

**THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE BODO SOCIETY: A
CRITICAL STUDY (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO UDALGURI DISTRICT OF ASSAM)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GAUHATI UNIVERSITY
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Chapter 7

Conclusion

The research topic “*The Role of Women in the Bodo Society: A Critical Study (With special reference to Udalguri District of Assam)*” a deep study have been made on vital role of womenfolk of the Bodo society in the different sector such as socio-cultural, economic, educational, political etc. and also discussed broadly about the position of womenfolk in society.

In the Chapter 1 the Ethnic identity of Bodos and a brief sketch of Bodo women is discussed. The Bodos are the early settler of the Brahmaputra valley or North-east India. The Bodos are known in history by various terms. Linguistically, the Bodos are the branch of Sino-Tibetan language family and racially branch of Mongoloid stock. In the history Bodos are mentioned as ancient ruler tribes which ruled all over the Brahmaputra valley. Gobinda Chandra (*Iragdao*) was the last king of *Kachari* or the *Bodos*.

In the Chapter 2, the Role of women in socio-cultural activities, women in festivals; seasonal festivals; *Bwisagw*, agricultural festivals; *Magw Domasi*, *Kati Gasa Saonai*, *Wngkham Gwrlwi Janai*, *Hal Jangkhra*, *Gosa Lajennai*, *Mainao Lainai/Borainai*, Religious festivals; *Kherai and Garja worship*, women in life cycle and rites of passage; *birth (Jwnwm)*, marriage (*Haba/Juli*); *Swngnanwi Lainai Haba* or *Haba Gwlao (Arranged marriage)*, *Kharsonnai Haba*, *Bwnanwi Lainai Haba*, *Dwnkharlangnai Haba*, *Gwrjia Haba*, *Dongkha Haba* and death (*Thwinai*) and importance of womenfolk are studied.

The Bodos observe different kind of festival and the role of womenfolk in festival is most remarkable. The womenfolk play most important role in cultural activities also and in the absence of them the celebration of ceremonies or festival is impossible.

In the Chapter 3, The role of women in economic sector has been studied. In this chapter deep study has been made about the role of womenfolk in agricultural sector such as wet cultivation, dry cultivation, horticulture, and animal husbandry, handloom and textiles, household works, family economy.

The womenfolk play big role or contribute to uplift the family to promote economic growth. The womenfolk of the rural areas have involved themselves in agricultural activities. The womenfolk engage themselves in sowing, harvesting, weeding and provide opportunities for income generation. The womenfolk actively participate and support their husband or family members. They work almost equally with the male members in all agricultural and allied activities of the family.

The womenfolk rear the live-stock and support the family's economic condition. They rear pigs, cattle, poultry, ducks, fowls, goats. In the early period, there were hardly any ways of income generation by itself but only as tools of agricultural activities produced, food items for the family. Thus, the contribution of the Bodo women to the family economy is enormous although it is always considered as family income.

In the Chapter 4, a study has been made about the Bodo women in the field of education, educational position of Bodo women, literacy rate, problems, domestic problems, social problems, lack of government assistance, insufficient women

teacher, lack of institution of women, Insufficient proper study materials, Insufficient facilities.

The Bodos are not progressive enough and they are considered backward basically in the field of education. The literacy rate is very low and the rate of womenfolk is lower than men folk. The Bodos are most rich in their traditions and culture but in education they cannot develop in comparison to other elite society. The educational status of womenfolk is also not higher in standard. Lack of the competitive attitude among them and educational atmosphere are the main reason behind this. The girls' students are deprived from the education because of their family problems and lack of government assistance etc. Though the several opportunities have been provided to improve the educational background of women since the independence of India. The illiterate parents do not want to send the girls' students to school or college because they do not know the value of the education. They think all the female or girls' whether literate or illiterate have to stay at home ultimately doing the household works. So, the guardians give less attention to the girls' students.

In Chapter 5, Bodo women in politics, politically awareness of Bodo women, participation of Bodo women in Roman script movement, participation in statehood movement of *Udayachal* and *Bodoland*, Bodo women and electoral politics, role of women organization; *All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation* (ABWWF) have been discussed.

The participation of womenfolk in politics cannot be denied. The Bodos are politically dominated by the others from the colonial period or after the loss of their kingdom *Cachar*. So, to safeguard their language, literature and culture or tradition

the Bodos have been struggling in different times. The involvement of Bodo women in political field have been noticed firstly in the movement of Roman script launched by *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* (BSS) in 1974-75. The womenfolk participated in the movement more than thousands from different corner of Assam. But the huge number of participation of the Bodo women have been seen in the statehood movement of *Udayachal* and *Bodoland* launched by *Plains Tribal Council of Assam* (PTCA) and *All Bodo Students' Union* (ABSU). Besides, most of the political awareness among womenfolk come to light after the formation of women organization. One of them is *All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation* (ABWWF). The political participation is assumed as one of the determinants of empowerment because political participation gives womenfolk a space for exercising their power and platform to use their leadership ability to solve problems. However, since 1951 Bodo women have also been participating in formal political structure as voters, party workers etc.

In the Chapter 6, study about the position of Bodo women in family, Bodo position of Bodo women in society, fair and festivals, rites of passages, economic sector, politics has been represented.

In Bodo society the men folk are the head of the family and the Bodo society is a patriarchal based society. Yet, the womenfolk are also treated equally in each and every activity of a family and society. The womenfolk have sufficient freedom to move in the domestic and social activities. The womenfolk are also given the rights in political, economic sector. The society recognizes the contribution of womenfolk in society at every activities or sectors and respects the qualified and skilled womenfolk.

The area of the study “*The Role of Women in the Bodo society: A Critical Study (with special reference to Udalguri District of Assam)*” the following findings are mentioned:

- i) The Bodos are not only inhabitants of Assam or Brahmaputra valley but also inhabitants of outside of Assam or India with their distinct identity.
- ii) In the patriarchal based Bodo society the womenfolk also play big role in different sectors viz. socio-cultural, economy, politics, education, sports, literature and focused themselves in different sector and enriched the Bodo society.
- iii) In Bodo society the womenfolk get the top position in every sector in a family and society.
- iv) The womenfolk play major role in agriculture, animal husbandry, handloom and textiles etc. for the purpose of economic growth of the family.
- v) The movements created consciousness among the Bodos as well as womenfolk and they get the scope to test their ability in the political view.
- vi) The Bodos mainly reside in the rural areas and their livelihood depends mainly in agricultural activities.
- vii) Weaving is an integral part in household works of the womenfolk of the Bodo society. They weave the cloths to fulfill their needs but in the changing perspective they weave beautifully designed cloths by applying modern technology for the business purpose also.
- viii) The agricultural based Bodos observe various festivals in the paddy field such as *Hal Jangkhra*, *Gosa Lajennai* or *Gosa Hwjennai*, *Bakhri Gaikhonnai*.

- ix) In the *Kherai* worship the Bodos sacrifice the animals and birds during the celebration.
- x) *Dowdini* plays major role in the religious festival *Kherai* as a holy woman and she worship Gods and Goddesses by performing dance and sacrificing.
- xi) The womenfolk of the Bodo society performs as midwife during the child birth and also co-operate the mother.
- xii) *Bwirathi* is a part and pareal of *Swngnanwi Lainai Haba*. It can be said that this kind of marriage is not solemnised without *Bwirathi*.
- xiii) *Hathasuni Khurnai* is the earliest and traditional form of marriage of the Bodos.
- xiv) In Bodo society for the salvation of the soul of dead person many holy activities are followed since death to the funeral ceremony.
- xv) The womenfolk of the Bodo society tie the surrounding of home or house by the yarn which is known as *No Swngthenai* and it means the soul of dead person will not be able to return at the home.
- xvi) The Bodos mainly resides in the rural area. So, the availability of education for women is less than male members. Because of, there are insufficient facilities in the educational institutions of rural areas particularly for the women.
- xvii) To create consciousness among the womenfolk the educated Bodo women formed a women organization entitled of *All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation* (AATWWF) on 14th July, 1986 later known as *All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation* (ABWWF) in 1993.

- xviii) *All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation* (ABWWF) is one of the most closed social women organization which is related with social, economic, political, culture and traditional activities.
- xix) At present perspective, most of the Bodo women have come to focus in different sector such as in politics, literature, sports, culture and other commercial purposes etc.

Scope of further study:

- i) The Bodos are agricultural based society and they are dependable in agricultural activities for their family economy. Hence, there is further scope of study in agricultural sector.
- ii) The Bodos are rich in tradition and culture. But the tradition and culture of Bodos are slightly assimilated with neighboring society at the present time. Hence, there is scope of study in the modern culture of Bodos.
- iii) Due to impact of Globalization there are changes in the field of politics, education, economic and other field also. The Bodos are also developing and the traditional thoughts and believes are changing. Hence, there is scope of study in these areas.
- iv) The Bodo women use to apply herbal medicines for some viral fever, cough, anxiety, decency etc. Further they apply some herbal medicines locally on the injuring spot and some serious bleeding and accident. So, there is a good scope of deep study regarding herbal medicines used by the rural villagers.
- v) As we have observed that Bodo women are expert in weaving and other embroidery designing in Handloom and Textile. Without training from the

modern technology Bodo women can design various embroidery over their clothes. So, I believe that there is also enough scope to research on Bodo embroideries of rural village.

The Bodos are one of the largest populated tribal communities of North-east India or Brahmaputra valley. The Bodos are very rich in tradition and culture from the early period and have own language, literature, culture etc. The Bodos are very simple, co-operative and living together forming group in society. At present, they are most conscious in the different field of culture, politics, economic, education, sports etc. The womenfolk are treated equally like the men folk in Bodo society.