

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### OBSERVATIONS

The study on **Traditional Tools and Technology of the Bodos** has thrown much light on the traditional tools and technology used by the Bodos and how the modernity affected the traditional tools and technology of the Bodos living in the Brahmaputra Valley with special reference to Kokrajhar district in Assam. The conclusion gives a synoptic overview of the discussions of the traditional tools and technology of the Bodos with the impact of modernity in them and the transformation they brought about in the Bodo society.

This study has made us realize the importance of tools and technology. Bodos used many traditional tools in their day to day life for defense, hunting, agriculture, fishing and domestic purposes, for social and cultural purposes, for house making and for building communication networks. Several of the traditional tools used by them are their own products while a few of them are bought from their neighbouring communities.

The entire North East is the land of wood and bamboo and the Bodos without any doubt were the people who built their civilization on woods and bamboos. Almost all the traditional tools of the Bodos were made from naturally available resources in such a way, that they reflect their nicety and creativity. They also show that the mode of resource utilization by the Bodos help in understanding how they utilize whatever resources that are available to them. It also contributes to social formation by developing, adopting and adapting to the new technology. The traditional tools of the Bodos make us realize their artistic mind, the expertise of their craftsmanship reflecting their rich cultural and traditional heritage. Their traditional tools are no less in their artistic excellence which is beautifully described by Late Shobha Brahma, “The *ual-*

*gaihen* (mortar- pestle), the rice pounding wooden device of the Bodo-Kacharis was an object of artistic excellence in itself. It had voluminous form resembling a middle aged Bodo woman. The upper part was the torso of the body with full blown blossom, terminating in the narrow waistline and the second part forming the hind portion standing on the ground. And the handle was the form of a slim figured narrow waist Bodo damsel of marriageable age”.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. A. K. Thakur mentioned that the findings of Karl Marx (*Capital*, 1986) of the type of labour and the corresponding technological improvement in a society have proved to be very useful on the traditional technology of North East India and also on the traditional technology of the Bodos, like technology of the tribes of northeast India. The available technology decisively shapes the society; it results in emerging institutions and therefore, the existing traditional normative of a particular group is broken. It interacts with any given society directly, shapes it as well as sustenance base are provided by it. The nature of technology is to know-how and the level of social development are two major component of a society and of a civilization and technology has played an important role in social change of the Bodos as well.<sup>2</sup>

The technology used by the Bodos in defense, building fences, construction of gate, hunting methods such as noosing, netting, shooting, spiking, etc., in production (agrarian) methods like cultivation of rice, wheat, mustard, jute, sugarcane, tobacco and pulses, preserving seeds, digging dongs and construction of irrigation canals, plantation of bamboo, areca nut, banana, fishing technology such as grapping and wounding, line fishing, trapping, areal trapping etc., technologies used for preparing *jou* (rice beer), weaving, spinning, dyeing, building religious altars, playing traditional games and recreations, celebrating traditional festivals, performing traditional rites and rituals, house building and building communication networks show that the traditional technologies of the Bodos are very rich and unique and they are linked to the nature of their society reflecting their engineering and creative skills in promoting the benefit of society.

From the impact point of view one has to understand that the human needs are constantly changing. The result of new innovations, progress and developments in all fields of human life particularly in tool and technology appropriate to one time and

culture may not necessarily be appropriate to another. The coming of modernism towards the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> or the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century among the Bodos brought about drastic changes in almost every sphere of life. The changes in the traditional tools and technology are particularly noticeable.

## FINDINGS

- I. The use of modern tools and technology transformed the livelihood pattern of the Bodos. Instead of hunting and fishing for their diets, they are now often seen buying fish, meat, pulses, vegetables, curry ingredients from the market. These practices have made the livelihood of the Bodos expensive.
- II. Though agriculture is still the primary source of livelihood of the Bodos the traditional tools and technology connected with it have undergone changes and the modern tools and technology have replaced them and further improved the system of agricultural operations.
- III. Traditionally Bodos used to produce limited quantity of products organically meant only for domestic consumption. But today the Bodos are more prone to the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides leading to health hazards.
- IV. There is a shift from domestic consumption to commercial production. Tea plantation, rubber plantation and pisciculture are done on commercial basis.
- V. Factory produced iron implements have replaced the indigenous agricultural implements which were made of forest resources. Today the forests are being destroyed, leaving the Bodos dependent on market products. As a result, they have lost their skill of inventing their own technology and traditional art and craft. The use of traditional domestic tools are being replaced by modern tools in large scales, changing the simple life style of the Bodos into complex and more expensive.
- VI. Tea can be seen as a preferred drink by the Bodos now as the followers of Brahma dharma and Christianity have discouraged the use of *jou* (rice beer) in the society. But there has been a rise in the commercial consumption of *jou* among the Bodos causing many health issues.

- VII. In the commercial production of silk and *endi* cocoons and finished products from *endi* yarn Kokrajhar district is leading. The Bodos there engage themselves in livestock, plantations, orchards etc.
- VIII. There has been a great change in the field of music and dance of the Bodos. Besides traditional musical instruments they have adopted the musical instruments of other communities. The western music also made its inroads in the Bodo rhythm and dance. There is extinction of some genuine traditional musical instruments.
- IX. The art of dyeing yarn and clothes in a traditional way which was also a community secret of the Bodos have faded away. The traditional weaving skill of the Bodo women, which has been handed down among women from generation to generation is facing challenge as many machine made *dokhonas* in different designs and colours are made available in the markets. It has become very difficult for the Bodo women to compete in the open market. However in a small way some small scale weaving industries have come up due to the initiative of a few Bodo women entrepreneurs or self-help groups. Now to some extent the condition of Bodo women have become better economically.
- X. Games and recreations are also inseparable parts of the Bodo society. In addition to the traditional games and recreations the Bodos have adapted other sports too. However the traditional games like *khomlainai* (wrestling) has been recognized globally.
- XI. The traditional housing style on raised platform are very rare these days. It has changed structurally due to modern tools and technology. Today it is difficult to distinguish a Bodo house from a non-Bodo house.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that the advent of modern tools and technology is a boon to the Bodo society but it is a bane from many fronts as well. Though there is increase in the productivity but it is a fact that they have lost their inventive skills on their traditional tools and technology.

With every technological revolution there is also political, social and economic revolution. Changes take place in every area of a society, but one should not forget one's own roots. Before the traditional tools and technologies become extinct an attempt

is made to have a recourse through the cultural and social values they carry in a society. The policies of the government can be of immense help in this regard. So, there is an urgent need to preserve and document the traditional tools and technology of the Bodos. This study will help in documenting Bodo traditional tools and technologies in the greater interest of future generations.

## END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Sobha Brahma, “The World of Bodo Creativity: In the Probing Eyes of Today”, *Sushraoti (The Saraswati)*, Souvenir, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, New Delhi, 2000, p. 33.
- <sup>2</sup> Amrendra Kumar Thakur, *Technology of the Tribes of Northeast India*, DVS Publisher, Guwahati, 2017, p. 268.