

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AN OVERVIEW

Women constitute nearly about 50 (fifty) percent of India's total population. The Census of India 2011 indicates that the total population was 121 crores out of which total male population was 62.31 crores and female population was 58.74 crores.

As women constitute nearly about half percent of total human resource of the country, therefore it is not possible for a country like India to make progress without the overall progress and development of women. As a matter of fact, the question of empowerment of women and understanding their difficulties has become a very important issue in the present context.

In the long history of traditional belief and male dominance in the human society, women were given least importance in every sphere of our socio-economic and political life. Women were not only physically and mentally abused but they were also denied other aspects of social and economic development. They were denied equal social status, political role, equal wages and were not treated equally as men (Nanda, 2004).

The Constitution of India has provided fundamental rights to every citizen which are Right to Equality (Article 14-15), Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19-22), Rights against Exploitations (Article 23-24), Right to Freedom of Religion (Article 25-28), Cultural and Educational Rights (Article 29-30) and Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32-35) to every citizen of this country without distinction on the basis of sex, caste and religion (Nirmal, 2012). Further, the Constitution of India also guaranteed several rights and privileges to all citizens in which the Article 325 and 326 guaranteed political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to vote. Again

Article 243 (D) provides for the political reservation to women in every Panchayat election. But in spite of these provisions enshrined in the constitution women's rights and privileges have been violated and they were denied in enjoying equal status and opportunities in various social and political fields. Moreover, their role in various social, cultural, economic and political activities has not been paid much attention by the human society.

It is to be mentioned that the participation of women in social and political activities is very much important in any society. They have a great role to be played towards the progress and development of the society. Women's participation in different socio-economic and political fields is essential for the empowerment framework, as there are various international treaties and conventions such as Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the initiatives of United Nations General Assembly in 1979 which set out comprehensive rights for women in civil, political, social and cultural fields. It defines there will be no discrimination, exclusion and distinction on basis of sex in attaining political, economic, social, cultural, civil and any other rights and they must be given freedom in enjoying fundamental rights as equal to men. More UN initiatives like- UN Decade for Women of 1975-85, UNDP's "Gender in Development Goal" and many global conferences on women, such as Mexico Conference (1975), Nairobi Conference (1985), Beijing Conference (1995) etc. have emphasized women's participation in political and economic activities as well as decision making processes which is treated as catalyst to women empowerment (Agarwal, 2008).

The present study has been given importance and emphasis to the understanding of the social and political role of Bodo women of Kokrajhar district, Assam and how their role has been influencing in the social-political development of the Bodo society. The Bodo constitute one of the important indigenous tribes of North East India scattered all over the Assam, North and East Bengal and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Nepal and Bangladesh. They are an ethnic and linguistic aboriginal group found in the northern bank of Brahmaputra valley of Assam in India, as defined by E.A. Gait and Rev. Sidney Endle. Generally, the language stock of the Bodo people belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family. The Bodo people are now recognized as plains tribes in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The Bodos, who are basically an agricultural community, rely mainly on agricultural economy concentrating in Brahmaputra valley. The Bodo women also have an active involvement in contributing towards economic activities. They are skilled in agricultural and other allied activities and are also skilled weavers. However, the social and political role of Bodo women has to be studied fully and properly to know their status in the society. It is to be mentioned that the social life of Bodo society is well organized and closely compact. Among the Bodo society the traditional method of social governance or polity is very much prevalent (Brahma, 2007).

The social structure of Bodo society is primarily patriarchal in nature with few elements of matriarchal characteristics. Father or male who naturally becomes guardian or head of the family controlled all the household activities and domestic affairs, as paternal property is inherited and distributed among the sons or male members only. Moreover, in the Bodo society women have also considerable authority in certain social and domestic affairs. They also played indirect role in the family decision of some domestic matters as well as in village level decision to some extent. In case, if there is no such a male member or son in the family, the property is also given to their female members or daughters in the Bodo society. Matriarchal traces can also be seen through marriage system of Bodo like the *Gwrjia* system of marriage, where husband moves out from his family and integrated into wife's family permanently.

Bodo women have significant role in the socio-cultural spheres of Bodo society. Their contribution to the social progress is highly acknowledgeable as since the earliest time they have been exhibiting their active involvement in the socio-cultural life of the society. Women have important role in the domestic life of the Bodo family. They have great role in looking after all the household activities, as women were believed as *Lakki* or goddesses of wealth in the Bodo society without whom a family is insignificant. Their involvement in the socio-cultural fabric can be traces from their participation in socio-religious rites and rituals. Their participation in rites and rituals starts from child birth to till cremation of death. They are expert in weaving of cloths, preparing food and also in agricultural activities (Brahma K. , 2015). No religious rites and rituals can be performed without the presence of women except *Garja puja* (a traditional religious ceremony).

Moreover, women's involvement in the political activities has been also remarkably praiseworthy, as participation of Bodo women in the political field started from the language movement which also called Roman Script movement of 1974-75. The Bodos felt neglected and deprived of enjoying their fundamental rights. They felt deprived of enjoying equal political rights, equal status, equal opportunities in different developmental aspects compared to other main stream community. Accordingly, the Bodos launched a vigorous movement under the banner of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) from 2nd March, 1987 for the separate homeland for them which was called Bodoland Movement. ABSU started its mass movement through democratic way under the leadership of late Upendra Nath Brahma who was dynamic leader among the Bodos. He took active role in mobilizing the people on the issue of separate state of Bodoland for the Bodos. In this strong mass movement, the Bodo women were also seen taking part along with male counterpart. They have actively participated in the movement and helped the ABSU members through various means and ways. Formation of women organization i.e. All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF) in 1986 has brought more consciousness among the Bodo women in different social and political aspects. Under the banner of AATWWF Bodo women were actively involved in the political activities, later the nomenclature of the organization has changed from AATWWF to ABWWF in 1993 (Mosahari, 2011). Therefore, women's involvement in the political aspect is really remarkable and their contribution towards the achievement of Bodo accords is really significant.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study has been focusing on the socio-economic and political role of the Bodo women in the Kokrajhar district. Bodo women who played important role in their society also enjoyed equal social freedom. But, in spite of that Bodo women have been facing various socio-economic and political problems like gender discrimination, health, education, domestic violence, unequal rights at work place, economic inequality, unequal political representation and other problems. Moreover, Kokrajhar which is one of the district of Bodoland Territorial Council has also witnessed several other problems like

communal conflict, ethnic conflict, problem of militancy etc where people especially women had to face various strains and difficulties. It is to be mentioned that the Bodo women have occupied important role in the socio-economic set up of the Bodo society and have contributed plenty to the growth and development of their society, as their contribution starts to the family since the childhood. They contributed in the family economy through various means and ways like agriculture, domestication of animals, fishing, handicraft, spinning and weaving etc. They also influenced or played an indirect role towards the decision making in family or in the village level. But, their role in social progress and social activities has not been recognized properly due to societal patriarchal structure of the Bodo society, as in the patriarchal society male always played dominant role in every domestic affair which can be regarded as one of the hindrances towards the development of Bodo women.

Moreover, women's participation in political spheres is also notably remarkable. Their participation in the long struggle for Bodoland movement embarked upon the cause of the Bodo community in the late 1980's, as the movement grew up under the leadership of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and took a vigorous shape in 1987 where women of all walks of life including minor girls, students and housewives were also participated in the movement. The formation of women organization i.e. All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF) has also made strong foundation or platform for women to participate in various social and other allied activities and also encouraged them to take active role in the political fields. The most common role played by the organization is that they stand for women's problems either it may be family or in society. They continued to raise voice against injustice done to women community, about their rights, issues, liberties and crime, exploitation, discrimination and domination over them in order to save status, dignity, rights and prestige of women folk in particular and also the men folk in general (Narjinari, 2014). However, their participation in political activities is still negligible in compare to male counterparts. A few scholars have devoted their study on the autonomy movement of the Bodos and socio-economic institutions of the Bodos and others but such thorough study on the social and political role of Bodo women has not been done yet.

Therefore, the present study has been done extensively in order to explore the social and political role of Bodo women of Kokrajhar district of BTAD, Assam to a larger extent.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the present study:

- i. To examine the Constitutional provisions along with various laws and conventions relating to promotion and protection of women's rights and privileges.
- ii. To examine the Socio-cultural role of Bodo women living in the Kokrajhar district.
- iii. To examine the role of Bodo women in Politics living in Kokrajhar district.
- iv. To analyse the Socio-economic and Political role of Bodo women in Kokrajhar district.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women are the pivot of our society around which the family, the society and humanity evolves. They play a very important role in the development of society. But women are one of the vulnerable groups who are weak because of chauvinism attitude of a male dominated society. However, in present time the study of women's role in social, economic and political aspects as well as other fields along with preservation of their rights and privileges has become very important and significant one. The provision of universal adult franchise, equal pay for equal work, decentralization of power, various women empowerment schemes, etc. clearly show the strong democratic intention of our union and state governments. Thus, the Constitution has guaranteed us some rights and privileges without any discrimination of sex, caste, religion, language or race etc. Hence, one can say that the role of women in socio political sphere makes our democracy stronger and cultured in which problems of women needs to be addressed and empowered.

The participation of Bodo women in social and political field has gained more attention than earlier. Bodo women plays important role in the socio-cultural life of the

Bodo society, it has influenced in all affairs of the family life and domestic activities. Their contribution in the social progress is enormous and undeniable. They played pivotal role in the agricultural and allied activities along with the household activities. It is to be mentioned that though Bodo society is patriarchal in nature but women are also equally treated and respected as male counterpart. Moreover, participation of Bodo women in political spheres is also remarkably praiseworthy. They involved in the different movements of the Bodos since the time of language movement. Further, Bodo women were actively participated in the Bodoland movement launched by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) from the 1987. Their contribution towards achievements of political identity of Bodos is significant. But, their involvement in various socio-cultural, economy and political activities has not been highlighted properly and people are unaware that women were also actively participated in various social aspects of the Bodos. The present study has been emphasized on various role played by the Bodo women in the field of socio-cultural, economy and political activities of the Bodo society to the great extent.

Further, it is to be mentioned that in Kokrajhar District of Bodoland Territorial Council, no research study was done in the field of Women's role in Social and Political fields, Moreover, it is felt that since half percent of the total population of Kokrajhar District is women, so, it is very important and significant to study the role of women in various fields and activities for the development and empowerment of Bodo women.

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study on the Social and Political aspects of Bodo women is limited to the following points:

- i) The study is limited only to the Bodo women of Kokrajhar district.
- ii) The study is limited only to the region of Kokrajhar district, BTAD area of Assam.
- iii) The study is mainly concerned with the Social and Political role of Bodo women in Kokrajhar district.

1.6 APPLICATION OF THEORY

In the present research work, the theory of human rights has been adopted in dealing with the equality and justice in social, economic, political, liberty of thought and expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual in the human society. There were some landmark developments for the protection and promotion of human rights in universal context, such as Magna Carta of 1215 in England, the American Declaration of Independence (1776), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man (1789) and these developments have made huge contribution in the context of human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 sets out 30 Articles. Article 1 and 2 of the declaration state that “all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights and are entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the declaration” without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Moreover, India was a signatory of the Declaration and the Indian Constitution adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November, 1949 which came into force from 26 January, 1950 was greatly influenced by the Declaration. Some of the important rights of UDHR are:

- i) The Right to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3),
- ii) Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 5),
- iii) The Right to equality before the law (Article 7),
- iv) Right of peaceful assembly and association (Article 20),
- v) The Right to social security (Article 22),
- vi) The Right to adequate standard of living for health and well being (Article 25),
- vii) The Right to education (Article 26),
- viii) The Right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Article 27).

Again, India was also a signatory to the International Agreement on the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This is the first strong initiative taken up by the United Nations in 1976 to ensure the rights of women around the world. CEDAW prescribes strict action against those, breaching the right of a woman and directs passing of Act to stop this discrimination. As, India has greatly influenced by the Convention and it has recognizes discrimination of women in social and political life as a violation of human rights. The convention which was an outcome UDHR has been often described as an 'International Bill of Rights' for women. The CEDAW contains a Preamble and 30 Articles that are the key principles of equality and an agenda for national action to end discrimination against women. It is based on the belief that basic human rights include the true equality of men and women. The Convention has structured six main Parts with 30 Articles and out of these Articles following provisions has been considered in the study:

- i. Part I (Articles 1-6) focuses on non-discrimination, sex stereotypes and sex trafficking.
- ii. Part II (Articles 7-9) outlines women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life, representation and the rights to nationality.
- iii. Part-III (Articles 10-14) describes the economic and social rights of women, particularly focusing on education, employment and health. Part-III also includes special protections for rural women and the problems they face.
- iv. Part-IV (Article 15 &16) outlines women's right to equality in marriage and family life along with the right to equality before the law.

So, in this research work the Provisions, Clauses and Articles of the stated theoretical framework have been considered along with both constitutional and legal rights enshrined in Preamble of the Constitution of India in dealing with protection and promotion of human rights in general and women in particular. In the study, the social and political role of Bodo women have been looked with Human rights perspectives. It is often described that the Bodo women were equally treated at par with men however in reality it is found that the social and political role in the society has always been dominated by the

male counterpart. So in the present study, the theory of human rights have been taken into consideration in understanding the plight of Bodo women in social and political aspects.

1.7 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated in order to test the validity of the research study:

Hypothesis- I

- a) Social Patriarchal structure of the Bodo society restricted women's participation in social and political activities.

Hypothesis-II

- b) The Social and Political Role of Bodo Women in the Kokrajhar District is not satisfactory.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is analytical one based on the primary and secondary sources. The methodology used in the present research study has been discussed in the following sections given below:

1.8.1 STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study area is covered in three Sub-Divisions namely Kokrajhar Sub-division, Gossaigaon sub-division and Parbathjara sub-division. Moreover, along with the three sub-divisions there were four number of revenue circles in the study area, these are- Kokrajhar Revenue Circle, Gossaigaon Revenue Circle, Dotma Revenue Circle and Bagribari Revenue Circle. Further, the study area is having eleven numbers of Development Blocks, out of these eleven development blocks, four blocks have been chosen for the data collection of the study. These four blocks are namely Kokrajhar Development Block (Titaguri), Dotma Development Block, Gossaigaon Development Block and Debitola

Development Block, as these Blocks are mainly concentrated by the Bodo population which will be more suitable for the researcher in getting reliable informations and data on the status of Bodo women both from rural and urban areas in field of social and political activities. The Kokrajhar district has been chosen as the area of study. The targeted group is chosen particularly to the women of Bodo community, as the district has the large number of Bodo dominated population. The Bodo women who play a pivotal role in the various social and cultural activities have also equal contributions in other social spheres of Bodo society. They shouldered the responsibility of household activities as well as in the domestic affairs. They also actively involved in all agricultural and allied activities in their daily life. However, their role in the Bodo society needs to be explored to a great extent. Again, the political awakening and incidents of movement activities of the Bodos mostly took place in this area. During the time of Bodoland movement, many Bodo women have participated and helped the ABSU members in carrying out various movement activities. Their contribution in the Bodoland movement and bringing political conscious among themselves is really enormous. An extensive research study will explore role of Bodo women in the various activities of political spheres of the study area.

In this present research work purposive random sampling has been considered from respondents of the four different blocks of Kokrajhar District for the purpose of data collection. The total of 300 sample units has been considered for the research study. Each block will cover 75 respondents representing 50 respondents from female and 25 respondents from male (i.e. $75 \times 4 = 300$). Survey has been conducted with structured questionnaire (interview method) based on random sampling method. The sample size has been designed keeping in mind that women of these blocks can represent their ideas and thoughts along with male counterpart. The female respondents have been considered more in numbers than male respondents to avoid maximum sampling error. The target groups are selected between the age group of 20 to 60 years. Moreover, to collect the information the researcher will meet and interacts with the NGOs, women leader and entrepreneur as well as political leader, leaders of students' organizations, village headman, Chairman of Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) through one to one interview and through

focused group discussion (FGD) based on structured and semi-structured questionnaire. Further, different sets of questionnaire has also been sent to NGOs and Civil Society Organizations via mail relating to their role, programmes and activities in regard to women's rights, privileges and role of Bodo Women in the field of social and political spheres.

Table No. 1.1: Sample Units in each block under study.

Sl. No.	Blocks	Gender		Total per Block	All Total
		Male	Female		
1	Kokrajhar Block	25	50	75	300
2	Dotma Block	25	50	75	
3	Gossaigaon Block	25	50	75	
4	Debitola Block	25	50	75	

1.8.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL (BTC)

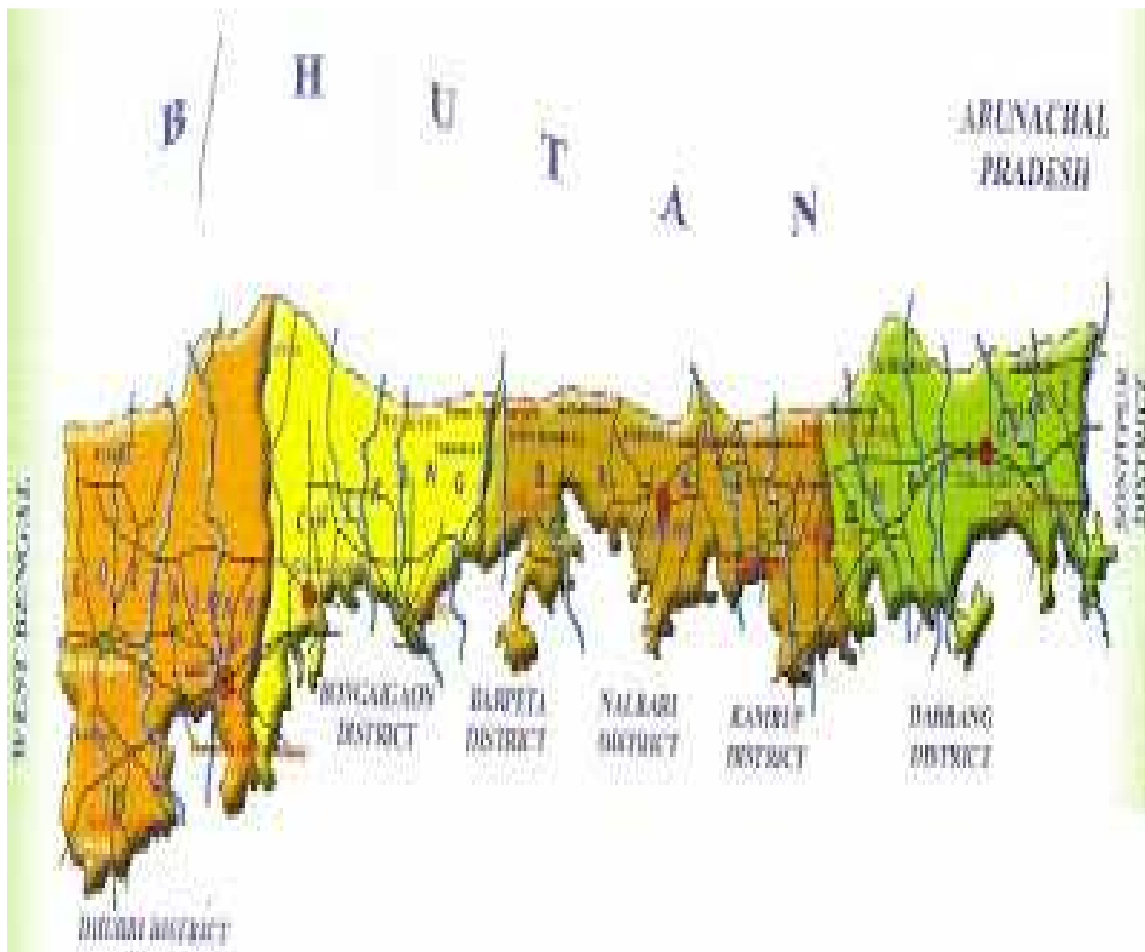
The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) also popularly known as Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) was formed on the 10th of February, 2003 with Kokrajhar town as its headquarter of the Council. It has been created under the amended Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The creation of the council has ends the long violent and arms struggle of Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) and paved away for the era of aspirations of peace and all round development in the region. The Bodoland Territorial Council has been divided into four districts for its administrative convenience namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. The BTC has a unicameral legislature consisting of 46 Members as Members of Legislative Council. Out of 46 Members 6 (Six) members are nominated by the Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities.

Map: 01: Map of Assam, India



Source: www.mapsofindia.com accessed on 13.03.2017

Map: 02: Map of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts showing Four Districts



Source: <http://www.bodolandtourism.org> accessed on 13.03.2017

1.8.3 PROFILE OF KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT

Kokrajhar is one of the twenty-seven districts of Assam and can be described as the gateway to the northeastern region of India. Kokrajhar was originally a part of undivided

Goalpara district. Till 1956, it was merely a small village with a railway station that connected it to the rest of the world. In 1957, when Bimala Prasad Chaliha was the Chief Minister of Assam, a new Civil Sub-division was created after carving out the northern part of Dhubri Sub-division and some parts of Goalpara Sub-division.

This new sub-division was called Kokrajhar Sub-division and Goalpara district thus became divided into three sub-divisions. The area covered by the then Kokrajhar Sub-division consisted of five tracts of the Eastern Dooars, viz., Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma with a total area of 4,065.88 sq. km. On the 1st of July, 1983 the Kokrajhar Sub-division was upgraded into Kokrajhar district with the head quarter at Kokrajhar town. There were four police stations in the old district and presently it has eight Police Stations. The area of the district then extended from the river Manas in the east to the river Sonkosh to the west (Assaminfo, 2017).

In 1989, there was further reorganization of the districts and some new districts were created. Thus, about 40% of the total geographical area of Kokrajhar district was carved out for inclusion in the new district of Bongaigaon. The area delineated from Kokrajhar district to Bongaigaon covers the entire Bijni Revenue Circle along with about 347.50 sq. km of Sidli Circle. Later on 20 villages of Nayekgaon G.P. with a total area of 40.22 sq. km under Chapar Revenue Circle of Dhubri district was transferred to Kokrajhar district.

Consequently, upon creation of Bodoland Territorial Council under Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in the year 2003, the Kokrajhar district was re-organized by inclusion of villages from Dhubri district. Again the Chirang district was created after formation of Bodoland Territorial Council (The National Portal of India, 2017). The present geographical area of Kokrajhar district is estimated to be 3,169.22 sq. km. The district now has three revenue subdivisions- Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon and Parbatjhora.

Map 03: Map of Kokrajhar District:



Source: www.mapsofindia.com accessed on 13.03.2017

1.8.4 GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

BTC is the gateway to the entire North Eastern Region of India curving out from Assam is bounded the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan in the North, the Mighty Brahmaputra River in the South, Paasnoi River in the East and Sankosh River in the West bordering West Bengal. It is an Autonomous Administrative Unit created by curving some areas of eight district of Assam, namely Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari,

Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur within the state of Assam covering an area of around 8970 Sq. Km. which is about 11.24 per cent of the total area of the state.

The geographical boundary of BTC lies between 260 7'12" N to 260 47' 50" N Latitude and 890 47' 40" E to 920 18' 30" E Longitude and is in the North Western part of Assam. Kokrajhar town which is the Administrative Head Quarter of the Council lies roughly between 260 25' N Longitude and 990 16' 38" E Latitude (Statistical Handbook, BTC, 2015-16).

Moreover, the Kokrajhar district is situated in a humid sub tropical climate that is characteristic of the lower Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. The district lies roughly between 89.46' E to 90.38' E longitudes and 26.19" N to 26.54" N latitudes. There is high rainfall and humidity. The district also has the largest concentration of forest in the State. The soil in the district is fertile and suitable for paddy cultivation. The soil throughout the Kokrajhar district is composed of sand and clay in varying proportions ranging from pure sand in the riverbed to soft clay in different parts. The rocks found in the district are all sedimentary. In the southernmost part of district there are two small hills that are composed of metamorphic rocks. These two hills are called the Dholmara Hills and the Dangdupur Hills which covers the area of Sakrachilla Wild Life Sanctuary which is breeding the house of *Golden Langur*.

1.8.5 DEMOGRAPHY

The population of BTC is predominantly belonging to schedule tribe community. As per the 2001 census report the total population in BTC is 29.2 Lakhs out of which the ST population is around 52% of which only 3% of the total population live in urban areas. The average density of the population in BTC is 326 Sq. Km. compared to 340 Sq. Km. of Assam. Amongst the tribal population Bodos, Rabhas, and less number of Garos are living in the area out of which Bodos is around 90%. The other communities like Rajbangshis, Sarania which are also originated from Bodo groups are inhabiting in large part of BTC. Besides Tea and other Ex-Tea Tribes including Santhal, Oraon etc. are also found available. Other general communities like Bengali, Assamese, Nepali and few numbers of Hindi

speaking people are also found in the council area. The communities residing in Kokrajhar district like Bodo, Assamese, Rabha, Garo, Rajbongshi, Muslim, Bengali, Adivasi, Nepali and others are mostly living in the rural areas and their occupation is based on agricultural and allied activities and the Bodos are a single majority among other communities in the district (BTC PRO, 2016).

According to the 2011 Census Report the total population of Assam is 31205576 of which 15939443 are Males and 15266133 are females. On the other hand the total population of BTC as per 2011 Census Report is found 3151047 of which 1600712 are Males and 1550335 are Females. The total population in Kokrajhar District as per Census Report 2011 is 8,86,999 out of which 4,34,034 is female. The total population of district wise break up in BTC is given below:

Table 1.2: Distribution of Population Statistics in BTAD as per Census, 2011

Sl.No.	District	Persons	Male	Female	Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Kokrajhar	887142	452905	434237	832201	54941
2	Chirang	482162	244860	237302	446825	35337
3	Baksa	950075	481330	468745	937833	12242
4	Udalguri	831668	421617	410051	794094	37574
5	Total	3151047	1600712	1550335	3010953	140094

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC 2015-16

Table 1.3: Revenue Circle/Sub-District/Block wise number of villages and population in BTAD as per Census, 2011

Revenue Circle/Sub-District/Blocks	No. of Villages	Population		ST Population	Literate Population
		Total	Female		
1	2	3	4	5	6

KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT	1068	887142	434237	278665	489305
Gossaigaon (Pt)	303	270952	132382	81638	141386
Bhowraguri	93	78061	38016	7682	40773
Dotma	172	144393	70942	54238	88073
Kokrajhar (Pt)	224	253094	123934	93668	150639
Golokganj	45	26671	13038	5577	14065
Dhubri (Pt)	69	33809	16596	13156	17735
Debitola (Bagribari Pt)	118	51001	25072	15080	23473
Bilasipara (Pt)	7	8736	4206	1890	958
Chapar (Pt)	37	20425	10051	5736	9203

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC 2015-16

1.8.6 ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

The administrative Unit of Kokrajhar district has been divided into three Sub-Divisions, four Revenue Circles and eleven Development Blocks.

Table: 1.4: Table showing different administrative unit of Kokrajhar district:

KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT	SUB-DIVISION	
	1.	Kokrajhar Sub-Division (Headquarter)
	2.	Gossaigaon Sub-Division
	3.	Parbathjara Sub-Division
	REVENUE CIRCLES	
	1.	Kokrajhar Revenue Circle
	2.	Gossaigaon Revenue Circle
	3.	Dotma Revenue Circle
	4.	Bagribari Revenue Circle

DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS	
1.	Kokrajhar Development Block
2.	Dotma Development Block
3.	Kochugaon Development Block
4.	Gossaigaon Development Block
5.	Hatidura Development Block
6.	Bilasipara (Part) Development Block
7.	Chapar-Salkocha (Part) Development Block
8.	Rupshi (Part) Development Block
9.	Golokganj (Part) Development Block
10.	Debitola (Part) Development Block
11.	Mahamaya (Part) Development Block

1.8.7 COMMUNICATION

Kokrajhar district has achieved a formidable communication; the 31(C) National Highway touches the north part of the district and No. 37 National Highway also touches at the south of the district. The district has also achieved BG railway line that passes through the heart of the Kokrajhar town. The railway stations are Kokrajhar, Salakati, Fakiragram Jn., Chautara, Gossaigaon hut, Shrirampur at the west. The district has developed its bus terminus centres at Gossaigaon International Bus Terminus and the head quarter of Bodoland Transport service is also situated in Kokrajhar town.

1.8.8 LITERACY AND EDUCATION SCENERIO

Education can be regarded as the tool and instrument of socializing and transforming the society. However, the BTC area is one of the most backward in the field of education and has the lowest percentage of literacy rate compared to the other parts of the state. The BTC Authority has taken some keen interests in the development of

education and its infrastructure. In spite of the initiatives taken by them, there seems to be very low pace of improvement and the council has to go extra miles to improve the education sector. The average literacy rate of BTC as per the 2011 census report is 67.11 per cent where Male percentage is 74.28% and Female is 59.80%, while in Assam it is 73.18 per cent in compared to the 74.04 per cent of National Average Literacy rate. This has shows that BTC is far behind in terms of literacy rate compared to Assam and India respectively. The literacy rate of the four districts of BTC has been given below:

Table No. 1.5: Literacy rate by Sex in BTAD as per Census Report of 2011:

District	Persons	Male Percentage in 2011	Female Percentage in 2011
Kokrajhar	66.63	73.44	59.54
Chirang	64.71	71.35	57.87
Baksa	70.53	78.55	62.23
Udalguri	66.6	73.79	59.17
Total in BTAD	67.11	74.28	59.80

Source: Census of India 2011

Among the four district of BTAD, Baksa district is in the top list with 70.53 percentage of literacy rate and Chirang district stands at the bottom with 64.71 percentage of literacy rate while Kokrajhar and Udalguri stands in the second and the third place respectively as the table indicates. It shows that all the four districts of BTAD has huge gender gap between the male female literacy rate.

Moreover, the literacy of Kokrajhar in 2011 was 66.63 compared to 52.29 of 2001. If we looked at from gender perspective, male and female literacy rate were 73.44 and 59.54 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 61.01 and 43.06 in Kokrajhar District. Total number of literate in Kokrajhar District was 503,178 of which male and female were 283,026 and 220,152 respectively.

1.9 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire has been designed taking into consideration of the objectives of the research study and is divided into different parts as shown in Annexure- I; which is divided into 5 (five) Parts as given below:

Annexure – I:

- i) Part - A: General Background Information of the Respondent: It covers total of 6 questions.
- ii) Part - B: Bodo Women in Social Dimension. This part includes 10 questions relating to social consciousness of Bodo women, their status, female education, establishment of educational institutions, religious aspects, reason of presenting gifts or cash during marriage, widow remarriage, male dominance in domestic affairs, women torture or harassment, victimization of witch hunting etc. were being asked.
- iii) Part – C: Bodo Women in Economic Dimension. This part includes 10 questions relating to self dependent of women of economic aspects, role of Bodo women in economic sector, women’s share in governmental schemes, equal wages of women, job opportunities for women, involvement in business activities, involvement in sericulture activities, involvement in SHGs, economic independent in the family, problems of infrastructure facilities were being asked.
- iv) Part – D: Political dimension of the Bodos and women’s involvement. This part also includes total 10 questions which covers some questions relating to political consciousness of Bodo women, casting of vote, women participation in election rallies, membership in women wings of the political party, participation in local administrative bodies, satisfaction level of women representation, women reservation, capability level of women’s participation in politics with male counterpart, need for active role in politics, expectations from women organization were being asked.

- v) Part – E: Comments, policy implication and suggestion in all dimensions of Bodo society in regard to women’s roles: The last part of the questionnaire covers over all aspects of the society in general and Bodo society in particular which are the qualitative questions. It includes comments, policy implication and suggestions from the individual respondents as well as from the civil society, different organizations, NGOs etc which has also includes 10 questions.

1.10 TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

While collecting the data from both primary and secondary sources different methods of data collection techniques have been used. The data from primary sources includes field visits and official documents while secondary sources will includes published and unpublished documents. The main techniques of used in the collection of data are given below.

1.10.1 INTERVIEW/SPOT SURVEY

While collecting the informations from the primary sources, all the proposed study area; i.e. 4 blocks of the Kokrajhar district of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts viz. Kokrajhar Block, Dotma Block, Gossaigaon Block and Debitola Block have been visited and data has been collected personally.

1.10.2 SURVEY OF VARIOUS SOURCES

Other than primary sources of data collection which includes interviews and field visits various other methods has also been explored which includes government reports, documents, district official records, other related publications of national as well as state government, books, journals, magazines, articles, news papers, working papers, published and unpublished works of various authors, etc.

1.10.3 TIME FRAME AND STAGES OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collection from the primary sources has been done in a phased manner. The proposed filed survey includes four blocks in Kokrajhar district of Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam. The time frame and the stages of data collection from the filed survey have been shown as below.

- i) Kokrajhar and Dotma Block under Kokrajhar Sub-Division of Kokrajhar district: September, 2016
- ii) Gossaigaon Block under Gossaigaon Sub-Division of Kokrajhar district: September, 2017
- iii) Debitola Block under Parbatjhora Sub-Division of Kokrajhar district: September, 2018

1.10.4 TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the primary sources such as field survey and interviews has been analyzed and presented in frequency tables. The whole data have been systematized, analyzed and presented through various statistical means such as tabulation and graphical representation. Tabulation technique is adopted to depict the clear picture of the data collected for the study. Some of the analyzed data has been represented with the help of graphical representation which will includes bar diagram, pie diagram etc.

1.10.5 CITATION ADOPTED

There are different methods and style of inserting citation and references available for the adoption of research study references. In the present research study citation style of American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition 2010 has been adopted, while typing text and reference citation in the entire course of the study. The citation will be applicable to all types of informations resources whatever have been referred and consulted in the various aspects and sections of the study.

1.11 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the present study on the topic of “Social and Political Role of Bodo Women: A Study on Kokrajhar District, BTAD, Assam” the related literatures has been considered for formal review and extensive literature survey for the undertaken research problem from the various sources including books, journals, conference/seminar proceedings, magazines, mouthpiece, Gazettes reports, Census report, published and unpublished theses, electronic journals covering various aspects of women’s rights, role of women in various socio-economic and political activities and others. The following are the related literatures which have been reviewed for the present research work undertaken by the researcher accordingly.

(Ahuja, 2001), in his book *Society in India; Concepts, Theories and Recent Trends* has mentioned that in social, psychological and moral dimensions, the situations of women are not identical to that of men. When they start their career as adults, they are evaluated by the society with a different perspective and then they fail to get recognition as successful role-performer in the society.

(Sarkar, 2002), in her book, *Women and the Politics of Violence* has also mentioned that the emergence of women’s movement within the Hindu right may lead us to reassess certain assumptions about women’s relationship with violence, religion, politics and the contemporary urban middle class culture in moments of mass violence. The only women who have engaged out attention so far have been the victims from the vulnerable community who need to pick up the pieces of a shattered community life and laboriously, painfully, begin a healing process. Within religion, women are usually regarded as quietist devotees who use its mythical and ritual resources to create an autonomous cultural space that wrests from patriarchy some relief and even power. They are vested with a more intimate and deeper relationship with and a custodianship of authentic religious tradition of the community. As far as politics goes, the force of research has been towards debating their location within mass nationalism, with only occasional glances at women of the left. The cultural aspects of upper caste urban middle class life, especially the tenor of change from the eighties have not yet drawn much systematic attention and we operate with

nebulous impressions of a new kind of market formation that is dominated increasingly by the commodities and images flooding in from the west.

(Singh, 2003) in his book *Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development* mentioned that the premises for the new generation of NGOs has to work towards 'empowerment processes' that will eventually usher in an era of more equitable and equalitarian economic, social, cultural and political order through concentrated efforts and structural changes of policies. In brief, it may be added that NGOs today are not just the naive social or relief organizations of the 1950s but a powerful force that contributes significantly towards shaping national options and international policies not only in effectively addressing the question of development but also in seeking autonomy and a working mandate from the government to promote people's participation on the basis of a well monitored partnership.

(Brahma S. , 2006), in his book *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition, A Historical Perspective* has mentioned that the economy of the traditional Boro society is basically dependent on the land and agricultural products. They were satisfied having possessed cultivable land and arrangement of cultivation. All the members of a family could not think of anything other than participating in agricultural process.

(Kumar A. , 2006), in his book *Indian Women in Politics* has mentioned that there are several socio-economic constraints by which women have been marginalized. The number of women in leadership position at the local, village, district, state and national level is still not commensurate with their numbers in society.

(Yasin & Uphadyay, 2006), in their book *Human Rights* mentioned that in the UDHR, the Preamble to the Constitution of India promises to secure for its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity. The Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, protection of life and personal liberty. Thus, women in India are the beneficiaries of Fundamental Rights in the same way as men. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution ensures "equality before law" and Article 15 prohibits any discrimination, among other grounds, of sex or gender. However, despite the constitutional provisions, *the Report of the Parliamentary Committee on the status of*

women titled *Towards Equality* highlighted the fact that the Indian Women continued to suffer from neglect and deprivation.

(Kumar B. , 2006), in his book *Women's Self Help Groups* stated that women in India had been kept in dark in the name of customs, traditions and religious faith. The alienation and suppression towards the women makes obstacles in the socio-economic development of women. By empowering, women would be able to develop self esteem, confidence, realize their potentials, capacity building and skill development. It's also empowered participation and greater control and decision making power in home, community and society.

(Rao, 2007), in her book title *Law Relating to Women & Children* discussed about the differences between men and women may be small but they have snowballing effects on the status of a majority of women. Even the most significant, rich and civilized empires cannot boast of providing their women equal treatment. It was soon realized that no country can progress if half of its total population is behind - socially, economically and politically. If equality and freedom evade women, it was also offensive to human dignity, human rights and development.

(Agarwal, Human Rights, 2008), in his book *Human Rights* has noted that although equality of status has been guaranteed to women by the constitution of India, it is a myth to millions of women as they are the victims of various kinds of violence within houses, at work places and in the educational system. They are still the subject of suppression. Tall promises for improving the plight of women were made during 2001 which was declared as 'Women Empowerment Year' but they were far from being fulfilled. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was placed before a group of ministers but policy has not been adopted. Seminars were organized on a number of issues affecting the conditions of women, no improvement has been made. They are being discriminated as compared to brothers at home and their male colleagues at work.

(Dwivedi, 2008), in his book *Status of Women in Independent India* has discussed that Women's rights to inheritance are limited and frequently violated. In the mid 1950s the Hindu personal laws, which apply to all Hindus, Buddhist, Sikhs and Jains were

overhauled, banning polygamy and giving women rights to inheritance, adoption and divorce. The Muslim personal law differs considerably from that of the Hindus, and permit Polygamy. Despite various laws protecting women's rights, traditional patriarchal attitude still prevail and are strengthened and perpetuated in the home. Under Hindu law, sons have an independent share in the ancestral property. However, daughters' shares are based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father can effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in his own right. Additionally, married daughters, even those facing marital harassment, have no residential rights in the ancestral home. Even the weak laws protecting women have not been adequately enforced. As a result, in practice, women continues to have little access to land and property, a major source of income and long term economic security. Under the pretext of preventing fragmentation of agricultural holdings, several states have successfully excluded widows and daughters from inheriting agricultural land.

(Vaid & Sharma, 2009), in their book *Political Rights of Women; with special reference to Jammu & Kashmir state* has mentioned that women's participation in the national as well as in the state or local body elections is a very important issue for the governance of India because they are composed of nearly half of the total population of India. The 73rd and 74th amendment to the constitution ensured 33% reservation of seats for women in local self governance. This has resulted in a million women gaining entry at different levels in the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj System.

(Lal, 2010), in his book *Women in Indian Politics* opined that the number of women in political decision-making bodies is abysmally low in both the Parliament and State Legislature. Lack of space for women in these political institutions and decision making bodies has resulted in the perpetuation of inequalities and discrimination against women.

(Bhattacharya, 2011), in his book *Rural Women, Panchayat and Development* has discussed that Gender has now become a fashionable term to designate the problem related to feminism. The women all over the world are fighting against this differentiation. The history of this fight against for equality goes back to several decades. These have been certain historical forces which have given rise to women's struggle against their

subordination. It goes to the middle of 20th Century when there was defeat of fascism and a forced retreat of imperialism. Prior to this, the French Revolution of 1789 created a favorable atmosphere for liberty, equality and fraternity. After the 1st World War, there was the character of human rights. This charter, among other things, bestowed equal rights to women, at par with men. There was a favourable situation for women to fight for their rights. On the other hand, the declaration of international women's decade (1975-1985) was a forceful factor to stress for feminism over the world. During this period, modernization had arrived. The new international economic order also created a favourable situation for removing the gender differences.

In the edited volume, *Human Rights Awareness in Education* (A., 2012), has mentioned that the relevance of human rights education and its important factor is not just knowledge, but how to apply in our lives. The test will be for students and teachers to recognize rights in their schools, in their homes and in the local community. The exposure and feedback of their encounters with 'live' situations of human rights violations, with victims and activists who have helped to redress wrongs will emphasize the value of human dignity, the sufferings of others and increased sensitivity.

In the edited volume, *Violence against Women and Human Rights: A Critical Evaluation* (Misra, 2012), widely discussed that violence is violent victimization of women includes physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidations, isolation and emotional, sexual or economic abuse. Narrowly, the term 'violence' has been applied to 'physically striking an individual and causing injury' to the act of striking a person with the intent of causing harm or injury but not actually causing it, to acts where there is the high potential of causing injury and to acts which may not involve actual hitting, but may involve verbal abuse or psychological stress and sufferings. The foeticide, infanticide, incest, wife battering, dowry deaths murder and abuse of elder women are pure forms of violence against women. It has been crystallized in our society and despite legislation; cases of dowry harassment and dowry death are increasing every year.

(Islam, 2012), in her article *Women in Bodo Society* has mentioned that Bodo society which is primarily patriarchal nature has the existence of male dominance in the domestic matters. However, Bodo women are equally respected and treated in the society.

They play important role in all household activities as well as performing in socio-religious rites and ritual of Bodo society. In *Kherai Puja* a female priest called *Dhoudini* performs various dances in the altar places of various god and goddesses. No religious ceremonies can be performed with their presence except *Garja Puja*.

(Devi, 2012), in her book *Women and Socio-Political Movement in Recent Past & Present Manipur* mentioned significant instances of women's struggle for their socio-political rights and liberties were there as early as the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Afterwards, more organized efforts were to follow during the nineteenth century. The twentieth century promoted the cause of gender equality by internationalizing women's struggle for justice. In the first half of the twentieth century, ideologies of women's movement were based on the value of freedom, self determination, equality, democracy and justice - socially, politically and economically. Their struggles against their subordination were intertwined with all these aspects in varying degrees.

(Deka, 2013), in her book *Women's Agency and Social Change, Assam and Beyond* stated that women have occupied diverse class positions under different material conditions and systems of production. Hence, historical interpretations of women's contribution to economy in general would have to be related to their specific positions in the systems of production and social relations. Women have to be perceived, not merely in terms of labour, but also in terms of their relationship to men, children and also other women, both within and outside the family. Gender differentiation in economy is not to be seen merely on the basis of sexual division of labour in the home or in the agricultural fields or on the 'hoe versus plough' issue as impacted by the extension of cash crop cultivation but factors like the new land reforms, surplus and also women's reproductive capacity will have to be taken into considerations.

(Pandey J. , 2013), in his book *The Constitutional Law of India* mentioned that the Articles 14-18 of the Indian Constitution guarantee the right to equality to every citizen of India and there should not be any discrimination on the grounds of religion, caste, race, sex or place of birth. Thus, arbitrary discrimination and negligence towards the women is also the violation of rule of law and are against the constitutional provisions.

In the context of Human Rights (Kumar, 2013), in his book *International Relations and Human Rights* has discussed that Human rights are literary, the rights that one has simply as human being. As such they are equal rights, because we are all equally human beings. They are also inalienable rights, because no matter how inhumanely we act or are treated we can not become other than human beings. Where do such rights come from? How do we determine which particular human rights we have? Such philosophy vital questions are immensely contentious. For the purposes of contemporary internationals, however, we can take them as having been authoritatively answered. In the fifty years since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, virtually all states have endorsed the Declaration, which has arguably acquired the status of customary international law. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights currently has 144 parties. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has 141 parties.

(Narjinari, 2014), in his book *The Saga of the Bodos* has mentioned about the Bodo women who were sacrificed their lives for the political identity of Bodo people. On 12 May, 1988, Assam Police raided villages of Soraibil area under Gossaigaon police station and opened fire on the innocent villagers in which Gaide Basumatary aged 30 was shot dead. Her three months old daughter name Ramba Basumatary died without care and starvation. A class ninth standard girl student Helena Basumatary aged 13 received serious bullet injury who later died at hospital. Another tragic incidence is that a teen aged girl named Sonoti Basumatary aged 14 years of village Thakampur under Kochugaon Police station was gang-raped in 1988. Rape and ill treatment of Bodo women by police and the security forces had been widely reported. Very often rape occurred during raids on villages in the name of searching ABSU activists. In March 1989, fifteen (15) girls were reportedly raped at Rupnathpur, Kokrajhar district by members of the Assam Police Task Force (APTF) who had raided the village. On July 1989, a team of police raided Goybari village. Nabley Brahma, aged 10 years, who was working in the paddy field ran to the adjoining village of Laodongya and tried to hide inside a house. Unfortunately for her a group of policemen were then entered inside the house, destroying whatever they could find. Nabley

was immediately caught, her hands and legs were held by some policemen in uniform and then turn all the seven of them raped her.

(Phukan, 2014), in her book *Women, Democracy and the Media; An Analysis of Current Trends in Assam* has mentioned that Gender discrimination has been a universal phenomenon in human history from immemorial. On account of women's biological constitution, social taboos and scriptural sanction, the social position of women has always been considered as inferior and subordinate to man in society. The status of women differs from society to society and region to region. In every society people as male and female are expected to make some exclusive role performance. The gender roles assigned to men and women are socio-cultural constructs of a given society. The roles that women play are different in any given society, and their situation is determined by the legislation, religious norms, economic norms, economic status or class, cultural values, ethnicity and types of productive activity of the country, community and household. But, it is a common practice all over the world that women are usually responsible for domestic works. In most societies they play a major role in productive activities of the family like in farming, paid domestic labour, services, industries and income-generating activities but their economic contribution is rarely accepted by the society.

(Das, 2014), in his book title *Women Empowerment and Grassroots Political Institutions; An Empirical Study* has stated that Mahatma Gandhi insisted that the way to change the status of women was the demand that they be treated as equals with dignity. He said that if the campaign for dignity and equality for women was to succeed, women must help women to resist old patterns and develop new strengths. He argued, 'Only the self can raise the self, the self is the help of the self. Only women can raise women and if a woman learns *Satyagraha*, she can be perfectly independent and self supporting. She does not have to feel dependent upon anyone.' Mahatma Gandhi used this strategy in the Freedom Movement. He was also particular about women's political rights and its practical use. He said 'Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberation of the nation. They must be part in the political process and have say in the decision making process in a direct manner.'

(Dutta, 2015) , in her edited book *Women as Peacemakers: A Study of North-East India* has mentioned that women play a crucial role in the economic survival and recovery of their families and communities during and after extreme conditions of conflict. There are number of examples of women's creativity and commitment to their families even under extreme conditions. Since women take over the responsibility of looking after families after war, ethnic conflict or any other terrorist activities, it is important to build on women's existing skills and capacities so that women can participate in both, the formal as well as the informal economic sectors. In places like Kokrajhar and Nalbari a number of women are victims of conflict situations and due to loss of family members or loss of property, many families are without any earning member. Some non-government organizations in such situations are successfully carrying out capacity building processes wherein women have been able to help their families to survive. Moreover, in such situations psycho- social support is important for women.

(Mohanty & Tripathy, 2015), in their book *Tribal Women Livelihood and Development Strategies* has mentioned that in the formation of Self Help Groups in tribal belts, target should not be only on the bank linkage. Equally important or even more important is educating the members. In view of the fact that tribal women forming SHGs are mostly illiterate, and formal education for them can't be ensured, NGOs as well as Government machinery promoting Self Help Groups have to run non-formal education programmes for tribal women on a large scale as per the convenience of women. More and more of diversified training programmes have to be undertaken on a sustaining basis to improve their skill.

(Brahma K. , A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos; With special reference to the Bodos of Kokrajhar District , 2015), in his book *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos; with special reference to the Bodos of Kokrajhar District* has mentioned that the *maigainai* or paddy plantation is performed with some rites. The guardian of the family, generally the elderly female member, offers a pair of areca nuts and betel leaves (*goijora-pathoijora*) in the name of *Mainao* or the Goddess of Wealth; and applying a little mustard oil on small quantity of seedlings, the elderly female member salutes towards the east and then starts

plantation, then only other members of the family start plantation all saluting to the east. Thus, this clearly shows how important women are in contributing towards household economic activities of the family in the Bodo society and this need to be identified.

(Swargiary, Boro, & Narzaree, 2015), in their research article *Political Empowerment of the Bodo Women in the Present Context* mentioned that the Bodos are one of the ethnic and early settler groups in Assam. They are the largest tribal group living in North East India. They have struggled for safeguarding their language, culture and for the political autonomy. In the different phases of Bodo movement, the participation of Bodo women has also been seen along with male. In the political history of Bodo society, women involvement has been noticed from the Roman Script movement of 1974-75. The movement was strongly launched by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and it was also supported by the All Bodo Students Union.

The statistical report (Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council, 2015-16) containing Socio-Economic scenario of BTC which includes data on household, population, sex ratio, land density, growth rate, statistics on social welfare, education, employment, demonstration and weaving activities, Panchayat and rural development and crime and judiciary, it is found that the ratio of women participation in every field of activities is very low compare to male counterparts.

The statistical report of Kokrajhar district (District Statistical Handbook Kokrajhar, 2015-16) containing Socio-Economic scenario of Kokrajhar district which includes data on household, population, sex ratio, land density, growth rate, statistics on social welfare, education, employment, demonstration and weaving activities, Panchayat and rural development and crime and judiciary has also been studied to find the data and information specially on the part of women.

(Rahman, 2016), in his book *Human Rights* has mentioned that in spite of all constitutional and legal safeguards women are subjected to various forms of discrimination in the society. They are abused, battered, molested, raped, murdered or forced to commit suicide. Women become the worst victims of violence and cases of crimes against women are an ever-increasing problem. The crime against women has been growing at an alarming rate in India in the recent years. Legislations are not enough to protect the rights and

interest of women. The setting up of NHRC in 1993 and State Human Rights Commission (SHRCs) sometimes proved powerless to deal with the cases of complaints of human rights violations. Women, particularly those belonging to weaker section of the society, can not take advantage of the awareness, gender discrimination, economic exploitation, political deprivation etc. They become the victims of atrocities in a number of ways.

(Narzary, 2016), in research paper *Identifying Bodo Women through Educational Empowerment with special reference to BTAD in Assam* has analyzed that the role of Bodo women in the development of socio-economic aspects is also related to the goal of comprehensive socio-economic development. The socio-economic development of the women leads to the development of the society and to the human development of the nation. They are considered important part of the society in various aspects. Hence, imparting education play significant role towards the socio-economic development. But, gender differences in terms of education are seen in the BTAD region of Assam where Bodo women are lagging behind.

(Brahma S. , Historical Interpretation on Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Women Empowerment, 2017), in his research paper, *Historical Interpretation on Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Women Empowerment* has stated that Bodo women since the period of Brahma Movement under the leadership of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma got the opportunity to participate in the decision making of the society. In the first *Mahasanmela* which was held in 1921 at Bhawraguri, Gossaigaon adopted various resolutions for socio-economic development of the Bodo society in general and for the development of women in particular. Prior to Brahma movement women had only considerable authority in the domestic matters and in other social activities and their participation in the society were negligible and insignificant.

(Talukdar, 2017), in his research article, *Problem of Bodo people in BTC* has mentioned that the formation of Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in 1967 has made the Bodos to launch political movement demanding separate homeland for the Plains tribal by the name of Udayachal. This movement brought certain political consciousness among and need for integration among the Bodos. In 1974 they again launched another movement for Bodo language called Roman Script movement where 15 persons sacrificed their lives.

The formation of All Bodo Students Union on 15th February, 1967 has brought phase of movement among the Bodos under the dynamic leadership of late Upendra Nath Brahma. They wanted to seek social justice for the Bodos through political means and demanded separate state for the Bodos called Bodoland.

The annual report of NEDAN Foundation (Foundation, 2017) has shown their direct intervention of rescuing children and girls from exploitative situations. On 2nd August, 2016, a number of 26, including 6 minor girls were rescued from Mumbai-bound Lokmaya Tilak Express train at New Bongaigaon, again on 17th August, 2016, one tribal girl who was trafficked one year back was send back home form Delhi due to her serious health conditions due to the exploitation leading to the tracing of other two girls, trafficked together. NEDAN performed random checking with the help of Railway Police, uniform personnel, labour union, department of labour and student union bodies in the rail line, bus stand, taxi stand which connects North East India, border areas and displaced locations through the community vigilance committee. Moreover, they have established the Weaving Destination Livelihood Campus in 2008 and today it's being recognized as an income generation program for the vulnerable tribal women. Weaving Destination (WD), a weaving production unit, has been started as social enterprise in the Bodoland Territorial Council in the state of Assam. They also ventures social entrepreneurship programme for the vulnerable and poor women and mothers of trafficked survivors and helped them by giving capital amount to start their own vendors at local market places and empower them as self earner to fulfill their family needs.

(Basumatary & Chainary, 2017), in their book *Monograph of the Boros* has mentioned that in Boro society, folk sayings related to women have positive as well as negative aspects and in comparison to positive, the negative aspects are a little more. The reason behind growing of more women related and folk saying in the society is very difficult to explain. When we peep in to the society, it is seen that Boro society is a very neutral society keeping no vast difference of males-females and respect the females a lot i.e. why they always compare the females with the Goddess *Mainao (Lakshmi)*, the Goddess of Wealth. The other aspect which one can point towards paying respect to females is that till today we have not heard a single case of female foeticide in the society

which is a very encouraging and appreciable step towards giving high respect and social status to women in the society. Women status can also be known from the social pictures prevalent in the bygone days. It is learn that in the bygone days it was not easy to marry a girl. For marrying a girl, the boy (bridegroom) and his family members were to bear a lot of trouble. A groom was sometimes bounded to serve in the family of the girl (bride) to draw her and her family's attention towards him by displaying his expertise in work and his capability to take care of the girl. A girl was never given to the boy's family for marriage in a single visit and was compelled to visit repeatedly asking her hand from her parents.

(Hertz, 2018), in her edited book, *Turning Points in the Lives of Chinese and Indian Women Leaders Working towards Social Justice* has discussed that in India the ideology of democracy and rights for citizens led change agents to appeal to the government to use its resources to ameliorate the inequalities associated with the economic change. While there are many constraints on activism, a variety of resistance strategies have developed at the local level. Local struggles may not challenged structures and processes that exist beyond their local communities or region but they do become sites where important social justice work is taking place and where change agents work to create a collective vision of a more just world. As these women moved through moments of personal transformation, they built more inclusive organizations capable of challenging local inequalities in important ways: i) collaborating with their governments, ii) Filling gaps governments can not or will not address; and iii) where necessary working around their governments.

(Brahma A. , 2018), in his research paper *A Study of Women's Human Rights of Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam* has discussed about participation of women in the political system is main weapon for the empowerment of women and towards bringing welfare in the society. Women's participation in the local, regional and national political activities will broaden the functioning of democratic system of a country like India. While mentioning about women's participation in various social and political activities of BTAD region, there were only few women who have been elected to the State's Legislative Assembly. The participation of women in politics is very low in compare to male counterparts.

1.12 ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

The study has been organized in the following manner and the whole study is divided in six chapters.

CHAPTER-I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter “Introduction” is covered with following points: An Overview – Statement of the Problem – Objectives of the Study – Significance of the Study – Delimitation of the Study – Application of Theory – Hypotheses – Research Methodology – Study Area and Sample Size – Design of the Questionnaire – Techniques of Data Collection – Review of Related Literature – Chapterization and Conclusion.

CHAPTER-II: WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS: GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

In this chapter the theoretical concepts of the Women’s Human Rights has been discussed thoroughly by taking different parameter like Global, National and Regional Context. The chapter consists of an: Introduction – Women Human Rights in Global Context - CEDAW – Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – Global and Regional Prevalence Estimates of Inmate Partner Violence – United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI) – Women Rights in India – Constitutional Rights of Women – Legal Rights to Women – Crimes against Women – Role of National Human Rights Commission in Protection of Human Rights – Working of National Commission for Women – Women Rights in the Regional and Local Context – Role of State Human Rights Commission in Protection of Human Rights – Working of State Commission for Women – Human Rights issues in Local Context – Conclusion.

CHAPTER-III: SOCIO-CULTURAL ROLE OF BODO WOMEN

This part of chapter consists of an: Introduction – Traditional Social Structure of Bodos – Bodo Women in Socio-Cultural Sphere – Bodo Women and Family Life – Bodo Women and Inheritance of Property - Bodo Women in Dress and Ornaments – Marriage

Ceremony and Bodo Women – Bodo Women in Birth and Naming Ceremony – Divorce and Women – Death Ceremony and Women - Bodo Women in Religion and Festivals – Kherai Festivals and Women’s Role – Garja Festival and Bodo Women - Bodo Women during Bwisagu and Domashi Festival – Bodo Women during Katri Gasa Saonai - Bodo Women in Economic Activities – Conclusion.

CHAPTER-IV: ROLE OF BODO WOMEN IN POLITICS

In the fourth chapter Role of Bodo Women in Politics has been discussed extensively in the present study which includes followings points: Introduction - Marginalization of Women in Politics - Status of Indian Women during 19th Century – Formation of Women’s Organization – Participation of Women India’s Freedom Movement – Political Participation of Women in India – Women and Electoral Politics – Political Consciousness among the Bodos – Political Consciousness among the Bodo Women – Political Participation of Bodo Women – Bodo Women in State and BTC Electoral Politics – Conclusion.

CHAPTER-V: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ROLE OF BODO WOMEN IN KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT

This part of the chapter dealt with analysis and interpretation of the data which consists of an: Introduction – Sampling Profile – Bodo women in Social Dimension– Bodo women in Economic Dimension– Bodo women in Political Dimension - Conclusions.

CHAPTER-VI: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The sixth and last chapter which have concluding part consists of an: Introduction – Major Findings of the Study - Achievement of Objectives – Testing of Hypothesis – Suggestions – Limitation of the Study and Scope for further research – Conclusion.

1.13 CONCLUSION

Although there have been numerous research work done by the different researcher in the field of women issues and challenges but such researches on the problems of social and political role of women specially to the women of Bodo community has not been done yet exhaustively by the researchers in the particular area. It is to be motioned that addressing women's rights and their role towards the upliftment of social and political activities has become very important phenomena in the present day world. The Bodo women who play important role in all social life of the Bodo community have to be studied thoroughly. The present study will bring real insights of Bodo women participation in social, economic and political aspects of the Kokrajhar district of BTAD extensively. Moreover, it is to be mentioned that the review of related literature has given us more scope in doing exhaustive research on the undertaken problem. The review of literatures has also shown us many clues and informations on various issues and problems of women's rights and also their role in various social and economic aspects in globally, nationally and regionally which helps the researchers to do thorough study on the problems undertaken by the researcher.

REFERENCES

- A., C. (2012). Human Rights Awareness in Education. In C. J. Nirmal, *Human Rights in India: Historical, Social and Political Perspective* (p. 73). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Agarwal, H. (2008). *Human Rights* . Allahabad, UP: Central Law Publications .
- Ahuja, R. (2001). *Society in India; Concepts, Theories and Recent Trends* . New Delhi: Rawat Publications .

- Assaminfo. (2017, June 26). *www.assaminfo.com*. Retrieved March 15, 2018, from [www.assaminfo.com: http://www.assaminfo.com/district/17/kokrajhar.htm](http://www.assaminfo.com/district/17/kokrajhar.htm)
- Basumatary, P., & Chainary, S. P. (2017). *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakshi Publishers & Distributors.
- Bhattacharya, S. (2011). *Rural Women, Panchayat and Development* . New Delhi: Mohit Publications .
- Brahma, A. (2018). A Study of Women's Human Rights of Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Engineering & Multidisciplinary Physical Sciences, Vol. 6, Issue 4* , 563.
- Brahma, B. K. (2007). *The Bodos: A Study on Socio-Cultural Change*. Gauhati University (Ph.D. Thesis).
- Brahma, K. (2015). *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos; With special reference to the Bodos of Kokrajhar District* . Kolkata: Punthi Pustak.
- Brahma, S. (2017). Historical Interpretation on Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Women Empowerment. *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences, Vol. 4, Issue 10* , 49-51.
- Brahma, S. (2006). *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition; A Historical Perspective* . Guwahati: DVS Publishers & Distributors .
- BTC PRO. (2016, January 30). *www.bodoland.in*. Retrieved April 13, 2018, from [www.bodoland.in: hptt://www.bodoland.in](http://www.bodoland.in)
- Das, S. D. (2014). *Women Empowerment and Grassroots Political Institutions: An Empirical Study* . Guwahati: DVS Publishers .
- Deka, M. (2013). *Women's Agency and Social Change: Assam and Beyond* . New Delhi: SAGE Publications .

- Devi, R. H. (2012). *Women and Socio-Political Movement in Recent, Past & Present Manipur*. New Delhi: Sunmarg Publishers and Distributors.
- (2015-16). *District Statistical Handbook Kokrajhar*. Kokrajhar, BTC: Office of the Deputy Director of Economics & Statistics, Kokrajhar.
- Dutta, A. (2015). Women as Peacemakers: A Study of North-East India. In M. Hussain, *Coming Oout of Violence* (pp. 65-66). New Delhi: Regency Publications.
- Dwivedi, S. (2008). *Status of Women in Independent India* . New Delhi: Cyber Tech Publications .
- Foundation, N. (2017). *Annual Report 2017*. Kokrajhar, BTC: NEDAN Foundation.
- Hertz, R. (2018). Turning Ponits in the Lives of Chinese and Indian Women Leaders Working towards Social Justice. In G. Paisley, *Contemporary Politics in a Changing World* (pp. 119-20). New York, USA: Willford Press Publications.
- Islam, M. (2012, January 22-28). Women in Bodo Society. *Frontier, Volume 44, No. 28* .
- Kumar, A. (2006). *Indian Women in Politics*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications .
- Kumar, B. (2006). *Women's Self Help Groups* . New Delhi: Astha Publishers & Distributors .
- Kumar, S. (2013). *International Relations and Human Rights*. New Delhi: Kunal Books Publications .
- Lal, S. (2010). *Women in Indian Politics* . New Delhi: Kunal Books Publications .
- Misra, P. (2012). Violence Against Women and Human Rights: A Critical Evaluation . In P. Pandey, *Women's Rights; Violence, Human Rights and Empowerment* (p. 23). Visakhapatnam, AP: Global Publishing House.
- Mohanty, B., & Tripathy, T. (2015). *Tribal Women Livelihood and Development Strategies*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers & Distributors .

- Mosahari, P. (2011). *Political Identity Crisis of the Bodos and their Bodoland Movement* . Guwahati: N.L. Publications.
- Nanda, S. P. (2004). *Indian Society and Culture* . New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors.
- Narjinari, H. C. (2014). *The Saga of the Bodos*. Kolkata: Published by the Author.
- Narzary, S. R. (2016). Identifying Bodo Women through Educational Empowerment with special reference to BTAD in Assam, India. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies, Vol. 4, Issue 7* , 136-137.
- Narzinari, H. C. (2014). *The Saga of the Bodos*. Kolkata: Published by Author .
- Nirmal, C. J. (2012). *Human Rights in India: Historical, Social and Political Perspectives* . New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Pandey, J. (2013). *The Constitutional Law of India*. Allahabad, UP: Central Law Agency Publications.
- Phukan, D. (2014). *Women, Democracy and the Media: An Analysis of Current Trends in Assam* . Guwahati: DVS Publishers.
- Rahman, A. (2016). *Human Rights*. Guwahati: Ashok Publications .
- Rao, M. (2007). *Law Relating to Women & Children* . Lucknow, UP: Eastern Book Company Publishers.
- Sarkar, T. (2002). *Women and the Politics of Violence* . New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications .
- Singh, R. K. (2003). *Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development* . New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications .

Statistical Handbook, Kokrajhar (2015-16). *Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council*. Kokrajhar, BTC: Office of the Joint Director of Economics and Statistics, BTC.

Statistical Handbook, BTC. (2015-16). *Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council*. Kokrajhar, BTC: Office of the Joint Director of Economics and Statistics, BTC.

Swargiary, B., Boro, D. J., & Narzaree, P. B. (2015). Political Empowerment of the Bodo Women in the Present Context. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research*, Vol. 3 , 763.

Talukdar, S. (2017). Problem of Bodo People in BTC. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Education*, Vol.5, Issue 11 , 7706-07.

The National Portal of India. (2017, June 26). Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.kokrajhar.nic.in: <http://www.kokrajhar.nic.in/kokrajhar/aboutdist.htm>

Vaid, S., & Sharma, N. (2009). *Political Rights for Women: Special reference to Jammu & Kashmir State*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications .

Yasin, A.-u., & Uphadyay, A. (2006). *Human Rights*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House.