CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

During the course of my study, I had undertaken field study in some selected villages in two districts of Udalguri and Baksa. During this field investigation the villagers extended their full cooperation and response with warm wishes. My contact person helped me on the matter and from this study I acquired a new experience and knowledge. During the course of my field investigation I did not face any disturbance but was interrupted by the rains and frequent BTAD bandhs called by various social, political parties and student organizations of Assam. However my mind became refreshed and satisfied when I came to know their vast knowledge and experience regarding the Bathou religion.

The Boros have been practising with racial affinities in language, culture, rites and rituals and traditions which is known as Bathou. From birth to death or womb to grave the followers of Bathouism observe the rites and rituals, social customs of life cycle ceremonies in every phases of life. All the seasonal, agricultural, harvesting festivals and ceremonies are also observed according to the tenets and principles of Bathou religion.

This age old Bathou religion of the Boros is being practised by a section of the Boros following two different practices i.e. (i) traditional system and practices who sacrifice animals and fowls at the worships of Kheraisali,
Garjasali in the name of several deities by the village community as a whole. This practice is also followed by a particular family in the name of Biswahari, Barmani (snake goddess), Gunakhar (a kind of annual puja) at the corner of the campus and

Modified section of Bathouism follow the practices of offering flowers, prasads, fruits at their community Bathou altar as well as family altar instead of sacrifices. This section of Bathou followers usually sing several prayer songs on every Tuesday. They have no temporary Kheraisali and Garjasali (place of Kherai and Garja worship), but they have shifted these places of worship to Bathou Thansali (Bathou altar) at the community where they offer eighteen fathali (pieces of plaintain leaves) in the name of eighteen main deities which are laid down in between the Mainao Bitha and Bathou Bitha on Bwiswmuthini ali.

The preceeding chapters deal with these aspects of Bathou religion.

The followers of traditional practices or worship of Kherai, Garja and other deities are turning a move towards the new form and practices with modified Bathouism. The modified Bathouism has now almost occupied a dominant role in the area, like the followers of modified Bathou religion in other districts of Assam.

Changes and innovation have emerged almost in every sphere of Bathouism. The traditional religion of the Boros is on the way to acquire an institutional form under the leadership of All Bathou Mahasabha (ABM).
Changes and modification with regard to dresses or costume, practices of worship, life style, drinking of liquor (rice beer or jou), behaviour in the family has almost been on the way to modernization. The red coloured dresses or costumes were used in any religious and social activities in the primitive days as holy cloths but now these are being replaced with white which may due to the influence of Hindus or other religions. Jou (rice beer) is being replaced by tea in almost all life cycle ceremonies and seasonal festivals.

Workshops, seminars, discussions and conferences are frequently organized by the institution or respective branches of ABM. Of course, my presentation in the chapter – VI almost covers the changes and innovations.

Offering fruits like banana, areca nut, betel leaves, lighting Alaribathi (earthen lamp or saki) in the name of respective deities as well as Bwrai Bathou have remained unchanged.

The recent moves to introduce modification and innovation in the religious practices are necessary to give the traditional religion a cohesive and institutionalized shape and to vitalize the religion in the days of ethnic assertion.

From the discussion in the preceeding chapters it is evident that Bathou religion occupies a pivotal place in the Boro Society and culture. It governs the lives of the people in their day to day life and in their rituals, ceremonies and festivals. Both the life cycle ceremonies (rites of passage) and seasonal and religious festivals and ceremonies are observed according to the tenets of Bathou.
religion. The deep philosophical principles of Bathou exert influence on the moral character and thought of the Boros.

In the conclusion it can be said that both the traditional and modified form of Bathou religion will continue to play significant role in the Boro society and culture. But the younger and educated section of the society will be drawn towards the modified form of the religion as the religious practices it has introduced are comparatively easy and conforming to the modern society. Of course the moves for modification and innovation need not be at the cost of the basic teaching and elements of Bathou religion.

............
PHOTOGRAPHS OF FESTIVALS/CEREMONIES

The nomano (Main house)

Garjasali (Place of Garja worship)
Garja worship

Bathou worship on the occasion of Magh Bihu
Offering cooked items to deceased person at Shraddha ceremony

Sacrificing pigeon at Garja worship
Sacrificing pigeon at Garja puja without cutting the neck

Instalation of Bathou altar
Doudini (Woman oracle) telling future prospect

A worship place of Gunakhar puja
Earthen lamp of Kati puja at Paddy field.

Celebration of first paddy plantation
Cow bathing ceremony at Bwisagu
Place of Garja worship
Mass prayer of village community

Bathou Haba
Preparation of Sijou tree plantation at Bathou altar

Hathasuni Haba (traditional marriage)
Bilwgw khanai

Thansali (Bathou Temple)

251
Phindu Baonai (offering items) at Giathi Jonai

Bodo women folk celebrating Baisagu ceremony
Bwisagu Dance

Kheri Dance of Doudini
PHOTOGRAPHS OF INFORMENT

Sri Bhedu Goyari, Age-82

Late Dhaneswar Swargiari, Age-78
Sri Merga Daimari, Age-70

Sri Nagen Basumatary, Age-68
Sri Baren Mochahari, Age-56

Sri Jogen Narzari, Age-69
Sri Budaola Daimari, Age-48
Sri Salen Daimari, Age-44

Sri Kanteswar Borgoyary, Age-71
Sri Gangacharn Boro, Age-85

Sri Sombar Basumatari, Age-75
Sri Chandicharn Basumatari, Age-77
Sri Rabin Mochahari, Age-54
Sri Hareswar Basumatari, Age 77
Sri Debendra Nath Basumatari, Age-89
Sri Gabda Basumatari, Age-75