1.0 Introduction

The Southern dialect of Bodo language is spoken in the South bank of Brahmaputra from Goalpara district to Boko, Chayagaon of South Kamrup and Rani Area of Kamrup Metro (Kamrup district) and in some parts of Meghalaya State. This South bank of Brahmaputra is the home of the Southern dialect of Bodo located in the western part of Assam and bordering with Meghalaya state on the southern side. These areas are bordered to the west by Dhubri district, in the east by Kamrup metro, in the south by Meghalaya state, and in the north by the mighty river Brahmaputra having Bongaigaon & Barpeta district on the northern side of this river. It is found out that the Goalpara district has the largest speakers of Southern dialect of Bodo language. So, the present study is confined within the Goalpara district only. The following is the Map of Goalpara district shown below:
However, Goalpara district became the part of Rabha Hasong Autonomous District Council since 2000. There are several numbers of tribe in Goalpara district but the native speakers of Southern dialect of Bodo are the second largest tribe next to the Rabha people. The other well known languages spoken in this area are: Assamese, Garo, and Hajong. According to 2001 census, the total population of Goalpara district is 8,22,306 and its scheduled Tribes population are 1,15,099 out of which more than 40,000 population are the native speakers of Southern dialect of Bodo in Goalpara district.

1.1. A brief introduction to Bodo and its language:

The people who speak this language call themselves ‘Boro’ [phonetically ˈbɔrə]. The neighbouring (Indic) Assamese speakers call these people and their speech ‘Kachari’ (Pronounced in Assamese as kosari). The western sections of the Boros who live in adjoining areas of Goalpara (Assam) and Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) are known to their neighbours as Mech (pronounced mɛːʃ). The Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson, 1903) states that the generic name ‘Bodo’ was first applied by Hodgson (1946) to this group of languages. The exact sound is better represented by spelling it Bâḍâ or Bārā, (P.C. Bhattacharya, 1977).

The Kacharis may perhaps be described as the aborigines, or earliest known inhabitants, of Brahmaputra valley. They are identical with the people called Mech in Goalpara and North Bengal. These are the names given to them by outsiders. In Brahmaputra valley, the Kacharis called themselves Bodo or Bodo fisa (Son of the Bodo). In the North Kachar Hills, they call themselves Dimasa, a corruption of Dima fisa or “sons of the great river.” They were known to the Ahoms as Timisa, clearly a
corruption of Dimasa, So that this name must have been in use when they were still in Dhansiri valley. (Edward Gait, 1905).

The wide extent and long duration of Bodo domination as shown by the frequent occurrence of the prefix *di* or *ti*, the Bodo word for water, in the river names of the Brahmaputra valley and the adjoining country to the west e.g. Dibru, Dikhu, Dihing, Dihong, Dibong, Disang, Diphang, Dimla, etc. (Edward Gait, 1905, Pp-236)

With the exception of Khasi, the numerous non-Aryan dialects of Assam all belong to the Tibeto-Chinese family and mainly to its Tibeto- Burman sub-family. The dialects of this sub- family which are current in Assam belong mainly to three groups, viz., Naga spoken in and east of the Naga Hills, Kuki- Chin spoken in Manipur, Cachar and the Mizo Hills, and Bodo, which claims practically all the surviving non-Aryan languages of Brahmaputra valley, the Garo Hills and North Cachar; it includes among others, Kachari or Mech, Garo, Lalung, Rabha and Chutiya. (Edward Gait, 1905, A History of Assam, Pp-5).

The people who speak Bodo language call themselves ‘Bara’ or ‘Bara-fisa’ i.e. sons of the Baras. The people who lived Siberia and Mongolia around 2000 B.C. were known as *Mongoloid*. The Bodo is known as *Bodo* or Boro or *Kachari* or *kirāta* or other variations in different places in different times. The Bodos are one of the earliest settlers of Assam, is a branch of the great Bodo-Naga group of the Indo-Mongoloid family falling within the Assam Burmese linguistic section. In course of time, these Mongoloid people were divided into three groups. One group of them went towards Europe who settled down in Turkey and Italy.. The second group migrated towards North America and Mexico and settled there. Again, a small section of the second groups went to Japan and lived there. The people who are now living in Erich,
North Japan and Mexico are the people of mongoloid group. The people who are migrated from Siberia and Mongolia of the third group through South-west of China gradually settled in the Hoang-Ho valley and Tibet. After living for several centuries in Hoang-Ho valley of China and Tibet, some of them migrated to the foot hills of Bhutan. At first, they were known in Tibet as BOD. According to Sunity Kumar Chatterjee (1951, Pp-43) and Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the word Boro or Bodo was derived from the word BOD.

The word Bod supposed to mean a homeland. It is also said that there were many parts of the country known as Hor Bod, Kur Bod etc. The inhabitants of Bod country are known as the Bodo phicha or Bodocha or Bodosa (Bod means land or country and Phicha or Cha means son or children, hence the children of Bod or country). In course of time, they came to be known as simply Boddo-Bodo-Boro. At present, they are known as Bodo or Boro.

Another clarification about the early existence of the Bodos is made by Sunity Kumar Chatterjee (1951) in his books entitled “Kirata-Jana-Kriti”. He said that “the Boḍo tribes are linguistically connected with the Nagas, but whereas the Nagas have till recently remained isolated and primitive, one may say that the Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid bloc in North eastern India, were the most important Indo- Mongoloid people in Eastern India and they form one of the main bases of the present-day population of these tracts.” (Chatterjee, 1951, Pp 45-46.)

According to the noted Historian Pratap Chandra Choudhury (1959), “the origin of the word Assam is probable that the name was first applied to the land by the Bodos, a Tibeto- Burman people, as it may be derived from a Bodo formation like Há-com.
meaning low land. If this derivation is correct, the name Asama may go back to a period long before the coming of the shāns or the Ahoms; because the Tibeto-Burmans must have entered Assam long before them. It appears, therefore, reasonable to suggest that the Sanskrit formation ‘Asama’ is based on an earlier Bodo form, Há-com.” Choudhury observed that the Bodos are none but the Kirāta, the termed ‘Kirāta’ was mentioned in the early ancient ages by the classical writers which can be quoted, “The Bodo have a close affinity with the Kirāta of ancient Indian literature.”

Interestingly, Dr. Choudhury shown the evidences of “The Geography of Ptolemy”, a work of about A.D.150 where Ptolemy, the country of Seres mentions the country of the Seres, which stands, like Thina of the Periplus, for Assam, while the name Seres appears like Thinae to have been applied to the inhabitants of the plains and the hills………………the reference is probably to the hill tribes of Assam, such as the Bodos. (Pp-31-32)

Again, Choudhury tried to reveal the Bodo Group and mentioned dialects of Bodo group as, “The Bodo group includes the most numerous tribes, occupying not only the hills but also found spread over parts of the valley from Dhubri to Sadiya. They were once a very dominant people of the valley, and petty kingdoms, like those of the Kacharis and the Chutias, were established even before the intrusion of the Ahoms. The remnants of their political domination, after the extinction of Hindu kingdoms and of their culture, may be noticed from the names of places, particularly rivers, preceded by ‘di’ or ‘ti’, the Bodo word for water. They have affinities not only with the people of Nepal and Tibet and other Tibeto-Burmans like the Nagas, but also the Khasis. The important members of the group are: - the Garos, Kacharis, Chutias, Rabhas, Koches, Lalungs, Meches, Hajong, Hojai, Dimasa and others; some of them got mixed up with
the Shāns at a later time. In spite of their affinities, we find many differences in both their physical features and dialects as the following Tables:-

**Specimens of Dialects of the Bodo Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Gāro</th>
<th>Mech</th>
<th>Lālung</th>
<th>Koch</th>
<th>Plai and Hill Kachāris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Sā</td>
<td>Shāse,</td>
<td>Kichā</td>
<td>Gasak,</td>
<td>Se, Sui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Māse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goisā</td>
<td>Māshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye</td>
<td>Mikron</td>
<td>Mogan</td>
<td>Mu</td>
<td>Mukrun</td>
<td>Megan, Mū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Āngā</td>
<td>Āng</td>
<td>Āng</td>
<td>Āngā, Ān</td>
<td>Āng, Ang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Mānde</td>
<td>Mānshiā</td>
<td>Libing</td>
<td>Māndai,</td>
<td>Munushui,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marok</td>
<td>Shūbāng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Sāl</td>
<td>Sān</td>
<td>Sāla</td>
<td>Sāl</td>
<td>Sān, Shain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As P.C. Bhattacharya (1977) has observed the Bodos or Boro language belongs to the branch of Barish section under Baric division of the Sino-Tibetan family as per the classification given by Robert Shafer (1955). The Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson, 1905) describes the Bodo or the Boro-Kachari as a member of the Bodo (Boro) sub section under the Assam-Burmese group of the **Tibeto-Burman** branch of the Sino-Tibeto-Chinese speech family.
The following is the brief tabular representation of the Sino-Tibetan languages drawn by Robert Shafer and found in “A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language” by P.C. Bhattacharya (1977):-

Another is the brief tabular representation of the Sino-Tibetan family of the language following the linguistic survey of India as relevant to the Bodo language:

The Bodo language speaking areas of Assam at the present are stretching from Dhubri in the west to Sadiya in the east. In Tripura and Nagaland also, we have small number of Bodo language speakers. In Jalpaiguri and other adjacent districts of Bengal, the Bodos are known as Mech.
1.2. **The ethnic identity of the Bodo and geographical boundary:**

“The ancient history shows that Bodo as powerful rulers not only the North-Eastern India but in Moran District of Nepal and Rongpur district of Bangladesh also”. (Liladhar Brahma: Religion and Dances of the Bodos, 2003, Pp-1).

According to Rev. Sidney Endle (1911), “the origin of the Kachari race is still very largely a matter of conjecture and inference in the absence of anything that entitled to be regarded as authentic history. However, on the basis of the Mongolian affinities of the Kacharis, he would point out to Tibet and China as the original home of the race”. (The Kacharis. Pp-3, 1975 reprint)

In this context Dr. Bhuyan (1951) observes that “there is bound to be diversity of opinion regarding their pre-Assam habitat as contemplated by some authorities to be in Tibet and China”. (Kachari Buranji. Pp-XIX).

In this context, Raj Mohan Nath (1948) writes clearly that “the inhabitants of various parts of the Bod country were known as Boddo-Ficha or Boddo-Cha (Ficha-Cha-Children) or the Children of the Bod country, and were later known simply as the Boddo or the Bodo”. He again said that “when Buddhism spread into that country, the southern part inhabited by Buddhist Lamas was known as Basti (lama) Bod which has now been transformed into Tibbot or Tibet”. (The background of Assamese Culture. Pp-15).

The Bodos are known by different names in different regions of Assam and its few adjacent areas. They were called Kiratas, Asuras, Danavas etc. by neighbouring Non-Mongolian peoples. The Bodo people living in North-West of Bengal and Nepal and Goalpara district are called Mech as they once settled in the river bank of Mechi. In
the Brahmaputra valley, the Bodo native Speakers identify themselves as Bodo while the Hindu Assamese speakers and speakers of other linguistic communities address them as Kachari or Boro-Kachari. Edward Tuite Delton (1872) has mentioned them as Kachari or Bodo. Gait (1891) and Rev. Sidney Endle (1911) also referred them as Kachari.

Edward Tuite Delton (1872) remarked rightly about the Meches and the Kacharis that “all the authorities agree in considering the Mech and the Kachari as the same people or at least of common origin”. He added that Meches of the Goalpara district have been converted to Hinduism by repudiation of their ethnic origin and called themselves Rajbongshis. They have become to a great extent Hindunised by the process of proselytism.

Renowned writer Birendragiri Basumatary (1963) comments that “the Karbi calls the Bodo people ‘Phorag’. There is a place called Pharag Khawa in Karbi Anglong where the Bodo people live. In Bhutan hills too, there are Phorag tribe of the Bodo race. In Nagaon area, there was Phorag Kingdom. The name Pragjyotispur is derived from the ruler Phorag. Phorag + Juung + Thi + Phur > Phragjuungthiphur > Pragjyotispur. The Phorag people also live in Cachar and North-Cachar area. The river where Phorag people live is known as Borag which is derived from Phorag. They also call themselves as Dimasa which means sons or children of big river. (Dhansiri or Brahmaputra River). The Phorags are none but Bodo or Boro when they live in Tripura they are known as Borok” (Boro Harimuni Mohor Mushri. 1963, Pp-2).

Sir Edward Gait (1872) in his book ‘A History of Assam’ refers that “It seems not improbable that at one time the major part of Assam and North-east Bengal formed a great Bodo kingdom and that some, at least of the Mech kings mentioned in the old
copper plate inscription belongs to the Kacharis or some closely related tribe”. (Pp-300).

Regarding identity and domination of the Bodo people, we can further recommend K.L. Baruas’s (1966) writing ‘Early History of Kamrup’ where he said that “Mongolians were described to be the Kiratas in the Mahabharata and other Hindu scriptures like Kalikapuran and Yogiknatntra”. He further observes that during the time of the Mahabharata war, even earlier, the Bodo tribes constituted the bulk of the population of the Assam valley, Northern and Eastern Bengal and the surrounding and intervening hills. (Pp-14).

The powerful kings of the Bodo race Ghotok, Ban, Bhaskar ruled this whole vast area, after them, the descendent of Bodo king ruled here with the name of different dynasty till Ahom kingdom became powerful, and lastly when British ruler annexed this kingdom to their empire.

Renowned writers and research scholars, B.N. Bordoloi, G.C. Sarma Thakur, M.C. Saikia jointly view in ‘Tribes of Assam, Part-I (1987) that “the Bodo Kacharis of Assam is a branch of the great Bodo group of the Indo-Mongoloid family falling within the Assam Burmese linguistic section. Their identity is not uniform as an ethnic group. Different names are used to designate them. In Bengal and in the lower ranges of the Himalayas coming within the territory of Nepal, they are known as Meches. In upper Assam, they are identified as Sonowal and Thengal Kachari, while in the western Assam they are more popularly known as Bodo or Boro-Kachari. In the southern districts of North-Cachar, they are designated as Dimasa and Barman respectively. (Tribes of Assam, Part-I, 1987, TRI)
1.3 The Bodo Society and Its Culture:

The Bodo society is one of the oldest societies in India. The group of people has its own origin history and culture. They are like many other tribal groups of North-East India in many respect, while at the same time, they have their own distinctiveness among others.

The Bodo culture is a part and parcel of the Mongoloid culture. The Bodo people live together peacefully forming a village under the gamiburai (headman) of the village. The Bodo people have their customary laws called ‘Bad’ for leading the village community in a peaceful way. The social structure of the Bodos is primarily patriarchal, and father is the sole guardian of the family. The gamiburai, the Ṣza (traditional healer), the Duuri (priest) are very important person in the village or in the society.

The grazing field is always attached to the village and the agricultural field is located nearby the village. In the eastern corner of the grazing field, there is always a Garzasali (An altar of mass people worshiping gods and goddesses). In the northeast corner of the courtyard, there is always an altar of Bat’huu with a Sızuu tree where the supreme God Bat’uuburai or Sibrail is worshiped. Bat’huu has five deep philosophy of the existence of the universe as a whole. This philosophy is specially related to Earth, Water, Air, Fire (Sun) and Universe. The Sızuu tree is the symbol of the God who created all these things and its five ridges indicate the five elements and its philosophy. Sızuu means, ‘Si’ is ‘soul’ and ‘zuu’ is ‘Supreme’, Supreme soul or the supreme God of these universe as a whole.

The Nome-no (main house) of the Bodos is built on the North side stretching from the west to the east and facing southwards which has three partitioned rooms
named Isiŋ (Kitchen), ɔkɔŋ (Dinning and common room) Kʰɔpʰra (Bed room). The Isiŋ is also the altar place of Balʰuubrawl, Balʰuuburi and Mainauburi (Goddess of wealth). The Bakʰri-Nɔ (granary house), the Suura-nɔ (parlor) and The Gɔli (cattle shed) are built in the east side, west side, and south side respectively.

In the Bodo society, a woman has a high status and honour. They are almost equal to male in the society. The widow remarriage is allowed in the Bodo society. The Bodo women are industrious and skilled in different activities. Besides domestic works, cooking, cleaning, and gathering vegetables, they are expert in farming and weaving. They prepare clothes made of cotton, Indi (Eri) and Silk. The Bodo women are famous for handloom and textile and for their excellent embroidery and design.

There are definite customs observed with rituals in respect of birth, marriage and death. Ulʰumai hanai is special ceremony for birth. ‘Halʰa suni’ is the oldest method of Bodo marriage and saradu is farewell ceremony of death person. The use of magic, witchcraft and hymn in different ceremonies are remarkable.

Rice is the staple food of the Bodo, rice beer is also necessary in traditional Bodo social functions but now the Bodo people are almost avoiding it. Fish and meat is also a part and parcel of Bodo diet. The dried fish and meat is regarded as a special favourite food. Napʰam, ɔndla, Narzi, Samɔ, Meuyai, Lapʰa, Sɔbai-dau, Maiʰa-na, Na-balʰun, Pʰanlu-rusi, etc. are very special food items of the Bodo society.

In Bodo society, male people use Gamsa, Pʰalli, Arɔnai, Sadri, Halali. Bodo women use two kinds of dɔkʰɔna: ɔrɔŋg dɔkʰɔna and Langa dɔkʰɔna. Pʰasra, Regeregang, zumgra. Arɔnai is Bodo national symbol like tie. Sima is the common bed cover or bigger cloth. Besides it, Bodo women use two types of Dɔkʰɔna: Sala matʰa
and Dokna i’ausi. The traditional clothes specially made of indi (Eri) and Silk has been gaining world wide popularity since time immemorial.

The Bodo women use to wear different type of ornament K’era, K’eru, zumk’a, P’uti etc. (for ear); Nap’hul, Nakap’hul, Nol’d, Int’h, etc. (for nose); Chandra-hala, zinziri, Lu.

The Bodo society has rich folk songs, folk dances, folk music, folk believes and folk literature. Their traditional folk instruments are K’am, Sip’un, zol’a, Serza, Gonguna, T’ork’a, Jabk’iuj, etc. The Bodos have five types of dances: (i) K’erai Dance, (ii) Haba musanai (Marriage Dance), (iii) Buisagu musanai, (iv) Bagurumba musanai and (v) Raizu Janai musanai (practical life Dance). These five types of dances again have sub-types dances. For instance, the k’erai dance has eighteen sub-types and other minor dances.

1.4 Its Genetic Origin and Geographical Area:

The generic term ‘Bodo’ was first used by Hodgson. (1946). The Tibeto-Burman language family is now widespread throughout the eastern and the southern parts of Asia including Burma and North-East India. As per classification given by Robert Shafer (1955), the Bodo (Boro) language belongs to the branch of Barish section under Baric division of the Sino-Tibetan family. The Linguistic Survey of India (1905) describes the Bodo (Boro) languages under the Bodo (Boro) sub-section under the Assam Burma group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan Chinese speech family.

Grierson (1903) had also designated Bodo as Bara or Bodo. The Bodo groups comprises (as stated in the Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.-III, Part-II) the following
tribes: Kachari or Bodo, Lalung, Dimasa, Garo, Rabha, Tripuri (Kok-borok), Koch, Chutia (Deuri) and Moran. The group of tribes known as Bodo or Bara forms the most numerous and important section of Non-Aryan tribes of the province of Assam.

Further, Madhuram Boro (1990) says, “the Bodo or Boro speech community is now well spread throughout the North-Eastern states of India including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Northern parts of West Bengal and adjoining areas of Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan”.

1.5 Demography of Bodo People:

Assam is the North Eastern State of India, the ground of linguistic hunting of the linguists of the world. The area of Assam covers 78,438 sq.km. and according to 2001 census of India, the total population of Assam is 26,655,528. The Assamese is the official language of Assam whereas Bengali, Bodo and Karbi are the co-official language of the Assam. According to 2001 census of India, total population of Bodo in Assam is 1,352,771 having 61.3% literacy rate. The Bodos are recognized as plans tribe in the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution.

1.6. The Bodo Literature:

The Bodo (Bara) has rich tradition in respect to the folk literature. In the Bodo folk society, folk songs, tales, legends, charms are related to various religious festivals and performance, various myths, riddles, idioms and sayings are also still prevailing as relics of the folk knowledge.

The written Bodo literature emerged with the publication of books ‘Bat’u Nam Buiki aguni Gidu’ and ‘Bɔrɔni Pʰisa O Ayen’. The first compiled by Prasanna Lal Kaklary in 1925 regarding Bat’uu Song and Buwisagu song. On the other hand, second
one was the first book of Bodo prose form written in Bodo by Ganga Charan Kaklary in 1915. In 1924, the first Bodo magazine ‘Bibar’ was published which was edited by Late Satish Chandra Basumatary. This magazine contains the themes like religion, culture, ethics, morality and advice to the Bodo community for the social upliftment. In 1923, a poetry book ‘Kɔ̃ntɔ̃ Mɛtɔ̃’ (Poems and Songs) was jointly compiled by Rupnath Brahma and Madaram Brahma. It contains national spirit regarding religion, culture, etc. Another important work is Bɔrɔni Gudi Sibsa Aru Arɔz written by Madaram Brahma. They are all part of Bodo classical literature.

Ishan Chandra Muchahary is entitled as the greatest romantic poet in the history of Bodo literature. His remarkable poetry books are ‘Sɔnani Mala’ (Chain of Gold) and Pʰami (lotus). Promod Chandra Brahma and Kali Kumar Lahary in the earlier period represented the nature as the anchor of their spirit and source of inspirations. In modern period, Manaranjan Lahary worked a lot of. In modern poetry writing, Brajendra Kumar Brahma, Manaranjan Lahary, Samar Brahma Chaudhury, Surat Narzary, Bijoy Bglary, Anju and many more played a great role in creating multifarious of modern life.

Besides Bodo short story, drama, novel, literary genres like children literature, biography, travelogues and literary criticisms as well as prose work and translation are largely available.

1.7. **Status of the Bodo Language:**

The Bodo language has been introduced as medium of instruction in 1963 in the primary level. Through struggle, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) established its language at different levels of academic courses. Now Bodo language is used as M.I.L, elective, major subject, certificate course, PG degree was introduced in the year 1994
under Gauhati University. The Bodo language has also been using as one of the M.I.L. under Dibrugarh University, NEHU and Assam University. It is used as the state associate official language (1984), and main official language in BTC area. Further, it is now used as an optional paper in ACS, UPSC or IAS exam and in the process of the computer language. It is now got recognized as one of the Eight Scheduled languages of the constitution of India as well as by Sahitya Academy of India. It is now right time for research scholars, readers and writers for their creative works for its further development and enrichment.

1.8. The classification of Bodo Dialects:

According to Promod Chandra Bhattacharya ‘A descriptive analysis of the Bodo languages’ (1977), there are four dialects areas of Bodo or Boro language: North-West Dialect area having sub dialects of North-Kamrup and North-Goalpara, (ii) South-west dialect area comprising South Goalpara and Garo Hills Districts, (iii) North Central Assam areas comprising Darrang, Lakhimpur district and a few places of Arunachal Pradesh, (iv) the southern Assam dialect area comprising Nowgaon, North Cachar, Mikir Hills and adjacent districts.

On the other hand, according to Phukan Basumatary, the Bodo language has only three dialects: (i) Western Bodo dialect (ii) Eastern Boro dialect and (iii) Southern Bodo dialect.

Of course, *Burdun* is also a dialect of Bodo which has very unique differences to the other dialects of Bodo. Its spoken areas are Bengtol of Chirang district, North-western part of Kokrajhar district and the indigenous people who are residing in the state of West-Bengal.
So, observing all those dialects including above mentioned comments of scholars, I would say that there are mainly four dialects in Bodo. These are: (i) Western (ii) Eastern (iii) Burduun, and (iv) Southern dialect of Bodo.

1.9. The History of the Bodo Scripts:

According to renowned scholar Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the Bodos had traditionally used their script named Deodai but due to ravages of time, the evidences of this script are totally lost.

Another history of the Bodo script is that in the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the Bodo writers used Roman and Bengali scripts for the writing of the Bodo language. In the last decade of the nineteen century, the Christian missionaries used Roman script. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bodo writers used Bengali as well as Assamese script. In the course of time, since 1974-75 Devanagagiri script along with Assamese was used for writing the Bodo language. As the result of the Bodo movement, an agreement between the Government of India and the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was made in 2003, since then Devanagiri script is accepted as the standard script for the Bodo language, which is now recognized by entire Bodo community and has gained its popularity.

1.10. Goalpara District and its population:

The North-eastern region of India comprises the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Assam is the largest state in the North-East and it consists of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys. The Goalpara district is located in southern bank of Brahmaputra valley of lower Assam. According to 2001 census, the total population of Goalpara district is 8,22,306 and its scheduled
Tribes population are 1,15,099 out of which more than 40,000 population are native speakers of the southern dialect of Bodo in Goalpara district.

The native speakers prefer to call this dialect as *Dikʰ ʔηkʰ ulaɾi “river bank of the south”* which is the most popular dialect among the Bodo because it has the first ever written book “*Bɔrɔni pʰisa ʃ’ Ayen*” (sons of Bodo and its customary Laws) by the edition of Ganga Charan Kachari in 1915.

1.11. **Organisation of the study:**

The proposed research work is organized in 6 chapters excluding the bibliography. The chapters are Introduction, Literature Review, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and Conclusion. The Introduction chapter contains a brief note on Bodo and its language, the ethnic identity of the Bodo and geographical boundary, the Bodo society and its culture, genetic origin and geographical area of Bodo, classification of Bodo dialects, history of the Bodo scripts, Goalpara district and its population, and methodology.

The next chapter contains literature review of linguistic study so far done on the Bodo languages. Many linguists have studied its grammatical rules and structures of the Bodo. It reviews the grammatical researches done so far on Bodo language.

The third chapter includes phonology of the Southern dialect of Bodo where vowels, consonantal phonemes and tones are discussed in details. In this portion, six vowel phonemes and its eight diphthongs have been shown with their minimal pairs along with the occurrences in all the three positions. The consonants are also discussed elaborately with their contrasting pairs, distributions in word initially, word medially and word finally and syllabic pattern, consonantal clusters and sequences, geminates and tones. Morphophonemics are discussed shortly in this section.
The **fourth chapter** contains morphology of the Southern dialect of Bodo. Morphology deals with the structure of words. Our analysis of the morphological structures of southern dialect of Bodo is on nouns, numbers, numerals, verbs, tense and aspects, moods, non-finite verbs, adjectives, adverbs, negation, interrogative, postpositions, emphatic particles and word formation process.

There are quite a number of differences between the southern dialect of Bodo and standard Bodo in its phonological and morphological structures which is found exclusively in our field works.

In the **fifth chapter**, we discussed the syntax of the Southern dialect of Bodo. Actually, Syntax deals with study of the sentence structures. Basically, the normal word order of the Southern dialect of Bodo is SOV, which means the language is a verb final language. The Noun phrase, Verb phrase, Adjective phrase, and Adverb phrases are highlights in constituents sections. The clauses, Nominalization, topicalization, type of sentences, negations, interrogation and passivalizations etc. are also discussed.

The **Sixth chapter** is the last chapter that contains conclusion of the whole thesis in a nutshell. That means the summarization of the whole discussion of the aforesaid analysis. The selected bibliographies are listed after this chapter.