CHAPTER V

SOCIAL LIFE

Family life, Kinship, Marriage, Religion of the thesis have been presented in this chapter
CHAPTER-V

SOCIAL LIFE

The Boro people of the Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela villages are living in traditional type of closely-knit families. Each village has a number of households. According to our observation the people of the sample villages are very simple and innocent. They are very frank and pleasant in manner. They are peace loving and hard working in nature. The village has a co-operative society and a village committee to maintain the village smoothly. These committees have helped in running the social norms and solving the problems of the villagers. It is the means to handle all functions of the village. There are two halmaji (messanger, peon) in these villages. Their functions are to inform the villagers for the meetings in the villages according to the direction of the president of the village committee. The village committees are the rulers of the village, and they can demand fine also as the form of punishment. There are two douri (priest) in each village, and they received remuneration for their service. Their functions are to sprinkle holy water on every sankranti (domashi in
Boro language) day and to offer earthen lamp to village than (religious place). All the three sample villages are divided into two parts for their convenient rulings. The Belguri village has two divisions, one fraction of the village Belguri (25 households) is dominated by the Bathou religion. These people do not sacrifice animals, birds etc. to the God and Goddesses they offer prasad along with various kinds of fruits and flowers. Besides the village organization there is a ABSU and a ABWWF unit in the village, they are representatives of the village unit and keep tie with the anchalic committee of the area to maintain the social norms of the community. The people of the village live like a joint family and they are co-operative in nature. They like to work collectively.

FAMILY

The family constitutes the essential background to study the social aspects of the Boro. In every society families are the building blocks that constitute a society.

Family is one of the basic and oldest human institutions. It is a social institution, which maintains the structure of the society. Thus, it is the
fundamental institution that fulfils various human needs. A family is regarded as the simplest and smallest social group or unit based on marriage. Man in order to maintain his existence has to observe certain natural law, which are given the name of instinct. They are responsible for preservation and development of human race. All these things are possible in the family. Family thus fundamental unit of human society and that fulfils various human needs. It has existed since times immemorial and shall to exist till the society exists.

A typical Boro family consists of closely related persons, who live under the same roof, eat from the same kitchen, share reciprocal obligations towards each other and form a functioning domestic economic unit. A household is a special or a local group; it may not be a kinship group. On the other hand a family is a kinship group marked by kinship relationships. The members of a family need not live together as a household in order to be a family. They used the term *fwler* to designate the family and *bhagi* or *bahagi* to designate all the effective kins. The word *gubun janai* is used to designate separation of joint family. The Boro family is the primary social unit around which the social structure of
the society revolves. The family imparts learning to the individual on all those subjects whereby he/she can become an ideal member of society.

The other biological basis of the Boro family is sexual reproduction, which obviously requires the activity of both sexes. The sexual urges of males and females are controlled through the institution of family. They must have offspring. Though the biology of reproduction does not necessarily requires marriage, yet the Boro society, like other human societies have adopted a general norm concerning child bearing. It should occur in the family, which is to socially recognized and constituted, not outside the family. Abortion is permitted by their society. Hardly they can marry girl from other religion. Although one may get married from other caste or religion, needs to perform the norms of parasit for the purification of the girl/boy.

Among the Boros of the study area the family is the first socializing agent. All infants receive extensive training to acquire the personality traits, internalize the group values and norms and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for participating in and perpetuating society.
The family usually maintains its socializing influence through most pre-adult life. Many of the basic values of the society its fears, superstitions, taboos etc. are first introduced to the young through the family. Family is the first institution to mould their children.

To maintain orderly group living, the Boros of these villages assign status and position to its members. The family plays an important role in this status ascription, a process that begins when the family gives a name to its newborn child.

Sexual behavior of the Boro people is regulated through the institution of the family to maintain harmonious group living. The Boros of these villages has taboos on sexual relations between husband and wife during menstruation and for some stipulated period before a religious ceremony. In the family the children are taught that sexual relations between close relatives are extremely disruptive to the family group. It is only after marriage that a person is allowed to have sexual relation with his or her partner and not with anybody else. Extramarital relations, sexual intercourse between a married person and some one other than his or her
Plate 1: Bathou.

Plate 1a: Nuclear Family.
spouse are customarily forbidden. The Boro people in the village are equally vigilant in preventing such behavior and in punishing offenders.

The Boro family is the major group that meets the affection needs. Marriage and the family are looked upon as the prime source of emotional satisfaction. Boro society recognizes that adults as well as children need affection and it also expects that adults will satisfy these needs within the family. They provide an intimate, close relationship in which one receives intense emotional response from others.

In Boro family is as much as a source of affection as companionship for its members. Children in a nuclear family look to the parents for love and security, because their cousins usually are living in a distant place. It is in the family that the child is loved unconditionally. We observed that the parents of these villages are seem to take this function seriously and try hard to provide their children with love and affection.

The part family plays in producing and distributing goods and services that its members need for survival constitutes the family's economic function. In the sample villages, family is the basic economic unit. A
family is responsible for managing in every side. The mode of livelihood also depends upon the ecological setting. The family members build their house, raise their own food and make their own clothing. The economic activities are undertaken for the general maintenance of the family. Some of the females of these villages have personal income by selling country liquor, poultry etc. In some houses the girls are meeting their needs by weaving cloths of neighbors or of neighboring villages. Some boys of the village have side business and also worked as wage laborer to meet the personal or household needs. Besides these there are some peoples who made their income by cutting wood and selling it in the market. The position of the head of the household is unique in respect of economic activities. In all kinds of decisions in the family is granted by the head of the household. He has the prime power in decision-making. The females are given less priority in decision-making purposes. The decision-making includes all respects.

The norms of adoptions are considered in these villages. The couple having no children can adopt a child. The child may be of other caste. The couples that are willing to adopt, pay nominal money to the parents or guardian of the child in exchange of the child. Before adoption there is a
purification rite that is known as parasit, after this rite and exchange of
the nominal money the adoption of the child is completed. The adopted
child has same right as own child of the parent.

Nuclear family is prevalent in all these villages. It contains generally only
two generations. As soon as the second brother marries, he no longer
prefers to live with his family. He may establish a separate household in
the village or any other place. He has to construct his own house. Thus he
becomes a head of an independent household.

The joint family distributes some functions of the family throughout the
larger family beyond the nucleus. Although child rearing is considered the
primary responsibility of the parents, the adult such as grand parents,
uncles and aunts also shares it. But Roles are not strictly assigned.

The Boro people of these villages follow patriarchal family structure. The
line of descent of the Boros is traced through the father who is the head of
the family. He is the ruler, adviser and caretaker of the family. All the
male members of a family enjoy the right as one goes out of the family
with the intention of living separately from the joint family.
The livelihood pattern of the Boros of the sample villages is very simple. The male members of the village who are cultivators, used to go to their field and the laborer goes for daily labor and serviceman left for office.

The females do the entire household works; they prepare cloth in their looms and also take care of the children. They also give a helping hand in the agricultural field. The children though go to school, they also give a helping hand in their household works. The female children have taken more responsibility in helping their mothers in cooking and taking care of her younger. On the other hand the male children help their elders by watching cattle etc. in the field.

The daily activities of the three villages are almost same. The peoples of these villages are enjoying most simple life. Their daily work routine is almost same.

Some case studies on the occupation pattern of the Boro people of the three villages are presented below
Case No. 1
Name: Biron Boro  
Sex: Male  
Age: 45 years  
Occupation: Rickshaw puller  
Place: Ghiwnala

Biron Boro aged about 45 years of Ghiwnala village is a rickshaw puller. He told that he owned only 2 bighas of cultivable land and it is not sufficient to manage his family. So he worked as rickshaw puller and the agricultural land is given to other as sharecropper. Besides this his wife, son and daughter also worked as daily wage labourer.

Case No. 2
Name: Kulen Boro  
Sex: Male  
Age: 47 years  
Occupation: Cultivator  
Place: Belguri

Kulen Boro, aged about 47 years of Belguri village is a cultivator. He narrated that he owned 10 bighas of agricultural land. He practiced both *Ashu* and *Sali* crops in the field. Annually he earns Rs. 20,000 from this cultivated land. Along with the paddy cultivation he cultivate in the kitchen garden and earns Rs. 5000.
Habi Ram Boro, aged about 60 years, an inhabitant of Ghiwnala village narrated that, he belong to a member of joint family, the total family member of his family are 22 in numbers. He has two wives and after marriage his four son with their family members living together in same oven. He owned 40 bighas of cultivable land. He earned 40,000 approximately in crop season. Their main source of living is agriculture. Besides agricultural income, his two sons are govt. service holders. They can manage nicely out of their income. They are not thinking about the separation of family. All the family members worked together in the field at the time of plantation and harvesting time.
Case No. 4
Name Ramesh Boro
Sex Male
Age 49 years
Occupation Rickshaw puller
Place Belguri

Ramesh Boro, aged about 49 years, of Belguri village is a rickshaw puller. He told that at present he has two sons and after marriage they are living along with their family members in the same hearth. He has 10 bighas of cultivable land. His son worked in the field and he also helped in the field when he is at home. Besides cultivation his sons go for work as daily wage laborer whenever they get leisure time.

HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE BORO OF BELGURI, GHIWNALA, MURMELA

Besides the interpersonal relationships among the Boro family of the three villages, there is also certain household relationship in these villages. The household relationships are not only among the kinship but also with the neighboring families. The villagers have a good tie among all the families. They share their joys and sorrows together with the neighboring family. They have received help from their neighbor in the crises time also. In the occasions of marriage or other ceremonies the neighboring people help
each other. The neighbouring households helped in the funeral rites. There is a norm in the funeral rite that the entire neighboring household must have to donate rice, vegetables etc. to the owner.

In case of house building, ploughing, uprooting of seedlings and big trees etc. the neighboring households help other. Among the females also at the time of setting a loom and to plaster the walls of the house with mud the neighbouring females help each other.

RELATIONSHIP WITH DIFFERENT RELIGION

There are good relationships among the peoples of different religions in these villages. Although the villagers do not take part major role in the religious purposes of other religion, they visit and cooperate the peoples of other religion. The people of these villages invite other religious peoples also in their ceremonies and functions.
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEIBOURING COMMUNITIES

The Boros of these villages have a good relationship with the neighboring communities. We have observed that there are the traditions of bonding with the persons; these relationships are, Bisigi khanai, Bima-bifa lingnai, Bibo lingnai and Bida lingnai etc. These types of bonding strengthen the relations with the neighboring communities. There are also a few ties, which are marriage with the neighboring communities as a result of love making by the Boro youth.

TIE A BOND WITH EACH OTHER (Bisigi Khanai)

It is a relationship made by two persons who have personal interest to tie a bond with each other. In this relation the social position of the individuals are the same. But there is another consideration also among them in this regard the position that the individual may be higher or it may elder than the other in which house the ceremony is performed. These relations are made between male- male and female-female. In this ceremony if the relationships are between female –female the elderly people of the village tie up jointly the hair of both the female and ask them to feed each other a
little quantity of rice beer or water from same pot and then let them to exchange the gifts after bowing down face to face. After this both the females salute to the elderly people present in this ceremony. In male-male relation ship they only exchange the gift items with goi jora fathwi jora (a pair of betel nut) and feed rice beer or water to each other. The elderly people or the douri chanting mantras as from today you both are become as Sakhi and you both must have to share your sorrow and sufferings equally for both the family; and sprinkles holy water to them. After this ceremony address them each other as Sakhi or Mithini in case of female and Mita in case of male. From this they are considering as a close family relationship to each other and both the parties address with same relations to their parents and other relations. In this ceremony there is a tradition of raging of the individuals; that is that attendances are pour water to them or paste a kind of fruit on their hair Agara (a kind of small plant found in jungle) as known to them. This raging is a means of merriment.

TIE A BOND BETWEEN A PERSON AND ANOTHERS PARENT (Bima-Bifa Lingnai)

There another bonding made between the parents of other family and an individual. In this relation if any individual have personal interest to tie
this bond, come to that household and bowing down to the individuals and presented the gift and feed the rice beer or water to the would be parents of the household. During the ceremony the elderly people and the *douri* chanting the mantras as, from today he/she will be your son/daughter and sprinkles holy water to them. After that the individual salutes all the peoples present in the ceremony. From this day the individual address them as father mother and they also address the individual as their son or daughter.

**TIE A BOND BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUALS AS SISTER (Bibo Lingnai)**

It is ceremony of bonding of the sisters. If any individual have a personal *interest to be sister of each other* they tie with this bond. Although they have no blood relation it is a ceremony of binding both the individual as sisters. In this ceremony the would be elder sister sit to the east and the younger sister bowing down to her and has exchange their gift item with *goi jora fathwi jora* and feed rice beer or water to first to the would be elder sister and next to the younger one. During this ceremonial rite the village *douri* and the elderly people chanting *Mantrs* as from today you both become sisters to each other, both of them must have to share your
sorrow and sufferings each other, you do consider the and sprinkles holy water to them. After that both sisters salute to the people present in the ceremony.

**TIE A BOND BETWEEN PERSONS AS BROTHER (Bida Lingnai)**

This is a ceremonial rite to tie the relations of two brothers. If the individuals have the interest to tie up a bond as brothers they come to the elders house and performed the rite. In this rite The elder brother sit in the east side and the younger brother bows down towards him then exchange their gift items and feed rice beer or water each other. At this time the village *Douri* or the elderly person chanting Mantras as from today you both become bother and you must have to share all the sorrow and sufferings; after this Mantra the *Douri* sprinkles holy water to them. The mode of address to the other family member is same for the both brothers.

These type of bonding may made with the same villager or between the neighboring villager whether they may be of other cast or even from other religion also. This is a good means tie up with the neighboring
communities. These types of bonding are practiced from time immemorial. There are also examples of *Bisigi khana* in these villages with the neighboring state, the Bhutias of Bhutan.

Along with the development of society now the marriage with other community as a result of loves are considered by the Boros of these villages. As well as we have found some examples that their marriage tie also made by other religious people also. Only they avoid the marriage with the Muslims. Still we have found a few examples of the marriages with the Muslims. *The girl got married with the Muslims by way of elopement with the boy.*

The relatives of the girls who got married by elopement report the following cases.
Case No. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mala Boro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>45 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Ghiwnala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mala Boro aged about 45 years of the Ghiwnala village, narrated that his younger sister got married with a Muslim boy by way of elopement. They have no objection as it is his sisters own selection and only wish their happy life. His sister visits his home with her bridegroom. His family also pays visits to his sister's house.

Case No. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jawaharlal Boro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Murmela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jawaharlal Boro aged 40 years, narrated that his younger sister got married with a Muslim boy by way of elopement. They had objection that she got married with Muslim boy and did not allow her to come to their house. Now they allowed visiting their house but they do not allow sharing everything as the people of own religion.
MARRIAGE

Marriage has been defined as a union between man and woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents. (Notes and Queries, 1951)

Marriage ensures a biological satisfaction (that of sex) and a psychological satisfaction (that of having children) of the individual plane; on the wider collective plane, it ensures a two fold survival, viz., that of the group and its culture. (Majumder and Madan, 1963)

The nature of the marital bond is basically the same everywhere. It involves the social sanctions, generally in the form of a civil and religious economy, authorizing two persons of opposite sexes to engage in sexual and the other consequent and co-related socio-economic relations with one another.

Marriage can be of several types. All over India or in other parts of the world there are rules of prohibition, preferences and prescription in deciding the form of marriage.
A taboo on sexual relations between closely related kin like parents and children and between siblings (except in Royal families of Egypt) is universal. But other than those above relations marriages within the relatives can be preferred in one society but prohibited in another society. It depends on the rules of the marriage endogamy or exogamy of the society.

The Boros strictly follow the rule of exogamy in marriage. It is generally the boy who selects his wife and the marriage proposal shall have to be initiated from the boy’s family. We observed the Boros of study villages follows mainly the following marriage type. These are,

1. Arrange marriage or marriage according to standard practice (*Swngnanwi lainai haba*)
2. Marriage by adopted son-in-law (*Ghwrjia lakhinai haba*)
3. Marriage by entrance of bride to the bridegroom’s house (*Kharsonnai haba*)
4. Marriage by taking away of bride forcefully (*Bwanwi lainai haba*)
5. Marriage by elopement (*Dwnkharlangnai haba*)
6. Marriage by a man living with widow (*Dhonka habnai haba*)
ARRANGE MARRIAGE OR MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO STANDARD PRACTICE (*Swngnanwi Lainai Haba*)

This marriage is solemnized according to social customs. In this type of marriage the parents of the bridegroom select the bride and then the marriage is settled after negotiation. This type of marriage is regarded as a regular marriage. The bride price is not compulsory among the villagers.

There is a norm of ring ceremony before solemnizing the main marriage, known as 'astham swnai' or 'goy thao khaonai' or *Khabri hwnai* in Boro. The bridegroom’s foot has washed up by the younger sister of bride and 'bwirathi' (females who cuts and distribute betel nut at bride’s house) offer five betel leaves, five betel nuts to bride’s party before entrance to the bride’s house. Then the bridegroom has asked to move five times around the 'Bathou' (the place of worship of *Bathou* or *Siva*). The parents of bride and bridegroom tie the bond of in-laws and a ring has placed on fourth finger of the bride by the bridegroom. As the ring ceremony has completed. The main marriage is solemnized within the following year.
In this type of marriage an advance party visits the bride’s house with bride’s dress and the girls to cut and distribute betel nut at bride’s house. These girls are known as ‘bwirathi’ in Boro. The bride family arranges a prayer group. When the bridegroom arrives the groom’s house welcome them from the gate with the prayer party. They carry basketful rice with a pair of betel nut and earthen lamp at the time of welcoming the party. Before entrance to the gate the bridegroom’s foot has washed up by sister of the bride own or other, and then proceed to the bride’s house following the group. Then the whole groom party sat in front of the altar (Mwndap) and the ‘bwirathi’ distributes betel nut to all present there. After some time the bride and bridegroom sat together and the prayer party started chanting Mantras after sprinkling holly water by the priest. The bride’s family handover the bride to bridegroom, tie up their chadar and all walked around the altar five times. It is the end of the marriage at bride’s house.

After completion of the marriage at bride’s house the bridegroom’s party as well as the bride’s party proceed to the house of the bridegroom along with the bride. As soon as the bride arrives with the party, the members of the bridegroom’s family and the villagers welcome her after washing her
feet with holy water. She is purified with holy water, which is kept ready by the *douri*. After purification she is asked to step over a burning earthen lamp and break it with her feet into pieces in front of the kitchen. The Boros of Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela village believed that if the bride can break the earthen lamp into pieces then she will bear children after marriage and if she fails, then it is believed that she will be childless.

A feast is arranged for all the members present there. After this feast there is a custom of offering meal by the bride to bridegroom and his friend, known as *Hatha Suni janai* in Boro. The marriage ceremony is complete after this custom.

The following case study is given as an example of arranged marriage in one of the village.

**Case No 1**
Name – Sukleswar Boro
Sex – Male
Age – 35 years
Occupation – Cultivation
Place – Ghiwnala

Sukleswar Boro aged 35 years of Ghiwnala village narrated that his marriage is *Swngnanwi lainai haba* (arrange marriage). After negotiation
Plate 1b : Joint Family.

Plate 2a : Bride's elder brother handover his sister to bridegroom.
a date is fixed for the marriage. The informant said that before solemnizing the main marriage the Astham swrai (ring ceremony) is performed. His (bridegroom’s) foot has washed up by the younger sister of bride and ‘bwirathi’ (females who cuts and distribute betel nut at bride’s house) offer five betel leaves, five betel nuts to bride’s party before entrance to the bride’s house. Then he (the bridegroom) has been asked to move five times around the ‘Bathou’ (the place of worship of Bathou or Siva). The parents of bride and bridegroom tie the bond of in-laws and a ring has placed on fourth finger of the bride by the bridegroom. In this way the ring ceremony has been completed. The main marriage is solemnized within the following year.

On the day of marriage an advance party visits the bride’s house with bride’s dress and the girls to cut and distributes betel nut at bride’s house. These girls are known as ‘bwirathi’ in Boro. The bride’s family arranges a prayer group. When the bridegroom (informant) and the party arrived the bride’s house they welcomed by the bride’s party from the gate. Before entrance to the gate sister of the bride own or other washed up the bridegroom’s foot, and then the party of the groom proceeds to the bride’s house following the bride’s group. Then the whole groom party sat in
front of the altar (Mwndap) and the ‘bwirathi’ distributes betel nut to all present there. After some time the bride and bridegroom sat together and the prayer party started chanting Mantras after sprinkling holly water by the priest. The bride’s family handover the bride to bridegroom, tie up their chadar and all walked around the altar five times. It is the end of the marriage at bride’s house.

A feast is arranged for all the members present there. After this feast the informant’s family arrange the norm of offering meal by the bride to bridegroom (the informant) and his friend, known as Hatha Suni janai in Boro. By this norm the marriage ceremony is completed and the new couple started their happy life.

**MARRIAGE BY ADOPTED SON-IN-LAW (Ghwrjia Lakhinai Haba)**

It is solemnized at the house of the bride. When the parent has no male child then they arrange the Ghwrjia lakhinai haba. This marriage is mainly based on the will of the parents of the bride. In this type of marriage the bride’s family arrange a feast for the villagers.
MARRIAGE BY ENTRANCE (*Kharsonna Haba*)

In this type of marriage, the bride voluntarily enters the house of the bridegroom before the settlement of the marriage. The consent of the parents of the bride is not taken into consideration.

MARRIAGE BY TAKING AWAY FORCEFULLY (*Bwnanwi Lainai Haba*)

According to this system of marriage the bride is forcefully taken away from the house of the bride to the house of the bridegroom and than the marriage is solemnized.

MARRIAGE BY ELOPEMENT (*Dwnkharlangna Haba*)

This type of marriage is the marriage by elopement of both bride and bridegroom. It is possible through the mutual understanding between the bride and bridegroom. This is a kind of irregular marriage system.
The following case of elopement has been recorded in the field.

Case No. 1  
Name - Babul Boro  
Sex - Male  
Age - 22 years  
Occupation - Cultivation  
Place - Murmela

Babul Boro aged 22 years of Murmela got married without consent of his parent. He narrated that his parent did not agree his marriage with the girlfriend. So with his girlfriend he ran away secretly from home and got married at Kamakhya temple. After six months he returned to his house with his wife and his parents formally informed to in-laws. At last his in-law considers their marriage and invited them to their house and arranged a feast for villagers.

**MARRIAGE BY SERVICE (Dhonkha Habnai Haba)**

In this system of marriage bride is a widow. If a man lives in a house of a widow as her husband then they are recognized as husband and wife by the society.
RELGION

Majumdar and Madan (1990) stated that, “from the etimological point of view, Bouquet has shown, religion is derived from the Latin word rel (l) igio, which itself is derived from either the root leg—which means ‘to gather, count or observe’, or from the root lig—which means ‘to bind’. In the former sense the implication is belief in, and observation of signs of Divin Communication. In the later sense the implication is the performance of necessary actions, which may bind together man and supernatural powers that be. Both the implications are relevant in view of the fact that beliefs and rituals have been found to be the main component parts of religions everywhere.”

Religion is a part of life of the Boros. It is very closely related with the socio-economic and cultural life of the Boros of Belguri village. In every aspect of life, they have experience the influence of god and goddesses. Their experiences are guided by religious beliefs. They believe that human being can live happily only with the blessings of supernatural powers. Like all animistic religions, that of the Boros of Belguri village,
religion consists of the beliefs in a multitude of benevolent and 
malevolent spirits. To some is attributed the creation, to others the control 
of natural phenomena and the destinies of man from birth to death are 
governed by a host of divinities whose anger must be appeased by 
sacrifice and whose good offices must be entreated in like manner.

The Boros of these sample villages follows traditional animistic beliefs. In 
Ghiwnala and Murmela village the two parts follows same kind beliefs 
and sacrifices fowls, duck, goat etc. to their god and goddesses. As the 
influence of neighboring people the introduction of Bathou religion is 
found in the Belguri village The followers of Bathou religion are not 
sacrificed any object to their god and goddesses, only they offer Prasad 
and flowers. There are two paid douris, in each part of the villages who 
are sprinkles holy water on every Sankranti and offer earthen lamp to the 
god Siva at their permanent than (temple). In the part of Bathou follower 
of Belguri village the Douris service tenure is three and half month. They 
have sprinkle holy water on every Sankranti or Domanchi day and every 
Tuesday then they offer earthen lamp to the Than. Except Tuesday the 
Douris are offer the earthen lamp in the Than at their own cost. The 
Bathou followers of Belguri village clean their houses every Tuesday and
assembled at *Than* (temple) and jointly pray to the God *Bathou* with *kham* (drum), *sifung* (flute) and *jatha* (cymbal). In the village there is a tradition of purification rite on *Sankranti* day of every month.

Some of the important deities and spirits are,

*Bura Bathou* (Siva), the main god of the Boros, another sixteen gods with *Mero* God (Ganesh), the *Bishahari* (Manasha), the goddess of safety, *Maa Kamakhya* and goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. They have offered these pujas in cyclic order during their lifetime.

According to the view of the villager, the welfare and health of the people lies in the hands of god and goddesses. So whenever somebody falls ill, it is attributed to be cause by any god who seems to be offended by the wrong doing of a particular person. In this type of sudden illness, the villager goes to village *kabiraj* or *ojha* to detect the god who is the responsible for such illness. After detecting, the *ojha* offered puja to that god. The method of detection is known as *gwdan nainai* (a process of divination).
In the village the treatment also made which are caused by the evil eyes of the evil spirit and also some other diseases in traditional way. They do not call doctor at delivery time also. The traditional dais (midwife) of the village is attended at the time of delivery.

**KINSHIP**

Kinship study is a central theme for social anthropologist. The desire for reproduction gives rise to two kinds of bonds. Firstly, there is the bond between spouses and their relatives on either side; and secondly, there is the bond between parents and their children, and that between Siblings. The first kind of bond is known as the affinal kinship and the relatives so related are called affinal kin. The affinal kin are not connected to each other through blood. The second kind of bond is known as consanguineous kinship, which is related to each other through blood.

Depending on degree of kinship, the kins can be of primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, distant etc. If a person is related to ego directly, then he is ego's primary kin; e.g. father, mother etc. are ego's primary consanguineous kin, and one's wife is primary affinal kin.
Any kin related to ego through primary kin is known, as secondary kin, e.g., ego’s mother’s brother, or father’s brother is secondary consanguineous kin and ego’s husband’s mother is secondary kin.

Likewise, the secondary kin of our primary kin and primary kin of the secondary kin will be tertiary kin. The degree of kinship can thus be calculated, theoretically to several degrees.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

The kinship terms are used to designate kins of various types. The kinship terms are divided into two categories – classificatory kinship term and descriptive kinship terms.

CLASSIFICATORY KINSHIP TERMS

In this system various kins are included in one category and all are referred to by the same term.
DESCRIPTIVE KINSHIP TERMS

In this system one kinship terms refers to one kin at a time.

The following table shows the kinship terms of the Boros of Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela village.

**TABLE 12 KINSHIP TERMS AND MODE OF ADDRESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Terms of Address</th>
<th>Terms of Reference</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>So</td>
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<td>Fishajw</td>
<td>Fishajw</td>
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<td>Binanao (Agwi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Br Wi Si (Y)</td>
<td>Bibonang, Agwi</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field study*

**Note:**

Fa = Father  
Mo = Mother  
Hu = Husband  
Wi = wife  
So = Son  
Da = Daughter  
Si = Sister  
Br = Brother  
E = Elder  
Y = Younger
From the above table it becomes clear that depending on the sex kinship terminologies vary among the Boros. As for example, the term *Abwi* belongs to feminine gender and refers to Fa. Fa. Si.; Fa. Mo. Si.; Mo. Mo. Si. etc. while the term *Abow* is masculine gender and refers to Fa. Mo. Br.; Fa. Fa. Br.; Mo. Fa. Br. etc.

Again kinship terminologies depend on the relative age of the speaker and person spoken to. For example, Brother is designated as *Bhai*, but elder brother is termed as *Ada* and younger brother is termed as *Fongbai*.

It is to be mentioned that the same kinship term is used in respect of younger brother’s wife and son’s wife. For example, Baohari refers to both sons’ wife and younger brother’s wife and the behaviour pattern also remains same towards younger brother’s wife and son’s wife.

**KINSHIP USAGES**

In every society the behaviour towards relatives is not the same as *behaviour towards non-relatives*. A person always owes certain obligation
to his kinsmen. The pattern of kinship behaviour is to some extent biologically determined. Moreover, role and status of the individuals in a society are customarily influenced by kinship. The kinship usages found among the Boro are: Avoidance, Joking relationship and Teknonymy.

AVOIDANCE

The Boro observe a kind of restrained or avoidance behaviour towards a daughter-in-law, towards a mother-in-law, the man and his younger brother’s wife, wife’s elder sister, and husband’s elder brother. Similarly, avoidance is also shown in between son-in-law and his mother-in-law etc.

JOKING RELATIONSHIP

Joking relationship indicates the equality and mutual reciprocity. Among the Boro, joking relationship is found between a man and his wife’s younger sister, between a woman and her husband’s younger brother and between grand parents and grand children.
TEKNONYMY

The Boro of Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela have practice that a wife does not utter the name of her husband. She calls him using the names of their son or daughter, for example, she addresses him as ‘Hangmafa or Hangma Bifa’ (father of Hangma) or ‘Dodefa or Dode Bifa’ (father of Dode), etc. Hangma or Dode being their daughter.

Factors like kinship, age, sex, etc. help to regulate the relationship between individuals among the Boro. The behaviour rules vary with age, sex and nature of kinship.

Some salient features of kinship relationships and behaviour among the Boro may be described as under:

HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP (Fisai-Bihini swmwndw)

The relationship between the husband and wife is based on mutual love, affection and harmony. Though the society gives lower status to the wife
(lower because she is under the guardianship of the husband), among the Boros of the sample villages the position is almost same with that of husband in the household activities. A good deal of this relationship depends on the mutual trust response by each other. A happy couple knows how to strengthen this mutual trust and belief. As long as a man’s parents are alive or there are other elders, particularly males in the household, his relations with his wife are somewhat limited in nature. It is not as broad as when it is a case of simple biological family. He has no exclusive natural responsibility on her behalf and it is the duty of the household to look after her. Similarly, a woman is not expected to do anything for her husband alone, unless, of course, she is the wife the head of the household. Thus she may not cook any special food for him and even if she wants to wash a shirt of her husband, she would collect the dirty cloths of other members of the household. The husband and wife are supposed to look after jointly for the well being of the household.

In the economic spheres, as well as in other affairs concerning the management of the household, the wife always remains subordinate to the husband. The husband directs all economic activities of the household. He is supposed to lead the household to economic prosperity. He has no
separate entity apart from the household. While the husband is the legal head of the household, the wife is entitled to definite considerations. The wife has complete hold over some household properties like fowls, goats and pigs, which the husband cannot dispose of without wife’s consent. Adultery on the part of the wife or the husband is a great crime. Structural relationship between husband and wife is strong.

PARENT-CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP (Bima-Bifa-Gothoni

swmwndw)

The parents take care from every side of the children. The father is responsible for food, clothing and taking care from education side. The mother has the responsibility of taking care of children beginning from feeding the breast milk. The mother is taking a vital role for growth of the children. She prepares food for them, feed them with love and affection. She washed up their children and educates to go to the school. The mother taught their children to respect the elders.
BETWEEN BROTHERS \textit{(Bida-fongbaini swmwndw)}

Ideally, a relationship of co-operation and unity is desired among the brothers. Brother, till their adolescence, are just play-mates but in the subsequent stages of life the younger brother is expected to respect the elder ones; the latter are expected to be kind, sympathetic and helpful to the former.

BETWEEN SISTERS \textit{(Bibo-binanaoni swmwndw)}

The relationship among married sisters is not marked by the same intimacy as holds true in the case of brothers. The sisters are more closely connected in pre-marital years, but after they get married, they settle down with their respective husbands, far away from each other. Then meet only in ceremonial occasions such as marriage, death, birth or festival.

BROTHER’S WIFE AND HUSBAND’S YOUNGER BROTHER RELATION \textit{(Bibajwi arw Bibonangni swmwndw)}
The relationship between a Bibonang the husband’s younger brother, and a Bibajwi the elder brother’s wife is normally frank and uninhibited. They can freely converse with each other. Their moving together is also unobjectionable.

The relation of an elder brother with his younger brother’s wife is formal and reserved. *In such* case, face-to-face conversation is neither permitted nor prevalent. From a distance, the man can however, convey something through teknonymical reference.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH IN-LAWS (Bihao-Bikhunjw-Bihamjw-Bijamadwini swmwndw)**

This pattern of relationship involves obligations, respect and sentiment. *The parents, in general, maintain a relationship of love and respect with their daughter-in-law. She too, favourably responds to the prescribed norms of relationship and behaviour. She is expected to speak with low voice and respectfully, avoid sitting or partaking of food in the presence of the senior members of her husband’s family.*
The relationship pattern of a man with his father-in-law and mother-in-law involves respect as well as reserve.

A daughter-in-law extends more respect to her *Bihao* and *Bikhunjw* as compare to the degree of respect shown by her to her husband. For example she does not burst into laughter in the presence of her *Bihao*. Reciprocally, a *Bihao* has to be very careful in his dealings with his daughter-in-law. Whether or not she is present in the house, a *Bihao* would enter into it only after coughing in order to alert the daughter-in-law of his presence. If a *Bihao* is negligent in his behaviour towards his daughter-in-law, he is criticized and degraded.

**GRAND PARENTS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP** *(Abwi-Abwo, Bima-Bifa arw gothofwrni swmwndw)*

The mother of the newborn baby cannot work any household work up to one month after childbirth. After ending of one month she can does every household work as her usual routine. In a joint family its parental grandparents, rather than own parents play the dominant part in rearing the child. When baby cries, the baby’s mother is asked only to feed the
breast milk and she takes it bed with her at night. For the rest of the day it is looked after by its grand parents, particularly the grand mother, other member of the family also give a helping hand in taking care of it. The boys up to six years spend most of their time in playing. They have learned behavior from the adults. The girls of the younger age also have to give their helping hand in household works. A girl may be married between the age of 16 to 20 years and the parents of the Boros of the sample villages expect that the daughter to do all household work. Thus, the girls are follows the elderly women. But with the present changing environment the marriage age of the Boro girl also considers as the neighboring communities.

ROLE OF KINS

ECONOMIC DEALINGS AND KINSHIP

Kinship and economy among the Boro are deeply interconnected. Economic help and co-operation are sought, at times, in order of preference, from various categories of persons in the kinship circle. Apart from rendering mutual assistance through physical labour, help in the
form of cash and kind is obtained at the time of marriage, while purchasing an animal, while constructing a house and when in need of grains. By and large, the members of one’s own kin-group are approached for the purpose. In case, the requirement is not met with from them, the next to be contacted is the maternal uncle. When a man fails to get a favourable response from the maternal uncle, he banks upon his Bihao, the father-in-law. It has been noticed that a Bihao usually obliges his son-in-law by extending material help as he feels that his own daughter might otherwise suffer. The next category of relatives who are approached for economic help is Bigumwi, the sister’s husband. An important factor is that in all cases of economic transactions between the members related through kinship, no interest is charged.

SOCIAL CONTROL AND KINSHIP

The kinship system of the Boro is effective in the socio-political life of the villagers also and relates to matters of social control. The family leadership headed by the father or the grandfather, is maintained. The latter gives direction to the inter-family affairs.
For certain matters specific members, from the consanguinal or affinal kinship circle are asked to act as mediators. For example, when two brothers, after the death of their father, decided to live separately and divide the ancestral property, they always take help of their Biyadwi, the younger brother of the father or Bimayong, the elder brother of the father.

The involvement of various members at the time of marriage, both from consanguinal and the affinal relations, is not done for the sake of kinship demand alone. It has also got a deep functional interpretation. At any stage of married life, if there is a conflict between the husband and the wife, it is the members of kinship groups who generally sort it out through social pressure and compromise.

DESCEnt

“Descent has conventionally been defined in anthropology as a principle of transmission of group membership; descent rules are the rules which in a given society assign membership in a kin group, which is thus referred to as a descent group”. (Seymour: 1986)
The modern family recognizes kinship with both parents' families of origin and therefore, it has been called a bilateral grouping. Of course, this recognition may not be equally weighted on either side. For example, a mother's surname may not be perpetuated in the names of the offspring. Thus, there are sibs, which completely ignore one of the two lines of descent and are, therefore, called unilateral groups. Opposed to such groups are double-descent and bilinear kin groups. The bilineal kingroups consists of only those persons who are related to ego through both patrilineal and matrilineal ties. Double descent involves the inclusion of some kin representing each line. If a common ancestor is the binder among a people, they are called cognates. In case their common ancestor is a male they are called agnates or agnatic kin or patrilineal kin; whereas the descendants of a common female ancestress are called uterine kin or matrilineal kin. Those kin who are related to each other directly through descent are called lineal kin and those who branch out from the main group, like uncles and cousins, are called collateral kin. From the study, it is found that, the Boros of Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela village follows the unilateral descent rule. They completely ignore mother's line of descent. Therefore, it is patrilineal in nature. The children use the surname of the father. Lineal and collateral kins are present in their
family. In the nuclear family the son, daughter is lineal kin. And the uncles or cousins are the collateral kin in a joint family seen amongst the Boros of Belguri, Ghiwnala and Murmela village.

INHERITANCE

Right to ownership and possession of property, both movable and immovable, transcends down to successors in every society. Customary laws in many societies govern succession or transfer or modes of inheritance of property in most cases. Therefore, importance of study of inheritance or succession of property in understanding the aspect of any society cannot be underestimated.

Ordinarily father is the head of the family in Boro society. Therefore, all property, both movable and immovable, belongs to father. During lifetime of father all the members of the family as joint property enjoy the property, and the question of succession or inheritance of property does not arise during the lifetime of father. After father's death, mother becomes the natural guardian of a Boro family.
According to the social custom, paternal property devolves upon sons in equal proportion. This is the age-old tradition of the Boro society. Daughters ordinarily have no right to property. But of late, a breakthrough is noticed in their age-old convention. Affluent families allocate a share of land property to daughters but the extent of land allocated to daughters depend absolutely on the goodwill of the sons, and there is no mandatory social custom legitimizing daughters' right on paternal property.

In respect of right of ownership of residential house, their customary law demands that the son or sons who remain with their parents till their death, is/are entitled to the total or major part of the residential houses. The son or sons who have otherwise settled somewhere else on their own and did not remain with their parents till death are not entitled to claim residential house. Same principle of natural justice becomes operative in respect of inheritance or division of immovable properties, of which major shares go to son or sons who take care of parents during their lifetime.

Though transfer of property or inheritance is not put to effect during lifetime of parents, circumstances sometimes necessitate the partition or
distribution of property, both movable and immovable. Sometimes, the son or sons' demand/demands a clear demarcation is made of their 'would be inherited property' during their parents' lifetime. In such cases partition of both movable and immovable properties is made by a memorandum of agreement arrived at on mutual understanding, and the terms and conditions of such memorandum are dictated by social customs or customary laws, as mentioned earlier. In such memorandum of agreement provisions for maintenance and subsistence of parents are provided. The peculiar feature of this society is that they, as far as practicable, do not take recourse to legal processes of the court to settle the disputes connected to inheritance, succession, partition, etc., of property and elderly persons of the village settle all these disputes according to the convention and social customs.

Social customs with regard to inheritance of property by widows deserve special mention. As mentioned earlier, under normal circumstances, a widow is entitled to the right to enjoyment of her husband's property, the division of which will be enforced after her death, or, until she marries again. But in case a widow does not have any son or sons, and in case she remarries in accordance with the customary laws governing remarriage,
then, her husband's property devolves upon her husband's brother's son or sons in the same manner as in the case of inheritance of father's property by sons. In the absence of any such blood relation, the right to property devolves upon the nearest kins of the deceased husband.

If a man leaves a minor son or sons behind, in such case, though mother is their natural guardian, the deceased's brother helps her to look after the property till the son or sons attains or attain majority.

*Genealogy showing inheritance pattern*

![Genealogy diagram showing inheritance pattern]

- ▲ = Inheritors
- △ = Male
- ○ = Female