CHAPTER III

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BORO COMMUNITY

This chapter of the thesis presents An Introduction to the community
CHAPTER-III

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BORO COMMUNITY

The Bodos or the Boro-Kacharis are the largest tribal community of North East India with distinct culture of their own. In Assam they are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe (Plain). They are widely scattered in the Brahmaputra and Barak valley of Assam, north and eastern part of Bengal. But main concentration of the Boro people are in the northern bank of Brahmaputra where they have recently formed the Bodoland Territorial Council comprising of four districts namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksha and Udalguri. Kokrajhar is the headquarters of Bodoland Territorial Council. It covers approximately 8795 square Kilometers (provisional) spreading flood plains of Brahmaputra and its tributaries and includes 3082 villages within its territory.
### TABLE 1 DISTRICT WISE POPULATION IN BTC AREA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Male M</th>
<th>Female F</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>S.C.Population</th>
<th>S.T Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M 5</td>
<td>F 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M 8</td>
<td>F 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokrajhar</td>
<td>433130</td>
<td>409675</td>
<td>842805</td>
<td>13211</td>
<td>12013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chirang</td>
<td>211143</td>
<td>199913</td>
<td>411058</td>
<td>16608</td>
<td>15216</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baksa</td>
<td>434040</td>
<td>415312</td>
<td>849352</td>
<td>30705</td>
<td>28864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udalguri</td>
<td>419117</td>
<td>399105</td>
<td>818222</td>
<td>16819</td>
<td>15637</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total under BTC</td>
<td>149743</td>
<td>1424007</td>
<td>2921437</td>
<td>73243</td>
<td>711730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: BTC secretariat as per 2001 census*

The total population of BTC area is 2921437, while 149743 persons are male and 1424007 persons are female. Where the scheduled caste population is 149073, scheduled tribe is 1049748 out of total population. The tribal people include Boros, Rabhas and Garos.
**TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION IN DARRANG (New Udalguri district is also included)**

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>0.16</td>
<td>1277</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jainism</td>
<td>1264</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>686</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>0.16</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistical hand book Assam*

According to the religion the Hindus are significantly highest in number in Darrang District recording 57.74% of total population. The next is the Muslims recording 35.54% of total population where the percentages of Christians are 6.47, Sikhs are 0.03, Buddhism are 0.12 and Jainism are 0.06 according to the 2001 census (Table No. 2). Religion wise population as per 2001 census has not yet been worked out in BTC area.
The Bodos or Boros are originally the inhabitants of a country west of China and in the foothills of Himalayas. This land is known as “Bod” which means homeland. The inhabitants of Bod country are known as the *Bodo Ficha* or *Bodocha*. Bodo means land and *Ficha* means children, hence the meaning is children of Bod country, and in course of time they come to be known as simply Boddō>Bodo>Boro (Brahma, 1992).

According to Endle (1911) there were two great migrations of the Borokacharis. One wave came from north and entered western Assam through the valley of Tista, Sonkosh and founded their kingdom in that area. The other migration was from the northeast through Subansiri, Dibong and Dihing valley of the present day Arunachal Pradesh.

*The linguistic Survey of India* describes the Bodos or the Bodo-Kacharis as a member of the Bodo sub-section under the Assam-Burma group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speech family (Grierson 1903). On the other hand, Shafer (1955) is of opinion that, the Bodo language belongs to the western branch of Barish section *under Baric division* of the Sino-Tibetan family.
According to Bordoloi, Sharma Thakur and Saikia (1987) “The Boro Kacharis of Assam is a branch of the Great Bodo Group of the Indo-Mongoloid family falling within the Assam Burmese Linguistic section. Their identity is not uniform as an ethnic group. In Bengal and in lower ranges of the Himalayas coming within the territory of Nepal, they are known as Meches. In upper Assam they are identified as Sonowal and Thengal Kachari, while in the western Assam they are more popularly known as Boro Kachari. In the southern districts of North Cachar and Cachar they are designated as Dimasa and Barmans respectively”. With their physical features like prominent cheekbones, small eyes with slight epicanthic fold, little growth of hair in the body, scanty beard, light brown to pale yellow skin color and medium to short stature of the strongly built body, they represent Mongolian characteristics. Endle (1975) refers to the original home of the Kacharis as Tibet and China on the basis of their Mongolian affinities. There are various opinions about the original inhabitation of the Boros. But it can be said that these people are the ancient inhabitants of Assam along with the Aryan migrants who also lived here from ancient times. In the book Early History of Kamrupa, Baruah (1966) states that after the arrival of the Aryans into the Indian soil, hordes of later Mongolian poured through the northeast corner. They
were described to be the Kiratas in the Mahabharata and other Hindu scriptures like *kalika Puran* and *Yoginitantra*.

Dr. S.K. Chatterjee calls them Indo-Mongoloid in his book *Kirata-Jana-Kirti*. According to Baruah (1966) the Kacharis, Koches, Rabhas, Mechis, Mikirs, Lalungs, Garos, Nagas, Kukis and the Chutiyas are the present day representatives of these Mongolians or the Indo-Mongoloid and the tribe speaking Bodo (Boro) languages seem to have occupied the plains of *Assam for long time*. Gait (1963) writes about them, as follows-"Having regard to their wide distribution and to the extent of country over which Bodo languages of a very uniform type are still current, it seems not improbable that at one time the major part of Assam and North-East Bengal formed a great Bodo kingdom, and that some, at least of the Mech kings mentioned in the old copper-plate inscriptions belonged to the kachari or some closely allied tribe". Whatever may be the origin of these people, it is widely accepted that they brought into N.E. India the technique of food production by plant cultivation and domestication of animals. They are considered as first rice cultivators of this region. They are also first introducer of the art of rearing silkworm as well as spinning and weaving of silk cloth (Sharma 1983).
The Boros felt for a long time that they were neglected in their own land. As a result they organized themselves under the banner of “Assam Bodo Chatra Sanmilan” to bring about a general awakening in the backward masses. They became successful in their venture of reforming their society along with the blessings of reformist Guru Kalicharan Brahma. They met the Simon Commission at Shillong on 2nd January 1929 to present their demands. At the advise of the Guru the leaders joined to build up a political platform to fight for their identity and in 1933 the Assam Plains Tribal League was formed under the leadership of Rupnath Brahma. According to their demand the British Government in India passed an act and reserved five Assembly seats for the Plains Tribal in Assam. Afterwards this party merged with the Assam Congress and sacrificed their political identity. But later it was felt that the Congress party did not give them proper protection as assured. The Boros renewed their movement with the formation of All Bodo Students Union on 15th February 1967. At the initiative of the All Bodo Students Union at Rongjasali Hall, Kokrajhar a political organization named Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) come into existence on, 27th February 1967. PTCA and ABSU jointly demanded separate Autonomous state for the Bodos. Later they demanded a full-fledged state named Udayachal. But
dissatisfied with the activities of the PTCA the leaders of the ABSU started working independently. During the Assam movement their demand for separate state died down. When the Assam Gana Parishad political party came into power in 1985 and made Assamese language compulsory in schools, colleges and offices the ABSU opposed this and launched a vigorous mass movement under the leadership of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma. After the death of U.N. Brahma Sansuma Khungur Bwismutiary became the President of ABSU. They continued their demand and several organizations like Bodo People’s Action Committee, All Bodo Employers’ Federation, All Bodo Samaj and All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation actively joined with them to make the movement a success.

The Government wanted to crush the movement by enforcing a number of laws like Disturbed Areas Act 1955, Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958, the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 etc. After a long period of movement, with worst blood shed, in 20th February 1993 a Memorandum of Settlement was signed with the Government of India, the Government of Assam and All Bodo Students Union and Bodo Peoples action Committee and the movement ended peacefully. As a
result of this the Bodoland Autonomous Council Law has been implemented. Ultimate solution was made with the understanding of all the concerned parties in 10^{th} February 2003 by signing the Agreement with the Government of India, the Government of Assam, BPAC, BLT and ABSU. The first 12 members Interim Council of Bodoland Territorial Council was Sworn-in at Kokrajhar in 7th December 2003 in presence of the then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani. The total strength of the BTC is 40.

A complete Boro household is constituted of three to four main houses surrounding a square or rectangular courtyard in the middle. It is also essential that each household is surrounded by bamboo fencing and separated from other houses. Earlier it was compulsory to construct long ditch in four sides of boundary. Endle (1975) writes “One prominent feature in the typical Kachari village can not fail to strike the attention of any casual visitor at first sight. Each house with its granary and other outbuildings is surrounded by a ditch and fence, the latter usually made of ekra reed, jungle grass or split bamboo, etc. The ditch, some three or four feet in depth, surrounds the whole homestead, the earth taken from it being thrown up on the inner side, i.e., that nearest to the dwelling house;
and on the earth-works, some two or three feet in height, so thrown up are firmly inserted the reed or split-bamboo work forming the fence itself, this later often inclining outwards at a very obtuse angle; so that the ditch and fence are not easily surmounted from the outside by the would be intruders. In the northern side they construct the kitchen, granary etc., living house is in the east and southern side is for the boys, western side is for guest and open house is constructed without wall sometimes for dhinkhi (mortar), loom, domestic animals and birds etc. Pigsty is constructed at a distance in backside of the living room or other houses. The open courtyard is necessary for various socio-religious functions. As the Boros are agriculturists they need the courtyard for keeping paddy after cutting it should be dried and thrashed. The northeastern corner is the most sacred place of this courtyard. There is an alter about one foot high at this corner made of mud plinth from the paddy field where a Siju (Euphorbia splendens) plant is grown.

This alter is surrounded by bamboo splits, tied together with five rings of horizontal bamboo stripes crossed with 18 pairs of about 2 feet high vertical bamboo stripes. In the front side, three pairs of these strips are twisted in traditional style and it is called Daothu Bikha Hebnai. This
Daothu Bikha stands for the three fold of power of Bathou viz, creation, nutrition and dissolution

The kitchen is made on earthen plinth and walls are of bamboo or reed, plastered with mixture of mud and cow dung. The roof of the kitchen is generally of bamboo and thatch or tin. On the eastern side of the kitchen, the granary is constructed for keeping rice, which is made on a platform of 1 to 2 feet high with bamboo or wooden posts. The door of the granary faced towards the kitchen.

Granary and kitchen are considered as sacred places where the Mainao (Lakshmi) lives and religious offerings are made inside the kitchen and on the Bathou alter and granary. In their custom the construction of new house is started with the granary. The living house is started after selecting the site. There are some beliefs regarding the selection of a suitable place among the Boros. The site for construction is tasted by wiping the floor with mud and placing some rice on top of banana leaf on that place and covered it with a bamboo basket for the whole night. Next day morning it is examined whether the rice remains intact by removing the basket. If the rice is scattered then the site is not good for construction,
if it is found as it is then a hole is dug up to one and half feet and the soil is tasted by eating. If its taste is sweet or salty it is a good soil and if sour taste then this site is very bad. Quality of soil is considered as compulsory because the traditional Boro houses are made on earthen plinth. Living houses are made on mud plinth about 1 foot high. Sweeping with cow dung plaster is a common practice of the walls and floors. In rituals sweeping of courtyard with cow dung mixture is must. Sprinkling of holly water mixed with Thulungsi (basil) leaf, gold ring and dub grass, sesame, on occasions like Bathou puja, Garja puja, etc. is a must.

The main house is called as Noma-No, which is 22 to 25 feet long and 13 to 15 feet wide and divided into three rooms, the eastern most room is called Ishing, middle room is Okhong and western room as Khofra. The guest room is a separate house known as Chora-No. A rich household may construct out house for servants and other guests. There is a cowshed at a distance on southern or western side of the courtyard. Long cowshed and granary shows the good economic condition of the owner. The house construction materials like bamboo, wood, thatch etc. are generally collected from the forest. The rich families make R.C.C. houses or tin roofed Assam type houses. In Boro villages dwelling sites are generally
near their paddy fields. There are grazing grassland and stream, ponds or river also for their cattle. There is a belief among the Boros that if there is no grazing land then there will be quarrel and no peace will prevail in the village in future. Therefore the villagers give importance to keep open grassland near village.

The traditional dresses of the Boros are colorful and unique with their designs. The womenfolk weave their own dress and also for their male folk. The women’s dress consists of *Dokhna* and blouse with a *Phali* on top of it. Male dress is very simple. It consists of shirt, dhoti or *Gamcha*. Boro women wear a few ornaments. They have a tradition of wearing only a few ornaments of gold or silver. In the marriage ceremony the groom or grooms mother offers also only one or two symbolic ornaments to her daughter-in-law. They do not like exaggeration or too much stylish boy or girl who are termed as *Chaldang*, a derogatory word to mean the people not interested in actual work. Their artistic mind is reflected in the colorful design of the cloth, not in ornaments. Now a day the girls are using some long pattern of earrings available in the market. The traditional earring, nose ring, wrist and neck ornaments have special place in their society. Earrings are known as *Khera* or *Kanpacha*, *Japkhring* and
Talinglora. Two varieties of nose ring are generally used, named as Gonthongni and Boula. Necklace is favorites of married women. These are known as Chandrahar, Bisahar and Galpata. The hand/wrist ornament is called as Ashan in Boro language. These are known as Bala, Mwthi Ashan, Baju etc. Finger ring is called as Akhtam or Astham. Gold ornament is kept as a friend in need as they can sell it at the time of danger or need. There is a system of keeping gold ornaments in mortgage with Mahajan and return it when they repay the debt. So the ornaments are kept for social security in every family.

The Boro Kacharis like to live in the plains and preferably by the riversides in homogeneous villages. They always live in well-constructed well bounded households, which constitute of married couple, their children and near and distant relatives. Family is the basic unit in the village. There is a strong tie among the villagers. The Boro villages have clear boundaries. Community feeling is expressed in various socio-religious ceremonies. Each family is related to another family by kinship ties. There are several clans among them; all people belonging to various clans live in the same village. Clans are totemic in origin. They strictly follow patrilineal descent, succession and rules of inheritance. After
marriage the girls are supposed to move to their husband’s house. The Boros follow clan exogamy.

As they are rice cultivators it is necessary to live near their fields with the traditional dong and canal digging system where cooperation of all the villagers is needed. Various rituals are also performed with the help of village priest, Bwisagw and Domashi are the two general festivals connected with beginning and ending of agricultural work and whole community is involved in these festivals. Amthi is observed for the prosperity of the seasonal fruits and the crops. They also perform rituals like Apeswari puja, Garja puja for the protection of the whole village. Kherai Puja is the main community worship where all the villagers participate. There is the involvement of the head priest, assistant priest, dancers, singers, drummers, siphung (flute) players, jotha (cymbals) players etc. The musical instruments namely, Kham (drum), Siphung (flute), Jotha (cymbals) etc. are used in this Kherai Puja.

In their religious beliefs and practices Boros are worshipers of Bathou as their Supreme Being. At the same time various other lower deities and spirits and ghosts are also worshipped. Their belief is polytheistic. There
is a *Siju* (*Euphorbia splendens*) plant in the northeastern side of the courtyard of every household, which is the worshiping place of every family. The *Siju* plant is considered as symbol of *Sibrai*, or *Bura Bathou*, which is the supreme god. Before starting any work or ceremony it is compulsory to first worship *Bathou* in the *Siju* plant altar. There is also a *Thulungsi* (basil) plant in the courtyard. *Mainao* is worshipped as goddess of wealth.

There are numerous malevolent and benevolent spirits in their belief. The **eighteen gods** worshipped along with *Bathou* are *Mero*, *Ailang*, *Agrang*, *Bwrli Bharali*, *Khaji*, *Khungur*, *Rajputra*, *Jwmwn Bagra*, *Jwmwn Khola*, *Thangiri*, *Mangiri*, *Bagraja*, *Bagheswari*, *Brahma*, *Bishnu*, *Maheswar*, *Surya*. The Bathou altar is encircled with specially designed bamboo fencing. A long bamboo, brought for this purpose, is cut into three pieces-each, measuring three feet. Then each of these pieces is again split into six long sticks and altogether eighteen sticks known as *Khunthi* are made from these bamboo pieces. The lower end of the *Khunthi* is stuck in the ground around the border of the altar. The tops of the sticks are cut into a V-shape. Then five long bamboo pieces, known as *Khami* are tied parallel to each other in a horizontal position to these eighteen *Khunthi*. On the
northern side of the Bathou altar a long altar is raised where eighteen gods are worshipped. These eighteen gods are represented by eighteen bunches of Khankhli, which is planted in eighteen holes along with branches of Mwkhna plant. At first a white female goat is sacrificed before Bathou. A pair of white pigeon is sacrificed for Mero. For each of the eighteen gods, a fowl is sacrificed and its head along with mustard oil lamp, incense sticks, fruits and flowers are offered on banana leaves for eighteen gods separately. All the family members and other invited guests, village people present there bow down in front of the Bathou and seek blessings. Then the priest and family head and elderly women enter the kitchen and worship hasung mwdai. Inside the kitchen a pair of fowl are sacrificed and its meat is cooked with Bhogo. Five bamboo cups are made of round bamboo pieces and rice beer is offered in these bamboo cups inside the kitchen. Then obeisance is paid to the granary or Bhandar by offering earthen lamp with mustard oil, incense sticks, betel nut, etc.

However, there are a number of people among them who are converted to Brahmanism and Christianity. There is also a new trend in the form of reviving the Bathou and several new ideas and rituals are included in this religion. There is a strong belief in the existence of the soul even after
death and it may enter into any newborn baby according to the *Karma* one performed during his/her lifetime. They are following the destiny according to the *Karma* of a person.

Rice is the staple food of the Boro people. They are always dependent on their own paddy cultivation. Both *Sali* and *Ahu* varieties of paddy cultivation is practiced by them. They consume boiled rice with vegetable curry, fish or meat curry. Dry fish is a delicacy. They are expert in fishing and both male and female know the art of catching fish. The male generally use net, fishing spear, basket, automatic or manipulated. Female folk generally use *Jekhai-Khobai* a kind of handmade basket etc. specially for collecting small fishes and snails. They prepare fish curry, snail curry etc. Small dry fish, half dried stem of black *Thaso* (arum), both the items mixed and made into paste-pounding by *Dhinkhi* (motar) and preserved it in bamboo tube or earthen pot and it is also preserved after making round cake type shape and dried it up in sunrays. It can be kept for several days. It is known as *Napham*. It can be taken after boiling with alkali, salt as required, garlic, *Dhania* etc. with water. The curry *Na Rudubanai* is prepared by boiling with small fresh fish, garlic, chili, ginger, alkali and salt into water. In this curry other vegetables can be
added, such as leaves of *Narasingha* or *Nwrsin Bilai*, flower of *Basiki*, *Sewali Bibar* etc. In this same way *Na Gwran Rudabnai* curry is prepared by adding dry fish. There is a delicious curry of black gram prepared by them. Small dry fish and black gram boiled in water with garlic, chili, ginger, alkali and salt as required. *Na Gwran Bathwn* or *Na Bathwn* is also a favorite *chatny* prepared by the Boros. Fried dry fish or fresh fish, chili, garlic, ginger and salt as required, grinded it into fine powder. There are different types of curry prepared by adding alkali; *Laikharwi* is prepared by adding alkali and salt as required and keep for a while on fire in a pot and boiled it in water add fish, *Dhania* if available. Sometimes they mixed rice powder into it known as *Ondla*. Besides this *Laikharwi* there are various types of curry prepared by alkali and other vegetables. The preparation method of these curry also same as the *Laikharwi*. Bamboo shoot or banana tree curry is also delicious dish among them. Fresh fish boiling into water and add *Mesta gwkha* or *Mesta Gwkhwi* or *Singri Mwkhwi* or Wood apple is also a favorite item among the Boros. In wood apple curry they some times add grinded rice powder and this is known as *Thaigir Ondla*. *Thaso Aitheng* (elongated stem of arum) and *Thaso Bithari* (tender bud of arum) curry is another favorite dishes among them. It is prepared by adding dry fish or fresh fish, *Thaso Aitheng* or
*Thaso Bithari,* salt as required, chili, ginger, *Jabrang* etc. and boiled it into water. Bamboo shoot, banana plant curry is another delicious curry among them. Besides this they also prepare curry of snails, crabs etc. The preparation methods of the curry are changing with the time and due to the influence of neighboring people.

Meat of pig, goat, duck, pigeon, chicken etc. is favorite dishes. These are kept at every home as domestic animals and used as food whenever they need their meat, especially to entertain guests. These are also used at religious ceremonies for sacrificial purposes. Though cow and bullock are kept as domestic animals, these are used for ploughing and cow dung is used for *manuring* the field and religious purposes. Cows milk and milk products are not favorites among the Boros. Now-a-days they are learning to use milk as food item and prepare tea with milk. The favorite drink is rice beer locally named as *Jonga* or *Zumai.* There are mythical stories connected with the origin of *Zumai* and it is considered as divine or sacred. In religious ceremonies the *Zumai* is the most essential item to be offered to gods and goddesses. All the members, male, female and children are allowed to drink this item on festive occasions. Rice beer is *prepared at every home* by the female folk. At the time of agricultural
activities, worships, marriage ceremonies even sickness people use it and according to their belief it rejuvenates the body and mind from all sorts of worries and fatigue.

There are many rituals connected with birth to death and after death of a person in the Boro community. After marriage a couple expects children otherwise it is not a complete family. They cherish birth of a boy or girl equally. After birth the midwife or Dhai cuts the umbilical chord with the help of a sharp bamboo slit or blade and the placenta buried in the courtyard or at a distance within one's own compound. The sacrifice of a chicken is must to offer the deity and the midwife is entertained with chicken meat and rice beer. No such elaborate rituals are observed. Only mother and child remained confined for a period of 9 days, while coming out the mother put the soil of the door entrance at the forehead of the child. Rice beer is also nominally given at his tongue to taste. The priest or Douri purifies both the baby and the mother by sprinkling holy water mixed with Thulungsi (basil leaf), dub grass, sesame and rice. A gold ring is deeped in the water, which is given to the owner afterward. Dried naval chord is not thrown away; it is kept inside the house or put into a Tabiz and tied to the neck of the baby.
Puberty rituals are not observed in the Boro society. When the girls or boys are of marriageable age the parents of both side look for their bride or groom. In Boro society parents are responsible for the marriage of their children. The consent of the boy or girl is not all considered necessary. Parents or guardian of a boy will go first to see the girl in her house. If they first see the girl working in the courtyard, drying rice or combing her long hair, it is considered as a very good sign. The Thundercloud, snake or Neol cross the road from left to right when they are traveling then it is considered as a bad sign. If the party sees dead body on the road that marriage will not be fruitful and the arrangement is cancelled. The Boro-Kacharis generally prefer marriageable girl to be good looking, with long hair, long fingers and fine narrow waist etc. Boro girls also like tall figure with heavy well built ankle and narrow waist of their would be husband. The choice of the boy or girl is of no importance for the guardians for there is a saying that the choice or love of the immature boys or girls are like “a fire of paddy straw” as these are burnt for very short period and become ashes immediately.

There is a custom of keeping a pair of silver bangle by the bridegroom’s party at the roof of the living house of the girl in certain districts of
Assam. If this pair is not returned within a week then grooms party think the proposal is accepted by the parents of the girl. There is a custom of visiting the bride’s house by the groom at least for one time after negotiation. Then the girl is supposed to bow down in front of him with the floral gamcha woven by her. If the girl does not offer gamcha then it is the sign of unwillingness, so the marriage proposal is cancelled. If the groom is offered with gamcha then the marriage is fixed. After these formalities the Khabri or Goi Thao Khaonai, is offered by the groom’s family in the bride’s house. A relative with a pair of rice beer and betel nut and betel leaf (pan) accompanied by two women (Ayotí) relatives visit would be bride’s family. The women must cut the betel nut and leaf carried with them and distribute among the relatives and neighbors invited by the bride’s family. The male member who carried the rice beer must distribute it among the male members sitting in courtyard. Those who have embraced “Brahma Dharma” should carry tealeaf and sugar instead of rice beer. After this occasion, two three times visiting of the bride and groom’s family members in each other’s house, both the parties fixed the date of marriage. The date of ceremony is fixed according to the convenience of both the parties. On the day of the ceremony the girl’s father invite relatives and villagers to attend the same. Women folk are
particularly invited to help in work and also to sing songs. The marriage ceremony is performed in the groom’s house after the marriage party takes the girl to groom’s house. In the simple ceremony the girl and the boy bow down in front of the villagers and exchange garlands. The Hathachuni ceremony is performed by allowing the bride to cook rice and chicken and distribute to the groom and his family members and invited guests. She is also allowed to bow in front of the Mainao in the Ishing, on that day before altar by offering rice and curry in banana leaf. In case of the follower of Brahma sect, the bridegroom go to bride’s house and perform Hom Yogya at the house of bride and then bring the bride with him to his house. After performing the rituals the villagers sit in the courtyard and the bridegroom has to bow down in front of the villagers and invited guests of the brides family with offering of two baskets of rice, betel nut, gamcha and two coins on top of it. The father should accept two coins as a bride price. There is also a custom of offering Rs.1.00 to Rs.1.50 or so to the villagers by the groom’s party. In certain districts the bride price amount is only Rs.5 to Rs.15 and that is also not accepted but the bride’s family must accept the two coins. After this ritual a nominal amount of money, Rs.5 to Rs.15 is to be given to the villagers which is known as Malcha this money goes to village fund of the bride’s
parent. There is a custom of handover of the bride by the guardian to the groom, known as *Mokhra Simnai*. There is another custom of giving special honour to the bride's maternal uncle by the groom's family; on the day of marriage ceremony it is only the form of promises to offer the honour. There is a custom of the Boros, that if the girl becomes widow then she should be returned to her parents family with that *Malcha* money to the villagers to be returned to the groom’s family and this is known as *Khola Gothainai*. The last item is to pay Rs.2.50 to the village headman of the bride’s village by the groom’s family, which is called as *Barihaga*. After this marriage ceremony is finished and the bridegroom leave the place with the bride along with the relatives of the bride and village elders. All of them arrive at the groom’s house and take feast and rice beer offered by them. After taking meal the bride’s party leaving her, proceed to their own village. In return they also carry rice and half of the pig meat offered to them, which is cooked into a feast in the bride’s house at the arrival. After the feast all of them go to their own place. The *Douri* purify all the places with the holy water and marriage ceremony is completed. After eight days the bride with the groom visit their original home, bring with the rice beer, *Muri* or other biscuits or sweets and meat etc., it is known as *Athimangal*. 
Boros have traditional belief and practices connected with death of a person. They have to perform these rituals as the soul will loiter within the house and not be able to go to heaven if these are not performed in right time. There is a common burial or cremation ground for each village. They either bury or burn the death body. Death body is carried to the burial ground by lying in a bamboo bier. The groove from which bamboo are used for funeral is considered as taboo and from that groove no bamboo is taken for any other purpose. Before taking out the dead body is washed and scented oil or mustard oil is massaged all over the body. Hair is combed and kept on the bier. Relatives cook rice and chicken and then give to the mouth and then cover the dead body with white cloth. It is tied to the bier with cane. In the waist a very tight knot is given so that in the next birth the person will be born with a narrow waist or slim figure. Then four male members to the grave carry the bier on the shoulders. Before them a person will carry a long thread to the grave, which will show the soul its way to the burial ground. If the dead person was unmarried a banana tree is planted near the grave. In their belief a man should not be alone in the next birth. A branch full of leaf is planted with any male or female so that in the next birth he or she will possess plenty of hair on their head. A coin, a knife and a bunch of paddy straw left near the grave
in the belief that the dead person can use these items. After returning from
the graveyard the persons take bath and chew bitter leaf. Then sprinkling
of holy water with *Thulungsi* leaf purifies them and after that they may
return to their home. Before entering into their home again they are
purified by sprinkling holy water and on fire. After ten days a dress of
dhoti for male and *Dokhna* for female with betel nut and leaf and some
food are offered at a place near water. The particular place is cleaned and
a white cloth is tied over four bamboo posts under which the above
mentioned items are offered to the dead and after sometime these are
taken back. Next day a feast of *Sardha* is offered to the neighbors and
relatives. A male member only can perform this *Sardha*.

According to their belief, there are several reasons of illness. These are, 1)
Evil eye of the evil spirit may fall on a person when he/she walks on their
way unknowingly. 2) Intrusion of foreign objects into human body. 3) By
performing black magic by someone with the help of certain objects like
nail clippings, hair, cloth, earth, food remnants, bodily excretion etc. 4)
*Evil sights and words* of a person. Whenever somebody falls ill then the
village medicine man (*ojha*) called in. He diagnoses the causes of illness
with the help of divination and then makes necessary arrangements for the
treatment. It is deeply believed by the people that they must offer puja to gods or goddess before taking any medicine. It is done by the ojha. There are different deities responsible for different types of diseases, e.g. Kuber mwdai, Hagrani mwdai are responsible for body ache, arms pain, stomachache, stomach disorder etc. There is a belief among the Boros that some of the persons born on Tuesday and Saturday possess “evil eye” or “evil word”. Their sight or word may cause a disease named Khuga-nagnai. The persons suffering from Khuga-nagnai feels very weak and cannot take rice or any food properly. Any elderly woman of the family can treat such person. The woman collects red chili, small stick of broom and a piece of old cloth on Tuesday or Saturday, burn these things together by uttering the spell like “Sanibar-Mangalbar Khuga, Eh hwnba bih thu thu”. This act is performed in the evening time.