Chapter-VIII
PRESENT TRENDS IN SOCIAL CHANGE
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India is a land of diversity with distinct race, culture, language, religion, ethnic group etc. During British rule these diverse groups of people were brought under the domain of British dominion and constituted into a single political unit. After the achievement of independence these groups of people continued to remain as the composite part of the pluralistic Indian society. Prior to incorporation to British rule they lived in their own way. They led an isolated, integrated and self-content natural life. There was abundance of natural resources around them and they would not bother about their livelihood. Their needs were very limited and they set a limited goal for them for survival.

They did not maintain closed interaction with outside world. The self-regulatory mechanism of their society was strong enough to maintain equilibrium and order the society. Their religion, custom and tradition played very important roles in regulating deviant behavior of the society.

British government in India introduced different types of economic, political, administrative, judiciary, and education system as institutional organs with different types of norms, ideals, values and functions, which were totally alien for the Indian masses. They also brought new ways of western culture and civilization, science and technology, new ways of thinking and mode of living different from Indian society.
Till independence, the level of involvement and participation of the people in all these systems was very low. Only elite section of the society had the privilege to involve and participate in the new system. After independence the government of India, retained all the institutions introduced by the British government with necessary modifications and enforced them by law and slowly the level of the participation of people increased high.

The objective of freedom movement of India was primarily to establish democracy, economic and social equality, justice, welfare and development of the people. The introduction of new institutions undoubtedly brought many positive changes in the societies. But, at the same time, it also brought many complicacies in the societies. For the effective policy implementation we should understand both positive and negative perspectives of social change.

Change in Economic life:- In order to translate the spirit of Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Central and State Government have enacted several laws, schemes, and programmes and plans specially the Five Year Plan for the development of tribals. For the purpose of policy formulation, intensive as well as specific studies have been conducted on the culture, economy, religion etc. of the tribal people. But both Central and State government have never been undertaken such study on Bodo society, their culture, religion, economy. We donnot find any study materials conducted by either anthologists, economists, govt. planners as what is done in case of other tribes. In regard to economic system of the Bodos we donnot have any authentic information. Twentieth-century ethnographers based on the contemporary socio-cultural conditions of the Boros have tried to draw a picture of Bodo economy. But, while doing so, they did not consider the perspectives social dynamic, evolution and variation of human biology, influence of cultural contact, role of environment on culture and physiology, history, archaeology etc. The Pre-Hindu culture and civilization of the main stream Bodos who created glorious history before conversion to either Hinduism or Islam were completely kept aside. However a gloomy picture of the economic system of the Bodos is depicted.

Hodgson’s articles, descriptions of Buchanan, note and diary of Jenkins, Statistical Accounts of WW Hunter provide some information on the economic system of the Bodos during 18th century. Buchanan and Hodgson made extensive studies on the Bodo society. Buchanan and Hodgson stated that only after coming contact with Hindu culture and civilization the Bodos developed ideas
on settled agriculture and used plough. (It is a matter of doubt, because the philological studies shows that, basic agricultural terms in Indo-Aryan language are of non-Aryan origin, Dravidian or others. It might be directly Dravidian derivation. And by 18th century major sections of the Bodo population already started a settled agricultural life. Spade was used in minor cultivation like, horticulture, vegetable, cotton, etc. The excessive growth of population created pressure on land and unemployment problem. In order to release the tension, excessive population migrated to other forest area and settled there. J.B. Ganguli, equating. Bodos with hills tribe of Garos and Tripuri, insist to say that, Boros also practiced burning and shifting cultivation. The view of Ganguli is partially correct. Demographic area of Bodo population during 17th and 18th century was quite different from that of the 20th century. Structure and nature of land in hill area is totally different from the plain. Land of hill area is never fit for settled agriculture. Shifting and burning cultivation and use of spade and hoe is a feature of hill agriculture that cannot equate with agriculture of the plains. Feudal economy is associated with settled agriculture and there is the record of collecting regular revenue from Bodo subjects by their king. And in the meantime, thousands of Bodos by the process of sanskritisation have been absorbed into caste Hindu fold losing their community identity. Buchanan and Hodgson from their individual field experience stated about the economy of Boros and allied tribes living in the plains. They never mentioned anything about the pattern of agriculture followed in Hill people. Bodos and allied tribes produced multiplied crops at the same time at the same plot. Writings of Buchanan and Hodgson give an impression that, Bodo people always prefer to live in plains rather than hills. Buchanan says, the Bodo people produced 16 types of rice at the same time and at the same plot. They also produced bhutta, different kinds of dal, till, nil, vegetables, chilly, lao, Kumbra, Jika, kachu, and cotton in abundance. And they remitted their land revenue to the king on the basis of plough they used in paddy production. Royal servant regularly collected taxes from their Bodo subject. Bodo subjects were extremely loyal to their king. Along with settled agriculture they also prefer shifting cultivation due to availability of abundance of land.

They produced basically for domestic consumption and not for commercial purpose. Their economy and life was nature based. Except some items like, salt, kerosene, match stick, they derived their essential items of livelihood from nature. They collect necessary vegetable and fire wood from jungle. They reared pig and poultry initially for domistic consumption. They produced their clothes themselves. Bodos rear cows and buffalows since immemorial time which indicate that plough cultivation was an old tradition amongst the Boro or they rear these animal for the
purpose of meat consumption. They lived in thatched house. Their needs were limited. The level of per capita income and per capita consumption was very low. Still then, they led a self contended life. After the establishment of British rule there was gradual but massive change in Bodo economy. That changes can be experienced in terms of production, consumption, exchange, employment, growth of population, unemployment, etc. Traditional feature of Bodo economy has completely changed.

Change in the mode of consumption: Till the establishment of British rule in India the Bodo people as a whole was agricultural community. Agriculture was the only means for livelihood for all. The arrival of British people in India brought with them new culture, material and ideological, civilization, scientific and technological which ultimately led to radical change in the structure and functions of Indian social institutions. Rather, we can say that the structure and functions of traditional society was replaced by the institutions introduced by the British government. Availability of material contents essential for happiness and comfort in life produced by machines and industry, new mode of life, increased the needs of people in general. In traditional society the needs of people were very much limited which were easily fulfilled by nature in which they lived. The level of consumption of people increased up to very high than what was in traditional society.

In traditional society adult man used two or three pieces of garments only for the whole year. And in entire village, hardly one or two, man of honour used to put dhuti-panjabi. Now putting on long-pant become very common for very adult members, even the villagers. With long-pant obvious need is at least one or two pairs of shoe. Wearing of slippers become universal for all from children to dying old. At least a piece of banyan is used by all male, adult or minor. Toothbrush and tooth paste becomes the item of daily usage. School going children have more things to use. People moved from one place to another by walking. Items of daily consumption also increased. So, the mode and level of consumption in life totally changed and increased. The effect of modernization effected the Bodo society in other way too. Due to growth of population the areas of per capita land holding was decreased, number of unemployment and land less people increased. During last sixty/seventy years the excess population migrated to different forest area of Assam and cleared jungles and created new revenue villages and settlement area. This type of settlement areas are in found abundance in Dhemaji, Gohpur, Mingmang, Rangapara, Dhekiajuli, Belsiri, Orang, Sibsagar, Langhin, Merapani, northern part of Kokrajhar, Sirang, Baska, districts etc
Majority of the people of these areas are living below poverty line. We have no any statistics about the total number of Bodo villages due to their location in scattered areas. The present day Bodos do not represent uniform level of consumption, rather, depending upon the nature of employment, income and occupation. We may superficially categorize into some classes as follows-

People with below poverty line will constitute majority. Under this category landless labourers, woodcutters, rickshaw pullers, daily wages earner.

People in minimum subsistence level who hold cultivable land and acquired their livelihood primarily from agriculture,

Above subsistence level or lower middle income group i.e., people engaged in govt and semi-Govt. offices as teachers, clerks etc,

Middle-middle income group includes Govt officer and low-grade employees in addition who hold productive land.

High-income group includes high-ranking govt. officers and Grade I contractor and a few privileged section of the society.

Till 1990, the govt. of India practically did not take any efforts from realistic point of view for socio-economic development the tribal people of Assam. For the upliftment of rural economy different type of scheme under the Directive Principles of State Policy have been adopted by both centre and state government. During Janata govt. in 1977-78 Tribal Development Authority was created for economic development. But it could do nothing. The schemes are implemented only in the papers, but actual fund allocated for the purpose had never been properly utilized. The schemes under District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Jawahar Rojgar Yajana (JRY), Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP), Training for Rural Youth Self Employment (TRYSEM) etc. over all failed to the targeted goal and bring basic changes in the economic structure of Bodo people. "Many of the schemes do not reach the ground level, as most of the schemes are enjoyed by a section of people, who are mostly favoured by the government officials or the leaders of the ruling political party. The Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), which came into being after a long movement for separate state could not do much to improve the condition of the grass root people AS a result it has increased the inequality gap between poverty and prosperity." Earlier Assam Government and Assamese people were alleged for the backwardness of Bodos. Now the power is in the hands of the Bodo leaders and just to observe how they execute the power in their hands either for the society or selfish interest of their own.
Change in the mode of production and income: - Earlier, productions were made for the purpose of domestic consumption for specific season and the access of the production were used in community consumption. People do not feel it necessary to store their production for future. Introduction of new systems changed the structural and functional system traditional society. Necessity of life increased, and with the increase of needs, people learned to produce more food and store food not only for consumption but also for marketing. They fulfill their additional needs of life by selling the excess of the production. This mode is not only confined to rice production and other primary needs but extended to other things, like, vegetables, cereals, fruits, weaving of clothes, rearing pig, goat, poultry etc. In spite of social protest and legal restriction in many areas country liquor is produced for commercial purpose which was earlier produced for domestic or community consumption. Bodo people in earlier were not at all interested in trade and commerce. Business and commerce in Bodo areas are controlled by other community specially Bengali and Marwari. Business establishment with small investment are coming up in remote Bodo areas, initiated by unemployed Bodo youths. Bodo women are far ahead of the male counterpart in this regard. During last 10 to 15 years vegetable market in Bodo areas are equally accessed by the Bodo women. In extended areas of Kokrajhar town many new business and commercial establishment have come up. Almost all these new establishment are organized and owned by the Bodo youths. Government contracts are the monopoly of the Bodo youths particularly in the Bodoland area. Bodo youths are hankering after easy money. Their quality of works is quite low.

Bodo women are natural weaver by community. A Bodo woman who does not know the art of weaving is a discredit for her. But, Most of the Bodo women of the last generation do not know the art of waving. Rather they show quite indifference towards weaving tradition. Even, in most of the Bodo villages, women regularly use the purchased garments from market because, modern Bodo women have no time for weaving garments. Many weaving industries particularly of traditional Bodo dress have come up during last ten years under the entrepreneurship of many spirited youths, male and female. In the long run the owners of the garment industries will constitute high class economic stratum and traditional weaving culture would go under the control of this group.

Since the of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma the Bodo Children have been motivated by the society as well by the guardians to acquire school education instead of trade, commerce or agriculture.
and other professions. Target of education was to get employment in government offices. All the educated Bodos of the early part of 1980 were almost absorbed in the govt. and semi-govt. offices. These employees drawing salaries from Govt. treasury constitutes another category of economic class. Their mode of life is more sophisticated and better than the rest of the society. Level of consumption is also higher. Individualistic attitude in terms of economy is increasing.

The Bodos are the numerically largest scheduled tribe in Assam. Linguistically they belonged to Tibbeto Burman speaking family. They are a section of the great Bodo race. They had migrated in Assam in the pre-Christian era from the Western China and Tibbet. At present they are mainly concentrated in Assam, Bengal, Nepal and Meghalaya. The social structure and cultural forms of the Bodo society is synthetic in nature blending of the indigenous Bodo elements with Sanskritic elements. Separation of Hindu elements from the Bodo culture and social structure are not possible.

The status of the Bodo women reflected in the traditional Bodo society is quite different from that of the post independent society. Before talking about the status of Bodo women we need to understand the meaning of the ‘status as a concept of social science. Commonly, we use the terms, like ‘status’ of women, status of Brahmin, status of Sudras, etc. in order to define the position of a particular segment of society. As indicated by the term itself, ‘status’ implies the position of member or group of members in a given society. Society is a Web of relationship. Hence ‘social status’ is a position of a member or a segment of members, in the network of social relationship in a society.

According to Ralf Linton “status are the polar positions... in patterns of reciprocal behaviour”. A polar position comprises ‘a collection of rights and duties”6 Thus he conceived of status as a group of rights and duties. Members of a society conform these rights and duties by performing certain roles. When a person is enacting these rights and duties, he is said to be performing a role. Status or positions of a member of a society is defined by the roles he or she performs. Social status corresponds to social roles, ascribed or achieved. In order to understand the status of a member or a segment of a society we must know the roles performed by that particular member or segment of society.

Anthropologists or social scientists have identified three important criteria for understanding the ‘social statuses in simple society, i.e. sex, age and kinship. The Bodo women are a segment of
the total population of the Bodo society and can be explained the status and role of the Bodo women in terms of age and kinship. The kinship system refers to a set of persons recognized as relatives, either by virtue of blood or by virtue of marriage relationships that is through what is called affinity. Kins are bound by virtue of blood relationship and marriage. As a member of a Kins group, a person occupies a specific position in the society and his or her roles accordingly. We may explain the status and role of women within the network of kinship relations.

Age is another criterion on the basis of which roles is divided. Certain roles are specifically assigned to minor age group and important roles are assigned on adult. For the convenience of our understanding we may stratify the entire Bodo women population into three categories, like, (a) minor aged group (b) adult and (e) old aged group.

Aidan Southal on the other hand identifies four 'Role Domain' for explaining the status of a member or a segment of a society, i.e., Kinship domain, economic domain, political domain and religious domain. Aidan’s frame works of ‘role domain’ provide a wider scope for understanding the status of a member or a segment of a society in general and the women in particular as well. Efforts will be made of explain the status of Bodo women under the Aidan’s frame work of role domains as it provides wider scope for the purpose.

The roles of the Bodo women under ‘Kinship domain’ may be explained in two levels, i.e. pre-marital level and post marital level. Before the marriage, a woman is a member of a particular family of orientation. She acquires her membership either by birth or adoption. The family is the basic unit of social structure of every society. It is true both for simple and modern society with complex social structure. Statuses in the society are determined by the internal organization of family, its' degree of autonomy, sanctions of taboo by which it is protected and perpetuated. The specific pattern of family life in any given social structure is the product of mores and varies with time. Children, either male or female are taught largely by their families to conform to socially approved pattern of behaviour. Family prepares the children for participation in the larger level and acquaint with larger culture. Individual social identity is initially fixed by family membership by being born to a given status and characteristic. The children take on the socio-economic class standing on the parents socio-economic positions in which they born including its behavioral pattern and definition of reality. In addition to internalizing family attitudes and beliefs children are treated and defined by others extension of social identity of their parents.
Before the marriage, a woman is a daughter of a “family of orientation.” Father and mother, brothers and sisters are her immediate kinsmen. Daughter is regarded as the transient or non-permanent members of the family. Her relations to parents and other elder members are of love, mutual affection, respect and of obedience. Every member of a family has to play ‘some ideally set roles’ or normally expected roles, which are defined by social mores and values. She has to play different types of ideally set roles with different members of the family in different ways such as a daughter, sister, granddaughter, as nice, aunt, etc. Her role in the family is defined by her Kinship position. Her relationship to younger member of the family is of love and affectionate. Her role differentiations are extended to lineage and clan level. Whatever roles (Services, duty and works) she plays with her kins in the parents’ family are all a sacrifice to the family.

The actual position of a member of society is determined by the actual roles that one plays. Actual roles played by women may be different from ideally set roles or expected roles. We have general perception only on the ‘ideally set roles. But the real scenario of the women’s roles and statuses are totally different. If a woman performs her roles above the level of expected or ideally set roles, she may be considered as a good woman and commands a good position in the society. But when a woman performs her roles below the normally expected roles or contrary to the ideally set roles, she may occupy low position in the family or society.

The role of daughters as Kin members in the family is determined by the structure and economic condition of the family. In a poor family, the role of a daughter is cooperative, contributory and substantive in terms of economy. In her early time of childhood, she is to perform the role of baby seer at home. A female child also performs as baby seer in other family. She leads responsible and difficult life. Even now, in spite of government’s policy of compulsory education for all children, the children from poor family in the rural areas hardly could avail this chance for education. They are to drop out from schools.

On the other hand, the situation in a family with subsistence economy is different from that of the wealthy family. Young girls, from wealthy families comparatively lead an easy life. In such families, both boys and girls are oriented towards modern education. Parents are not interested to make their children a good man or woman on the basis of the ‘ideally set roles’ prescribed by traditional mores and values. Instead they desire their children to be employed in government or non-government office, which is non-manual in nature.
The culture of the Bodo society emphasizes the marriage of daughters. Earlier, the life was simple and the necessity of life was limited. Marriage of girls was not a problem. Now situation has changed. The basic conditions of economic life have totally changed, the necessities of life have increased and society becomes complex. For economic uncertainty both boys and girls are not interested in getting marriage. Marriage of a daughter constitutes a difficult problem for every parent these days, and constitutes a ‘major women issue’ in the Bodo Society. Unmarried girls beyond age limit are neither desirable by parents nor individual girls concerned. For a father it is a burden and a state of dishonor and anxiety and for a girl it is a curse and a state of sorrow. Normally society doesn’t like a girl to remain unmarried beyond age limit. Psychologically, they are aware of their positions. And, in order to get relief from anxiety they move to towns and cities and engaged themselves as household workers, and workers in small scale industries and started independent lives. The number of this category of woman is quite considerable.

The attitudes of the parents towards girls are not fair when it is compared to boys. Boys are more preferred than the girls and options for higher and costlier education are more opened for boys than the girls. It is attributed by the fact that girls are disposed to another family after marriage. Daughters don’t enjoy the rights of property inheritance. This is the most important factor that attributed to economic uncertainty for unmarried girls.

After marriage a woman is incorporated into her husband family with different family structure and economic conditions. The family structure and economic condition of the husband family determined the roles of the newly married bride. Her living in the new home is in a way conditional, depending on proper behaviour, efficiency in the household work, amicable relationship, service to the elder, pleasure to husband and gifts she brings at marriage. At the marriage rites, the couple promise to associate one another in all circumstances in pain and pleasure, prosperity and adversity till to death. Her relation to husband is of love, friendly, mutual respect and affection and cooperative. Endle has stated that, the position of Bodo Woman was sub-ordinate to her husband, but the direct observation of fact convinced Endle that, the Bodo husband treated his wife with distinct respect and regards her as an equal and a companion to an extend which can hardly be said to be the rule among many of the Indian people. In comparison to caste Hindu society Bodo women enjoy greater freedom in the society.
Stating the freedom enjoyed by the woman in Assam. W. Robinson stated that, the women of Assam were beautiful to look at and they go about in public without any artificial modesty unlike the woman of other parts of India.\(^\text{10}\) Definitely Robinson indicated to the women folk beyond the caste-structured society of Assam. Her role to the father and mother in laws is of love, respect, obedience and servitude. She is subordinated to mother-in-law in the management of household affairs. In the absence of mother-in-law she manages the household affairs. She maintains avoidance relationship with the elder brother of her husband. Her relations to younger member of the family are of ‘love, affection, master and guide.’ Women in the family are regarded as ‘Noni Mainao’ or *Lakshmi*. These are the ‘ideally set of roles,’ normally expected to be performed by a women after marriage in husband’s family.

There are lots of differences between the actual roles performed by a woman and ideally set roles of the women. Desai and Thakkar observed that, women themselves sometimes become oppressed and oppressor.\(^\text{11}\) There are instances of Bodo women of becoming oppressed particularly by husband in drunken state. Barren woman without child become a subject to dishonour in the society. Woman without child is a great disqualification for her. A woman may be ill treated or oppressed due to her miss-conduct and character.

Sometimes, it is seen that, woman herself usually become oppressor instead of being oppressed. Daughter-in-laws with better economic background and modern outlook from wealthy families married to a son working in government service created tensions in the family. She for one reason or the other used to come into conflict with other members of the family. In these conflicts ultimately the son takes side of his wife. When the husband is the only earner, she gradually begins to control the family affairs and tension in the family grows. And slowly the bride herself turns to an oppressor and she becomes the factor of anxiety for other members of the family.

Employed women on the other hand put rational domination on the family. Due to her education and economic position she enjoys comfortable position in the family as well as in the society. A few women with irresponsible, mischievous, quarrelsome, jealous, envious cruel in nature create tensions not only in the family but also outside the family. Such type of women is referred as ‘Rankhmi, Khungkhmi, Mwnsari, fansari’ etc. Generally, people avoid such type of women. Due value is given to quality but not on beauty which is reflected by the *Bodo* proverb, ‘Mohora mwjang akhola angjang’, the meaning is beautiful in form but ugly in characters.
Economic domain: Desai and Thakkar\textsuperscript{12} says, “Women’s work is of tremendous value to family, society and state, but it was always remained invisible.” Again they say, “Women’s contributions to economy remained hidden because their work especially in agriculture and in the unorganized sector remained unenumerated.”\textsuperscript{13} The roles of the Bodo women perform in the economic domain are in no way less than male counterparts. The Bodo society is a patriarchal society and so the contributions of the women are not duly recognized. “Men are bread winners, so, they, not the women are head of the house hold.”\textsuperscript{14} This statement is not appropriate in case of the Bodo Society. In poor family and in the families in simple society, women take very important roles in the economic domain of society. Earlier, it was stated that from her minor age Bodo women play vital, effective and contributory roles to the family economy.\textsuperscript{15} In her studies on the economic life of the Karbi Women she made a beautiful remark as, “Daughters begin as soon as their strength permits to help their mother in all her works.” “The poorer the household, the greater the dependency on women’s work for survival.” Similar is the picture of the Bodo women in poor families in rural areas. Newly settled poor families in reserved forest areas in Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bagsa, Dhekiajuli, Orang, Belsiri, Rangapara, Sonitpur, Mingmang, and Dhemaji etc. The women play similar roles in survival and continuity of the families. In traditional Bodo society agriculture was the primary and common occupation to all the families. There were instances of specialized occupations i.e., carpentry, bamboo craft, pottery, weaving etc. But these specializations were not based on hereditary or birth like that of the caste Hindu society. The poor families of the newly settled forest areas in Sonitpur, Darrang, Bagsa, Chirang and Kokrajhar districts women play equal roles to male counterpart to the family economy. When a girl attains five or six year of age, she begins to play her roles as a baby seer in the family. Is it exception to only the families with wealth and property? She helps the families by moving light household articles from here and there as desired by the elder members of the families. With the increase of her ability and strength she begins to help her mother in all kinds of household works. Washing of pots and utensils, fetching of water from stream and well, booming of floor and courtyard of the house, are her regular works. Her orientation is towards becoming a ‘good household worker’. Mother and other members of the family help her in the construction of ideas and experience through socialization and training.

Traditional Bodo society was characterized by isolation, self-sufficiency, self content and distinctiveness and homogeneity; all the essential features of the ‘little community’, conceptualized by Robert Redfield.\textsuperscript{16} The introduction of new social structures or systems since the time of British
rule in India has brought radical changes in structural and functional systems of traditional Indian
societies. Changes have been crept into the Worldviews, modes of life, avenues of life, attitude of
life, necessities of life, organization and structure of society, material culture, value systems etc. of
the society. Society is directed to new dimensions of social change i.e. development, welfare,
progress, unity, peace etc. Indian society has achieved a lot in general but the national policies for
development has failed to marginalize the gap between rich and poor, advance communities and
backward communities, instead has created a new situation attributing to socio-economic
backwardness of the scheduled communities of India. On the other hand new modes of life enhance
the level of consumption at the individual and family life. Under the above circumstances, the lives
of the tribal people turn miserable. Growth of population put tremendous pressure on land. Alienation
of land by non-tribal community, encroachment, illiteracy and many other social, economic and
political factors make these people displaced from their homeland and compelled to settle in a new
reserved forest areas. Their socio-economic conditions become worst.

The deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the families degenerate the roles and statuses
of the Bodo people in general and the Bodo women in particular, all these areas. Poor families in
rural and forest reserve areas lead a very difficult life. Adult women support their family economy
in different ways such as – animal husbandry, especially by poultry farming, Piggery, silk rearing,
weaving. Many women now adopt weaving as a profession. They take important roles in agriculture.
Plantation of Paddy plants are entirely done by woman folk. They also take care of vegetable
garden in the family. They also sell the domestic products in the market and they do shopping and
marketing for daily consumption. The women of poor families, in order to meet the growing needs
of the families of the time undertake the customary production of rice beer for trade. The women
from the families above the substantial level of economy comparatively lead an easy life. They get
their household works done by the maidservant. They take important role in the management of
household works and the socialization of their children.

The post independent India provided to the people new domains of economic roles in the
forms of jobs in the public sector under different departments, in the private sector in different
industries, business, entrepreneurs, trade and business establishment etc. Educated Bodo women
also accepted these chances and get employed as a government servant under different departments,
public or private sectors. The percentage of serving under government departments is less in
comparison to the Bodo male counterparts. The statuses of employed Bodo women are better economically and socially than those who are engaged in agriculture. Employment is the symbol of economic status in itself and sign of being educated.

Political domain: Stating the roles of Bodo women many anthropologist and ethnographers like. Enderson, Gordon, Endle and many others remarked that, both in life and as a matron enjoy a large measure of freedom, which is very rarely abuse for evil purposes. But we don’t find any instances of participating Bodo women in the public life in ancient time from the pictures of the Bodo women depicted by the ethnographers, or anthropologists. Mr. Bhaben Narzary,17 mentioned in his ethnographic description of the Bodo society in the story of Sandw Baodia and Asagi Bwisagi, about the great meeting of the people where entire member of the village both males and females participated. This indicates that on important public issues females also participated. Sarbeswar Rajguri18 has mentioned a number of instances of the participation of women in public life as preachers of Vaisnava religion, simply terming them as ‘Assamese women’ without mentioning their racial affiliation. The ‘Assamese’ is a generic term inclusive of a numbers of racial and ethnic communities speaking Assamese language and living in Assam. The largest section of them is definitely from converted people of Bodo origin and this supported by interdisciplinary studies of history (economic, political, culture, religion of India), language, ethnography, archaeology, anthropology etc.

In the Kachari History of Kachar, the role of queen Induprabha of Raja Gobinda Chandra indicated the roles of woman in public affairs. Women played a very crucial role as a spy in the Kings’ court. Birgwshri was an efficient woman who was appointed as a tax collector by Jaolia Dewan and she collected revenues from the people and paid to the British government on behalf of the Dewan. Gambari Siklal, Theng Pakhri and Birgwshri participated in the war against the British where they sacrificed their lives for the interest of the country, i.e., Shikhnajhar. Bhaben Narzy mentioned two types of Council i.e., first one is ‘Haden’ regional council consisting of twelve villages and ‘Hasung’ the council of a single village.19 The head of the ‘Haden’ was known as ‘Hadung Gwra’ and the head of the village council is known as ‘Hasung Gwra’. No mention has been made about the participation of women in the affairs of the councils. In the present village committee system also Bodo women have equal scope to play roles along with their male counterparts. In the real sense, woman’s participation in the public affairs was facilitated by the
introduction of modern education. Educated Bodo women started to play their roles as a government employees, i.e., teachers, clerks, officers etc. Employment is indicative of one's education, economic position as well as of roles. Higher the education better the job, income and status.

Nadel adopted the principles of content (i.e., the kind of conduct expected) of roles and divided them into two categories of ascribed and achieved roles and accordingly categories the status into ascribed status and achieved status. The status or position that a member of society enjoys or inherits by dint of membership to the society or by birth is ascribed status. The western culture and civilization brought different type of roles. Efficient role-performance involves interest, efficiency, sincerity, aptitude etc. of the members. Better the performance of roles better status in the society. A poor man becomes a rich man or man of power, big officer, industrialist, singer, actor etc. by dint of relentless efforts. The new statuses acquired by Indian people as a result of the introduction of new patterns of economic system, political system, education system, administrative system comes under achieved status.

The introduction of electoral system based on the principles of universal adult franchise is the first step facilitating the women folk of India to participate in the political system. Bodo women at least began to participate in the political domain as electorates. The number of Bodo women participating as a member and workers of political party was a few in numbers. During the time Ranendra Narayan Basumatary, some of his closed lady associates took membership in the congress parties.

The formation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students' Union created a wide avenue enabling the mass people to interact with each other on important public issues. A few educated women were incorporated as member of executive committee of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students Union in different levels and hundreds of other as supporters, and general members. The educated women started taking roles as writers, poet etc. During the time of Bodoland movement led by ABSU, as allied organizations, the Bodo women's organizations, ATWWF, and ABWWF had come into existence. Through these organizations many Bodo women established their positions as leaders, social workers, and politicians. Two MLAs, to Assam legislative Assembly, one general council member to BTAD represented the ABBWWF. ABWWF produced a numbers of prominent Bodo women leaders. ABWWF deals with important women issue in particular and
deals with issues of common interest too. In apparent observation it seems that, ABWWF and other Bodo women organizations enjoy rights exercising their freedom given by the constitution of the country. But minute analysis of the activities of these women organizations shows that they are more or less dependent on men’s organization or parent organizations and most of the time they are used by the parent organization and works as the agent of the same.

Since 1970, a numbers of non-government Bodo women organizations and Associations have been emerging basically to exploits the benefits given by the state and central governments under various welfare schemes. Systematic study is required to depict the actual and extensive pictures of the Bodo women in the political role domain.

Bulks of the Bodo population still practice their ancestral religion, ‘the Bathou’. In this system number of deities is worshipped. Deities are divided into two categories, i.e. house hold deities, ‘Noni mwdai’, and village deities, ‘Gamini mwdai’ in the propitiation of god and goddess, both men and women play very important roles. The priesthood is confined to male only. The priest does performance and initiation of religious rites in community and family levels. In the propitiation of household deities’ women take primary role. For the propitiation of household deities there are two types of altars, ‘bedi’ in every family, altar or ‘bedi’ inside the Ising or Nomano or main house of the northern side. On altar of the ‘Ising’ Mainao is propitiated. On the other hand another altar ‘bedi’ is existed in the frontal side of courtyard of the house on the foot of the ‘Sijou’ tree. Bamboo fencing is erected encircling the ‘Sijou’ tree. The women everyday and regularly mop the altars with clean water and offer Santijal, light ‘vanti’ or ‘alari’, and pay prayers to the deities. Mainao or Lakshmi is propitiated at the alter side the Ising and ‘Bura Bathou’ is propitiated at the altar of the frontal side of the house.

Community rites are performed once or twice in a year. A priest performs initiates rites. In these rites a selected woman performs the role of ‘deodini’, which is considered as the symbol of spirit or deity. The deori or priest by chanting mantras sprinkle Santijal on the deodini and transformed her into a spiritual entity. She moves round and round around the alter by dancing and singing for a long time about three to four hours and she worshipped all the eighteen Gods and Goddess installed in front of the ‘Sijou Bathou’.

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Similar type of community rites is observed at the time of famine, epidemic and other crises of the society. In community rites both men and women are participated. A small segment of the Bodo population follow a peculiar type of ‘Bathou’ religion, which is known as ‘Moni Bathou’. The founder of this religion is a woman. This is a religion blending of indigenous traditions from ancestral religion, ‘Bathou’ and Brahmanic traditions from Hinduism. This religion follows similar types of rites and ritual activities that are practiced in Hinduism, viz, yajnas, Ahuti, hom, Karma, dharma sanskara etc. Basic principles of this religion are derived from Hinduism. Some traditions of ancestral religion constitute an integral part of this religion. The position of priesthood in any levels of hierarchical arrangement is opened for both man and woman. Women can preach, perform religious rites as Purahitas. A woman may attain the highest position of the priesthood by dint of her perfection and purity of higher religiosity. Woman of the family performs every domestic Puja and propitiation of God Shiva and other household deities.

Hindus constitute major section of the total Bodo populations. Hindu Bodo populations may be stratified into three distinct groups, viz, the followers of Brahma dharma, the followers of Sankari Vaishnavism and the followers of the Satang Hinduism founded by Thakur Anukul Chandra.

The followers of Brahma dharma are numerically larger than other categories and found scattered throughout Assam. A significant number of the Bodo populations follows Sankari Vaisnavism and found in the district of Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang, Sonitpur and pocket areas of the Southern bank of Brahmaputra. A minor section of the Bodo populations follow ‘Satang’ Hinduism. It is emerging among the Bodos now. The patterns of ritual activities are different from one another. But the basic principles and secret ideas governing Worldviews and religious behaviours are derived from the fundamental Hindu scriptures. In spite of their affiliation to different sects of the Hindu religion the Hindu Bodos including the follower of ancestral religion pay their respects to different Hindu deities viz, Shiva, Durga, Kali, Mahamaya, Lakshmi, Saraswati, etc by offering prasads and prayers in the festivals. It is due to close socio-cultural proximity and interaction to the neighboring people from historical time.

In the community rites women have a little role to play. Among the followers of Satang and Sankari Vaisnavism there are organizations of women’s fraternity in village level and play vital roles in spreading and indoctrination the principles Vaisnavism. It also plays very important roles as an

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agency of socialization and teaches the members of society relating to their duties towards family, society and to the country. Woman performs domestic Pujas. In fact, traditional Bodo social structures were governed by their ancestral religion, i.e. Kinship relation, economic, political and other social cultural activities were governing by their ancestral religion. And as such, women’s behaviour was also governed by their ancestral religion.

As the religion the Christianity is comparatively younger than other religion among the Bodos. Due to its love, sympathy, humanity, and services to the mankind particularly to the poor and oppressed section of the societies, the Christianity as a religion is emerging among the significant populations of the Bodo society. According to the Bible, the entity of woman, the God out of the bone of man ‘Adam’ created ‘Eve’. Ancient Christianity talks different types of roles and statuses of Christian women. But, the present day Christianity in practiced, reflected a respectable roles and statuses of the Christian women in the society as a whole.

Christianity is divided into two major Sects, i.e. Catholicism and Protestantism. Catholicism provides a wide range of ‘role domain’ to Christian woman. Catholic women have freedom to enter in the religious organization and lead an ascetic life for the service of the God through love and services to mankind. This segment of ascetic nuns with diversity of positions in hierarchical arrangement constitute an integral part of Catholic religious organization. There are numbers of Bodo nuns, who derived honour and respect from common people in general and Christian community inn particular for their sacrifice and services to societies and mankind. In Catholicism, the position of Mother Marry is next to god. It is seen that a number of Bodo women (nuns) have occupied in important position in the hierarchical arrangement of the Catholic organization. They serve the people as priests, preachers, doctors, nurse, teachers, and in different capacities. Common women participate in the Sunday service and the Friday service, which is specially meant for woman.

The Protestantism has different types of organizational arrangement. We see Protestant organization of Christian women in local, regional and district etc. levels. These woman organizations are sub-ordinate to the parent organization dominated by male and selective and temporary in nature. Members don’t lead an ascetic type unlike the members of Catholic organization. The roles of the women organizations are to educate and indoctrinate the dogmas of Christianity amongst the
people. Like Catholic women; common Protestant women also participate in Sunday services and the Friday services. Woman generally initiates women services. Christian Bodos have totally abandoned all the practices of the ancestral religion.

Impact of Westernization or introduction Modern Institutions: - The impact of the introduction of new institutions in India is far reaching. This impact can be explained under following dimensions:

1. Structural and functional adaptation.
2. Integration.
3. Pattern maintenance or self-regulatory mechanism.
4. Tension management.

Every society has culturally set goals, e.g., wealth, property, land, status, honour and some other material and non-material cultural properties. Certain set goals are essential for survival and others are non-essential. Each of the culturally set goals are corresponds to specific culturally defined means. Culturally set goals are understood in terms of material or non-material resources (needs) of society and means are understood in terms of defined ways to achieve those culturally set goals. Each goal is corresponds to defined mean or means. In traditional society, people led a very simple life with limited goals and means. Their needs were primary in nature. Agriculture was the primary means to acquired livelihood. Essential needs for life could easily obtain from nature. Introduction of modern institutions in the country sets available a quite different types of goals and means before the people. The introductions of new institutions brought new opportunities and material and non-material conditions for life. These opportunities and conditions of life are the output of the introductions of western education, economic system, political system, administrative system, industrialization, urbanization etc. New opportunities and conditions of life, as culturally set goals with defined means are not easily and equally attainable for all. Goals and means are integrated. Underdeveloped country with huge population, like India, the available goals or opportunities of life are very meager and limited in comparison to the number of population. As a result there comes extreme pressure on the means. Defined means for the achievement of the culturally set goals practically become nonfunctional due to extreme pressure. In order to achieve the goals people resort to elicit means. In this way normslessness ensues in the structural and functional order of goal attainment system.
A society is a ‘total whole’ composed of different structural and functional units. Proper functioning of a structure depends on the proper functioning of other structure. Similarly male-functioning of a structure leads to non-functioning or male-functioning of other structure. Therefore, different structures of society are functionally interrelated and integrated.

Every system has its in-built mechanism for self regulation even in traditional social system. In democratic set up responsibilities are arranged in a rational order hierarchically. System itself provides a spontaneous mechanism for self regulation on rational order. Authorities in higher level exercise command and control over the subordinates in lower level. And they have the right to take appropriate action against deviant behaviour of any employee. In this way order, regularity and integrity of the system is maintained. When the stability and internal order of a system is upset by deviant behavior of any member or any other forces, it creates tension and disorder in the system. Serious types of deviant behaviours are resolved by the judiciary.

The failure of the in-built mechanism could be understood in terms of achievement failure of the development planning, welfare programmes and policies and actions executed by the government in various departments. Irregularities in appointment, corruption in allocation govt. fund, misused of power, non-conformity to official conduct, nepotism etc. are the examples normslessness and deviant behaviour. In every department in its every level there is normslessness and non-conformity to established rule. Similarly the authority who supposed to regulate and control the self regulating mechanism, themselves involved in the similar activities and contribute to the mounting of tension affecting the order of the system.

The mal-functioning of the system fails to maintain homeostasis or equilibrium both in the national level as well as in the community level. The introduction of new system with achievement failure to desired goals created disorders in the structure of the small communities like Bodo. These are-

The structural and functional roles of traditional social systems have gradually become ineffective. The state institution replaces the same.

Culturally set goals and prescribed means both have lost their motivational forces in the society now. People are now motivated by the new goals set before them by the new state systems.
The prescribed means for goal achievement are functionally effective only for a limited number of people and turned non-functional for majority sections of people. People failed to maintain status quo in the changing environment and they are subjected of being in dilemma.

The most important effect of the introduction of new system is the break down of in-built mechanism of social order. The values, customs, beliefs, traditions, practices which governed the deviant behaviors of the members of society failed to retain their functional roles in the society. Different government institutions have replaced the traditional forces, which regulated the behaviour of society. The members of societies become directly accountable to government law for their deviant behaviour instead of society. The people are now used to see every event, social or natural from rational and scientific point of view, instead of traditional worldview. Adaptation to changing conditions of life, which is not favourable for their survival, stands as great challenge in their life. According to Durkheim, no man can live happily, unless his needs are proportionate to his means. Collective order is the only legitimate force that can effectively retain the coherence and integrity of the society. Abrupt changes brought by the installation of new systems replacing their own have upset the societal scale.

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