeral rule such as a leper is not burnt but buried. In olden days, the lepers were isolated in huts and in the last stages of the disease; in case of death, they burn them with their huts. A person who is killed by a tiger is cremated but cremation takes place in the day time. Moreover, the dead body would not be taken into the village and body will be cremated at the place where he was found dead. Besides that, no formal ritual would be done for the dead, all his belonging would be destroyed as they consider that it is taboo to make use of them after such an unnatural death.

Normally, when a person dies, all the relatives are informed and if they live nearby, then the cremation takes place immediately. But if the relative live at distant places then the dead body will be kept indisposed for two or three days. Before cremation, in the case of a rich person, the dead body is placed among a row of Gongs and other valuables, but if the person is poor, then is laid down upon the bamboo floor. The dead body of a rich person is washed with undiluted liquor and poor person’s body is washed with water. The funeral pyre consists of four upright wooden or bamboo posts in a rectangular shape within logs of piled wood. They usually use good quality wood for burning the body, because they believe if the corpse is burned with bad wood, the spirit in it reincarnated with bad health. After the cremation, the bones and ashes are collected in a basket and left in the jungle.

Among the Garo, who are Christian, they do not burn their dead but bury them and funeral ceremony is performed according to the Christian practices.

3.5 RELIGION AND BELIEF

Originally, the religion of the Garos was a mixture of Pantheism and Hinduism. They were not animistic but they believed and presided over by the “Supreme God” as locally known as “*Dakgipa Rugipa Stugipa Pantugipa or Tatora Rabuga*”

Stura Pantura”, or the Creator. It is in clear observation, the religion of the Garos is monotheistic with polytheistic stage, it lapsed into gross ritualism, in its highest consummate form, it is purely monotheistic in its origin. The Garos believed in creation of Earth, all living beings on earth and the sea, heavenly bodies, rain and the wind including lesser gods and thereby completed different objects within eight days, as they believed. This is the background of the religion, various festivals and the ceremonies of the Garos. According the Garo mythology creation of Earth, all living beings on earth and the sea, heavenly bodies, rain and the wind including lesser gods and thereby completed different objects within eight days, as they believed. This is the background of the religion, various festivals and the ceremonies of the Garos. The Garos believes that the creator of earth is *Tatara-Robunga*, other then that, there are the deities of *Choradubi* (protector of crops), *Saljong* (God of fertility), *Goers* (God of strength), *Susince* (Goddess of riches) etc. (source: <http://westgarohills.nic.in/people.htm>).

The Garos believe in the existence of a Supreme Being. They call all the good and evil spirit as “Mite”, it covers all god, goddess, some lesser spirits. According to the Garos the spirit of Mite is everywhere-in the sky, on the earth beneath, in the depths of the waters, in the dark corners, mountains, trees and bamboo groves, river, lakes etc. there are different names of the Garo Mite such as; *Tatara-rabuga*, *Saljong*, *Nostu-nopantu*, *Chorabudi* etc.

The Garos believe in existence of a spirit in man which after death goes to a particular place i.e. the abode of the spirits. They also believe in trans-migration of souls, as a state of reward and punishment. The trans-migration means that when a man dies, his soul or his essence leaves the dying body and enters the body of some animal or human being at it comes into the world to begin its career. And the process may be repeated from generation to generation.

The Garos believe in natural phenomena like the thunder, lighting, earthquake, eclipse, wind, rain, shooting stars. They believe that each of these natural elements is controlled by a spirit and the object of their worship has to be done by offering sacrifice (Milton S. Herbert.1991. The history and culture of Garo).

Now most of the Garos are now Christians. The factor responsible for these changes are, the British rule from 1867 to 1947 that is almost 80 years. During that time Christianity entered the Garo Hills as a result of attempts made by the foreign missionaries and Western education was introduced in the traditional Garo society. Although, most of the Garo people converted to Christian religion but, some of the old ritual are strongly followed by the members of the newly converted society.

3.6 GARO ETIOLOGICAL TALES

The mother of salt

The mother of salt was a very dirty-looking old hag. On her eye sockets, nostrils and cheeks hung filthy mucus secretions. Her whole appearance was disgusting but she was a grand cook. She could preserve every sort of delicacy in its pristine freshness and taste. No flesh ever decomposed and no foodstuff ever grew rotten under her skillful handling. However, both mother of the salt and terribly afraid of water. In fact she never bathed nor washed her hands, feet and face. She never hand handled water, but always used some sort of vessel when it was necessary

to use it in the pursuance of her culinary art. Her daughter Karitchi was no less filthy.

Now, the son-in-law of the mother of salt had a special liking for the dishes of curry, soup, chutney, and so on prepared by her. But does not like both mother-in-law and wife’s dirty appearances, one day he asked them to take bath. He gave them long sermon on the virtues of cleanliness; but it had no effect on them. They staunchly refused to go near the river then he decided to use force. He dragged both mother and daughter to the river side but Karitchi managed to escape from there. The son-in-law took mother-in-law into river and Karachi kept weeping seeing the cruelty and hard-heartedness of her husband. As the mother went to the river; the mother of salt dissolved and vanished completely before her eyes, after that incident the daughter wandered about the wild woods shedding tears, seeking consolation from the trees, plants and herbs. The trees and plants and herbs on which her tears fell became saturated with potash. She traveled on broken-heartedly and at last came to Aema Ditema Songduma Sagalma (the Ocean), to which the remain of her mother were carried by the river into which she was plunged. Karitchi, still weeping, leaped into water to discover the spirit of the mother of salt. Her congealed tears become pearls inside the ocean (Birendranath Datta, Nabin Chandra Sarma, Prabin Chandra Das, (eds).1994. A hand book of folklore material of North-East India. pp.285-286).

Check your progress 3

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given the end of the Unit.

4) What is Nokpante?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5) Who is “Mite” ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.7 LET US SUM UP

The study of the Garo tribe, a branch of the Mongolian group are one of the important tribes of North East India. In the above mentioned article; we have

given a general idea of the Garo tribe from the point of their social-cultural life and traditional beliefs. It may be noted that the most of the ritual and ceremony observed by the Garo people living in different parts of the North-east varies from each other. Here, we are giving a picture of a traditional Garo society, but there are many changes that have been taking place in the Garo society since then. The factor responsible for these changes are, the British rule from 1867 to 1947 that is almost 80 years. During that time Christianity entered the Garo Hills as a result of attempts made by the foreign missionaries and Western education was introduced in the traditional Garo society. Although, most of the Garo people converted to Christian religion but, some of the old ritual are strongly followed by the members of the newly converted society. They celebrate various religious and nature festival around the year for performing jhum cultivation. The Garo have a matrilineal society, where husband lives in wife's house after marriage and their children takes mother's surname, that an unique example of power of women (Milton, Sangma S. 1979. The history and culture of Garo)

3.8 ACTIVITY

We have together discussed about the Garo tribe. Try to write down from your memory any of the cultural activity and myths of the Garo tribe that you may have attended or read in books or journals.

3.9 REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READINGS

- i) <http://westgarohills.nic.in/people.htm>
- ii) Datta, Birendranath, Das, Prabin Chandra and Sarma, Nabin Chandra. (eds). A hand book of folklore material of North-East India. Guwahati: Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture, Assam. 1994.
- iii) Herbert Risley. The people of India. New Delhi: The Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.1991.
- iv) Sangma, Milton S. The history and Culture of Garo. New Delhi: Book Today. 1979.
- v) Singh, K.S.The scheduled tribes. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1984

3.10 GLOSSARY

Jhum : shifting cultivation

Matrilineal : society in which a female is head of the family and decent is traced through the mother not by father. All property belongs to the women, remains with her till she is alive and is passed on from mother to daughter.

3.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- 1) The Garos belong to the Garo Hills from one of the major constituent tribal population the state of Meghalaya in North East India. Apart from the Garo Hills, there is large number of the Garos live outside the Garo Hills district.

They are found in all over the Brahmaputra valley and other hill districts of north-east India. Other than these they are also found in Mymensing district of Bangladesh.

- 2) The Garos use limited utensils mainly of cooking pots, large earthen vessels for brewing liquor, the pestle and the mortar with which paddy is husked. They have bamboo baskets of different shapes and sizes and few cutters and knives. Dry gourds are used for carrying water from streams and for drinking; a number of these gourds are of various shapes and sizes. The gourds are allowed to dry and are then converted into water-bottles by the process of cutting a hole and shaking out the seeds.
- 3) The Garos have variety of musical instruments like drums, gongs or rang, cymbals etc.

Drums types: there are several big and small types of drums played by the Garos and they are dama (long narrow drum), kram (larger drum than dama), Nadik (small wooden drum), nagara (large drum).

Flute types: the Garos play different types of bamboo flute such as Otokra (long bamboo flute), Ilongma (small bamboo flute) and Bangsi (bamboo flute much smaller than Otokra and Ilongma), Imbingi (flute made of short piece of thin bamboo).

Gongs or Rang: the Rang or gongs are brass metal plates or basins. Besides playing as musical instruments, they are also used as a Gold reserve, because in the Garo society men of wealth and social standing are measured by the number of Rangs one possesses.

Cymbals types: the Garos play two kind of cymbals: Kakwa (small brass cymbals) and Neggilsi (smaller than the former one, made of brass).

Besides these musical instruments, there are Gongmina or jews' harp (made of thin slit of bamboo), Adil (small wind instrument made of buffalo horn) and Singga (another type of buffalo horn).

- 4) The Nokpante or the bachelor's dormitory is one of the commonest institutions of the Garos. Almost every Garo village has its own Nokpante or Nokpantes. In the big villages, each clan has its own Nokpantes for the young boys, but in some small villages there is no Nokpante and the bachelors sleep either with their parents or in the house of an old widower. The Nokpante is entirely the dwelling house of the unmarried young men. Women are not allowed to enter the Nokpante, only on certain occasions like socio-religious festivals.
- 5) The Garo believes the good and evil spirit as "Mite", it covers all god, goddess, some lesser spirits. According to the Garos the spirit of Mite is everywhere-in the sky, on the earth beneath, in the depths of the waters, in the dark corners, mountains, trees and bamboo groves, river, lakes etc. there are different names of the Garo Mite such as; Tatara-rabuga, Saljong, Nostunopantu, Chorabudi etc.