

## **Ferry to go home**

Mishing is a largest river community of Assam dispersed around various tributaries of River Brahmaputra. They also live in one of the world's largest river island called Majuli. As a riverine tribe, Mising indicates blend of mi 'man' and asi 'water'. The Mising consider themselves to be the descendent of the Sun and Moon. On all auspicious occasions, the Sun is referred to Ane Do:nyi- 'Mother Sun' and the Moon who they call Abu Po:lo 'Father Moon' are worshiped.

People of Assam referred to Mishing as Miri. According to E. A. Gait, the word Miri means middle man in Assamese words. They acted as a channel of communication between the people of Assam and Abors of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ferries and boats are the only lifeline which connects people to the mainland. Women are rare travellers in the ferry as men dominates the passenger ratio. Women in the boat are seen either with a new born baby, visiting her family or to check ailments to nearby hospitals in mainland. With half the male population outside the island for work or better education, these women spends most of the time weaving, tending farms, cooking or battling flood during monsoon season. Climate related disasters with women in rural areas often go unrecorded while they are directly related to accessing natural resources like water and forest for their daily consumption. Looking at the vastness of the River Brahmaputra, a Mishing woman is seen looking at the river from the ferry as though the river is the only companion and her gold earring, the only wealth. The narratives around women and their relationship with river often goes through many layers.