

**TOPIC- ASPECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE BODOS  
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BODO WOMEN IN ASSAM.**

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## **Chapter-6**

### **Conclusion**

One way summarise that the study of Bodo society in the contemporary presents a challenge both in terms of materials and also in terms of materials and also in terms of approaches and selection of themes. A domain critic of earlier studies would point to the nature of reductionist arguments employed by facing on state categories to give a picture of Bodo society to represent Bodo society on the basis of ethnicity or region or a unilinear identity. A danger of such approaches the partial representations that emerged from such representations. In this approach, a new understanding can emerge. Possibilities for such, thematic and related items are as said in this project.

Thus, in conclusion from the above chapters it has been attempted to study the historical overview, their origin i.e their place of origin, present population, social status of Bodo women with respect to their culture, religion and also their economic and political participation in the Bodo society. It is found that the Bodos are the early inhabitants and plain tribe in Assam. They cherish a very rich culture and tradition among themselves in the society. Socially the status of Bodo women is almost equal along with their male counterparts despite being a patriarchal society. The women are highly respected and even in terms of marriages, girls are allowed to choose their life partners. It is also observed that in the Bodo society many of the social evils like dowry system, child marriage, honor killing, infanticide etc are not practiced, unlike in other parts of the Indian community. Yes some serious social evils still exist among the Bodo society. One such hotly debated in recent years has been the inhuman practice of witch hunting, which has received wide attention throughout the whole of BTAD region. Recently, the Assam

government along with AASU, ABSU and women organizations like ABWWF is taking lots of painstaking effort in spreading mass awareness in order to eradicate the menace of witch hunting among the tribal people of Assam. Bodo women actively take part in all the religious and social ceremonies along with men. Religion plays an important role in their family life as well as in the community life, because they have learnt and followed to live amidst different religion and culture with respect and tolerance. Though Bodos have the Bathou religion as their religion of origin, the new religion most importantly the Brahma and Christianity brought a renewed spirit in their ideas, behavior, rituals and style of living in the society. In the early 20th century, the Bodos followed different religious cults and sects but they have never created any unhealthy environment in the society, rather they have kept themselves conscious about their own culture and identity and have successfully emerged as an integral part of the Indian culture.

In the traditional society, Bodos regarded themselves different from the other tribes of Assam but they are found to be in absolute sync with the common sentiments when it comes to their identity, religious beliefs and cultural practices towards the society. The change in the religion and culture supplemented the Bodo women to enhance their status and position both socio-economically and politically. And also it is revealing that Bodo women play an important role in the socio-economic field.

As agriculture is the main occupation of Bodos, their economy is entirely dependent on their natural resources. Bodo women are very active in all household chores and economically they are not dependent much on their spouse. They participate in all kinds of agricultural activities like sowing, planting, weeding, harvesting, etc. along with men and finally serve their family through the preparation of their delicious foods. In other words they play an active role from the field to the plate of the family. They even grow lots of leafy vegetables for their consumption

and sell the excess in the market adding supplementary income to their families. It is seen that fishing is very popular among the Bodo women. They are food lovers especially the pork, which is consumed in every occasion. Bodo women take the lead role in maintaining the farm. Bodo women are expert weavers and very industrious and it is also an important part for the socio-cultural unity of Bodo people. Many young and women are actively involved in small cottage industries and sericulture. In recent years, weaving industries have sprung up and empowered the Bodo women economically and financially so that they can support their family. It also serves as a platform for the additional income and employment of the Bodo women in society. As a matter of fact as Bodos are mainly dependent on agriculture, they face the problem of seasonal unemployment every now and then. So the activity of weaving absorbs the large number of women work force and provides them a source of income to support their family and so they are engaged actively in the weaving activities. It has helped them to be more independent and empowered them economically and financially. But some problem persists among the women weavers; as the weavers are mostly women, they face lot of health issues and marketing issues that needs to be address adequately.

Self help group has played a significant role among the rural Bodo women in BTAD areas like Udaguri and Kokrajhar districts for the development of the society. Especially NRLM has done a tremendous job for the upliftment of Bodo women through the establishment of Self help groups. Illiteracy of women is the main hindrance for the women's empowerment and development of the family and society. The women's literacy has been improving in recent years. Parents are taking lots of interest in educating and providing facilities to their children whether its boy or a girl child. And the post modernization has brought changes in the lives of the Bodo women because the social and economic changes has also brought a positive side in the

education sector, as women are actively participating in different central and state government jobs like lecturers, banking, doctors, engineers, paramilitary forces etc. and some women have even joined active politics in recent years. It is clear that the improving trend of education among the Bodo women and young generation girls is an indication of women's development leading to an empowered status in the society.

The deleaniting women in this schema would also involved looking at over lapping identities like ethnicity, territory, class to escape from the danger of partial pictures. Women occupied multiple social locations and therefore cannot be generalized as a whole.

It is clear that, when we go back to Bodoland Movement during the end of the twentieth century, it shows that the political economy which was started as socio-cultural movement emerged not with a single factor but comprised many issues like ethnic identity, language, cultural heritage; socio-economic problems etc. This in later years resulted into the demand for a separate Bodoland. The emergence of Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) in 1952 is another milestone in the revolution on Bodo language and literature and has since its inception worked for the welfare of the Bodo society. It served as the raised platform for uniting all the young and energetic Bodo writers towards developing their language. It is also found that they have always tried for the establishment of separate Bodo identity in India.

From the above study we find that though Bodo women actively participated in the movement, they were always subordinate to the men in every process of the movement especially the ABWWF, the most active women organization. At that time the leading members of the organization shifted their focus on women related issues without improving their participation in various decision making forums. No doubt, the three women organization like ABWWF, BWJF and BPFWW of BTAD region have played an unparallel role not only in raising the status of

women but also in protecting the rights of Bodo women in the society. But unfortunately, they could not find their place in the decision making process because these organizations were mostly premature in nature and only at a nascent stage. The areas of their interest were largely confined within their own women Bodo community. Other problems like the lack of good leadership quality and networking with other women organization of different states as well as their financial position largely restricted their activities. From the above study, it is also observed that the three women organizations played a significant role in terms of bringing social peace, harmony and serenity in the Bodo society. It is in the larger interest of all that all the governmental and nongovernmental organizations should maintain peace and understanding among themselves and work only for the best results of the society. The groups should avoid conflicts of any kind, which will only hamper for development of the society. They should work independently to raise voices for heinous crime like rape cases, sexual harassments and against corrupt practices which have entered at every walks of common people in the society. The programmes like food security, gender equality etc are hardly discuss. Many new problems like environmental issues have to be solved through combined effort because it is usually the womenfolk that bear the brunt of climate change. Though the movement has not succeeded to a large extent, the expectations are very high from the emerging new Bodo women, because they have shown their worth in every sphere of their life. The day will be not so far when Bodo women will regain their honored status and play a vital role for the Bodo community towards the path of healthy development. We hope these women organizations and women movement will be able to establish a society based on gender equality.

Domain discourses on Bodos emerged from NGO's who are obsessed with the westernised agenda that evoke white men's burden. Silences of the NGO's critic of religion as a handmaden

of such groups as articulated by the Nobel laureate an urged to do is totally missing. On the other hand their one sided critic of the state is also very unconvincing and this project only has made the Bodos as subjects of a new transitional capital in which they are the junior partners.

It is also very unfortunate that when Bodos managed to secure the Bodoland Autonomous Council in 2003, not even a single woman was given any administrative or official position in the higher hierarchy. Male members dominated the whole of administrative work and politics was in the exclusive domain of males. But this time in the 2016 state Assembly elections of Assam, two prominent women activist contested for the election; unfortunately both of them could not make it through for various factors, who would have been a role model for the younger generation especially among Bodo women in politics. However another promising woman, Pramila Rani Brahma of the BPF (Bodoland Peoples Front) party managed to even get a ministerial berth in the state cabinet, with her earlier experience as a cabinet minister. These trends suggest that male members in the Bodo society are ready to accept women leaders when the opportunity comes, a really impressive thrust for the whole society of India. But even though the political space for women's participation in the Bodo politics has began to set in, the women's participation in decision making bodies remains unsatisfactory till date. As rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi that salvation of India cannot be achieved unless women are empowered; which is absolutely true even for the Bodo society. Thus, we can say that to bring social peace and development in the Bodo society, it is imperative that a Bodo woman needs to be empowered economically and politically in the current scenario. It is not sufficient just to discuss the problems orally but should find a practical solution or do research studies at the grass root level and prepare the roadmap and run with urgency; the extra miles that we need to go more.

In sum, the thesis will conclude by saying that the situation of the Bodo women is enough flux

on account of the large to scale changes in economy and polity and the influence of globalization. It is in this new context that one has to locate the studies and secondly, account for the new patriarchal structures in Bodo society. These patriarchal structures are not of the traditional pattern but the modification of the same on account of with modernity and temporary forces of globalization in the context of NGO discourse and the electoral politics with forces of militancy and ethnic assertions. The thesis would conclude by positioning that a new hibrate identity of the Bodo women is emerging as a result of the operations of the above mention forces. It is the need of the time to understand the context intotality using relevant categories rather than employing outmoded categories and explanations.