CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER-1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origin and identity of the Boros and the Garos: The province of Assam at the far north-eastern corner of India is the museum of the nationalities... the Assam hills contain still more ancient collections of humanity.¹

In this land of humanity the Boros and the Garos are the two cognate tribes having some similarities in their cultural life as well as in their spoken languages. Their concentrations are originally found in the western part of Assam and Meghalaya and later on they spread over to the different parts of this region such as Tripura, North Bengal and Bangladesh etc. The Mongoloid tribes speaking dialects of Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan speech family would appear to have found a centre of dispersion in some tract to the east of Tibet and north-east of Assam, from where they began to spread into India and Tibet sometime during the pre-historic period. The route taken by the first arrivals into India is not known—whether it was from Tibet, and then south by crossing the Himalayas, or whether it was from east Assam, along the Dihang, the Sesiri, the Dibang and the Luhit rivers, and down the Brahmaputra of Assam.² Racially they belong to the Mongoloid stock and linguistically to the Bodo-Garo (Barish)³ sub-group of

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¹ Playfair, Major A: The Garos, Introduction, p.xxix
² Chatterjee, S.K: Kirata-Jana-Kriti, p.170(Extracted from the Journal of the R.A.S of Bengal, vol.xvi)
³ Benedict, P.K: Sino-Tibetan A Conspectus, p.5
languages of the Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan speech family. *Bodo* and *Garo* are *sub-types of a well differentiated nucleus which includes also the moribund and phonetically aberrant Deori-Chutiya language of North-Assam.* It is a fact that during the Vedic and Epic ages they were recognised by different names. For instance the name *Kirata* is found for the first time in the *Yajurveda*. The names *Mleccha*, *Danava* and *Asura* were also given to the same group of people during that period.

1.2 The origin of the Boros is still remained as a matter of conjecture. There are divergences of opinion about their origin and migration. For instance Rev. Sidney Endle was of opinion that they were migrated from Tibet and China. In his words- 

"The origin of Kachari race is still very largely a matter of conjecture and inference, in the absence of anything entitled to be regarded as authentic history. In feature and general appearance they approximate very closely to the Mongolian type; and this would seem to point to Tibet and China as the original home of the race."

Further it is also important to note that the peoples who presently identify themselves as *Boro* were called by different names within their locality after their permanent settlement in those places. In the north and the south banks of Brahmaputra valley they identify themselves as *Boro*, while in the two hill districts

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4 Op. cited, p.6  
5 Chatterjee, S.K: Kirata-Jana-Kriti, p.162 (Extracted from the Journal of the R.A.S of Bengal vol. xvi)  
6 Endle, Rev. S: The Kacharis, p.3
of Assam and in a large area of undivided Kamrup district they are called Kachari. On the other hand in the Jalpaiguri district of North-Bengal they are called as Meche or the Mech as because they had settled down in the bank of the river Mechi. Buchanan Hamilton\(^7\) had already described in 1810 the Mech as a tribe of Kamrupa. All these are believed to be the same original Boro peoples identified with different names.

1.2.1 The generic term Bodo was first used by B.H. Hodgson coining the word from the Meches of Darjeeling district sometime in 1846. Later on George Abraham Grierson had simply used the term Bodo to mean this community making a statement as—"The generic term Bodo was first applied by Hodgson to this group of languages."\(^8\)

In the term Bodo Hodgson included the group of languages like Boro-Kachari, Garo, Dimasa, Rabha, Mech, Lalung (Ttwa), Koch, Riang and Tripuri. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee also used the term Bodo or Boro to identify this group of people. But Sir Edward Gait and Rev. Sidney Endle used the term Kachari instead of Bodo to identify this group. In the words of Endle- "It is indeed not at all unlikely that the people known to us as Kacharis and to themselves as Bada (Boro), were in earlier days the dominant race in Assam."\(^9\)

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\(^7\) Sanyal, Charu Chandra: The Meches and the Totos, Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes of North Bengal, p.2
\(^8\) Grierson, George Abraham: Linguistic Survey of India, vol. III, part-II, p.1
\(^9\) Endle, Rev. S: The Kacharis, p.4
Edward Tuite Dalton has given the meaning of the term *Bodo* or *Boro* as a **great people**. Further, he boldly stated: "All authorities agree in considering the Mech and Kachari as the same people, or at least of common origin."\(^{10}\) This way some references are available in connection with the past history and original source of the Boros. But regarding the origin and identity of the Garos are not clear, still it is in the dark shadow.

**1.2.2** The origin and identity of the Garos are also not very clear like the Boros. This tribe is known to the outsiders as *Garo*, but they identify themselves as *A?chyk mande*, which means **hill people**. Regarding the origin and migration of the Garos to the Garo hills Rev. Sidney Endle’s opinion may be quoted: "The Garos, a race obviously near of kin to the Kacharis, have a tradition that in the dim and the distant past their forefathers, i.e. nine headmen, the offspring of a Hindu fakir and a Tibetan woman, came down from the northern mountains, and after a halt at Koch-Bihar, made their way to Jogighopa, and thence across the Brahmaputra to Dalgoma, and so finally into the Garo Hills.\(^{11}\)

**1.2.3** There are some other hypotheses in respect of the Garo’s migration. According to Major A Playfair, the term *Garo* is a corrupted form of the word *Gara* or *Ganching*. Another interpretation is that the word *Garo* is derived from a *Boro* word *gao* that is to separate or gar which means to leave or to abandon. The

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\(^{10}\) Dalton, E.T: Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, p.89
\(^{11}\) Endle, Rev. S: The Kacharis, p.4
Boros and the Dimasas called the tribe has separated from them as ‘Gao’ or ‘Gaoro’. The Bodos consider Garos as one of their brothers who have been separated from them earlier during the migratory period.\textsuperscript{12} Nagendranath Vasu has tried to establish the linguistic link of the word Garo with Garudas, from which a corrupted form Garo was developed. Thus he traced out that the Garos were known as Garudas\textsuperscript{13} in Ramayana.

1.2.4 The migration of the Garos from Tibet has no authentic historical basis. Before the establishment of the British rule the Garos were unknown to the outsiders. The Garos are akin to most of the aboriginal tribes of the Assam valley like the Kachari, Rabhas, Meches and such other tribes, but belongs to quite a distinct stock to that from which the Khasis sprang.\textsuperscript{14} They have close linguistic affinities with the Boro, Mech and Chutiya. The history of migration of the Garos is found in their epic lore called Katt\textsuperscript{ha} Aganna in verse as well as in prose form. These are handed down as most rare compositions from generation to generation and this is why the language is very archaic and not understandable to the general people. Even then these are retained in the original form through mouth in their memory.

\textsuperscript{12} Marak, Dr. Julius L.R: Garo Customary Laws and Practices, pp.6-7
\textsuperscript{13} Vasu Nagendranath: The Social History of Kamrupa, vol-I, p. 96 (Extracted from Dr. Julius L.R. Marak’s Garo Customary Laws and Practices p.6)
\textsuperscript{14} Allen B.C: Assam District Gazetteer, vol.-x,p.61
1.2.5 It is believed that in the course of journey of the Garos from Tibet to this western most part of the state of Meghalaya as well as in the pocket areas of Assam, Tripura and Bangladesh this tribe broke into different branches and accordingly they have settled down in different places. According to Milton S. Sangma- “These isolated settlements resulted, in the long run, in the evolution of certain regional linguistic and cultural variations amongst them. Thus, in accordance with these linguistic and cultural differences, the Garos are divided into eleven groups, namely, the A?kawes or A?wes, the Chisaks, the Duals, the Matchis, the Matabengs or Matzangchis, the Chiboks, the Rugas, the Garas or Ganchings, the Atongs and the Me?gams. But however, today, with the progress in education, transport and communication, these regional differences are fast disappearing.”

1.3 Aims and area of the study: The aim of this study is to find out the similarities present in the standard dialects of these two cognate languages. Since the Boros and the Garos are developed from a common source, sufficient similarities are found in their language as well as literature, especially in folk-literature. Here, it is proposed to make a study on Boro and Garo: A Comparative Linguistic Analysis, and so an attempt will be made to bring out the similarities between these two languages mainly in four major points: phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. It is expected that this study will give enough scope to trace

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15 Sangma, Milton S: History and Culture of the Garos, p.4
out the relation of these two languages and also prove that both the languages were truly developed from a common source. These languages were developed from the same source, but appear to be different languages as developed in two different sentiments. Most of the data are collected through personal investigations, field works in different Boro and Garo speaking areas. Of course library references and other secondary sources are also utilised for data collection.

The area of this study is confined in the two north-eastern states: Assam and Meghalaya. The Boro speakers are mainly concentrated in the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The *Western Boro Dialect* is considered as the basic foundation of the standard Boro language. This study is confined within the standard dialects of both the communities. The standard Boro language is the spoken variety of the Boros in the districts of Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon and this spoken variety of Boro along with the written Boro have been taken as specimen of the Boro language, while, on the Garo language the *A?we* dialect, the basic foundation of the standard Garo and its written specimens has been taken as the basic materials of this study. Field investigation has been done in both these two dialect areas of Boro and Garo and also visited Tura and Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon etc.

1.4 Importance of the study: The proposed study on two cognate languages of the Tibeto-Burman group acclaims a high social as well as the academic value. In this study an emphasis has been given to encourage the people to develop national feelings of unity. Boro and Garo are allied languages and through such
comparative analysis speakers of these languages can be inspired to come nearer. Besides these, an attempt has been made here to give some clue for further serious studies with greater national interests. Here in this analytical study importance are given on the phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary to show the genetic relation of both these two languages. Moreover this type of study is also considered as highly needed in the present academic context of the country.

1.5 Methodology: For this comparative study on Boro and Garo, two cognate languages, importance are given on the descriptive linguistics analysis pointing out the similarities between the languages. The data have been gathered from both the languages mainly from the primary as well as the secondary sources. The primary source is mainly depended on field investigation, where dictation system and tape recordings have been used extensively. In field the native speakers of different places are approached for proper articulation. Moreover some selected informants of both the sexes from both the languages have offered sufficient service in data collection from the field. In the collection of data from secondary sources i.e. books, magazines and journals etc. different libraries of this region are utilised and people both in field and in the libraries are found very helpful.

1.6 Dialect groups: Dialect is a variety of a language and at the same time it is socially and regionally distinct from other varieties of a language. Most of the languages have the peculiarity of having more than one dialect. It is a deviation from other standard form of dialect. Dialects are either mutually intelligible or unintelligible to each other. Barring a limited number of vocabularies and grammatical categories, all the Boro dialects are intelligible to each other. But some of the Garo dialects are mutually intelligible to each other and some are
mutually unintelligible. Variations in dialects are found either in phonology, grammar and vocabulary in both the languages.

1.6.1 Based on the regions of concentration of the speakers, Boro language is divided into three main dialect areas. These are:

a) Western Boro Dialect (WBD)

b) Eastern Boro Dialect (EBD)

c) Southern Boro Dialect (SBD)

a) Western Boro Dialect: The spoken variety of the Boro language in the districts of Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon is identified as *Western Boro Dialect*, which is the basis of the standard i.e. written variety of the Boro language. No doubt, within this area other several language speaking people are also permanently dwelling, even then, the *Western Boro Dialect* still prevails among the Boro speaking population as medium of day-to-day conversation. Since this variety of Boro is used in writings there is only little change in the language due to the contact of other languages.

b) Eastern Boro Dialect: The Boro language spoken in the northern areas of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup districts and in the northern areas of Darrang district is identified as *Eastern Boro Dialect*, which shows some differences with the WBD mainly in respect of phonology and vocabulary.

c) Southern Boro Dialect: *Southern Boro Dialect* is spoken in southern area of undivided Goalpara district, a few places around Boko-Chaygaon area of the South
Kamrup district. In this area some other allied languages of Boro are also prevailed and so this SBD is quite distinct from the WBD and EBD. It is to be noted here that Boro dialects are not identified as per their class division like Garo.

1.6.2 The Garos have eleven different groups, which is divided on the basis of their spoken variety and each of them inhabiting a distinct area of the three Garo Hills districts. These groups of the Garos have sufficient cultural affinities as a tribe excepting the Me?gam speaking group whose difference is prominent both culturally and linguistically. It is important to note here that each of these groups have their own spoken variety i.e separate dialects. So, eleven different dialects are found in Garo language. These are: a) A?we b) Chisak c) Matchi d) Matzangchi or Matabeng e) A?beng or Am?beng f) Chibok g) Ruga h) Gara or Gan?ching i) Megam j) Dual k) Atong.\(^{16}\)

a) A?we: The A?we dialect is spoken in the northern part of the Garo Hills district and the adjoining narrow area in the plains of the southern most parts of the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara of Assam. This A?we speaking Garos are having neighbours who speak the Rabha and the Boro languages. Their concentrations are from western most part of the south Kamrup district to Jinari river in the west through the hilly areas of Meghalaya.

b) Chisak: The Chisak and the A?we dialects have very close resemblance to each other. This Chisak dialect is spoken from the southern border of the A?we in the

\(^{16}\) Sangma, Milton S: History of Garo Literature, pp. 8-11
north, to within a few miles of the Someswari river in the south. In the east they are spread from the western border of the Khasi Hills within about fifty kilometres to the west.

c) **Matchi:** The *Matchi* dialect speakers inhabit in the central portion of the Garo Hills centering the headquarters of the East Garo Hills district Williamnagar. In the extreme north side the Matchi touch the *A?we*.

d) **Matabeng or Matzangchi:** The *Matabengs* or the *Matzangchis* are concentrated to the northern side of the Someswari river nearing Tura. **Major A. Playfair** opined that they are mingling of the *A?bengs* and *Matchis*.

e) **A?beng or Am?beng:** The *A?beng* or *Am?beng* dialect speaking populations form a majority in comparison to others. This dialect is spoken in the West Garo Hills including Tura town. A small group of them also inhabit in the extreme south-east of the Garo Hills to the proximity of the Khasi Hills boundary.

f) **Chibok:** The speakers of the *Chibok* dialect occupy the central portion of the South Garo Hills district from the upper valley of the Bugi river to the Dareng river. Their dialect is mutually unintelligible to other groups of speakers. This group has a very small number of speakers.

g) **Ruga:** The *Ruga* speaking peoples live towards the southern part of the South Garo Hills district in the vicinity of Dalu. Their concentration is towards the south of the *Chiboks* whose number is also few like the *Chibok* speakers.

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17 Playfair, Major A: *The Garos*, p.60
h) Garas or Ganchings: The Garas or the Ganchings inhabit to the south of the main range. Their concentration is from Nitai river to the proximity of the Someswari river.

i) Me?gam: The Me?gam speaking population is considered as a hybrid race rose from the fusion of the Garos and the Khasis. The Me?gams are also called Lyngams by the Khasis. Their dialect is mutually unintelligible to the other dialect speaking peoples of the Garos. That is why Dr. G. A. Grierson included their spoken tongue within the Khasi language and the speakers were also identified as a branch of the Khasis. But their physical appearance and customs are very closely related to the Garos. This dialect speaking populations are concentrated within the border area of Meghalaya and Assam just from Kamrup district to Mymensingh in the present Bangladesh. Me?gam speaking Garos are also living in the valley of the Rongkai hills and the foot of the Chitmang and Balpakram Hills.

j) Dual and Atong: Other two varities of the spoken Garo are Dual and Atong. The Dual speakers are living on the bank of the Simsang river and in the hills to the south bank of the river. But the majority of the Dual speaking Garos are living in the Bangladesh. On the other hand the Atong speakers are living in the valley of Simsang river upto the Siju area.

18 Sangma, Milton S: History and Culture of the Garos, p.137
1.7 Study on the languages, Boro and Garo: During the last part of the 19th century some Christian Missionaries had initiated the study of Boro and Garo languages along with a few other much underdeveloped spoken languages of the eastern part of India. They took more interest in the study of the Boro language as it was spoken mainly in the plains of the valley. During those days Boro speaking population was scattered in the valley and besides Assamese, a developed language having rich varieties of literature would not demoralise the Boro speaking population. They learnt Assamese, but retained their own tongue without much change. Moreover Boro appears to them as a very interesting tongue from socio-cultural viewpoints. This way they related to study the Boro language.

The Christian Missionaries were impressed with the Boro language and Rev. Sidney Endle took initiative to study Boro from the grammatical viewpoints. The results of this study were *Outline Grammar of the Kachari (Bara) Language* and *The Kacharis*. On the other hand George Abraham Grierson’s work on Boro language is also considered as a remarkable contribution on Boro studies. But Rev. H. Halvorsrud’s *A Short Grammar of the Boro Language* is considered as an impressive work on the linguistics of the Boro language as it is a description of the Boro language from the viewpoints of structural linguistics. In the seventh decade of the last century two prescriptive grammars in Boro namely *Boro Rawkn'ant' (*Boro Grammar, 1970) and *Gwynn Rawk'ant'h*i (Important Grammar, 1972) were prepared by native speakers. Pure linguistic study on Boro was *A Descriptive...*
Analysis of the Boro Language by P.C. Bhattacharya, a non-Boro person and this is the first linguistic approach on the Boro language. After them a few impressive works have been done on Boro. *Historical Development of the Boro Language* and *Assamese and Boro: A Comparative and Contrastive Study* are such popular types of approaches on the subject. In the meantime, a few scholars have made some attempt on comparative study of Boro with other languages. In this area, the first attempt was *Boro-Asamiya Abidhan* (Boro-Assamese Dictionary) by Rajendralal Narzary, where he tried to prepare a bi-lingual dictionary of Boro and Assamese. Such other dictionaries are *Boro-English Dictionary* (1968), *Hindi-Bodo Dictionary* (1973), *Asamiya-Boro Sabdakosh* (Assamese-Boro dictionary, 1983), *Bodo-English Dictionary*, *Bodo-English-Hindi Dictionary* (1996), of which the last one is considered to be the best among all these dictionaries as it has been prepared following the principles of modern methods of dictionary. The head entry of this dictionary is 10,000 along with 2,100 suffixes. To speak the truth, linguistic study on the Boro language is very few. P. C. Bhattacharya's work is based on descriptive principles of linguistic analysis and it is a serious study, while M. R. Boro's works are based on popular approach of language study. The last dictionary published by Bodo Sahitya Sabha has been prepared giving importance on the linguistics of the language, for which IPA has been used very often as required. There are ample scopes for linguistics study on the Boro language, also for some
comparative and contrastive analysis of Boro with its allied languages like Garo, Rabha and Dimasa etc.

The Garo language was also considered by the British officials and the American Baptist Missionaries, who were attracted by this speech very much during their missionary activities. They started to collect the folk-literature. They got some patronisation of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, which is now known as Asiatic Society of Bengal. These foreigners are fully responsible for giving Garo a status of written language for which they got proper patronisation from the Government as well as the Asiatic Society. Rev. William Robinson, an education officer prepared a grammar of the Garo language, which is considered as the first work on Garo just from the grammatical viewpoints. This was no doubt pioneer work on the Garo language, but not on the Garo linguistics. On the other hand the compilation of Garo vocabularies was done by John Elliot, who came to the Garo Hills on public deputation during his service time in Dacca as commissioner in 1788-89.

After the British officials and the American Baptist Missionaries, the first Indian to work on Garo language was Ramnath Chakravarty, a local officer of Garo frontiers. His *Comparative Vocabulary on English-Bengali and Garo Languages (1867)* is considered as an important approach on Garo. Such other works on Garo dictionary were *A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia* by W.W. Hunter, *Phrases in English and Garo* by Rev. Miles

The remarkable work on Garo language is *Outline Grammar of the Garo Language (1905)* by Rev. E.G. Phillips. This is a prescriptive grammar of the Garo language, brief in writing but quite dependable as it covers almost all aspects of grammatical needs. Next to that Robbins Burling’s *A Garo Grammar (1961)* was prepared following the methodology of descriptive grammar.

1.8 Written Literature in Boro and Garo: The two ethnic groups, the Boros and the Garos have not their own scripts. So, for writing purpose they have to depend on the scripts of other languages. At present the script used for writing Boro language is Devanagari, while for Garo it is Roman script. As they are not having their own scripts, they had to depend on the scripts which were familiar to them. The Britishers, especially the Christian Missionaries had initiated to write these languages. No doubt, both the tribes have very rich varieties of folk-literature both in prose and poetry forms, which they inherited generation after generation. Folk-songs, tales, legends, myths, proverbs, idioms, riddles, charms and the other genres of folk-literature are yet to be properly collected and recorded for
preservation in both the languages. The entire folk-literature of these two languages are found in verse as well as in prose and all of these are flourishing through the mouths of the people and this is why, most of these compositions have lost their original language.

The tradition of writing on Boro language started towards the last part of the 19th century. The initiative of this writing tradition was undertaken by the Missionaries in this language. On the other hand such initiative was undertaken by British officials and the American Baptist Missionaries in case of the Garo language. In Garo language it started with the compilation of Garo words in the last decade of the 18th century. So, comparatively there was a gap of hundred years in the process of writing or collecting various oral or folk-literature of both these languages. But these can not be considered as beginning of written literature of these two languages. Because behind such attempts of the Missionaries as well as the British officials there was a motive of preaching Christianity among the backward communities, mainly the tribal people who were non-Christians and also neglected by the other communities. They tried to influence them through the translations of Old Testament, New Testament and such other books into these two languages. This way they have occupied good place within the tribal societies. Barring these points, the actual beginning of written literature in Boro and Garo is considered from early part of the 20th century. To speak the truth the secular literature in Boro and Garo started in the 20's of the last century. Here, below an
attempt has been made to give a sketch of the history of Boro and Garo written literature.

1.8.1 The tradition of actual Boro written literature started in the southern part of the Brahmaputra valley of the undivided Goalpara district. As a pioneer work in 1915 Ganga Charan Kachari edited *Boroni P\textsuperscript{h}isa O Ajen* (The child of the Boros and its laws) in prose form. In 1923, everfirst poetry book *K\textsuperscript{h}onl\textsuperscript{h}ai-Mel\textsuperscript{h}ai* (Poetry and song) was published under the joint editorship of Rupnath Brahma and Madaram Brahma. In 1924, a quarterly magazine *Bihar* (Flower) was published under the edition of Satish Chandra Basumatary. *Baal\textsuperscript{h}unam B\textsuperscript{y}ak\textsuperscript{h}agum Gi\textsuperscript{h}a* (Songs of Ba\textsuperscript{h}wu and B\textsuperscript{w}isagu festival) was published under the compilation of Prasanna Lal Khakhlay in 1925. In 1926, a poetry book *Boroni Gi\textsuperscript{h}a S\textsuperscript{h}i\textsuperscript{h}a Aroz* (The first devotion and prayer of the Boros) was published under the compilation of Madaram Brahma. The songs inserted in this book were either collected or composed by him. The magazine *Hatork\textsuperscript{h}i Hala* (Constellation. 1930) was published under the editorship of Pramod Ch. Brahma. The first romantic poet Ishan Ch. Muchahary is one of the most memorable contributors to this magazine of Boro literature. He has two poetry books to his credit. These are: a) *Sonam Mala* (The golden chain) and b) *P\textsuperscript{h}ami* (Lotus). Another great poet Kali Kumar Lahary was also the production of this magazine. His collection of poetries *K\textsuperscript{h}onl\textsuperscript{h}ai Biza* (The poetry book) was published in the year 1951. The poet and singer Nileswar Brahma published his poetry book *Balabgan\textsuperscript{w}i* (Two episodes) in the year 1952.
is worth mentioning that after the inception of the BSS the literary genre of poetry developed more quickly than before. In this regard a few of the remarkable poets are: Samar Brahma Choudhury, Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Guneswar Muchahary, Nandeswar Boro, Dharanidhar Wary, Saroj Bwiswumthiary, Katindra Swargiary, Anjali Narzary alias Anju, Aurobindo Uzir, Bijoy Baglary and others. They are considered as new pathfinders to the present trend of Boro poetry.

In the literary genre of short story the first short story to name is *Abari* (The name of a girl). It was composed by Ishan Ch. Muchahary and was published in the first issue of the magazine *Hatorki Hala*. In the magazines like *Olongbar* (Polestar), *Alari* (Light) and *Musri Arw Sansri* (Form and thought), few serious persons like Jiten Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Prasenjit Brahma and others published their short stories.

The actual renaissance of Boro short story started in *The Bodo*, the mouthpiece of the BSS. The first modern short story of Boro literature *Gysymi Daha* (Pangs of heart) was published in this magazine. The Boro short stories were published in book form in the year 1970. In this year Chittaranjan Muchahary published his book *Tujimal Mizir* (Unsuccess ambition). His other short story collection is *Talim* (Rehearsal). On the other hand the most remarkable name of this genre is Nilkamal Brahma. He is considered as the greatest short story writer of Boro literature. *Hagra Guduni Myi* (The deer of deep forest, 1972), *Sirinaj Mandar* (The offshoot modar flower, 1983), *Silikar* (Devastation, 1985) and
Mem Daudwi (The egg lady, 1985) are his published short story books. The other mentionable contributors to this genre are Manaranjan Lahary, Dharanidhar Wary, Janil Kr. Brahma, Haribhusan Brahma, Nandeswar Daimary, Nabin Malla Boro and Katindra Swargiary to name only a few.

In the genre drama, the first drama to name is Nalabuha, composed by Satish Ch. Basumatary. It was a one act play. The first full length drama of Boro literature is Hamphe composed by Manindra Islary. It is worthmentioning that most of the dramas, before the inception of the BSS were either translated or self composed. A few dramatists and the dramas of that period were: Gandamar Palla by Umesh Ch. Muchahary, Dwrswn Zwhwlaw, Rani Laimul, Najpin Zajwi and Bikani Or by Satish Ch. Basumatary and Raza Nilambar, Sukaru-Dukaru, Bima Batul, Zuli-Bizuli, Chitranagada, Sonani Maiban and others by Dwarendra Nath Basumatary. On the other hand the contributors after the inception of the BSS were: Kamal Kr. Brahma, Manaranjan Lahary, Surath Narzary, Mangal Singh Hazowary, Katindra Swargiary and others. Kamal Kr. Brahma is the greatest contributor of this genre till date. A few of his dramas are: Gwrynli (The mistake, 1954-55), Gwdan Wisisali (The new vision, 1957), Horbdi Wmsi (The dark like that of night, 1968), Ziuni Siman (The dream of life, 1986) and others.

The first novel ever published in Boro language is Zuzaini Or (1962) written by Chittaranjan Muchahary. It is worthmentioning that he is considered as the first and the greatest contributor of this genre. A few specimens of his other novels are:
Bilψγψ, Call Girl, Suzata, Мψψψ, Habani Ast’am and others. Few other contributors to this genre are: Manaranjan Lahary, Dharanidhar Wary, Nandeswar Daimary, Katindra Swargiary, Tiren Boro and others.

The numbers of travelogues and biographies are also very limited in Boro literature. In case of travelogue there are only two-three travelogues in this language. Thus most of the biographies available in this language are either translated or abridge version from other languages.

Children literature and literary criticism of this language are also in a preliminary stage till date. Most of the children literatures are the translations from other languages. Innovative creations helpful to children mentality are very rarely found in this language. Like this the genre literary criticism is also in a budding stage. Only a few critics are giving interest in this genre, but their attempts are also not considered as adequate.

1.8.2 In Garo language also the written aspect was introduced by the Christian Missionaries. But most of their creations were not secular in nature. So, the actual or secular literature in Garo language started only from the year 1924, though religious creations were also running side by side during that period. It is considered that the latest trend of Garo literature started from the year 1940. Most of the literatures created during the period from 1924-40 were for easy learning of Bengali-English-Hindi or the folk tales translated from other languages. It is worthmentioning that during that period the publications of different biographies
on great personalities were also took place. Its contributors were either the Garo native speakers or the Christian Missionaries.

In 1940 under the humble guidance of Prof. Howard Denison W. Momin a monthly literary journal *A?chyrk Kʰu?ran* (The voice of the Garos) was published in Garo language. It was the beginning of new trend in Garo literature. Prof. Momin could be regarded as the father of modern Garo literature.¹⁹ Though he has no published book to his credit then also his poems are highly appreciated by every section of the society. Besides, he also translated some of the best portions of Tagore's *Gitanjali*.²⁰


The literary genre drama started in Garo literature from the year 1969. In this year Keneth M Momin published a short drama namely *Nokdan* (Family). It

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¹⁹ Sangma, Milton S: History of Garo Literature, p.74
²⁰ Ibid, p.74
²¹ Kar, P.C: Glimpses of the Garos, p.191
was a social drama depicting contemporary Garo social life. Another drama book *K' amni Bi'e* (Fruit of one’s action) written by Argison G Momin was also published in the same year. In 1970 Karnesh R Marak published an abridge version and adaptation of Shakespear’s origin work *Macbeth*. Thus in the year 1981 a one act play *Sin'?kari* (Winter) written by Cartin R Marak was published.

The number of literary genre novel is also very few in Garo literature. *The first novel was written by Redin Momin under the title "K'al sin aro Sonatchi" and was published posthumously in 1972.*

Sonabal *Me?qyik* written by Simison R Sangma was also published posthumously. It is worthmentioning that this novel was an adaptation of the original Bengali novel *Swarnalata* written by Taraknath Ganguli.

1.9 Culture: Racially the Boros and the Garos belong to *Mongoloid group* who were also known as *Kirata*. Genetically both the tribes developed from a common source. But later on some differences occurred as observed in their social customs and traditions. Boros are patriarchal with a few matriarchal characteristics while the Garos are purely matriarchal. Of course in course time after some of era some changes are taking place. *Originally, there were eleven groups among the Garos, each inhabiting a distinct part of the Garo Hills district.* But such division of the Boros is not available at all.

Clan system is available among the Boros and the Garos. In Boro clan is known as *Mahari* while the clan or exogamous sept among the Garos is known as

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22 Sangma, Milton S: *History of Garo Literature*, p.92
23 Sangma, Milton S: *History and Culture of the Garos*, p.134
Chatchi or Katchi.\textsuperscript{24} Rev. Sidney Endle identified 20 different clans among the Boros or the Kacharis.\textsuperscript{25} But previously there were only two basic clans among the Garos, namely Sangma and Marak,\textsuperscript{26} which have been further increased with the introduction of new clans and presently the clan strength has gone up to five. These newly introduced clans are: Momin, Areng and Shira. These have been further developed into many other sub-clans called Ma?chong in Garo language. But the Boros don’t have such type of sub-clans.

In the marriage system of the Boros and the Garos exogamous as well as non-exogamous systems are prevailed. Among the Boros, marriages are performed either within the same clan if the couple would not have direct blood relationship or between different clans. Among the Garos the rule of exogamy both within the Chatchi and Ma?chong is seen violated at present. Although marriages within Chatchi and within Ma?chong are taking place more and more frequently, such marriages are still condemned by the society.\textsuperscript{27}

In earlier times, the Boro families were basically depended on joint family system. But now most of the families consist of the husband, wife and their children, which is also common among the Garos. In both the societies, husbands are given all the responsibilities of the family affairs and the wives are generally subordinate to them. According to the custom available among both the tribes,

\textsuperscript{24} Op cited, p.138
\textsuperscript{25} Endle, Rev. S: The Kacharis, pp.24-27
\textsuperscript{26} Sangma, Milton S: History and Culture of the Garos, p.138
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, pp.142-143
husbands can beat their wives if necessary but, the reverse is not allowed at all. In Garo society beating of husband is considered as a great insult to the mahari of that husband. Noteworthy is that divorces are very rare among both the tribes.

The status of husband is higher than wife in Boro society, which is not reverse in case of matrilineal Garo society also. The process of polygamy is available among both the tribes. For this a Garo husband is to take permission from his first wife but, no such permission is necessary among the Boros. But, today, the process of polygamy is very rarely found among both the tribes.

The Boros are basically the plain dwellers and the Garos are the hill dwellers. So, the Boros build their houses attached to the floor and the Garos build their houses on piles and mostly on the slopes of the hills. One most common feature is that the main houses of both the tribes have three rooms each. The Boros built this on the northern side within their campus which stretches from east to west facing the south. But no such process is available among the Garos. The main houses of the Garos are very long. But in comparison to its length its breadth is quite limited. In a traditional Garo house there are no side windows but only openings in the shape of doors at each end, the interiors are generally dark and gloomy.

The easternmost part of the Boro main house is called isin or usun and is meant for cooking and worship. The middle room is called okho and is meant for

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28 Op cited, p.151
29 Playfair, Major A: The Garos, p.36
dining as well as for sleeping. The western most part is $k^h op^h ra$, where outsiders or gents are allowed to enter and sleep. In a Boro household $Bai^h \nu\mu$ is placed to the south of the easternmost room of the main house. This is the place for family praying. On the other hand, in a Garo household $nokk^h ra$ is meant for household articles, objects or even for keeping cattle. Its platform is not same to that of other two rooms. Next to that the second room is $nokgan\chi$, which is the public living room of the family, and usually takes up quite two-thirds of the whole building. This room is also meant for worship, cooking as well as sleeping place for the unmarried girls of the family. The last room is $nokoro\eta$, which is a sleeping room for husband and his wife of the family.

The staple cereal food of the Boros and the Garos is rice. In the former days, both the tribes never cooked their curries with mustard oil or ghee. Instead of these they preferred to use a kind of potash known as $k^h ar\dot{w}\ddot{i}$ and $k^h at\ddot{c}hi$ respectively in Boro and Garo. These were basically prepared from plaintain stems. The favourite article of food of the Boros and the Garos are $nag\dot{w}\ddot{r}\ddot{a}$ and $n\ddot{a}^\ddot{p} k^h am$ i.e dry fish respectively. On the otherhand $nap^h am$ and $n\ddot{a}^\ddot{p} k^h am zagua$ i.e. dry fish crushed in the mortar and then kept inside bamboo tubes are also considered as very delicious food respectively by both the tribes. The Garos eat the meat of goats, pigs, fowls, ducks and cows. But the Boros, who are the worshippers of the Supreme God $Bai^h \nu\mu$, never take beef. Betelnuts and leaves are also very famous among both the tribes and they offer it to the visitors as a mark of hospitality.

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30 Op cited, p.36
The Boros and the Garos are very fond of rice-beer which is prepared almost in every household of the society. It is called *zųu* in Boro and *chu* in Garo. The Garos normally take the brewed liquor while the Boros prefer brewed as well as distilled.

The dress of the Boro men is not scanty in comparison to the Garo men’s dress. The principal dress of the Boro men is *gamsa* and that of Garo men is *gando*. On the other hand the Boro women cover the entire body with their traditional dress while the Garo women’s dress is not of that type. The garment of Boro women is known as *dokʰna* or *dokʰona* and that of Garo women is known as *dakmanda*.

Drinking and dancing are associated with the music in both the Boro and the Garo social life. Verrier Elwin has rightly remarked on tribal dances putting in two categories as ceremonial and recreational dance. The ceremonial dances are closely associated with religious functions while recreational dances have no specific occasion as it may be performed at any time for any purpose including religious functions. Both these two types of dances are important items of the socio-cultural life of the Boros and the Garos. They are having various types of folk, martial and many other meaningful dances.

The teknonymy of the Boros and the Garos are also almost the same. Both the tribes don’t consider it proper to call married men and women by their names. They are having various meaningful kinship terms in both the languages for calling the couple having or non-having of children. If they have children then they are
either called by the name of the first child or by the suffixation of \(-p^{ha}\) or \(-bip^{ha}\) and \(-ma\) or \(-bima\) respectively for male and female in Boro, while in Garo they use the suffix \(-p^{ha}\) and \(-ma\) respectively with the name of the first child.

Both the tribes follow their own traditional customary laws, but these are not preserved in written form. These are unwritten, but are strictly followed.

Traditionally there are six different types of marriage among the Boros against the nine different types of marriage practised by the Garos. At present both the tribes fully accept only one type of marriage. It is known as \(sw\eta ny\eta y\) \(lajnaj haba\) in Boro and in Garo it is known as \(do\?sia\). Both the marriage systems are performed through negotiation. Widow remarriage is also available among both the tribes but, such marriages are very rare among both the tribes.

The customary laws of both the tribes allow adoption but, these are under certain conditions.

The law of inheritance in Boro society is through father while in Garo it is through mother. In Boro society only the male child have the right of inheritance, the girl child would neither receive nor claim any part of the parent’s property. In case of the Garos it is simply reverse. But the \(nokma\) or the heiress only has the right of inheritance in Garo society.

Both the tribes have some rituals relating to birth and death. As they have some rituals relating to birth but they don’t observe any ceremony for naming a child as in other societies. The Boros have a tradition of burrying or leaving the
dead body openly in the crematorium ground. But now a day they mostly cremate the corpse. The tradition of leaving the corpse open or burying is fast disappearing from among them. But the Christian convert Boros always bury the dead body. On the other hand only the process of cremation is available among the Garos. But they bury a dead body suffering from leprosy.

The Boros and the Garos have some festivals and ceremonies too. As both the tribes depend on agriculture for their livelihood so most of their festivals and ceremonies are connected with various activities of agriculture including harvesting, starting of agriculture etc. It is also worth mentioning that the Boros mostly depend on wet cultivation and the Garos depend on jhum cultivation. So, most of their agricultural festivals and ceremonies are not common in nature.

The festivals and ceremonies of both the communities are mostly ritualistic in nature though there are some religious features too. In the Bat'wu puza and Kerai festival of the Boros there are more religious features along with the rituals. On the other hand Bwisagy festival, Garza puza, Newyn, the ceremonies relating to birth and death, Mainaw lajnaj etc. are considered as fully ritualistic festivals and ceremonies of the Boros. In Garo, Wangala festival, birth and death ceremony, O?pata ceremony, Rornchu gala or Gynde gala, Asontata ceremony etc are considered as ritualistic though there are also the religious features too. It is worth mentioning that the Bwisagy and Wangala of the Boros and the Garos are comparable to each other. Bwisagy is a pre-agricultural festival while Wangala is considered as post-harvesting festival. Thus Mainaw lajnaj of the Boros is comparable to Rornchu gala or Gynde gala ceremony of the Garos. Because both
the communities think it necessary to offer the first fruits of their agricultural product especially the rice to the god. *Garza puza* of the Boros is also comparable to the *Alsontata* ceremony of the Garos.

Both the communities have musical instruments manufactured from tree, bamboo and others. Drums, flutes and cymbals are mostly common in both the communities. Beside these the Garos uses trumpets and rang or gongs too. The Garos have four kinds of drums known as *Dama, Kham, Nadyp* and *Nagra*. But the Boros have only one variety of drum known as *Kham*. The *Kham* of the Boros is comparable to the *Kham* of the Garos in its size and shape. The flute of the Boros is big or small; long or short in size and shape. But each of them must to have five holes for the fingers and one for the mouth. In Boro the flute is known as *Shari* and in Garo it is known as *Tilori*. But for the Garo flutes the numbers of the holes are not fixed. There may be either two or three holes based on their varieties. Thus the *Gongyna* (Jew's herp) of the Boros is comparable to the *Gongyna* of the Garos. The Garos have two varieties of cymbals known as *Kakwa* and *Nengyfis*. But the Boros have only one variety of cymbal known as *Zol$a$ and it resembles with the *Nengyfis* of the Garos. Besides these, one more important musical instrument of the Boros is *Serza*. It is like violin.

The Boros and the Garos have their traditional dances too. The *Bwyagy* and the *Bagurumba* dances of the Boros are non-religious. On the other hand the dances like *Msagla$mi$, *Dai$mi* bwyaj, *Naw bwyaj*, *Mup$mi$ gelenaj* etc are
related with the *K`erai festival*. The Garos have also the dances like *Gryka* (It is a group dance which owes its origin to its old fighting days), *Dok`ru sua, Ambare-rurua, K`il p`ua* and *Chambil moa* or other dances. The last four dances have relationship with the *Wangala festival*.

Both the communities give warm welcome to their guests with betelnut and leaves as well as with ricebeer. They consider guests as their god and try to satisfy them at their best. Their attitude is not bad even to the strangers. In Boro the non-Boros are called as *Harsa or Bangal*. On the other hand the Garos call the non-Garos as *Rori*.