

CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION

The rites and rituals are observed almost in each and every society of the world. Like other communities of the world, the life of the Bodos is full of rites and rituals from birth to death. They have rich traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies which have been practiced since the ancient days in their social and individual life. It is fact that the traditional rites, rituals and ceremonies of the Bodos have influenced by Hinduism after their conversion to the Brahma Dharma or Hinduism, yet they have not lost their Bodo character. In another word, the original character of the rites and rituals of the Bodos has not been extinct with the influenced of Hinduism and still preserved with certain modification or without modification. The ritual is such type of formal action of rites performed in the form of ceremony.

According to Oxford Dictionaries rite is defined as a religious or other solemn ceremony or act and ritual is defined as a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order e.g. ancient fertility rituals. Both the words are clearly closely connected. However rite is used more as a headline term that refers to a particular ceremony, the detailed enactment of which constitutes a ritual.

Ritual is the indispensable element of the human society. It is regarded as the forms of behaviour which are recognized by the society concern and performed on a certain occasion of the community or society. Ritualism is included many aspects of art

and culture of each and every society of the world. The rituals that have been carried out on varied occasions of the diverse society or community have as much social as religious significance that attached to them. No doubt, it is the tool or means to control of a society. Ritual has been defined as the formal acting out of a ceremony, usually repeated in exactly the same way on specified occasions.

Background of the Bodos:

The Bodo tribe is one of the prominent and oldest tribal groups in North East India who are believed to be one of the earliest inhabitants in Assam with powerful kingdoms at Dimapur, Maibong and Khashpur.¹ S. K. Chatterji opined that the Bodos belong to Indo-Mongoloid people who were inhabited in the Brahmaputra valley, North Bengal as well as East Bengal.² In different historical period, they entered into contact with other races which led to cultural assimilation and racial fusion.³ The Bodos have their home in different parts of North East India mainly in Assam with their typical cultural and linguistic traits. B. K. Baruah also advocated that the Bodos are most important tribal group of the Tibeto-Burman race who had formed a very important section of the non-Aryan people in the Brahmaputra valley.⁴ Class division is not practiced in the society of Mongoloid races from past to till today which is totally different from the Hindu society. The Indo-Mongoloid Bodos are known in varied names in different places. The Bodos who are inhabited in the region between the Sonkos River and the Brahmaputra River are known as Meches, Kacharis in the Kachari Hills, Dimasa in Dimapur, Tripuri or Kok Borok in Tripura and so on.⁵

The Bodos have been maintaining their distinctive cultural traditions customs, beliefs, social systems, dresses, ornaments, songs, musics, etc. since the ancient days. Having no literate forefathers, the Bodos could not keep any record of their history. But the history of the Bodos may be reconstructed on the basis of their oral history, folk tales, folk songs, etc. as they have rich folktales, myths, legends, songs, proverbs, culture and tradition. Their traditional religion is known as *Bathou*. However, many of the Bodos had been converted into the other religion like Hinduism, Christianity, etc. due to the cultural contact with other communities which gave a death blow to their traditional

religion. They had also well established social and cultural system with self sufficient economy in past days. The language and literature of the Bodos are only the means for existence and survivable of the Bodo community.⁶

The word Bodo is used to signify the greater Bodo races as well as the particular indo-Mongoloid branch. Their physical structures are yellowish complexion, prominent cheek, bones and snub nose. They are mainly settling down in Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladhak of Kashmir etc. with the similarity of their culture and tradition.⁷

The Bodos are recognized as Sonowal or Thengal Kachari in upper Assam but Dimasas in North Cachar Hill. Ahom called Dimasa as Timasa which is clearly a corruption of Dimasa. Therefore, the name must have been allotted to them when they ruled over the Dhansiri Valley.⁸ In the lower Assam, the Bodos are popularly known as Bodo or Boro Kachari. In North Bengal and in the lower ranges of the Himalaya, they are known as Meches. However, the origin of the generic term Mech is a controversial matter. Anderson sated that the name Mech was given to the Bodos of North Bengal.⁹ The renowned scholars like G. A. Grierson¹⁰, B. K. Baruah¹¹, Rev. Sydney Endle¹², Dr. Kameswar Brahma¹³ and Bhaben Narzi¹⁴ are also advocated that the word Mech has been derived from the Sanskrit word Mlecha. Some scholars viewed that the Bodos settled on the North bank of the river Mechi in Nepal after migration from different places of China and Tibet. So, they are known as Mech from the Mechi River. From the above description it may be noted that the Bodos living by the bank of the river Mechi flowing through Nepal are called themselves as Mech or Meche. The Bodos who are living to the west of the present Kamrup district or in and around Kamrup and Goalpara district of Assam are also known as Boro. Whatever name they may be called by their neighbours, wherever they live, they are the same people and everywhere they speak the same language with few local peculiarities.

The generic term Bodo is of a recent origin which was for the first time used by Brian H. Hodgson in 1847 as an ethnographical term to a group of languages to refer the Meches of Darjeeling District.¹⁵ This statement was confirmed by G. A. Grierson in the

sense of generic name.¹⁶ But frequently it is used as a generic name of all the Tibeto-Burman speaking people of the Sino-Tibeto origin. The Koc, the Kachari, the Lalung, the Dimasa, the Garo, the Rabha, the Tipra, the Chutiya, the Maran and other tribes of the Mongoloid features are regarded as the sub-tribe of the Bodos. Rev. Sydney Endle stated that the origin of the Kachari race is still very largely a matter of conjecture and inference, in the absence of anything entitled to be regarded as authentic history. As remarked above, in feature and general appearance, they approximate very closely to the Mongoloid type and this would seem to point to Tibet and China as the original home of the race.¹⁷

The Bodos maintained the tradition of conservative knowledge of the mythical, folklores and folktales to supply a little hint on the origin of man in their beliefs and thought. The Bodo's beliefs and thought highlighted on the role of the birds, egg and fish for the evolution of man. From the belief, it can be understood that how the unicellular cell progressed through different multi cellular junctures to Homo sapiens to which the modern man belong. The scientific perspective behind the folktales and folklores of the Bodos can be interpreted as there was long evolutionary process of life leading to man, which clearly alludes to the ecological concept of the Bodos in ancient days. It is said that *Aham Guru*¹⁸, who is regarded as the creator of the universe by the Bodos, ordered men to go to the earth in order to keep ecological symmetry with other living beings like ants, flies, animals, trees, etc.¹⁹ This illustrates a clear indication of having some philosophical knowledge of the Bodos on the evolutionary theory of creatures including the human being. The origin of the world, birds and animals, mankind, vegetation and the phenomena of nature have been elucidated through myths which have been orally handed down from generation to generation and explained the phenomena of nature through myth by the Bodos. This view on the origin of man is also cited by many Bodo scholars like Dr. Kameswar Brahma²⁰, Dr. Anil Boro²¹, Medini Choudhury²², Premalata Devi²³ and Kumud Ranjan Basumatary²⁴ while touching on the origin of the Bodos.

The Bodos are the race of Mongoloid people who were known to be the inhabitants of a country to the north of the Himalaya, China and Tibet. This land was

known as Bod which is supposed to mean a homeland. Edwin Atkinson stated that Bod country was included in central Tibet and Bodpa which the Tibetan called as Bodyaut.²⁵ Lior Bod, Kur Bod, etc. were also mentioned as a part of Bod country in the works of other scholars.²⁶ It is said that Bodpa is derived from the word Bod and Bodo came after the Bod country.²⁷ As a result, the term Bodo/Bodho/Boddo/Boro is supposed to be creating from the name Bod. The Bod country may be identified with the Bodo-Ficha or Bodocha or Bodosa which means children of the Bodo country. Bodo-Ficha (children of the Boros) came from Hbrug-bu-tsa, a Tibetan word signifying children of the people living in the plantless regions.²⁸ In later period, they are called as Boddo/Bodo/Boro.²⁹ Mohini Mohan Brahma writes that the Bodo word seems to be invented from the word Borok of Tipperah language which means 'Man' who speech the Bodo.³⁰

History says that the Indo-Mongoloid people who lived in the Eastern and North Eastern India during the epic age of Ramayana and Mahabharata were known as Kirata. S. K. Chatterji has identified the Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid people who are inhabited in the southern slopes of Eastern Himalayas in Eastern India with the Kiratas of ancient India.³¹ Gangmumei Kabui stated that the present Bodo-Kachari, tribes of Assam the Nagas, the Kukis and the Meiteis of the eastern hills are also the descendent of the Kiratas.³²

S. K. Chatterji stated that the Kiratas of ancient India were the forefather of Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid who might had peopled in the southern slopes of Eastern Himalayas in Eastern India around the beginning of first millennium before Christ.³³ Ancient Indian literatures also show about the similarity of the Bodos with the Kiratas and describe as the ancestor of the Bodo.³⁴ The identification of the Bodos with the Kiratas has been supported by the many of the scholars.³⁵ It has been agreed that the generic word Kirata indicates the people belonging to Mongoloid origin who are inhabited in the Indian sub-continent and the Bodos are considered to be one of the subdivisions of the greater Kirata group.³⁶ It is stated that the Bodos and other cognate tribes who are living within and outside Assam are considered to be the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group and great stock of Mongoloid race. They are identical with the Kirata of

the epic era.³⁷ B. K. Kakati³⁸, P. C. Bhattacharya³⁹ and Bhaben Narzi⁴⁰ also supported on the Kirata origin of the Bodos. Ancient Sanskrit literature confirmed that the Indo-Mongoloids or Kacharis or Bodos were the Kiratas and they were exterior the Hindu Varna fold.⁴¹ According to Bakul Chandra, the Bodos are offspring of the Mongoloid origin Kiratas and Cinas.⁴²

The origin of the word Kirata is the subject matter of arguments. However, they have been defined as non-Aryan tribes of the Mongoloid origin of the Himalayas and North East India who had connection with the Chinese, Bhotas or the Tibetans and other Mongoloid sections.⁴³ Kaksaka which signify the people of the frontier area is the derivative form of the word Kirata.⁴⁴ It is also said that the term Kirata possibly derived from the word Cirata or Cirayita which is known as Kirata-tikha Prakrt Cilaaita or Ciraa-tta, a very bitter plant that grown in the lower region of Himalaya which is used for medicinal purposes by the non-Aryan people.⁴⁵

For the first time the word Kirata is mentioned in the Yajurveda, namely Sukla-Yajurveda⁴⁶ and Atharvaveda.⁴⁷ Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya notified that Kiratas were the people living in the caves and mountains in the Eastern Himalaya region and of low status who were outside the Aryan fold during the Vedic age.⁴⁸ The Ramayana also shows that the residence of the Kiratas were in the Eastern region of India.⁴⁹ This information is also found in some of the Puranas addressing the Kiratas as the settler in the hills of Eastern India.⁵⁰ They are also mentioned in Samhitas as a people dwelling in the cave of mountains.⁵¹ From the information provided, it is clearly indicated that the Kiratas have been settling in this land since ancient time.

Kirata is spelt as Kirrhadae by Periplus who identified Kiratas as the dwellers in the hills of the Assam and Burma.⁵² According to Ptolemy, Kirrhadia (Kirata) also lived in Tripura, Sylhet and Cachar.⁵³ E. T. Dalton specified that the Kiratas of South-East Bengal and Western Assam belonged to the Mongolian race.⁵⁴

Fa Hien supplied some hints of the Mongoloid people so called Kiratas when he visited India during the time of the Guptas.⁵⁵ Thomas Walter⁵⁶ and S. Beal⁵⁷ also stated

that Hiuen Tsang, another Chinese pilgrim who came to India during the time of Harsha Vardhana left some valuable clue of the hill people of Assam who were considered as Mongoloid Kiratas with dark yellow complexion. As a result, it can be said that the tribal people of North East India who had yellow complexion could be identified with the Kiratas of ancient India.

According to the literary evidence, it is found that the Kiratas of Eastern region had golden complexions, extraordinary strength, nomadic, cannibals and fair looking with sharp pointed hair.⁵⁸ These people were found in the forest of the Assam, caves and swampy areas, sea coast extending up to the East Bengal and both sides of the Lohita River since the early days.⁵⁹

The Indo-Mongoloid or the people of Mongoloid features of North East India are supposed to have been migrated from different places of South East Asia, Tibet, Burma, etc. Many scholars who worked on history, anthropology, sociology, linguistic, archaeology, etc. have propounded the theories that the people of North East India who belonged to Mongoloid stock including the Bodos had their origin in South East Asian region and China. Ancient Indian literature and classical Greek and Latin literatures have described the tribes of North East India as Kiratas. Therefore, the Bodos of North East India are genuine to have been denoted as the offspring of ancient Kiratas. On the basis of the available sources, it may draw a possible conclusion that the Bodos who's another name is Kachari are absolutely equivalent to the Kiratas of ancient India. Martin Montgomery also stated that the proper name of the Kachari is Bodo.⁶⁰ However, the present Bodo are neither called themselves as the Kachari nor the Kirata but they are portrayed themselves as the Bodo or Boro or Bodo-Ficha, the people who speak Sino-Tibetan Bodo language.⁶¹

The upper Hoang-Ho region of China was surely and certainly to be the primitive homeland of the Bodos who belonged to Mongoloid race. They started moving towards the south-west way to India. Since pre-historical times, the human movement became a general phenomenon which is found from various sources and eyewitness. Before reaching India, first they settled in the territory of South-Eastern Himalayas to reach

India. In around 8th century A.D., they marched towards the Brahmaputra valley as well as Koch Behar, Garo Hills, Cachar and Tripura from southern Himalayas. It is stated that the Bodos might have arrived Lhasa in around 7th century A.D. The areas to the Southern Himalayas are called as Bod or Pot by Tibetan which means land of the snows.⁶² W. I. Singh asserted that the word Bodo is derived from Tibetan term Bod or Pot which means areas to the southern Himalaya. The early Christian era can be considered as the arrival period of Bodos in the Sub-Himalayan region. Before Bodos, Pa a similar tribe reached India through a different route.⁶³ S. L. Barua⁶⁴ and R. C. Mazumder⁶⁵ stated that in around 6th century A.D., a tribe known as Mon also came to eastern Himalaya from upper Hoang-Ho which is regarded as subsequently immigrants in that region. This tribe was called Mon-Pa by the Tibetan who settled in the areas of South-Eastern lower Himalayas.

W. I. Singh informed that the migration of Bodos to the Brahmaputra valley was most probably be around 8th century A.D.⁶⁶ However, his statement is needed for further examination and proper treatment with the consultation of the available sources because many of the historians have regarded the Bodos as the descendents of the Kiratas in ancient India. So, the migrations of the Bodos in 8th century A.D. is a matter of the question and debatable and cannot be considered as totally accurate as we have noticed that Mongoloid tribes of North East India including the Bodos are believed to be the descendent of ancient Kiratas who were in India right from the Vedic period or even before that. The Bodos were driven away from Sibsagar to westward by Pongs for which they had to settle in North Cachar Hills and Cachar where they were known as Kacharis. In the early part of the 16th century A.D., the Bodos who have migrated towards the South to Tripura were assigned the name Tripuris or Kok-Borok.⁶⁷ But the view of W. I. Singh on the date of the arrival of the Bodos to Tripura in the 16th century A.D. may also be necessitated to be re-examined on the ground that both the Kacharis and the Tripuris are the people of same stock who used the word Pa (father) and Ma (mother) to call their parents. As a result, it can be said that Kacharis and Tripuris are the same stock.⁶⁸ Like the Bodos, they also used the word Pha and Ma for father and mother. The name of the Tripura kings and queens end with the word Pha and Ma respectively. This clearly shows

that the Tripuri and Kachari have the same origin. No doubt, Tripura was known as Kirata-Desha⁶⁹ in ancient time for the fact that Adi Dharmapha nineteenth generation upwards of Chang-Thun-Pha became the king of Tripura in 64 Tipperah Era in 654 A.D. who was also known as Dungurpha or Hari Roy (640-670) A.D.⁷⁰ If so, there is room to reject 16th century as the date of arrival of Bodos in Tripura.

Rev. Sidney Endle advocated that the Kacharis were the original autochthonous of Assam.⁷¹ In the introduction part of the Sidney Endle's book, *The Kacharis*, Anderson have described that the Bodos were the aborigines of the Brahmaputra valley.⁷² Like the other tribes of the ancient India, the Kiratas have been depicted as aborigines who have been inhabited originally in the Gangatic plains in Madhya-desa, in the wild tracts on the banks of different rivers and their tributaries of the Kailasa Mountain near the lake of Manasorovara and its adjoining areas. In many ancient literary texts, they have also been portrayed as the dwellers of mountain regions and the forest of the Northern and Eastern Himalayan border land, Vindhya region and many parts of the North-Western, Central and Western India as well as Deccan in ancient time. However, they have been look upon as immigrants. The impression of immigrants on them may lead to wrong notion as the fact remains that they were by and large autochthonous.⁷³ These statements testified that the Bodos evolved on the very soil of Assam. However, till date the modern researches into the origin of the human being always silent to proved Assam as the first place of human evolution which clearly proved that Assam was not the land of the human origin. Those who had been settling in Assam might have been migrated from different directions and places in various stages of human dispersal.

The Bodos who belonged to the Indo-Mongoloid race have their own language. The language speak by them is Tibeto-Burman language of the western branch of Baric division of the Sino-Tibetan family.⁷⁴ Linguistically this language may be classified into two groups- (i) Tibeto-Burman and (ii) Siamese-Chinese. The Tibeto- Burman includes central Tibetan speech, Eastern Tibetan, Sikkimese Tibetan, and Bhutanese. The Himalayan groups of Tibetan- Barman speeches consist of Newari, Magar, Gurung, Lepsa, and Sunwari. The North Assam groups of Tibeto- Burman speeches comprise-

Aka, Miri, Abor, Dafla and Mishmi. The Assam Burmese group Tibeto- Burman speech of North and East Bangal, Assam and Burma contain- The Bodo speeches – the Bodo, Mech, Rabha, Garo, Kachari, and Tipra (Tripura), the various Naga dialects; the Various Kukichin dialects, the Kachin- Lolo group of northern Burma and Burmese. The Siamese- Chinese branch of Sino- Tibetan group includes various dialects like Dai or Thai, Lao, Shan and Ahom of Assam.⁷⁵

In 1963 A.D., the Bodo language is recognized as medium of instruction in schools of Bodo populated areas and it is extended up to the University level later on.⁷⁶ In 2003 A.D. Bodo languages has included in the eight schedules in the constitution of India.⁷⁷

Dress and Ornaments:

The Bodos have their own traditional dresses which are indeed very rich and varied. The Bodo women wear *Dokhna*⁷⁸ which is their traditional dress. It is the most important and attractive female dress which is measuring about ten feet long, four and half feet wide. The Bodo women wear *Dokhna* from chest to the ankle. *Dokhna* has number of design such as *Daothugod* (dove's neck), *Pharwo Megon* (pigeon's eye), *Pahar Agor* (hill's scenery), *Mwider Agan* (elephant's foot print), etc.⁷⁹ Along with *Dokhna* they also used a wrapper called *Jwmgra*⁸⁰ (a kind of scarf hangs on the shoulder by Bodo women) which is about two metre long and a half metre wide to cover the upper body. The Bodos produce *Dokhna* and *Jwmgra* in various colours and designs. The male members of Bodo used *Gamcha*⁸¹, a traditional dress cloth of male. They also put *Gosla* (shirt) on their body from neck to hip. Sekhar Brahma stated that a jute lace wooden foot-ware (a kind of traditional slipper) was used by the Bodos which is known as *Yapthong* or *Phoitha* or *Kwrwm*.⁸² Today, due to the influence of modern techniques, the Bodos nowadays used machine made products shirts, pants, trouser, dhoti, etc. which are easily get at the cheap rate in the market.

The Bodo women used to wear the ornaments on their ear, nose, finger, neck, etc. mainly made of gold and silver. These are *Phuthkuri*, *Khena*, *Doula*, *Lathinglura*,

Nakaful, *Bulaki*, *Ashansuri* or *Chankasuri*, *Goldsuri*, etc. These ornaments are regarded as essential during the time of marriage ceremony. If the bridegroom fails to give ornaments to the new bride he is expected as poverty.⁸³ However, the wearing of *Nakaful* or *Bulaki* i.e. nose rings are almost rare in the Bodo society.

Food and Drink:

Rice is the main food of the Bodos. Traditionally, the Bodos are regarded as non vegetarian in character. They consumed meats like pork, chicken, mutton, duck, pigeon, etc. However, buffalo, beef, snack, etc. are not considered as eatable meat in the Bodo society. They also eat fish, tortoise, *Eri* worm, etc.⁸⁴ *Napam*⁸⁵, the fermentation preserved fish is another important food item of the Bodos. It is made by fishes for which they dried the fishes in the sun or fire. After fishes are dried up either in the sunlight or with the fire or in both (fire and sunlight), they are grinded with the some vegetables or plants leaves together and stored in the bamboo tube covering the mouth with banana leaf for three or five months. *Onla Wngkri*⁸⁶ is the traditional curry of Bodos which is prepared with rice powder and fish or any kind of meats by applying *Kardwi*, a traditional alkine. This curry (*Onla Wngkri*) occupied a very important place in Bodo society without which the traditional marriage cannot be executed.

The Bodos also cultivate various kinds of vegetables such as potato, cabbage, cauliflower, radish, brinjal, etc. for day to day used as well as for the purpose of preservation for later utilization. Besides, some wild vegetables like *Sibru* (a kind of thorny plants), *Lapa Saikho* (a sour taste plant), *Jwглаouri* (a scanted plant), *Raidwng* (cane tree), *Dwosrem* (a kind of small creeper of sour taste), etc. are also very fond.⁸⁷ They also eat special items such as *Pitha*⁸⁸ (cake made of powder rice putting some sugar, coconut, lit, etc.), *Enthab*⁸⁹ (pan cake made of sticky rice powder), *Chourai*⁹⁰ (flattered rice), *Laru*⁹¹ (lumpish made of rice powder) which are made from different rice.

Jwo (wine) is a special item of alcoholic beverage which is mainly used in the traditional gathering or religious functions of the Bodos. It is made from the grain of

broken rice with *Emao*⁹² (a kind of medicine which is made of uncooked rice mixing with some wild plants or leaves). They prepared two types of *Jwo* i.e. *Jwo Gisi*⁹³ (rice beer) and *Jwo Gwran*⁹⁴ (fermented wine). The Bodos drinks both types of liquor in their traditional function but the women and children are restricted from drinking *Jwo*. It is said that there is no reason to call the Bodos as drunkers though they have a good habit of drinking liquor in their special festivals which are entertained by them since the ancient days.⁹⁵ Apart from *Jwo* (wine), tea has become a popular drink item in social function of the Bodos at present.

The area of study:

The area of study of the present research work is on the Bodo inhabited areas of the Brahmaputra valley. The Bodo, the tribe of our concerned, are mostly concentrated in four Districts of Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam namely Baska, Chirang, Udalguri, and Kokrajhar. In these four districts of Bodoland Territorial Council, total Bodo population in 1991 A.D. was 7.15 lakhs which was about 13.43 per cent of the total population of these districts. After a decade, in 2001 the Bodo population increased to 8.42 lakhs, accounting for 13.73 per cent of the total population. By 2011 census, Bodo population was recorded around 16 lakh which was about 15 per cent of the total populations. The Bodo language was included as one of the languages of the 8th schedule of Indian constitution on 22nd December, 2003 A.D.

Scope and Review of literature:

Traditional Rites, Rituals and Ceremonies of the Bodos, is the area of interest of many scholars and this area is more concern by many scholars. However, there is no in-depth research work on the subject concern by employing and utilizing all the sources available so far. It is also fact that on some areas like society, religious, customs, ceremonies, festivals and traditions etc. of the Bodo have been brought to light by some scholars in their respective work but some still await careful analysis and treatment within a wide canvas. As a result of which we have an ample scope to carry out the present research on the traditional rite, rituals and ceremonies of the Bodos.

A Study of Socio Religious Beliefs Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos written by Kameswar Brahma and published in 1992 is the very important book which deals with the every facet of the Bodos relating to the life cycle, religious festivals, rite and rituals, black magic, etc. He has taken thorough study of the history and culture of the Bodos, however, some areas are not yet fully discussed. No doubt, he is one of the pioneers who worked on the history and culture of the Bodos. Very important information has been supplied by him which is very reliable and important source of the information of the subject concern. S. K. Chatterji wrote a book entitled *Kirata Jana Kriti* which was published in 1955. He discussed on the tribal people of North East India with their origin and migration. He contributed a lot for the understanding of the tribal people of North East India in his work. The historical authenticity *Kirata Jana Kriti* written by S. K. Chatterji is away from uncertainty. Satyandra Nath Mondal's *History and the Culture of the Bodos*, edited by Bonny Narzary, Jalpaiguri, W. B., 2011, Anil Boro's *Folk Literature of Bodos*, Adhunik prakashan, Guwahati, 1st Edition 2001, Bhaben Narzi's *Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu*, Chirang Publication Board, Kajalgaon, 2006, Medini Choudury's *The Boro-Dimasas of Assam* Tribal Research Institute of Assam, Guwahati, 1988, Sekhar Brahma's *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition*, DVS Publishers, Guwahati, 2006, N. N Acharayya's *Early History of Kamrupa*, 1980, H. K. Barpujari's *The Comprehensive History of Assam*, Vol.-I, Ancient Period, Publication Board of Assam, 1st Edition 1990 & 2nd Edition 2004, B. K. Barua's *A Cultural History of Assam (Early Period)*, Bina Library, Guwahati, 1st Edition 1951 & 5th Edition 2011, K. L. Barua's *Early History of Kamrupa*, Lower's Book Stall, 2nd Edition, Gauhati, 1966, S. L. Barua's *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2002, Bakul Chandra Basumatary's *A Treatise on the Bodos*, Kokrajhar, 2012, Birendra Giri Basumatary's *Boro Harimuni Mahar Mushri*, N. L. Publications, Guwahati, 1993, Dr. Keshab Basumatary's *A Short Profile of Human Development in BTAD of Assam*, N. N. Publications, Guwahati, 2014, P. C. Bhattacharya's *Descriptive Analysis of Boro Language*, Guwahati University, 1977, Dr. S. K. Bhuyan's, *Kachari Buranji*, Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Govt. of Assam, Guwahati, 1936, B. N.

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Methodology:

The methodology of the study is obviously inter-disciplinary method with the combination of historical sources and field work. Both primary and secondary sources are consulted. Accordingly the work is primarily based on field investigation for collecting first hand data as well as also based on all the literary texts. The technique of

anthropological, data collection, participants, observation, interview methods, both structure and non-structure, case study, genealogical methods are adopted. The collected data have been analyzed both quantitatively and the qualitatively whenever necessary.

The present work is accordingly put in order into the following chapters:

Chapter one is introductory which deals with Definition of Rites and Rituals, Background of the Bodos, Dress and Ornaments and Food Habits of the Bodos.

The second chapter highlighted on the traditional rites, rituals in the life cycle of the Bodos like *Gwrbwao Thanai* (pregnancy), *Ujinai* (ritual relating to the birth), *Jaoja Ujinai* (twin born), *Mung Dwnnai*, (name giving) *Dwi-Sarnai Asar* (ritual relating to the naval fall), *Haba* (marriage), *Thwinai* (death), *Gwthwi Garnai* (ritual of cremation) and *Baonai* (offering) which have been practiced since the time immemorial.

Chapter third throws light on the rites and rituals in agrarian society. In this chapter it deals with traditional beliefs and practices relating to agriculture and economic life of the Bodos.

Chapter fourth is on the traditional festivals of the Bodos which includes *Bwisagu* (Bihu), *Domashi* (Magh Bihu), *Kathi-Gasa Saonai* (Kati Bihu), *Puthuli Haba* (Doll marriage), *Kherai* Festival and *Garja Hwnai* and associated rites and rituals in the traditional festivals.

The fifth chapter describes the Traditional Religion of the Bodos and its Conversion. It presents detailed account on the traditional religion, rites, rituals and ceremonies as well as conversion to the religion others.

The sixth chapter is conclusion.

Endnotes

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- ⁸⁸ Cake made of powder rice putting some sugar, coconut, lit, etc.
- ⁸⁹ Pan cake made of sticky rice powder.
- ⁹⁰ Flattered rice.
- ⁹¹ Lumpish made of rice powder
- ⁹² A kind of medicine made of uncooked rice mixing with some wild trees.
- ⁹³ Rice beer
- ⁹⁴ Fermented wine
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