CHAPTER NINE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BORO AND RABHA

After a critical and thorough study about these two communities, it has come to know that the Boros are a race of the Mongolian people who are described to be inhabitants of a country North of the Himalayas and west of China, on the other hand the Rabhas are also one of the nine-scheduled tribes in the plains districts of Assam. The total population of the Boros and the Rabhas in Kokrajhar district are 1,90,841 and 6,840 respectively. From these figures of their population it is seen that the Boros covered major portions of the area than that of the Rabhas.

However, there is no different view points regarding their origin and affinity, because both communities are the Kacharis. In regards of dwelling and livelihood patterns, they are not differ from each other. Both communities like to live in compact blocks or villages. They generally form 'Suba' or 'Suburi' blocks, Mondals, village etc. The similarities are also found in food-habits, construction of houses, Agriculture etc. Both communities livelihoods are mainly based on agriculture and they undertake cultivation of both 'Ahu' and 'Sali' alongwith some amount of pulses, mustard seeds and jute. Rice is the staple diet of both the communities.

They are similar too in regards of dresses and ornaments. Both the Boro and the Rabha use ornaments for ear, nose, neck and hand.
made of Silver and Gold, the Boros and the Rabhas are used homemade dresses for both men and women. They produce 'Muga' and 'Endi' which is also one of the traditional culture. The women of Boro and Rabha are expert in weaving and are the expert weaver. They know how to spin and weave well. But there is also to some extent differences between the Rabha dresses and Boro dresses. Generally, the Bors are used 'Dokhna', 'Fasra', 'Gamcha' etc. whereas the Rabhas are used 'Rufan', 'Kambung', 'Dhuti' etc.

In regards of religious and cultural lives of the Boro and the Rabha, both of them are similar to each other. The Boros celebrate different festivals like Baishagu, Katigasa, Kherai etc. and the Rabhas also celebrate so many ritualistic festivals like Baikhu Puja, Langapuja, etc. Regarding the life cycle, both communities are also same. The Birth, Marriage and death ceremonies are celebrated by the both communities.

From this discussions it is observed that there is no any differences between the two communities the Boros and the Rabha. But, it is a matter of great regret that the Boros and the Rabhas are educationally most backward. The literary percentage of this Scheduled Tribe is only 30.92 according to 1991 census. Between this two, comparatively the Rabhas are too backward to Boros. During the field studies, it was observed that there were no any separate L.P or M.E. Schools and High Schools for 'Rabha Students' in Kokrajhar district. The Rabhs students are generally admitted in the Assamese medium schools and it is also another interesting thing that in some areas where there are
majority of Boro medium schools, the Rabha students are admitted to
that Boro medium schools. The enrolment of the Rabha students in
both Assamese medium and Boro medium schools are very poor. In
case of women/ girls education the guardians or parents are conser-
vative. They themselves, develop the negative attitudes towards the
women educations. It is no doubt that in Agricultural works, in spining
and weaving, and other household activities the women are very ex-
pert and they are equal to each other in status and activities. But
educationally, the Rabha women are most backward than that of Boro
women. Educationally the Boro women are advance and develop to
some extent. Comparatively, the education of Boro women is better
than the education of Rabha women. In language in literature, the
Boro community is much advanced and developed than that of Rabhas.
The Boros have their own language and dialects and there are so
many written as well as published books on Boro language. The Boro
language becomes one of the associate official language of Assam
under (Amendment) Act 1985. But the Rabhas although have their
own language and dialects yet it remains as undeveloped. It has re-
cently been made some efforts to standardise the Rabha language
and to impart education at the Primary level in the district of Goalpara.
On the other hand, Boro language has already introduced as medium of
instruction throughout the various stages upto higher secondary level.
Even there is a separate Boro department in the University of Gauhati.

Therefore, after observing all the view points, it can came to the
conclusion that the Boro community is developed, advanced in Edu-
cation, literature and language comparatively than that of the Rabhas.