Chapter- II

History of *Bodo Drama*
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HISTORY OF BODO DRAMA

2. The *Bodo* dramatic literature may be sub-divided into three types. These are folk drama, open-air stage or jathra and curtain raiser or modern drama.

The *Bodo* folk drama is believed to be a very ancient art form. It is said that before the written literature had taken its own course, there was folk drama among the *Bodos*. The folk drama is the origin of the *Bodo* dramatic literature. *Baisagu, Bohag Bihu* in *Assamese* and *Magw, Magh Bihu* in *Assamese* were the two means of mass entertainment for illiterate country *Bodo* people. Apart from *Baisagu* and *Magw*, *Bodo* people used to have entertainment through folk dramas too.

*Thakhripalla, Khemta palla* 1 and *Kherai* were also other three means of mass entertainment of *Bodos*. *Bodo* folk dramatic performances were held on the occasion of two festivals and marriage ceremonies. *Thakhripalla* and *Khemta palla* were rudimentary form of *Bodo* drama.

2.1: ORIGIN OF BODO DRAMA: Many literatures, educationist, literary critics opine that through these entertainment *Bodo* written drama was originated. Brajendra Kr. Brahma,2 a *Bodo* poet says that *Bodo* drama may be originated through dances or performances held in *Kherai* or *Khemta* or *Thakhripalla* or joint hunting or in some other festivals.

Janil Kr. Brahma,3 a *Sahitya Akademi* awardee tries to trace the origin of *Bodo* drama. He says that it is hard to trace the origin of the *Bodo* dramatic literature. Yet, drama has been attached with their livelihood since long time. Among them are *Bathou* worship, *Kherai* dances, *Baisagu* festival, *Thakhripalla* dance, *Khemta* dance, musical plays of *dhula* party during marriages and imitation of animals and birds. He says that these may be called as the folk drama in *Bodo* literature.
Chanakya Brahma, a retired Principal of DIET, Kokrajhar and a social worker, and Dr. Mangalsing Hazowary, a dramatist and Sahitya Akademi awardee who is also actively associated with the Bathou religion, say that amongst others, Kherai dance is the strongest reason to be called as the origin of the Bodo drama. So they opine that Kherai dance has all characters and elements of dramatic literature. There are dialogue, music, songs, dances and action in Kherai dance.

Khemta and Thakhripalla are not seen among Bodo now-a-days. Chanakya Brahma says that these had disappeared before 100 years ago, but reasons of its disappearance is not known. The Thakhri Palla was a women dance where no man folk were allowed to take part. Lessons of married life were taught to youths by elders, specially old ladies through dances and dialogue etc.

Dancers moved around forming a ring round and sang songs while dancing. No body can give the exact information regarding Khemta dance which may come from contact with other cultures.

Religion is the birth place of drama all over the world while religious subject matters were subject matters of drama like morality and interlude plays. Hence Kherai, the religious festival and dance may be considered as the origin of Bodo drama. The ritual performance of the Doudini, the female shaman of kherai worship involves ritual dance, dialogue and enactment of various moods.

### 2.2: OPEN AIR STAGE OR JATHRA OR LANGADANG GAN:

The open stage drama was first staged in the year 1919 at Kokrajhar at the present Kokrajhar Govt. H.S. and Multi-purpose School. It was staged in the 1st convention of the Boro Satra Sanmilani of the undivided Goalpara district. This is popularly known as Jathra or Langdang Gan. Its characteristic features are discussed in the preceding chapters. It is discussed dividing into: 1) Plot and
2.2 (i) PLOT AND THEME: Plots of old Bodo drama were based on folk tales, historical, social and imaginary theme. But amongst thousands of old Bodo drama, only a few were published in book form and many others have been lost. Only their names are remained in history. The Audience were very interested in war, herotic acts, Pompous dialogue, kingly dresses and etc. Knowing well about the audiences’ interest, dramatists of that time used to write historical plays. Satish Chandra Basumatary’s play’s – Dwrswn Jwhwla (Dwrswn the hero), Rani Laimuthi (Queen Laimuthi) Naiphin Jaywi (Unnoticed) and Bikhani Or (Fire of heart) have historical plots.

Likewise, Dwarendra Nath Basumatary’s plays like Raja Nilambar (The King Nilambar) and Sonani Maibong (The Golden Maibong), Phoben Phwrwngigirs’ Obongni Phao (Role of God)

Madaram Brahma’s plays like Dimapur Nwgwr Bainai (losing of dimapur Nwgwr), and Saodang Bairagi, Upen Narzary’s Dukhashri have historical plots.

Theme of most of old Bodo drama were struggle between Good and Evil spirits. This may be called as allegorical themes. Sonani Maibong (The Golden Maibong), Obongni Phao (Role of God), Dukhashri, Raja Nilambar (The king Nilambar) have allegorical themes where Good and evil spirits fight against each other, but the evil spirits are defeated at the end. Some other dramas have melodramatic themes- like war, conspiracy, bloodshed, killing etc.

2.2 (ii) ACTOR AND ACTRESS: The folk artists of Jatra gan were not educated and trained properly. The actors and actresses were not trained. Their acting was natural. Generally the dramatist himself became the director.

Previously there were no co-acting, male actor played the role of female characters. Men played the role of queen, princess, dancers. Social taboo and illiteracy may be the reason
behind it.

Ostad Maniram Islary of Mwider Khoro, Kokrajhar was the first who introduced Shakri (female dancers) in the jathras or langdang gans of Bodos. Dwarendra Nath Basumatary and Kali kumar Lahary also introduced female dancers in their drama in the year 1949-50. It was Khargeswar Muchahary of Gwmwbilw Dotma who first introduced female actors in the jathras.

2.2 (iii) INTRODUCTION OF SHAKRIS: Shakris are female dancers like nartaki. Shakris generally comprises six to ten dancers. Their role become like the chorus of Greek dramas. They sing and dance in the palace to pacify king, queen and countries. The mixture of happiness and sorrow of their songs relates to the states of mind of king and queen. Sometimes, they become foreteller of the fate of king, prince (Hero) and princess (heroin). They again act like comic reliever.

2.2 (iv) CLOWN: There were clownish characters almost in every old drama. Most of these drama were serious in action and theme. Clown were the comic characters who always tried to provide relief to sorrow striken mind of audience. According to Manaranjan Lahary Jashula Pharia of Raja Nilambar (The King Nilambar) is an immortal character like Falstaff in Shakespeare's king Othello. Lahary has said that Jashula Pharia of Dwarendranath Basumatary's Raja Nilambar (The king Nilambar) might be the most important character creation of old Bodo drama.

2.2 (v) WEAPONS: It is always mentioned that most of the old Bodo drama have historical and mythical plot, therefore characters of these drama used common weapons like swords and spears, axes and shickles, bows and arrows. Gun and bullets were not used.

2.2 (vi) LANGUAGE AND LITERARY QUALITY: Language used in these drama was simple, straight forward and colloquial. As most of the audience of these jathras were illiterate
country people, prosaic and simple language was used by characters. On the other hand, most of the dramatists were not well educated, their knowledge about language was also limited.

Secondly drama of these periods had lesser literary qualities. It is needless to mention here that drama was a means of mass entertainment. It was written and staged to entertain peasants who were all time busy with ploughing and other domestic works. More emphasis was based on their entertainment than literary qualities.

2.2 (vii) MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS :- Music of these kinds of drama were also very simple, but melodious. The music was based on oral folk music of Bodos. Musical instruments used in these dramas were *kham*, *siphung*, *jotha*, *serja*, *harmonium* and *tabla*. The rhythm and melody of the *Kherai* were also heard in the music of these drama. The music of imaginary plays specially music of assuras comprised very laud concert. *Demsri* dance was also seen in *Jathras*.

2.2 (viii) COSTUMES :- The use of costume in the Jatra gan is very colourful and functional. Historical dramas have glamorous on costumes of kings, queens, prince and princess. They wore crowns on their heads. Female characters like queens and princess used to wear some glittering ready made costumes along with their traditional dresses like *dokhona* and *phasra*. Some ostads preferred to use *sari* for female characters.

Costumes of characters like danab, daitya and assuras were very symbolic. Their painted face, nose, forehead with black colours looked fearful. They used to wear hairy cap, took bamboo mask, wore iron hand glove and three white lines were drawn on their foreheads.

*Paharia* characters were very popular in old *Bodo* drama for their costumes. They used to dress like wild birds, wore cap where feathers of peacock, pigeon were attached with and printed glamorous dresses. Female *paharia's* also took feathers on their hairs and raised their *dokhona* upto the knees.
Mask was also popular in the jatras based on stories of demon animals and birds. Dramas written on folk stories like Bandarbir (The Monkey Hero), Dao dwishrwn (The Mongoose Hero), Khusiashrwn (The Eel Hero), Belsri, Maidangsri, Dhwhwnsri and many more had many personified characters. These personified characters used to wear mask of their characters. It is known that sometimes some financial weak theater parties could not purchase the readymade masks in markets, they made these by bamboo.

Handkerchief was commonly used. The long handkerchief was tied around the neck, waist and both the arms. Clowns also painted face, nose and forehead, they sometimes wore cap, balloon was tied up with the cap, and their common dress was loose gown.

2.2 (ix) THE STAGE :- The old Bodo drama which is also called jathras is popularly known as langdang gan. Langdang means open, gan means drama. So Langdang gan means open air stage. The stage of old Bodo dramas have no much decoration. It is very ordinary and naturalistic. The stage is build in an open field, sometimes in paddy field. Banana tree is made post of the stage, bamboo and banana leaves are made for roofing and straws are spread on the ground for sitting for audience. The main pendal for acting is raised for some feet by earth filling.

The entrance of the stage is generally made east wards. There are three entrance partitioned by banana leaves. A separate temporary house is built for the players. Again two small rooms for male and female are build near the stage which is called green room where players dress and luxuriate themselves. Any entrance through is performed from behind the entrance through a song or dialogue which is Mayashri methai 5 or Mayashri Khwiphwt.6 Prompter and music players sit towards south. The Jathra which starts at about 8 p.m. usually ends at 6 a.m. There is no use of mike or any other sound system. Characters try to speak loudly as much as they can. There is no use of gallery, chair, bench, screen or such other materials as we
see now-a days. For lighting patromax lights are used.

For entrance and exit for spectators the stage is divided into several parts. Men and women are not allowed to sit together. There are volunteers to arrange everything to control spectators and others.

2. 2 (x) AUDIENCE :- Audience of old Bodo drama were more or less illiterate. The audience were very interested in war, pompous dialogue, dance, and songs, heroic and mysterious actions. This interest of audience influenced jathra ostads or playwrights to write such plays. Heroic characters were appreciated by audience inside and outside of drama or acting. There are several evidences of girls who fell in love with heroes of jathra troupes. On the other hand, dramatic actions sometimes influence the audience in different ways. A short introduction of dramatists and story of one of their dramas are given bellow.

2. 3 JATHRA OSTADS : There are many jathra ostads. They are discussed in brief in the following paragraphs.

2.3.(i) SATISH CHANDRA BASUMATARY (1901-1974): He is the pioneer of Bodo jathra. He learned the art and technique of writing drama from Bengali ostads. He had written five drama to his credit including Nalabuha, the first Bodo drama. Other four dramas are Dwrswn Jwhwlao (Dwrswn the Hero), Rani Laimuthi) (Queen Laimuthi), Naiphin jaywi (Unnoticed) and Bikhani Or (Heart of Fire).

Out of five drama only two dramas Dwrswn Jwhwlao and Naiphin Jaywi have been published. Manuscripts of other dramas have been lost. Many people who happened to watch his drama say that Dwrswn Jwhwlao (Dwrswn the Hero) was a popular drama. This play is based on imaginary history.

The play Dwrswn Jwhwlao (Dwrswn the Hero ) is an quasi- historical play. Dwrswn
being a kind hearted King sheltered Rangphali and Meharsing as the army commander. One day, when the king was ceremonising his marriage anniversary, Ombragong, a commander of Naga King invaded Dwrswn’s kingdom. Jwibwr and Chilagang the two soldiers of Dwrswn also conspired against the king and joined hand with the Nagas, but was defeated in the war.

Purity of mind and love to man kinds are the main theme of the play and these are the way of success in life. King Dwrswn wins enemy hurdles in life by the grace of god which he receives through his inner and outer discipline of life. Dwrswn, the worshiper of goodness and beauty has not seen the negative side of life.

Dwrswn is a typified character for idealism and goodness. Mehersing, the army commander of Dwrswn, the King of Agrang state is also a type character who represent heroism and bravery. Mehersing, who once a begger and sheltered by the king saved and rescued the king and the state many times.

There are some looseness in plot construction of the play. But in the use of language and dialogue the playwright is superbly successful. The songs of the play have all poetic beauty and flavour. There are lyrical beauty in the songs of his play. There are humorous characters, scene and dialogue in his play Dwrswn Jwhwlao.

2.3. (ii) DWARENDRA BASUMATARY (1902-1972): He is a popular dramatist of his time. Many say that he had written more than 25 dramas. But only two dramas- Raja Nilambar (The king Nilambar) and Sonani Maibong (The Golden Maibong) have been published till date. Name of other drama which have not been published yet are – Shukharu-Dukharu, Bima Bathul (Step Mother), Juli- Bijidi, Chitrangoda, Ranjalu Jwhwlao (The Hero Ranjalu), Anason-Kalason, Nihari, Danek Raja (The King Danek) and so on.

Dwarendra Basumatary learned the art of writing and play direction from his contem-
porary dramatist Satish Ch. Basumatary. He also went to Kolkata to learn writing and play direction and stayed there for six months.

*Raja Nilambar (King Nilambar)* is a historical tragedy. Critic, novelist, literary, historian, poet Manaranjan Lahary says that *Raja Nilambar* is written on the grand combination of Gait's *History of Assam*, Prasannalal Chowdhury's *Assamese* play and Bengali play by Dwijendralal Rai. Nilambar, the king of Khwmthapuri (Kamatapur) is conspired by his Brahmin minister Sachipatra. The king jails the minister, kills his son and give him the flesh to eat. Sachipatra takes revenge against the King with the help of the Nawab of Gour. Khwmthapuri King Nilambar wins in the war, but the Nawab defeats Nilambar by his tricks.

This play is written on historical episodes found in Gait's *History of Assam*. There is a single plot. The king Nilambar is conspired, war takes place, wins the war, but is defeated by Nawab's trickery. Khwmthapuri King Nilambar is the main male protagonist of the play. He, being an honest and powerful ruler suffers great difficulties and ultimately hunted upon Sachipatra is the negative character in the play.

His conspiracy and villainous act provokes the king Nilambar to act the nastiest and the most inhuman acts. Both of them perish and their tragic end is the result of their ill thoughts and evil activities. So character is destiny in this play.

Apart from conspiracy and war there is revenge theme too. King Nilambar takes revenge on Sachipatra and Sachipatra again takes revenge on Nilambar. This revenge motive is one of the root causes of their failure in life. Both real and imaginary history are wonderfully woven together to bring the success of the play.

*Sonani Maibong (The Golden Maibong)* is his another quasi-historical tragedy. The playwright creates an imaginary history where Bodo king of Maibong and Muslim Nawab fight frequently. Apart from war, the playwright tries to show the effects of love. Here woman is shown
as the root cause of downfall of Maibong state. The king of Maibong has two wives, the first wife is very ideal where as the second wife is very selfish and licentious. She always quarrels with the first wife and wants to crown her son. On the other hand, Sondibwr, the king of Maibong. They both fell in love with the beautiful princess Rongphali, but the princess love Sursing, the army commander.

The Nawab, can easily take Maibong with the help of these rebellious soldiers. The king of Maibong wins the war with the help of his friend Naga king but with heavy loss. He lost his army commander Sursing while Sursing’s death persuades his beloved Rangphali to kill herself.

Love and war, friendship and enmity are the main themes of this play. Forsaken love leads to enmity, enmity leads to war; friendship for victory and enmity for destruction are beautifully shown in this play.

Manaranjan Lahary, the poet, dramatist, novelist, critic, essayist and writer of history of Bodo literature says that Dwarendra Basumatary was the greatest dramatist of his time. Lahary says that Dwarendra Basumatary taught Bodo drama in every nook and corner of Assam. There were many songs incorporated in his drama. One of his lyrics is now regarded as the national song of Bodos this is as follows:-

जोहोलाव जागिया गथ 'फोर जोँ

जो़ॅतॅग रावखोजो गिया गिया ।
दाहाल शुंगियानो जॉनॉ गेलेग्रा मुवा,
जोहोलाव जागिया गथ 'फोर जोँ
सोरवा सुधुरा गाप्लोबफैयोब्ला
दानगोन, सुगोन गायगोन
(We are the sons of heroes
We know not fear, we know not fear.
The shield and the sword
Are our play things- our toys
Should any enemy invade our place
He will be cut to pieces and be killed,
We know not fear, we know not fear.)

Jashula pharia, the clown is an immortal character depicted by Dwarendra Basumatary.

Manaranjan Lahary has said that Jashula Pharia is a unique character creation of Dwarendra Basumatary like the Falstaff of William Shakespeare.

2.3. (iii) **BHOBEN SWARGIARY (1921-1989)**: He is popularly known as Bhoben Phwrwngiri or Bhoben Master also wrote eleven dramas. Bhoben Phwrwngiri had no formal education. With his limited education and experience he translated many drama.

The translated plays by Bhoben Phwrwngiri and the names of Bengali originals are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of dramas translated in to <em>Bodo</em></th>
<th>Name of Bengali original</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Dwimalu</td>
<td>Jaler Meye.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii) Okhrang Gwdan</td>
<td>Naba Swargo (<em>New sky</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii) Phwjwbnai Mwdai</td>
<td>Dhanger Devota (<em>God of Destruction</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv) Hinjaoni Gwhw</td>
<td>Ronsondi (<em>Durga</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>v) Phabni Bahagw</td>
<td>Karmer Pol</td>
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<tr>
<td>vi) Hajari Hinjao</td>
<td>Pahader Maye (<em>Maiden of the fornest</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>vii) Obongni Phao</td>
<td>Ananta Mahatma (<em>Role of God</em>)</td>
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A part from these translations, he also wrote four drama. There are *Bilaisri, Joybir, Shwithwboti and Rajkhungri Nilima (The Princess Nilima)*. It is seen that all his original plays are named after the female protagonists.

*Obongni Phao (Role of God)* is a moral or religious allegory. Though historical characters and political events are allegorised in this play, yet good and evil qualities are personified here in this play. Agents of these two qualities always try to enter into human being. Human mind is the reason of their quarrel and place of their battle. Here in this play god himself descends as Anjalu, a little boy and on the other hand, agents of evils are Dapor, Khwli, and Muhini. Here is Chitrangpha, the King of Chantipur in between these two powers. Anjalu, the little boy teaches moral lessons to the King but Dapor and his men teach immoral lessons. Muhini takes the form of a beautiful girl, allures and persuades the king to marry her. Muhini, Dapor and Khwli can win and influence their immoralities on Chitrangpha, but lastly they are defeated. Anjalu can establish virtue and morality in Chantipur state. Many characters, events and places are allegorised in this play.

Critical analysis of the play as a morality play would reveal that the good and evil characters are none but the divided mind of the King *Chitrangpha* only. King Chitrangpha, as a human being sometimes thinks to play with beauty, power and wealth; but sometimes he wants to worship god for the happiness of his mind. So he is seen searching for happiness.

2. 3. (iv) **ANIRAM BASUMATARY**: Ostad Aniram Basumatary of Dudhnoi also wrote some drama. Out of his dramas *Gamgbari shikla (The Heroine Gambari)* only has been published. He also brought some movement in the *Bodo jathras* especially amongst the Dwikhong Khulali. *Bodo* people of Goalpara district is known as Dwikhongkhulali. It is known that most of his dramas were written on historical events and episodes.

The historical play *Gambari Shikhla (Gambari the Heroine)* represents the war between
Bhutan King, and the *Bodo mouzaders* of the plain. Gambari, one of the mouzadars of the plain is very strong, powerful and independent female mouzader. Battle take place between Bhutanese soldiers and the *Bodo* heroine. The Bhutanese king can never defeat Gambari, but when Mansing, Gambari’s deputy commander deceives Gambari for his selfish interest, Gambari is defeated. Thus the glorious rule of *Bodos* in the plain is engulfed by Bhutanese rule.

War and love, the two opposite nature of mankind are shown as main theme of this play. Gambari is a very brave warrior, She is a perfect embodiment of heroism like Jhansini Rani Lakshmibai. She never lost any war but lastly she is defeated by Bhutanese invader- Garpha. She fights heroically against Bhutanese army commander Garpha, and she dies a tragic death. She is deceived by Mansing who takes revenge upon Gambari for her forsaken love. Mansing’s loves to Gambari is forsaken and immediately Mansing becomes Gambari’s ferocious enemy. Therefore, it is seen here that forsaken love leads to war and death.

Gambari is a historical character. Her tragedy has historical realities. Other characters, events and episodes are created and designed by the imagination of the playwright.

2.3 (v) OTHER DRAMATISTS: There were many *jathra* ostad or dramatist. But only few dramas had been published. Manuscripts of many dramas had not been found. Other dramatist who wrote and taught dramas at different places and villages are Modaram Brahma, father of Kamal kumar Brahma, Biswanath Basumatary, Bergo Brahma of Kajigaon, Karendra Uzir of Dotma, Gunswar Daimary and Mathuram Basumatary of Haloadol, Kokrajhar, Harchanath Basumatary of Salakati, Gaitheng Basumatary of Bongaigaon, Deben Basumatary of Shamthaibari, Amarendra Brahma of Basugaon, Moniram Islary of Kokrajhar town, Binesh Brahma of Bhaoraguri, Binod Bihary Basumatary of Gossaigaon, Lachit Narayan Basumatary of Gambaribil, Upen Basumatary of Kokrajhar Tinially, Lochon Brahma of Gossaigaon, Sitiram Basumatary of Patgaon, Dhansing Brahma of Basugaon, Balen Basumatary, Tarendranath Brahma,
Sargeswar Machahary of Dotma, Jatin Brahma and Subhod Brahma of Gossaigaon, Subnath Narzary of Borobazar, Bijni, Tipu Narzary, Sundarsing Membor wary of Simborgaon. These are only a few names of Bodo drama Ostads. Umesh ch. Mushahary of Patgaon who is also known as Oja had written many dramas. He was the son of honorary Magistrate Rai Sahab Jagat Chandra Mech. Santosh Basumatary of Patgaon is known as Sola ostad. He wrote dramas like – Ainamuthi, Hinjaobw Nanga- Raijwbw Nanga (Need Neither Women Nor State), Hangmashri, Alaishri Palla and others. Modaram Brahma (1903-1990) the father of Kamal Kumar Brahma also wrote dramas. These are Raimali, Dimapur Nwgwr Bainai and Sodang Bairagi.

2.4 MODERN BODO DRAMATISTS : Modern Bodo dramatists who have contributed to the dramatic literature of Bodo language are discussed in brief in the following paragraphs.

2.4. (i) SURATH NARZARY (1945) : The dramatist Surath Narzary, retired Principal of the Kokrajhar Govt. College is not only poet of dramatic monologue but also a reputed dramatist. He have published two anthology of poems- Angni Thwinai Shwinai (My Death Beloved) and Jiuni Alongbar (Morning Star of Life). The first dramatic monologue and the later is lyrical. He has written a mythical play in Bodo entitled Sando Baodia. According to the dramatist it is the story of Sando Baodia, the son of soil. The story of this play is associated with Monsing Sing 7 myth which represents the interaction of chance and circumstances with human desires and ideas. It seems to be the greatest event at a certain period of Bodo social life created a milestone of period or brought vital consequences for the future. It entangled many issues and resulted transition in the society to a great extent. It compasses the whole aspects of human society touching it to the root of religion. He became a living reality of that progression. He was not a man to be confined to the limits of traditions and conversations. His life and activities were the marks of the emergence of a new culture. This mythology of Sandw Baodia upholds three ideas in the main; first the Bodos believe in the Absolute God, and these are conven-
tions of the society.

The serja 8 player turned philosopher Sandw Baodia 9 comes in conflict with the tradition of society. He defies the tradition of his society, therefore lives in the forbidden area of deep forest, but he is countered by his own Maya-Ze. 10 By applying this secret magical power he is brought into Hemlet's 11 dilemma: To be or not to be. He comes back to the society through a jury of the villagers. He also happens to bring some changes in the society.

There are no division of acts or scenes in this play. The playwright does not follow the conventional dramatic structure. Here, three unities are observed. There are both internal and external conflicts in this playwright.

2.4 (ii) MANARANJAN LAHARY (1936-2008): The dramatist has a good number of published works to his credit. He is one of the pioneers of the modern Bodo literature. He is not only a novelist, but also a poet, essayist, dramatist and critic. The History of Bodo Literature (1990) written by him is a milestone of Bodo literature. He has received Sahitya Akademi award in for his novel- Daini (The Witch) in 2009.

Manaranjan Lahary wrote two drama, one is five act social drama and another is collection of one act plays. Anari, his five act play is the depiction of the Bodo society divided into rich and poor. The playwright tries to depict some unruly youths and their activities. Here, the biased judgment of Gaobura in the village is also represented.

Anari, the heroine is the daughter of poor parents- Sambaru and Belsri. Sambaru is not only a labourious, but also pious in heart. But he has never seen luck in his life. The more he works hard, the more he becomes poorer, the more he shows purity in behavior, the more he is victimized by the society. Anari works as a bonded labour in Dayaram's family-a family the torture and exploit the poor labourer and survants.

2.4 (iii) MANGALSING HAZOWARY (1954): The first Sahitya Akademi Awardee of Bodo literature is also a dramatist. He received the award for his poetry collection Juini Mwkhthang
Bisombi Arw Aroj (Souvenir of Real Life). Dr. Mangalsing Hazowary first wrote Siman (Acknowledgement), collection of one act plays.

Hazowary has written a number of historical plays in Bodo. Swmdwn is a full length play written by him. Swmdwn, who is popularly known as Sombodhon Kachari is the freedom fighter who fought against one British East India Company. Swmdwn, a full grown youth had a widow mother. He could not tolerate the administration of British East India Company. He learned the art of archery in the deep forest and jungle along with his friends. Swmdwn is a very strong and stout who can even fight with bears of forest.

All the three plays by Mangalsing Hazowary are historical plays. The playwright aims to re-write historical events and episodes of Bodos. The playwright keeps the names of his plays by the names of the male protagonists. All the male protagonists meet tragic death at the hands of their antagonists. Domestic enemy takes some traitorous act against them. They suffer great difficulties and fail to withstand.

Along with bare realities of history, he adds some imaginary episodes and characters in his plays. The main plot and protagonists are taken from the real history.

Swmdwn, is a historical tragedy. According to the dramatist it includes the period from 1870 to 1882. Swmdwn is the historical character of Cachar who fought against the British East India company. Swmdwn, the brave and patriotic one aims to set free his motherland from the British East India company.

Swmdwn, the common youth of the village fights against the mighty British rule. Swmdwn’s strength of sword, bows and arrows could not fight against the cannon and rifle of Britishers. Swmdwn is betrayed by his own people. He is tortured and killed mercilessly by Britishers. Thus, Swmdwn’s dream of freedom for his people ends in vain.

Jwhwlao Dwimalu (Dwimalu the Hero) is his another historical tragedy. It is the tragedy
of Dwimalu who ascends from a cook to the army commander of the king Daimal. His inherent body strength and technique of wrestling makes his way to the palace, but ironically his ill luck brings his tragic end of life.

Apart from war, jealousy and revenge, divine blessing constitute the themes of this play. Dwimalu proves his valour and heroism and thus can harvest the king’s admiration. Dwimalu who denies to accept divine blessing of Bura Barthou is killed by jealousy and revenge of the minister. Character like Dwimalu, King Daimal, Rangadao and Degadao- the wrestlers, minister are historical characters. Events of history and imaginary episodes are beautifully woven together to have a fine historical tragedy.

Jaolia Dewan, the third historical tragedy of Mongalshing Hajowary tells the war between the Bhutanese of the hills, the Bodos of the plains and the British East India Company. The plain areas inhabited by Bodo people was ruled by Jaolia Dewan. War take place between British East India Company and Bhutan. Jaolia Dewan is deceived by the army commander of Bhutan King. Jaolia Dewan fights with the mighty British East India Company but fails. Jaolia Dewan after being defeated in the war and run away towards Alaihungri river in West Bengal. He is killed by Chenkchaw Khampa, the army commander of the Bhutan King. There is love between Jaolia Dewan and Chikhiri, daughter of a gaonbura. This love relation brings Jaolia into great difficulties.

Jaolia Dewan is the historical character and other characters like Bhutan King, his army commander Chenkchaw Khampa, Bemapharia, the gaonbura, father of Chikiri are not exactly drawn from history but have been drawn on the line of history related to the tragic end of Jaolia Dewan.

Swmdwn's tragedy results and out of his patriotism, Jwhwlao Dwimalu's tragedy results from
destiny and Jaolia Dewan’s tragedy comes through conspirancy. The playwright tries to dramatise
the tragic history of three Bodo heroes of three different periods.

2.4. (iv) JANAK JHANKAR NARZARY: Janak Sankar Narzary, Professor of Biswa Bharatiya University, Shantiniketan, W.B. is also a dramatist. He has written a number of one act plays. Geolangnaini Lamajwng (In the Path of Blooming) is his book of one act plays.

There are five one act plays in this collection of plays. The playwright observes the social reality of his time and tries to depict it in a convincing way. Women education is the theme of the Geolangnaini Lamajwng (in the Path of Blooming). Military rule and humanism are seen being confronted in Phwjakhangri (To Awaken). The other three plays are Habani Mala (Marriage Chain), Daha (Sorrow) and Shwrni Dai (Who is Guilty). The remaining three one act plays deal with social problems of the society of the middle of 20th century.

The playwright’s craftsmanship is seen in character formation, dialogue and dramatic structure. In all the five one act plays he followed the dramatic tradition of the three unity of time, place and action.

2.4. (v) MADHURAM BORO: The retired Associate Professor of Linguistics of Gauhati University has also written a social play—Mugani Thandwi (Representation of the Era). In this play Madhuram Boro depicts the character of Mwdan, the protagonist of the play. Mwdan is the representative of the new era, the era of education and stiff competition. Mwdan the university student of Gauhati University can’t continue his study here at the University of Gauhati due to Indo Chinese war. His thirst for higher education leads him to Pune University. He returns home after completing his education in Pune. He stays with his uncle at north Guwahati. He mobilizes people and teaches them that education is the back bone for human civilization. It only can lead people to the upstairs of human society.

2.4. (vi) KAMAL KUMAR BRAHMA: Kamal Kumar Brahma has brought the dramatic
revolution through the play *Gwdan Fwishali* in 1959. He has brought many changes in *Bodo* drama regarding plot, theme, characterization, stage, songs and music and language and style.

Kamal Kumar Brahma is the first *Bodo* dramatist who has written drama on social problem of *Bodo* society. He has dropped chorus from his plays. His plays were staged in the curtain raiser stage, not in an open air stage. *Jewary Affat* and *Bithorai Affat* – are the two social organizations based at Kokrajhar town. Many educated persons were involved with the activities of the Affat. They enacted Kamal Kumar Brahma’s drama –especially the *Gwdan Fwishali* in 1959 and travelled like the guilds of London. These enthusiastic members were – Chitola Kanta Brahma, Barendra Nath Brahma, Prasenjit Brahma, Dwarendra Daimary, Sachin Basumatary, Charat Brahma, Jagadish Chandra Brahma, Mangal Chandra Narzary, Suresh Chandra Brahma, Tarun Narzary, Pritiraj Basumatary, Ramani Narzary, Purnima Basumatary, Pulmoti Narzary, Tapan Basumatary, Daniram Basumatary, Janak Jhankar Narzary, Indira Brahma and many more.

These theatre parties staged plays at different villages at different times in the undivided Kokrajhar district. Thus, these affats could bring awareness among *Bodo* people in the field of theatre, writing drama in modern forms, culture, language and literature. The warm welcome and applause of audience and educated people encouraged Kamal Kumar Brahma to write drama one after another and finally he wrote seven plays to his credit.
End Notes:

1. Khemthapalla: A folk dance of Bodos which have disappeared now.

2. Brajendra Kumar Brahma: Ex president of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, recipient of Tagore Literary Award. A modern Bodo poet and critic.


4. Chanakya Brahma: An educationist

5. Mayasri Methai: A Mysterious Song


7. Monsing sing: God, who comes on the earth as a human being.

8. Serja: A musical instrument of Bodos.

9. Sando Baodia: An artist amateur who attained the power of destroying and regenerating the leaves of the tree with the vibration originated from the string of Serja.

10. Maya-ze-ban: A magical knot having the power to entrap anybody when exercised.