CHAPTER - I
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THE BODO SOCIETY: BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1. INTRODUCTION:

Human society is an organized community. Few definitions of society are mentioned here for the understanding of the term of society. Society means a large group of people who live in the same country or area and have the same laws, traditions, etc.\(^1\) It has a close relation with human organization. Society means an organization for people who have the same interest.\(^2\) It is a social way of living. Society means system whereby people live together in organized communities: social way of living.\(^3\) It is a shared living in the society, Society means particular grouping of humanity with shared customs, laws, etc.\(^4\) So, the Bodo society means a large group of Bodo people living in the same area or country having the same laws, traditions, etc. and who have the same interest and who share common customs, laws etc. in the social way of living. Madhuram Boro says—

_The Mongoloid Boros are one of the aboriginal tribes of the Bodo race living mainly in Assam and its neighbouring Indian states like Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Manipur, Tripura and foreign countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan._\(^5\)

1.1. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT:

The Bodo Society has co-operating backgrounds which has achieved development with the passing time and which aspires the necessity of the Bodo people in the influence of existing other communities and other global factors. As per the information provided by Amalsing Muchahary, a social worker of Bijni, the background of the Bodo society are--

_Boro samajni baidi bithingkhou nainanwi bini background phwra jadwng—hariari, jariminari, somajari, harimuari, dwrwmari, abadari, rangkhanthiari, swlwngthaiari, hanthamelari, phahamthaiari, nokhor shilpo._\(^6\)
(Eng. trans: Looking at the different aspects of the Bodo society the background of the Bodo society are basically related to racial, historical, social, cultural, religious, agricultural, economic, educational, communication and transportation, medical, small scale industries.)

Let us describe in short the racial, historical, social, cultural, economic backgrounds of the Bodos in the following pages.

1.1.1. RACIAL:

The ethnic identity of the Bodos is anthropologically Mongoloid and linguistically Sino-Tibetan. They are Indo-Mongoloid and aboriginal of the North East India. In the pre-historic period they are known as Kiratas, Mlechhas, Danavas, Asuras, Pani, etc. Subsequently, till the 18th century they are known and established as Kiratas, Danabs, Asuras, Varmas, Salastambhas, Palas, Meches, Kacharis, Koches etc.

The majority of the people of Assam are of Mongolian stock. A range of sub-Himalayan Hills from the north-east to the north-west is inhabited by the people of Tibeto-Burman origin. The range on the south-east and south-west, the whole area are inhabited by the people of the same people.7

Rajmohan Nath, eminent scholar of Assam, has explained in his book the derivation of the term 'Bodo'8. The word 'Bod' is supposed to mean a homeland. The inhabitants of Bod country are known as Bodo or Bodosa. He says the word Bodo has been derived from Bod. The Bodos are Indo-Mangoloid inhabitant of Bod, homeland or country lying to the north of the Himalaya and to the western belt of China. There were many parts of country known as Hor Bod, Kur Bod, etc.

In his book The Background of the Assamese Culture, he writes thus—

...who inhabited the country north of the Himalayas and west of China. This country was known as the Bod or the home-land, synonymous with Sanskrit Varsha (as in Bharat-Varsha and home land of Bharat—India). There were various parts of the country—Hor-Bod, Kur-Bod etc.9

He clearly mentions in his book that the people who used to live there were called Bodo, and who have migrated later from the Kuchar and Mecha areas called themselve Koches and Meches.

The inhabitants of various parts of the Bod country were known as Boddo-Ficha or Boddo-cha (Ficha-cha—children) or the children of the Bod country,
and were later known simply as the Boddo or the Bodo. Some of them however, retained the name of the particular portion of the country from which they migrated at a later date. These were the Koches who perhaps migrated from the Kuchar or the kucha area and the Meches who migrated from the mecha area.¹⁰

The Bodos are one of the most important indigenous tribes of the North-east India. The Bodos belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Mongoloid race. They acquired great power over the whole of Assam and influenced the whole of the North-east India. The North and East Bengal was the homeland of Bodo People. Today Bodos are spread all over Assam, Meghalaya, the North and East Bengal and some parts of Nepal, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The majority of them have settled on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra valley. The Bodos have their own culture, language, literature, religion, rituals and festivals etc. S. K. Chatterjee identified them as the Kiratas or Indo-Mongoloids. He writes about the Bodos in this way—

... the Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid block in North Eastern India, were the most important Indo Mongoloid people in Eastern India, and they form one of the main basis of the present-day population of these tracts.¹¹

However, they are always being subjected to external influences, especially in their social, religious and cultural life.

Bodos or Bodo-Kacharis, who are racially of the Mongoloid stock of the Indo-Mongoloids or Indo-Tibetans, spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, North-Bengal and parts of Bangladesh. N. N. Acharyya writes clearly in his book The History of Medieval Assam—

The most important and numerous of the various Tibet-Burman races of Assam are the Bodos. The Bodos include the Koches, the Meches, the Lalungs, the Dimasas, the Garos, the Rabhas, the Tripuras, the Chutias, the Morans and the Borahis. This stock claims to be the original inhabitant of Assam. Before the rise of Ahoms, the Bodos controlled the political destiny of Ancient Assam and constituted a synthetic culture over the region bordering the banks of the life giving Brahmaputra.¹²
At length it may be said that the Bodos, anthropologically, fall within the Bodo group of the Mongoloid or the Kirata population. Linguistically, the Bodo belongs to Tibeto-Burmese of Sino-Tibetan language family. They include that large group of people who are the speaker of the Tibeto-Burman speeches of the North and East Bengal, Assam, parts of Bangladesh and Myanmar, erstwhile Burma. They are Bodos of the Brahmaputra valley, Mech or Meches of lower Assam and West Bengal and Nepal; Rabhas, Garos, Dimasas, Kacharis, Tipras or Boroks, Lalungs, Sonowals, Hajongs, Mishings, Deuris, Chutias, etc. of North East India.

The ethnic identity of the Bodos and its evolution with topographical variations demand deep observations. This larger group includes various racial stocks, viz—Mongoloid, Kirata or Bodo, Mlecha, Danav, Asura, Mech or Meche, Varman or Barman, Koch or Kocha, Kochari or Kachari (Kachari groups), Garo, Rabha, Tipra or Borok, Hajong, Dimal, Tharu, Lembu, Lepcha and Rajbongsi. Hence, in general term 'Bodo' or 'Boro' is a generic name of the people which means all the Tibeto-Burman (Bodo) speaking group of Sino-Tibetan origin.

It is observed that the Bodos which were once great mighty rulers of North East India. They have today scattered as small tribes and very little known communities.

1.2.2. HISTORICAL:

As regards its ancestry the Bodos have references in pre-historic sources and legendary accounts. The land of Assam is known as the land of Mlechchas (uncivilized people), Asuras (inhuman beings), Danavas (giants), or Rakshasas (demons) etc. which clearly identifies it as a non-Aryan country. In the age of the Mahabharata the land Assam was called Pragjyotishpur. In the period of the Puran as this land was known as Kamrup which covered some areas of the present Bhutan and East Bengal.

The ancient kingdom of Pragjyotisha was ruled by Mahiranga Danava. According to legend 'Mairong' was aryansised into 'Mahiranga Danava'. 'Mairong' is a Bodo word. It means paddy or rice. The name of the king was 'Mairong-dao'. 'Dao' means hero in Bodo. Thus, Mairong-Dao is aryansised as a 'Mahiranga
Danava'. He was the ruler of 'Pragjyotisha'. King Mahiranga Danava was a Kirata Mongolian. He belonged to the great Bodo race. K. L. Barua in his book *Early History of Kamrupa* writes thus—

*It is clearly a Bodo name and the people of this race who then inhabited the country were called Kiratas and Mlechhas as they were Mongolian immigrants.*

Premananda Mosahari writes in his book *Political Identity of the Bodos and their Bodoland Movement*,

*Mairong-dao or Mahiranga Danava was succeeded by his descendents- Hatakasura, Sambasura and Ratnasura. It is seen that the titles of Danava, Asura or other heinous words were applied indiscriminately to the non-Aryans by the Aryan people. After Ratnasura, he was killed by famous Narakasura.*

In the Kirata Parva a sub canto of Vana Parva of the *Mahabharata* the Kirata people have been described as

*gold like or yellow in colour, not dark or black like the Dasyas and the other pre-Aryan people. Bhagadutta, the king of Pragjyotisa or western Assam who took part in the Kurushhetra battle was definitely described as a ruler over Mlechas or non-Hindu barbarians.*

The authentic historical records of the Bodos are found from the 4th century to the twelfth century A.D. in various sources like Siyuki, *Harshacharita*, Nidhanpur copper grant and Doofi copper grant. According to Doofi copper grant, Pushyavarman was known as the first king of Pragjyotisha. According to H.C. Roy, Pushya Varman belonged to Bhagadutta dynasty and his lines were closely related with those of Salastambha dynasty. The greatest king of Varman dynasty was Kumar Bhaskar Varman, who was contemporaneous with king Harshavardhana of Thaneswar and Kanauj. From the writings of Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang and from Doofi and Nidhanpur copper plate grants it is known that the dynasty and descendents of Bhagadatta ruled over Pragjyotishpur for three thousand years. Hiuen Tsang came to Kamrupa in 638 A. D. and had left a vivid description of ancient Kamrup of the 7th Century A.D.
According to S. K. Chatterjee the Mongoloid character of the people of Kamrup was clearly noted by the Chinese pilgrim. He clearly noted that the people are of small stature, dark yellow complexion, and their language differs from the middle Indian language. Bhaskar Varman had a very strong Farsightedness and he linked ancient Assam i.e. Kamrupa with one of the greatest contemporary ruler of the northern India, the King Harshavardhana. Bhaskar Varman offered many valuable things to him as a work of reverence. But he did not accept anything except the ‘Ho-La-Li’. Rajmohan Nath says that the Bodo word ‘Ho-la-li’ means lustrous i.e. emitting light. The Chinese traveler, Hiuen Tsasng praised very much the Ho-la-li Coat, made of Bodo silk.

After Bhaskar Barman, Kamrupa was ruled by another dynasty called Salastambha. In the Bargaon grant, Ratnapala of Salastambha dynasty has been described as Mlecha king. The distinct mention of Mechadhipati in Bargaon copper plate indicates that Salastambha was a Bodo chief of Mech Tribe. K. L. Baruah says Salastambha probably belongs to the dynasty of Bhagadatta because, nobles of the royal family were appointed as Governors. After the death of the last king, Tyag Simha of Salastambha lines another dynasty of similar Mech or Bodo origin called Pala dynasty was established. It also rose to power in Assam. The first king of this dynasty was Brahmapala who, according to an inscription of his son, Ratnapala was relative of Tyag Simha of Salastambha line.

Minhaj Uddin, the author of Tabaquart-i-Nasiri mentions the three races of people, one called Kunch, the second the Mej (Meg) and the third the Tiharu. This means that Kamrupa was inhabited by the Koches, the Mechies and the Tharus. The then ruler was a Mech who gave a stiff resistance to Muhammad-ibn-Bakhtiyar khilji. But the Mech ruler fell into the hands of the Bakhtiyar khilji and under his rule the Mech ruler had to accept the Mahammedan faith.

The Dimasas or son of the big river Brahmaputra spread from the Brahmaputra valley to the Surma valley. In syhet, there are a number of places whose names end in with Bodo word. The Bodo rulers of Syhet were completely aryansed. The old Kingdom of Patttikara (Comilla) was also ruled by the southern Bodos who were also entirely aryansed in their speech.
The Kacharis are the eastern Bodos who built a capital at Dimapur, now in Nagaland. The first king of the eastern Bodo was Khun-Kara. They fought with the Ahoms and finally shifted their capital to Maibang, presently under North Kachar district of Assam. The last Kachari king, Gobinda Chandra died in 1832 A.D. and with his death the rule of Kachari kings ended. The Kachari kingdom lasted till 1854 A.D. The present Tripura was also ruled by Tripuri Bodos or Boroks. However, the Tripura Kings were completely hinduisised. The kingdom of Tripura ended on the 15th October, 1949 AD. under the Tripura merger agreement of the 9th September, 1949 A.D.

The resent district of Koch Bihar in west Bengal was the capital of the Mech or Bodo king, Viswa Simha. He was the son of Haria Mech of Siknajhar of Golpara district (presently Kokrajhar District of B.T.A.D) during the 10th century A.D. This Mech dynasty wielded a great power under Narnarayana and during his reign the great kingdom comprised of North Bengal, western Assam, the Khasi and Jayantia hills (Meghalaya), Syhlet and a part of Tripura. The Mech kingdom of Koch Bihar became a native state during the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. The rule of Mech dynasty ended on the 12th October, 1949 A.D. when the state became a district of West Bengal under the Merger agreement between the Governor General of India and his Highness, Maharaja of Kooch Behar. The agreement was signed on the 28 August, 1949 A.D.

The above discussions about the historical fact of the ground of the Bodos show that once upon a time the Bodos were great mighty rulers of North eastern India. But today the Meches or Bodos are a very little known community. There are many reasons how this group of great people turned into a very little known community. However, the main reason is the Sanskritisation of the Bodos for centuries as opined by many scholars.

1.2.3. SOCIAL:

It has already been mentioned that the Bodos or Bodo-Kacharis are racially of the Indo-Mongolid stock of the Indo-Tibetans of the Mongolid spreading over the whole of the Brampahputra valley of Assam, North-Bengal and parts of Bangladesh. This ethnic group is now one of the important tribes of the North East Region of
India with their distinctive cultural and linguistic features. Over the years, there have been cultural assimilations and fusions, yet the Bodos are basically stuck to their identity.

Anthropologically, the Bodos are Indo-Mangoloid inhabitant of a country lying to the north of the Himalaya and in the western belt of China, known as Bod or homeland. The inhabitants of Bod or country are known as the Bodo Phicha or Bodocha or Borosa. In course of time, they are known as Boddo-Bodo-Boro.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE BODO FAMILY:

The social structure of the Bodos is patriarchal system where father is the sole authority of the family. After his death the eldest son inherits the rights exercised by him and the entire property is distributed among the sons only. The daughters have property rights only when there are no sons. In modern age the Bodo families are becoming family consciousness and they are planning only for maximum two or three children either male or female.

STRUCTURE OF THE BODO VILLAGE:

The structure of the typical Bodo village is not very big in size. Houses are constructed on both sides of a common street. The crops field is kept on one side and the grazing field is situated by the bank of a river or stream attached the village.

Gaobura is the headman of the village. He is a prominent, elderly and popular person in the village who is recognized as the leader of the village, who tries to solve all the problems relating to the village. Halmaji, a chowkidar performs his duties on the advice of the Gaobura and informs the villagers for gathering or meeting. Oja is a medicine-man of the village and Douri is a priest of the village who perform all religious functions. Besides, the medicine man looks after illness of villagers. These four persons are very important persons of the Bodo society.

In the Bodo society, in every village, in a corner of the grazing field there is a Garza Sali or a common place of worship of gods and goddesses. The cremation grounds are situated at a solitary place to the south of the village. Gradually with the passing time the Christians are introduced by Christian missionaries and the Bramha Dharma is preached in the renaissance period by Kalicharan Brahma.
The followers of Christian religion and Brahma Dharma have established their Church and Dharma Mandir in the suitable place of the village. In the influence of modern age the structure of the urban village are undergoing totally change. The rural areas are scarce of lands and density of population is thick. One more important point is that they are not dependent on agriculture only. Instead they have emerged their living ways in another ways.

**POSITION OF THE HOMESTEAD:**

The Bodo people select the homestead by traditional method of observation like Vastu Sastra. The Bodo house is constructed in traditional belief that in the north side there will be Noma-no (main house), comprising of three rooms—Khopra (sleeping room), Akhong (sacred room) and Ishing (kitchen), in the east side, Bakhri (granary house) and in the south part, Goli (cowshed). The other one is Choura-no (drawing room) where bachelors sleep in group singing, dancing and merry making. The traditional style of homestead is now changing. They now build houses in towns and urban areas. The domestic house pattern has changed for the position of land and under the influence of Vasstu Sastra rather than Bodo tradition. The traditional houses have been replaced with picca houses. Its growths are witnessed more after the creation of B.A.C. and B.T.C. and with the economic development of the families.

**PLACE OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY:**

Being patriarchal society father or guardian has the sole responsibility for looking after the family. He is co-operated in all family matters with mother or lady guardian of the family. Outside the home he has a sole responsibility for agricultural works. Inside the home she has a major responsibility. The place of women in the Bodo society is high even the patriarchal system society and they have full liberty in their parents' home before marriage. Though they have no land rights yet the land is distributed to all daughters if there is no male child or they become the owner of land after the death of their father. Bodos are industrious and women are expert weavers. With the change of societal values the equality of men and women
are becoming more liberal with the influence of education and globalization impacts in every sphere of life.

**SOCIAL LAW (BAD) IN THE BODO SOCIETY:**

The social law or bad system is practiced for social offences. If some person offences the society particularly concerning moral turpitude, he is treated as a guilty person, and is obliged to perform penance (udrainai) with some strict social customs. The Bodo society follows some strict principles of morality. The Bodo society has traditionally divided these offences into five categories. These are – Agar bad, Phongsloth bad, Daokhi bad, Khawali bad and Khoulwbwd bad. The value of Bad system seems decreasing and people are becoming more dependent on court judgement.

**1.2.4. CULTURAL:**

Culture is the mirror of the society and the way they live. It has very important role for the identity of the community and society. The different cultural aspects of the Bodo people may be described in short as follows –

**TRADITIONAL RELIGION OF THE BODOS: 'BATHOU':**

The traditional religion of the Bodos is Bathou. The Bathou is also the worshipping place of the Bodos. It is erected in the North-east corner of the courtyard in front of the granary house and in parallel of Ishing. The land of Bathou alter is raised around one foot high where Sijou (Euphorbia splendid) and Thulunsi (Basil) tree are planted and fenced by narrow split bamboo twisted five times around bamboo fairied posts. Bodo people worship Bathou Bwrai (the God-in-chief) in the symbol of Sijou and Bathou Burwi (the Goddess-in-chief) in the symbol of Thulunsi. Bathou means 'Ba' and 'Thou'. 'Ba' means five and 'Thou' means deep philosophy. Bathou means a religion with five deep philosophies. These five philosophies are related to The Sun, The Earth, The Water, The Air and The Universe. It also looks evolution in the religions of modern age. The life sacrifice system is decreasing and offering fruits and flowers or prayer system is getting more acceptances.
FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES:

The Bodos celebrate three major seasonal festivals—Bwisagu, Magw Domashi and Khathi Gasa. Bodo people also observe Kherai and Garja religious festivals. Besides they also perform many agricultural, religious and seasonal fairs and ceremonies. Bwisagu is the greatest spring time festival of the Bodos. Kherai is the greatest religious festival of the Bodos which is also remarkable for distinctive different kinds of dances. Magw Domashi is an important harvesting festival in winter season. Khathi Gasa is a festival of lighting for welcoming the mother Goddess of wealth in the advent of rice flowering. The Garja festival is a religious festival for the purification of the village and offering the gods and goddesses. In modern age the festivals are modernizing. The traditional Bwisagu is missing and has undergone radical changes and it is now performed and showcased in the stage as stage Bihu.

FOOD HABITS:

Rice is the staple food of the Bodos. The Bodos are very fond of meat and fish. They dry meat and fish for conservation and preservation which is called Bedor gwran (dried meat) and Na gwran (dried fish). They preserve it for a long period and use it when they are busy with their agricultural work. They consume locally prepared rice beer called Jou. Pithika (distilled wine) is also produced by distillation of rice beer which tastes like spirit. Both these drinks are used in the community in different occasions of festival, marriage and community activities.

The very special food items of the Bodos are Wngkham Maibra (sticky rice) and Jwsa wngkham (scented rice); Narjwi wngkhrwi (curry of dried bitter jute leaves) with pork and Ondla wngkhrwi (curry of rice powder) with chicken and Mwitha (sour leave) with fish, Napham (pickle of fish mixing with medicinal vegetables), Maibra Bidwi (juice poured from sticky rice) and Phanlou Rwsi (silly juice of young chicken mixing with selected medicinal vegetables). These special food items are prepared on special occasions.

Bodo people have various traditional food items. Meat is essential item for the guests and in the community eating of the Bodo Society. They generally eat Oma bedor (pork), Hangsw bedor (of duck), Mwi bedor (of deer), Pharou bedor (of
pigeon), Bwrma bedor (mutton), Dao bedor (chiken), Sesa bedor (of hare), Khusung bedor (of turtle), Khaseo bedor (of tortoise) etc. They do not eat beef and snake. The Bodos have the custom of community hunting and fishing for food.

Besides producing vegetables at home garden Bodo people collect wild vegetables from the forests or fields. The wild vegetables are of different tastes, some of them are used as medicinal food to relieve from the diseases. The most common wild vegetables are sibru (a kind of thorny plant), Lapha Saikho (a plant of sour taste), Doushrem (a kind of creeper of sour taste), Jwglaori (a scented plant), Wngkham Gwjang (a creeper of sour taste), Buri Thokhon (a small plant), Khungkha (a plant of bitter taste), Gan-ga-mala (a small plant), Raidwng (cane), Onthai Bazab (a small plant with scent), etc.

They are very expert in preparing curry in a balanced combination according to their taste such as Sobaikhari-jwng dao (a black pulse curry with chicken), Ondlakhari-jwng Meowa and dao (a rice powder curry with bamboo sooth and chicken), Mwitha-jwng Na (a sour leave with fish), Narjwi-jwng oma (a bitter jute leave with pork), etc.

Kharwi (locally prepared alkali) is locally made alkaline which is very important in Bodo food habit. The food items have undergone of change in feasts, marriage and community. In place of traditional bell-metal disc and glass people now use plastic disc and plates.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS:

The Bodo male persons put on their traditional dresses like their local made gamsa, sadri, jwmgra, phali. The Bodo women use traditional dresses like dokhona, alowan, chador or jwmgra, phasra, mekhela, rikhaosa, phali. Bodo women wear three kinds of Dokhona—sala matha (plain), agor gubwi (embroidered) and thausi (embroidered in the red dokhona for the purpose of sacred ceremony like marriage).

Bodo women wear very few ornaments. They wear ear ornaments, nose ornaments, neck ornaments etc. Ear ornaments are Khera or Kheru, Japkhring, Dul Boula and Puti. Nose ornaments are Nak-phul and Bulaki. Neck ornaments are Chandra har, Bisahar, Thanka-siri and Jibou-zin-siri.
Apart from the traditional programmes like other ethnic groups, dresses of the Bodos are greatly influenced by modernity and globalization. Influences of modernity and westernization have made a total impact on the costumes and draperies of Bodos.

1.2.5. EDUCATIONAL:

Education is the main means of development of a particular community. It plays important roles in bringing development in language, literature and academic aspects of that community.

BODO LANGUAGE:

According to P. C. Bhattacharya, an eminent linguist on Bodo language the Bodo language belongs to baric division of Sino-Tibetan language as per classification of Robert Shafer or as per the Linguistic Survey of India by G. A. Grierson, the Bodo language belongs to Bodo or Boro sub-section of the Sino-Tibetan speech family.

Though the Bodo language shares some common features in vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax with other sister languages of the Bodo group or tribes like Akas, Miris, Daflash, Mishimis, Rabhas, Kacharis, Garos, Meches, etc. It has assimilated much with Assamese. In Old Age of Bodo literature or before Independence of India Bodos had no scripts of writing for their own. They had no medium of instruction for learning education. They have to write their articles in Bengali scripts and learn in Bengali. After Independence they have started writing in Assamese scripts and have had their education in Assamese medium of instruction.

It is known that Bodo scripts are historically evolved. Deodhai script is used during Bodo kings. Roman script is used during missionary period. Bengali script is used in pre-independence period. Assamese script formally is used from 1963 A.D.. After vigorous movement for Roman script though, Devnagari was accepted in 1975 A.D. and is being used since 1976 A.D..

Due to ceaseless efforts of the newly awakened Bodo leaders, the Bodo language has been introduced as the medium of instruction of primary education in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam in general but Kokrajhar in particular; which
was implemented on 18th May in 1963 A.D. in Kokrajhar Higher Secondary School by Bimala Prasad Chaliha, then Chief Minister of Assam. The Assamese script was used for the school education from 1962 A.D. till 1975 A.D.. In 1970 A.D. the discussion for Roman script starts within the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and the debate continued till 1973A.D.. The vigorous movement for Roman script continued for two years from 12th September of 1974 A.D. to 13th February of 1975 A.D., and afterwards the modified Devanagari or the Bodo script is permitted for the education of the Bodo medium schools in 1975 A.D.. It replaced the Assamese script in 1976 A.D.. The Bodo language has been recognized as an Associate Official Language of Assam from 28th December of 1985 A.D.. The Bodo language has already been recognised as one of the Modern Indian Languages (M.I.L.) by Gauhati University (1977 A.D.) and North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong and lastly by Dibrugarh University. The Bodo language is now recognized by Central Government and is included under the 6th Schedule of Indian Languages. The Gauhati University and Bodoland University have already introduced the Bodo Department for post-graduate course. The process of opening Bodo Diploma course is under process in Assam University and North Bengal University in West Bengal.

**BODO LITERATURE:**

The Bodo literature may be described in different periods in shorten like Oral literature, Missionary literature, Old literature and Modern literature. The Bodos have a rich tradition of Oral literature or folk literature. In Bodo folk society, folk songs, folk tales, legends, charms and incantations are related to various festivals and religious performances. Myths, riddles, idioms and sayings are also prevailing as a relic of the folk knowledge.

In Missionary period the Bodo folk literature was first recorded in the collection book by J. D. Anderson's *A Collection of Folksongs and Rhymes* (1879 A.D.) and *A Collection of Kachari folk tales and rhymes* (1895 A.D.). After him, Rev. Sidney Endle's writings *An Outline of Kachari Grammar* (1884 A.D.) and *The Kacharis* (1991 A.D.) were published. It gives more information about the Bodo grammar, vocabulary, folk tales and social life. Another important grammar book of Rev. L. O.
Skefrrud is *A Short Grammar of the Mech or Boro Language* (1889 A.D.). It is an important period for grammatical writing and preservation of folk literatures.

In Old literature period the writing trends of Bodo literature was emerged with the publication of books, journals, magazines, prayer songs, etc. from the beginning of 1900 A.D. The Christian Missionaries were the first to publish books on religion, tales, rhymes and songs. These are, however, not regarded as proper Bodo literary productions by the present Bodo scholars. It should be mentioned that the first book of Bodo language *Boroni Phisa O Ayen* was published written in prose form by Ganga Charan Kachari in the southern part of Brahmaputra in 1915 A.D. *Nalabuha* is the first one act play in Bodo by Satish Chandra Basumatary in 1919 A.D.. First Poetry book *Khonthai Methai* compiled by Rupnath Braham and Madaram Brahma published in 1923 A.D.. This poetry contains the national spirit of religion, culture and tradition of the Bodos. The first Bodo magazine *Bibar* came out in the year of 1924 A.D.. This magazine was edited by Satish Chandra Basumatary. This magazine contains number of poetry, theme of religion, culture, ethics, and morality of the Bodo community. Then *Bathu Nam Bwikhaguni Gidu* contains two parts—Bathou Song and Bwisagu Song published in 1925 A.D.. The *Bathou* reflects the *Philosophy of Bathou* religion which is the original religion of the Bodos. The Bwisagu songs reveal the love and youthful exuberance of the Bodos. This is regarded as the land mark of the Bodo written literature. *Boroni Gudi Sibsa ArwAroj* (first devotion and prayer of the Bodos) written by Madaram Bahma is published in 1926 A.D.. The first recognized Bodo short story by Ishan Mushahary ‘Abari’ was published in the journal *Hatharkhi Hala* edited by Pramad Chandra Brahma in 1930 A.D.. The journals and published books were the breeding grounds for young Bodo writers who were in fact the harbingers of the first renaissance of Bodo literature. Lastly it may be mentioned the poetry books published in the closing period are *Khonthai Bizab* (1951 A.D.) by Manoranjani Lahary and *Balabganwii* (1952 A.D.) by Nileswar Brahma. The noted contributors of this age are Satish Chandra Basumatary, Jaladhar Brahma, Parsuram Brahma, Rupnath Brahma, Madaram Brahma, Judisthir Hazowary, Ganga Charan Kachari, Prasanna Khakhlary, Ishan Mushahary and Pramad Chandra Brahma, and others.
In modern period, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was formed on the 16th November, 1952 A.D. *The Bodo* was the mouth-piece of Bodo Sahitya Sabha first published 1954 A.D. under the editorship of Satish Chandra Basumatary. This journal had a catalytic role in moulding new consciousness among the new generation of Bodo writers. The first short story book *Phwimal Mijing* (1970 A.D.) by Chittaranjan Mushahary brings a turning point in Bodo short story. The first novel book by the same writer *Zujaini Or* (Fire of husk) in 1962 A.D. heralds the beginning of Bodo novels. Pioneer in travelogue writing Mohini Mohon Brahma wrote two travelogue books are *Amerikayao Daobayhwinay* and *Chin Hadwrao Dandise*. Nabin Malla Boro also wrote two important books on this topic. Kalicharan Bramhachary (junior) is the pioneer in biography by writing *Sarnay Gurudebni Bwswn*. Many journals, magazines and books have been brought out which are shown the development of Bodo literature in Modern Age.

Some critics, notably, Nil Kamal Brahma, Manoranjan Lahary, Haribhusan Brahma, Kathindra Swargayary, Nandeswar Dwimary, Janil Kumar Brahma, Gobinda Basumatary, Prasenjit Brahma, Jamuna Brahma etc. contributed a lot to the realm of Bodo short story. The well known dramatists are Dwarendra Nath Basumatary, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Madaram Brahma. They are known for the dramatic movement in Bodo society. Kamal Kr. Brahma, Manoranjan Lahary, Mangalsingh Hazowary, Madhu Ram Boro also contributed a lot in the field of Bodo drama. Chittaranjan Mushahary who writes more than 25 novels is regarded as a pioneer in the field of Bodo novel. Besides Manoranjan Lahary, Dharanidhar Wary, Nandeswar Dwimary, Kanteswar Basumatary, Thiren Boro have contributed in the field of Bodo novel. Contribution to the field of literature was also made by Sukumar Basumatary. Many more writers have contributed to the Bodo literature in different genres like biography, travelogue, poetry, criticism.

**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:**

In pre-Independence period there were no colleges and universities in the newly created B. T. A. D. but only one or two high schools in Kokrajhar and one vocational and training centre in Tipkai. Only few primary schools are there in
Kokrajha, Bijni, Tamulpur and Odalguri areas. Students have to go for study to places like Dhubri and Guwahati for higher education. Most of the children could not receive education due to want of schools or economic condition. Only few rich families can send their children to the distant schools. For this reason Govt. H.S. School and B.H. College in Dhubri and Cotton College in Guwahati become the main centre for learning of higher education for Bodo students in those days. These two education centre turns to meeting place of the Bodo students. After the formation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha on the 16th Nov. 1952 A.D. and after independence, the number of primary schools, M.E. and High Schools are increasing gradually. The medium of Bodo language of education is started since 1963 A.D. Later on with the upgradation of classes and demands of necessity and pressures of Bodo Sahitya Sabha Higher Secondaries and colleges are established in some progressive town areas. The settlement of script is decided after the Roman script movement and Devnagari is recognized and implemented since 1976 A.D. Then the educational institutions are established in more increasingly numbers. Even the formation of All Bodo Sahitya Sabha steers it in progress. After the creation of B.A.C and B.T.C. the numbers of primary schools, M.E. and H. Schools, Higher Secondary and Colleges and few numbers of Junior Colleges have been established in large numbers. The educated numbers of students are now increasing year by year and the consciousness of education reaches even in deep rural villages both riches and poors. Now there is one University, one C.I.T. and an Engineering college in B.T.C. Before B.T.C. was formed there were only one Govt. college, one G.C.T.E. (B. Ed) college and seven provincialised colleges but now it increases into 18 provincialised colleges and six numbers of science streams and more than forty Higher Secondary schools. High schools are established now in required places which are being provincialised or some remained ventures till now. These institutions have helped in improving education both in rural and urban areas. Still there are about 9 nos of private colleges which will have to be provincialised. Its education system is becoming more and better than earlier and it impeds in the growing rate of education in Bodo society.
CENTRE OF LEARNING:

It is known that the Bodo learning centre before pre-Independence India were Dhubri, Abhayapuri and Guwahati. Tipkai, a port in British period is the first awakening centre among the Bodo dominated area. It had close connection with Dhubri, the district head Quarter of Goalpara district. The southern part of the Brahmaputra river got the awakening of education and literature in the influence of Cotton college. Abhayapuri, the capital of Bijni was the centre of learning for Bongaigaon and adjoining areas. Thus the Bodo people were awakened through these three centres of educational places in the ancient time.

1.2.6. ECONOMIC:

Economy system in the Bodo society was traditional system. Pre-colonial period Barter system was the means of exchanging of goods. Some coins based on colonial period are found Bodo people live in self dependence style. They live in agricultural products. They use barter system with their crops in exchange of salts. They also prepare themselves local alkaline and mustard oil from mustard seeds. According to the information provided by Ombari Muchahary, a social worker of Bijni the Bodo people can live in the Bodo village by earning money by different ways. She further reports,

*Boroni gamiyao baidi rahajwng rang khamainw hayw. Abad maonanwi, mwigong thaigong phwnanwi, phithai samthai biphang laiphang gainanwi, jiu jirad phisinanwi, dannay hebnay arw danay lunayjwng, songnay khaonayjwng rang khamaynw hayw. Beni ongaywibw khamani maonanwibw Borophra gamiyao rang khamaynw hayw.*

(Eng. trans: People may earn money by different ways in the Bodo village. They can earn it by agriculture, nurturing vegetables, planting fruit trees in the gardens, rearing livestock, making handicrafts and handloom products, cooking and frying eatable food items. Besides they can earn money working as wage labourers in the villages.)
AGRICULTURAL:

In agricultural field they mainly produces paddy. Maisali, Maibra, Jwsa, Karma, Ashu, Phulphakhri etc. etc. are common paddy which are specially grown for food. They produce cash crops like master seeds, seasume, jute, black pulse, red pulse, Kesar dali (a kind of pulse). They also produces arum, potato, brinjal, pumkin, cucumber, guard, bean, tomato, green chilli, zinger, tarmaric, sweet potato, etc. Being educated and conscious the Bodos have gradually produced it applying high technology in some areas and they plan for producing them for commercial purposes.

FARMING:

In traditional farming there are livestock and horticulture. They rear pig, goat, cow, bird, duck, silkworm, fish, and buffalow. As horticulture they grow betel-nut and leave, bamboo, tree gardens, orange, banana, lemon, fine apple, jackfruit, mango, big orange etc. In earlier days most of them were used for their domestic use and were used in exchange of barter system. The Bodoland movement brings awareness and the creation of B.A.C. and B.T.C. brings modernization and upgradation of livestock and horticulture farming system. They start the farmings in large scale such as passauli, mushroom cultivation, rubber plantation, banana plantation, coffee plantation etc.

SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES:

Small scale industries are very rare in the Bodo society. Whatever they establish they are for self dependence in the society. Bodo women weave the cloths, rear mugas and produce endi yarn. Wooden tools are made for agricultural field, domestic use and furniture and bullock cart, husking mortar, fishing nets, musical instruments and grinding industry of master seeds and sugar cane. But they can not use all these for commercial purpose. The Bodoland movement brings awareness, modernization and upgradation on traditional small scale industries. Formation of B.A.C. and B. T. C. brings the improvement and expansion in small scale industries. In small scale industries weaving or handlooms become more successful. It brings women empowerment.
TRADE AND COMMERCE:

In earlier days the Bodos reared endi cocoons and practiced wooden business. They sold woods to nearby growing towns by river ways. They sold cocoons to neighbouring countries. Silk and timber business are the oldest trade system in the Bodo society. As per the information of Sontosh Muchahary, intellectual of Basugaon the Bodo people traded since ancient times in wooden timber; silk and muga, bettlenut and rice—

Borophra gwdwhai dongphang endi-muga arw ouwani bepha phalangi khalamwmwn. Goy arw mai-abw Boroni bephar phalangini gahai muwamwn.\(^{20}\)

(Eng. trans: The Bodos traded in wooden timber, silk-muga and bamboo trees in ancient times. Besides they produce bettlenut and rice which are also main commodities of trade and commerce.)

Gradually being educated they have started business on agricultural products, on cash crops, vegetables, horticultural fruits and timbers, on livestocks for meat and milk. Under the able leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma the Bodos bring mass revolution and evolution through the Bodoland movement which brings awareness in business on diverse fields and modernization in old and traditional trade and business system. Many Bodo people are now running business of different trades, supply of goods and other materials and contract works.

1.2.7. COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:

In earlier days and before the formation of B.A.C. and B.T.C. most of the roads in Bodo dominated rural areas were not pucca roads and were of no good condition. But it has now changed to black topping roads. Wooden bridges and bamboo crossings are replaced by concrete bridges. Bullock carts were the main communication and transportation vehicles in Bodo dominated areas which are replaced now by trucks, tractors, buses and cars. Most of them travelled on foot and bi-cycles but these are replaced now by bikes and cars.
1.2.8. LIVING STANDARD:

In earlier days agriculture was the main sustenance of the Bodo society. After the introduction of the Bodo medium and the renaissance and reformation the changes of the Bodo society had impact on language, education, politics, agriculture etc. Many educated people got engaged in government jobs, business and contracts. After the creation of B.A.C. and B.T.C. some of them have turned rich and well-placed in the society and thereby forming a high middle class of the Bodo society. Even the rural people are becoming urban minded and most of them try to change their way of living style from agricultural works to other jobs. So, the economic development has changed the life style of the traditional Bodo society.

1.2.9. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS:

Bodo village committees and social organizations help in the development and changing of the Bodo society.

BODO VILLAGE COMMITTEE:

The Bodo village committee was the all in all in the ancient Bodo society. All the problems of the village are solved in this committee. It helps, protects and guides the village from all evils and danger. But later on, after the formation of self ruled council and the influence of modern education, now the village committee has lost its former glory and power. But still, this tradition of village committee continues to act in the Bodo society.

BANDW (DAM) COMMITTEE:

Bandw committee is formed among the neighbourly villages. Its main purpose is to dam the rivulet and supply the water from the rivulet to the agricultural field. They meet together before the starting agricultural works and help together in emergency.
HABRAGHAT BORO SONMILONI AND DOKSHINKUL BORO SAHITYA SONMILONI:

These two organizations are very important organizations in the Bodo society. These two are the old big social organisations. 'Habrاغhat Boro Sonmiloni' is a socio-religious organization of the Bodos of the South bank of the Brahmaputra of the greater Goalpara district formed in the year 1912 A.D.. This organisation publishes a bi-lingual magazine. It comprises a list of numerous members and articles on the Boro language, culture, religion, social systems and customs, etc. In 1918A.D., a literary organization is formed on the southern bank of the Bramhaputra named 'Dokshinkul Boro Sahitya Sonmiloni'. Its aim is to develop the Bodo language and literature. These two organizations are the milestones of the Bodo society which inspire other genuine organizations formed for the development of language, literature, culture, education, religion and social safety of the Bodos.

BODO SAHITYA SABHA:

Bodo Sahitya Sabha is the first allied largest organisation in the Bodo society. It was formed on the 16th November in 1952A.D. at Basugaon. It is born with great social interest among the Bodos of different groups for the protection and development of Bodo language, literature, culture and racial identity. The first President and Secretary were selected from the Dimasa community and they were Jaypadra Hagjer and Sanaram Thaosen respectively. It is the land mark of the beginning of modern Bodo literature and Modern Age in Bodo literature. It fights for the growth and development of the language, literature and culture of the Bodos. Its continuous fight brings introduction of the Bodo medium in 1963 A.D. in some schools of Assam. Its strong movement for two years for the Roman script compelled the Central Govt. to settle for a modified Devanagari or Bodo script in 1975 A.D.. Its fight for the Bodo education pressured the Govt. to set up required educational institutions in every corner; its creative zeal for literary forms and productions help to the Bodo language in the recognition of a language in the 6th scheduled of Indian languages.
BORO SATRA SANMILON:

Another very important organisation is 'Boro Satra Sanmilon' which was formed in 1919 A.D. at Senior Basic School of Kokrajhar. Sabharam Brahma and Satish Chandra Basumatary were the President and Secretary respectively. Their main aim is to all round development of the Bodo race. They published the 'Bibar' magazine edited by Satish Chandra Basumatary in 1920 A.D. in handwritten form and published in 1924 A.D. in print. It is the first platform of many writers and publications in the Bodo language.

ALL BODO STUDENTS' UNIONS:

'Boro Satra Sanmilon' is renamed as 'Sadou Assam Boro Satra Sonmilon' after 1924 A.D. as per decision in the second meeting in 1920 A.D. There were many students' organizations in different areas in the then Goalpara district after Independence. On October 19, 1963 A.D. 'North East India Boro Kachari Students' Union was formed in Shillong. Ranjit Shekar Mushahari and Ranjit Kumar Borgoyary were the President and Secretary respectively. 'Goalpara District Bodo Students' Union' was formed on the 9th February, 1966 A.D. at Tribal Guest House at Kokrajhar and Lohendra Basumatary and Tarun Phukan Basumatary were the President and Secretary respectively. Under the banner of this organization the full fledged students' organisation 'All Bodo Students' Union' (ABSU) was formed on the 15th February, 1967 A.D.. The first President is Baneswar Basumatary, from Kamrup district and Secretary is Kankeswar Narzary, from Goalpara district. They continued for the period of 1967-72 A.D.. Premananda Mosahari writes in his book,

_A New Era had been dawned in the political life of the Bodos since the time of Upendra Nath Brahma who was elected as the eight President of the ABSU on the 31st May, 1986 in its 18th Annual Conference held at Routa in Darrang district of Assam. The quest for political identity with its separate entity for the Bodos took a new shape under the dynamic leadership of U.N.Brahma. Just after sitting on the helm of the ABSU as its president he decided to reclaim the Bodos as a great nation in the world._21
ALL BODO WOMEN WELFARE FEDERATION:

'All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation' (AATWWF) is born on July 14, 1986 A.D. Its aim is to bring about the unity and consciousness among all tribal women of Assam. But, other tribal women are not interested and they have not co-operated with Bodo women in this organization. So its name is rechristianised as 'All Assam Bodo Women's Welfare Federation' (AABWWF). The organization is contained to the Bodo women only. It raises its voice against all kinds of atrocity or ill treatment against Bodo women in particular and other tribal women in general.

BODO WRITERS' ACADEMI:

Bodo Writers' Acaemi is established on the 16th March, in the year 1985 A.D. under the first Presidentship of Manoranjan Lahary and first Secretaryship of Janil Kumar Brahma at Tipkai in Porbotzora Sub-division for the session 1985-87A.D. Its main objective is to develop the standard of the Bodo language, literature and culture of the Bodo society and is to widen the scope of the Bodo language and literature by uniting all the Bodo writers of the country. Since its inception it has been working its mission and objectives till now. It publishes a journal of research paper called Laithun which has been contributing a lot to the Bodo society in the field of language, literature and culture and also it has organized different authors, publishers etc. in a single platform.

Thus we see that the Bodo people and society has been developing more and more because of some factors like expansion of education, communication, media etc. after the formation of B.A.C. and B.T.C. The Bodoland areas have witnessed spectacular social and economic development for which the tribe has occupied a significant position in Indian society today.

1.4. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion it may be noted that the Bodo society have undergone many changes from the pre-independence days to present days. It is rapidly changing in intellectual and materialistic field due to the factors and influences mentioned above, more particularly after the formation of autonomous and territorial council in Bodoland.
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