Chapter - I
Introduction
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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION : This is an attempt to make a critical study of Kamal Kumar Brahma’s plays. Brahma has written seven dramas. Out of seven, four plays have been published. In this thesis, his four plays are critically analysed. The history of Bodo drama says that it originate from festivals and ceremonials. Bodos have some kinds of festivals and dances for mass entertainment. These are Baisagu¹, Magw³, Kherai puja³ and Thakhripalla⁴ dances. It is found that Kherai dance of daudini⁵ has many dramatic elements. There are prologue and epilogue, beginning, development, climax and ending. There are dialogue, dances, songs and music too.

The jathra gan was another form of folk dramatic performance of the Bodos. These plays were staged in an open air stage in every nook and corner of undivided Goalpara and Kamrup districts mostly during 50s and 60s. Dramatists, like Satish Chandra Basumatary⁶, Dwarendra Basumatary⁷, Bhoben Phwrwrgiri⁸, Sola Ostad⁹, Aniram Basumatary¹⁰, Modaram Brahma¹¹, Umesh Chandra Brahma¹², Guneswar Dainary¹³ took major role to popularize the dramatic show among Bodos.

Kamal Kumar Brahma’s Gw dan Fwishali written in 1959 is the milestone for the modern Bodo drama. This drama is staged with the help and courtesy of proficient artists of Jewary affat¹⁴ and Bithorai affat¹⁵.

Kamal Kumar Brahma transformed the modern Bodo play. His modern plays helps to construct modern stage. Brahma has acclaimed as gifted one of the most Bodo playwright of the modern times. All his plays have great importance in respect of plot construction, characterization,
theme, language, songs and music.

Again, this study has tried to highlight the growth of *Bodo* plays. An attempt is made to unearth the origin and its development of *Bodo* drama and the artistic creation of Kamal Kumar Brahma. Drama before Kamal Kumar Brahma was meant for mass entertainment only. But Kamal Kumar Brahma has added literary importance through his plays. Brahma’s technique of plot construction, art of characterization and use of language have brought some major changes and distinct growth in *Bodo* dramatic literature.

1.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY: This is an attempt to make a critical study of Kamal Kumar Brahma’s four published plays. Some writers have written article on Kamal Kumar Brahma’s literary creations and their literary importance. But nobody has made scientific study on Brahma’s dramatic literature. Therefore an attempt to study his four published plays critically is undertaken. Some writers have said that Brahma’s plot construction is superb and he has brought a sea-change in plot construction, character creation, theme and style. Therefore this is an attempt to study these aspects minutely and scientifically.

Brahma’s plot is collected from *Bodo* society. It is tried to see how the dramatist has added universal feelings and appeal in his themes and made his plays universalised through his artistic quality and philosophical views.

Brahma is an accomplished author who could established himself through his use of language, images and symbols. The present study has made an attempt to see his style.

This thesis is an attempt to study how the dramatist has shown the social pictures of
Bodo society in his plays. It is expected to find out Brahma as an craftsman of plot construction, characterization, theme, use of language and as a painter of Bodo society. Lastly, an attempt is made to study his dramatic craftmanship as a modern Bodo dramastist.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: The present study is significant in so far as it highlights to unearth the art and technique of Kamal Kumar Brahma as a dramatist.

The study from the secondary sources have brought the origin of Bodo plays, growth of Bodo open air stage, theatre groups, impact of it on society, literature, culture, economy and many others. Modern playwrights like Henric Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, T.S. Eliot and Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare have influenced Kamal Kumar Brahma.

The study of the primary sources which includes four published plays of Kamal Kumar Brahma such as Gwdan Fwishali (The New Horizon), 1959, Raja Iragdao (King Iragdao), 1963, Mingmangni Simang (Dream of Mingmang), 1971 and Horbadi Khwmsi (Dark as the Night), 1993 have highlighted some historical and social values of Bodos. The historical revenge tragedy Raja Iragdao has depicted the history of king Iragdao. King Iragdao is betrayed, conspired and revolted by his own people. Tularam, Indupropha and Manipuri king Marjitsing killed king Iragdao mercilessly at his own palace at the midnight. This historical play has also shown the war of Kachari-Manipuri, Manipuri-Burmese, Burmese and British East India Company and ultimately subjugation of East India Company over Kachar through Doctrine of Lapse.

The thematic aspects of the play has also a great influence on the Bodo society. The themes of Gwdan Fwishali, Mingmangni Simang, Raja Iragdao and Horbadi Khwmsi have great values for our society. Gwdan Fwishali teaches us the importance of religion for disciplined
life, *Mingmangni Simang* tells us not to be greedy. It tells us that to be impassioned with imagination is to lead to danger. *Raja Iragdao* tells us not to be impatient and stand unitedly for the victory in life, while *Horbadi Khwmsi* gives us lesson for realization of self as well as other. Uncompromising attitude opens the door to go to total doom.

The poetic justice found in *Gwdan Fwushali* and *Mingmangni Simang* is a kind of moral lesson to the society forbidding not to take any ill motive towards others.

This study of Kamal Kumar Brahma’s plays has revealed the dramatists’ weakness and strength as a modern dramatist. The present study has discovered him as a gifted and skilled *Bodo* dramatist and this study will be beneficial to young dramatists. But the dramatist’s hope of creation of more new dramas has not been fulfilled because the great dramatist breathed his last on 4 April of 2006.

This study also brings some social pictures of *Bodos* of four different periods. *Raja Iragdao* has shown the picture of intrusion of *Hindu* religion among *Bodos* and its bad impact, *Gwdan Fwushali* depicts the new religious uprising among *Bodos* during the first half of 19th century, *Mingmangni Simang* depicts the bad habits of *Bodos*, their unsettled habit and idleness. *Horbadi Khwmsi* gives us the picture of growing society in the light of modern culture and civilization.

**1.3. METHODOLOGY** : In this thesis the methods of historical and sociological criticism are applied. Some books on drama and dramatists as well as good plays written by Henric Ibsen, T.S. Eliot, Barnard Shaw, John Webster and William Shakespeare are read. The researcher tried his level best to give attention on the *Bodo* drama and its influence on Kamal Kumar Brahma.
The study has been confined to the four published plays of Kamal Kumar Brahma. These are *Gwdan Fwishali* (The New Horizon), *Raja Iragdao* (King Iragdao), *Mingmangni Simang* (Dream of Mingmang) and *Horbadi Khwmsi* (Dark as the Night). The researcher studied these plays in detail and has given own critical judgement on these modern *Bodo* plays.

**1.4. LIFE AND WORKS OF KAMAL KUMAR BRAHMA**: Kamal Kumar Brahma, the eldest son of late Padmashree Modaram Brahma was born at Dhauliguri, a village near Kokrajhar town in the month of July, 1927. He had his early education at Kokrajhar. He joined Kokrajhar High School as an assistant teacher in the year 1958 after his graduation. He also happened to get married in the same year. After three years of his service, he left the school with a view to study M.A. in Gauhati University. He took his MA degree in *Assamese* in the year 1963 and joined Kokrajhar College as lecturer. Then he joined the Kokrajhar Teachers Training Centre as the language instructor in 1968 and was elevated to the post of Principal of that institution in the year 1978. Brahma retired from his service in the month of February, 1991 after long thirteen years of his service as the head of the institution. He also worked as an Academic Officer with State Text Book Production & Publication Corp. Guwahati on deputation.

His contribution towards the *Bodo* language and literature are given briefly:

a) **LITERARY CONTRIBUTION**: Kamal Kumar Brahma is undoubtedly a name of celebrity in the field of *Bodo* literature. He is a poet, a playwright and a prose writer of high reputation. He made his advent as a writer from the days of his student life through his literary contribution in Assamese ‘*Dulali*’- a collection of poems in Assamese is the first work of Kamal Kumar Brahma.
Then Brahma directed his energy towards the creation of literature in Bodo language to meet the crying need of the time. As soon as the Government of Assam had introduced Bodo as the medium of instruction in the schools in the year 1963, Brahma came forward to shoulder the utmost responsibility of the newly constituted organization The Bodo Text Book Production Committee as founder secretary. The Bodo Text Book Production Committee made a remarkable contribution to fill the vacuum of Bodo text books for the schools. Brahma himself wrote and edited numbers of text and ancillary books from primary to college level. This must be regarded as his greatest contribution in the field of Bodo language and literature.

b) **FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTION**: The fundamental contribution made by Kamal Kumar Brahma to the development of Bodo language and literature is of no second rate to the text and ancillary books. In the field of dramatic literature, Brahma set a basic standard in Bodo literature. In concept and diction, Brahma raised the standard of Bodo drama to its high pedestal. The entitled play in reference are, -Gwrwnthi, Gwdan Fwishali, Gwranthini Lama, etc. Raja Iragdao is a historical drama while all other mentioned above are plays on social problems. Besides, poems and critical pieces, Brahma is earmarked for his translation of Edward Fitzerald’s English version –Omar Khaiyyam in Bodo language. He is also the pioneer of the Bodo grammar written in Bodo language.

C. **CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION**: In the field of culture too, the name of Kamal Kumar Brahma is a prominent. From language and literature Brahma ascends to the cultural platform. Brahma assayed to translate and focus his literary creation through cultural media. So, he tried to exhibit his written plays on the stage with the help of proficient local artists. From the days of his student life, Brahma earned his reputation staging his social and historical plays with the help of
proficient artists of the locality by the courtesy of Jewary Ajfat and Bithorai Ajfat—the then parent organization of art and culture of the students of Kokrajhar town.

Brahma himself took the initiative of those performances and earned good name as playwright and stage director. His plays are based on the social problems of the Bodos. Credit goes to Kamal Kumar Brahma for elevating the old form of the open stage to the modern theatrical base with help and association of his co-workers in the field of the stage-play. He is the pioneer to make the stage bedecked with modern preparations and accessories which attracted the people without restraint. He is also to be accounted for introducing co-acting in the Bodo theatre. Among his above mentioned plays, the following are the pieces presented mostly on the stage.

Gwrwnthi (Mistake), Gwdan Fwishali (The New Horizon), Gwrwnthini unao (After Committing Mistake), Raja Iragdao (King Iragdao), Mingmangni Simang (Dream of Mingmang), Horbadi Khomsi (Dark as the Night) and Gwswni Jaiklong (Rainbow of Mind).

(i) RADIO PLAY: Mandarni Modoi (Tears of Mandar) by Kamal Kumar Brahma is a radio play first broadcasted from Guwahati Radio Station. His other play Raja Iragdao is also broadcasted from the same Radio station in serialised form in several parts.

(ii) CINE-PLAY: In the field of cinema production too, the name of Kamal Kumar Brahma comes first among the Bodos. He must be acclaimed as the pioneer in the field of Bodo film making. The script of Daina (The Witch) the first Bodo short film that was released in the year 1983 was written by him. Then his next adventure is his full length film Jewni Simang (A Dream of Life). It was released in the year 1987. Under the direction of Late Amar Hazarika, while Kamal Kumar Brahma was the Asstt Director of the said film. Brahma himself wrote the
script. Those two films were produced under the supervision and initiation of the Bodo Film Society, Kokrajhar, of which he himself was the president.

d) OTHERS: Apart from all those achievement, Brahma is involved in different educational and social organization. Over and above, Brahma was elected as the president of the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, the top parent body of literary and cultural organizations of the *Bodo* for the term 1990-1993.

For his basic and stupendous contribution to the field of *Bodo* literature and culture, Kamal Kumar Brahma is offered literary pension by the Government of Assam from 15th August, 1990. He is also honoured by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha at its 36th Annual Conference held at *Duliajan* on 21st, 22nd and 23rd February, 1997 with *Raangsar* award. Brahma was also working at Kokrajhar Music & Fine Arts College and Kokrajhar science college as Principal. He was also one of the members of the Education Reform Commission that was constituted in the year 1993 by the Government of Assam.

Considering all these, conclusion emerges that Kamal Kumar Brahma has a position of pride in the literary and cultural field of the *Bodos*.

Kamal Kumar Brahma, the gifted and prolific writer of *Bodo* language and literature of the modern period died on 4 April/06 at the age of 77. Kamal Kumar Brahma has established *Bodo* as distinct language by his grammar *Boroni Rao Khanti*. Likewise, he has brought a great change in the dramatic literature through his plays. His sad demise is a great loss to the *Bodo* language and literature. He is a bright luminous star amongst the *Bodo* intellectuals and writers who will always be remembered as long as the *Bodo* community and language survive.
End Notes:

1. **Baisagu**: The national festival of Bodos, Bihu as Assemese people call it which is observed throughout Assam in the new year in the month of Baisak (April).

2. **Magw**: It is also one of the seasonal festivals of Bodos which is celebrated in the month of last Push and first Magh (January). This festival becomes more famous and gorgeous.

3. **Kherai puja**: Kherai is the biggest religious festival of Bodos. There are four kinds of Kherai—viz: Dwrsbwn Kherai, Umrao Kherai, Phalw Kherai and Noaoni Kherai (family Kherai). (Aspects of social customs of the Bodos: Dr. Kameswar Brahma).

4. **Thakhripalla**: Our forefathers tell that Takhri Balia was a means of entertainment. Our villagers, especially Bodo woman perform this sort of dance where they dance by making a round and move.

5. **Daudini**: The central figure of Kherai worship, she is the sanctified medium of divinity, the para nature, who is the essence of the Kherai worship.

6. **Satish Chandra Basumatary**: One of the freedom fighters of India, untired man of strict principle, who led Bodo community and also a great social worker and writer.

7. **Dwarendra Basumatary**: A great Bodo dramatist.

8. **Bhoben Phwrwrgiri**: A dramatist of Baksa district.

9. **Sola Ostad**: A dramatist of Chirang.

10. **Aniram Basumatary**: A dramatist of Goalpara. His *Gambaty Shikhla* is a famous drama written on the historical figure *Gambari Shikhla*, a Bodo lady who fought against British
East India Company.

11. Modaram Brahma: A renowned writer, who received Padmashri Award from the Govt. of India in the year 1988. He is the father of the dramatist Kamal Kumar Brahma.

12. Umesh Chandra Brahma: A great Bodo dramatist, son of Rai Saheb Jagat Chandra Mouzadar of the British regimes of patgaon areas of Kokrajhar.

