

## **CHAPTER-V**

### **AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ROLE OF BODO WOMEN IN KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The present chapter is to determine the analysis of the data collected on the study of Socio-economic and Political Role of Bodo Women in Kokrajhar district. The analysis of data is necessary to study the organized materials in order to discover the inherent or natural facts. It refers to breaking the complex factors of the tabulated materials to the simpler parts and putting them together in order to determine inherent factors or meaning. Data analysis involves the arranging or ordering the data into constituent parts for the purpose of interpretation and to get the desired objectives. However, mere analysis on the data is not enough to achieve the desired objectives, and for this interpretation of result of analysis is also required. The data of the present study has been collected through qualitative and quantitative methods.

#### **5.2 SAMPLING PROFILE**

The data collected from the primary sources has been analyzed in this chapter. The data collected from the 300 respondents from four blocks of Kokrajhar district namely, Kokrajhar Development Block (Titaguri), Dotma Development Block, Gossaigaon Development Block and Debitola Development Block. Each block will cover 75 respondents representing 50 respondents from female and 25 respondents from male. Survey has been conducted with structured questionnaire interview method based on purposive random sampling method. Different sets of questionnaire has also been sent to NGOs and Civil Society Organizations relating to their role, programmes, and activities in

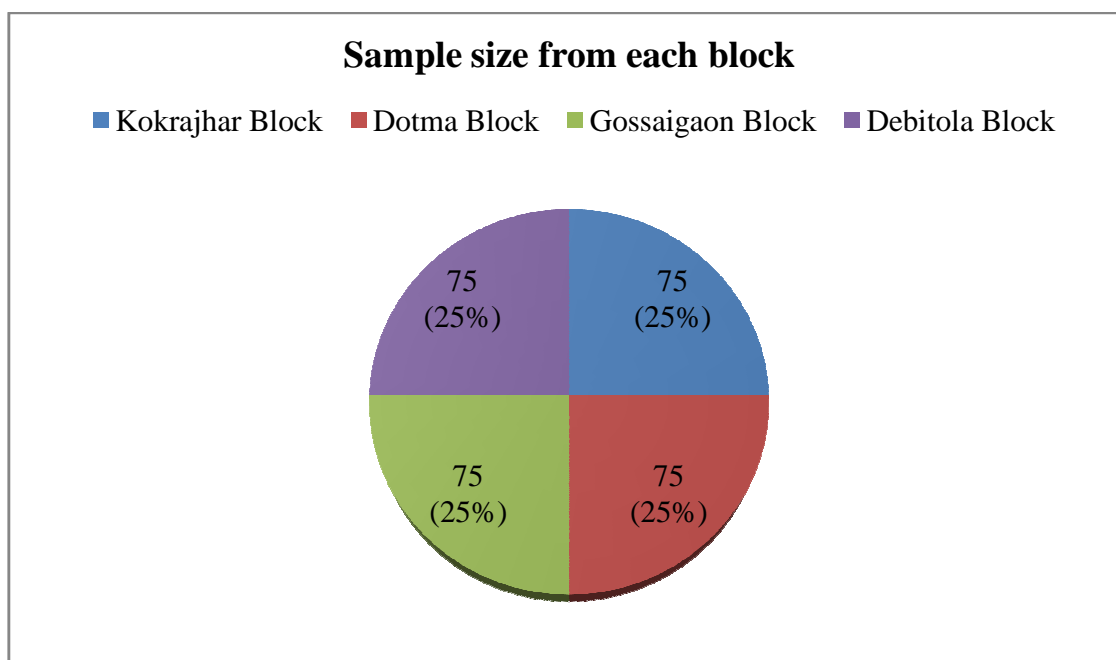
regard to rights, privileges and role of Bodo Women in the field of social and political spheres.

**Table No. 5.1: 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	

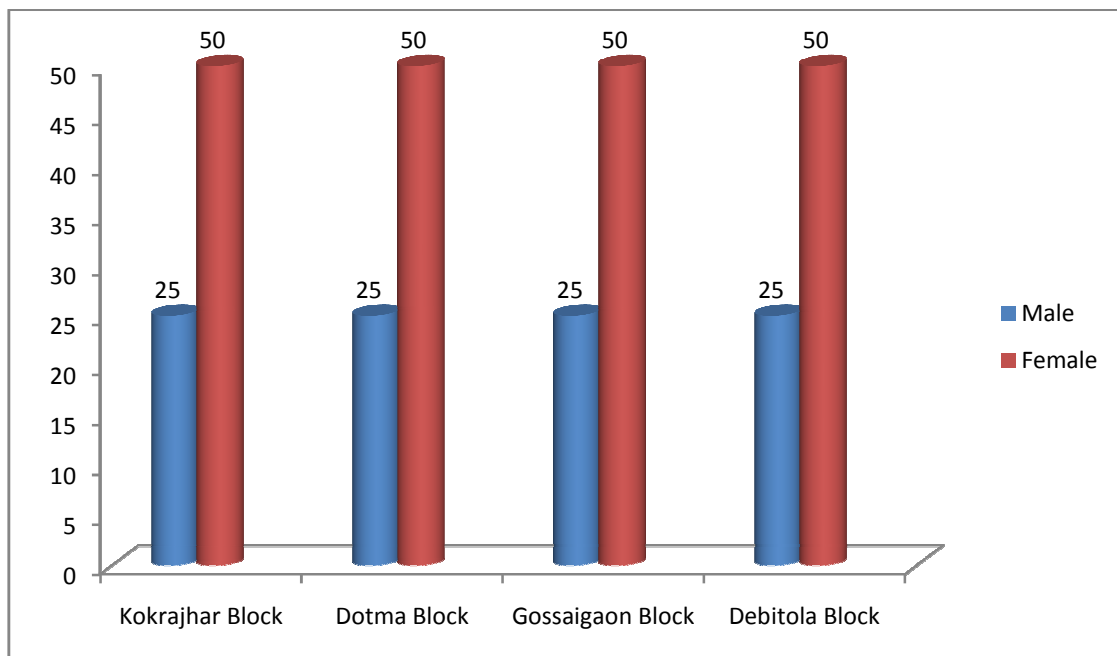
*Source: Sample size undertaken by researcher for the study.*

Figure 5.1: Pie diagram showing sample size from each block



**Figure 5.1:** Sample characteristics of chosen 4 development blocks.

Further, the sample size of each block has been stratified into male and female respondents as shown in Fig. No. 5.2.



**Figure 5.2:** Bar diagram showing Male Female breakup from each block.

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.

### **5.3 BODO WOMEN IN SOCIAL DIMENSION**

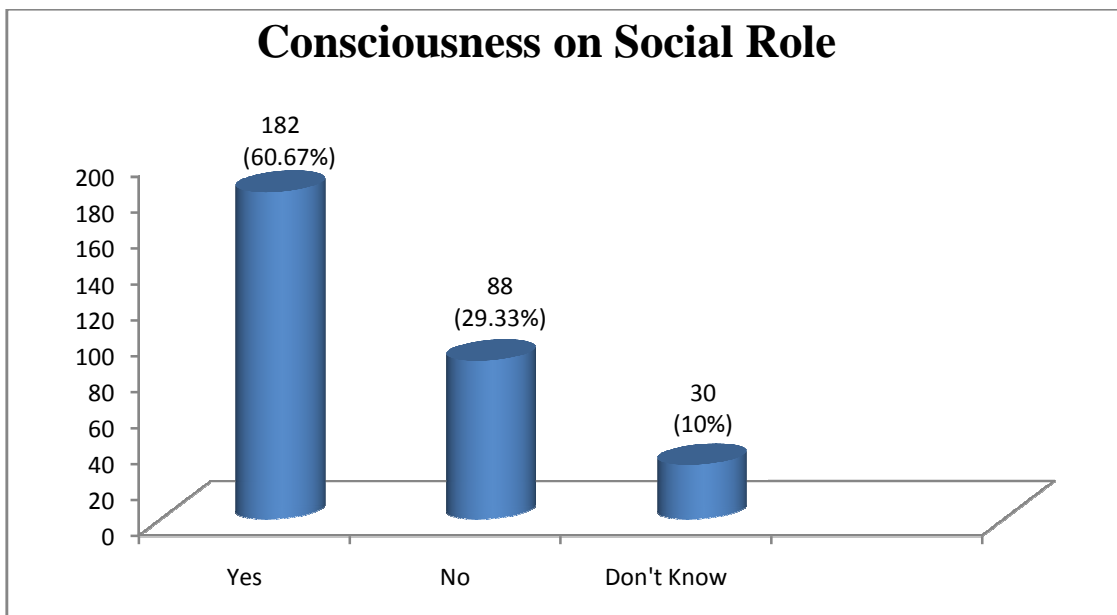
The Bodos having a rich cultural heritage considered themselves as an egalitarian society. Bodos do not have any class or caste differences and their society is primarily patriarchal in nature. In the present Bodo society women are enjoyed their due respect and status, as the Bodo women occupies important place in the socio-economic structure of the Bodo society. It is to be mentioned that the status of women in a particular society is a significant reflection of the social justice of that society. It is seldom witnesses in Bodo society such crime against women, dowry deaths, murder etc. However, in order to

understand the different role, responsibilities and problems of Bodo women in social sphere of the study area some questions has been put to the respondents where the first question was: Do you think that Bodo women were conscious about their social role in the society? The option was provided for them for easy reply was: - a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't Know. Table no. 5.2 will show us the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.2: Showing responses on social consciousness.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	182	60.67%
2.	No	88	29.33%
3.	Don't Know	30	10%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure 5.3:** Bar diagram showing consciousness on Social Role from the respondents.

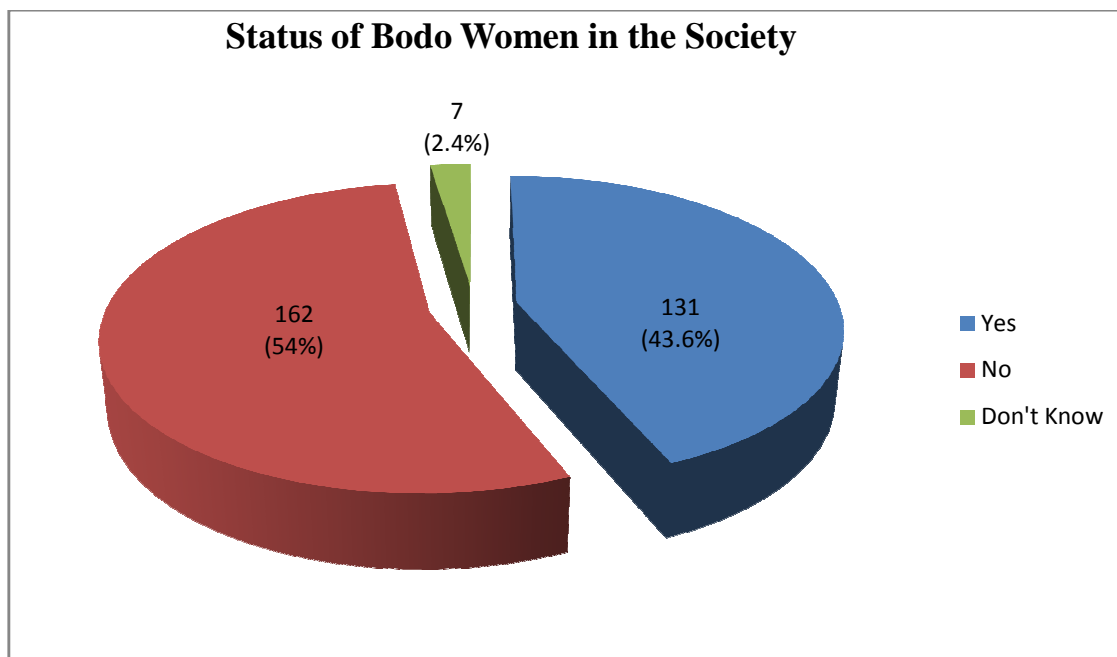
It is found that (182) 60.67% of the total sample population responded that Bodo women are conscious about their social role in the society. They opined that Bodo women have a significant role in the various social activities of Bodo society. Around 29.33% (88) of the total respondents of the study area were not aware of their social role and they are of the opinion that women were dependent upon their male counterpart in most of social responsibilities and they rely their decision on them. The Bodo society which is patriarchal in nature empowered male to take most of the decisions in domestic affairs. Therefore, the women naturally become dependent on their male counterpart. However, the Bodo women along with their male counterpart, also equally bear the social responsibility. Women have a key role while performing social ceremonies in the Bodo society. In Bodo society women are called *Mainao* or *Noni Mainao* (Goddesses of wealth) for which their role in every social aspect is important for the existence of Bodo society. So, from the above data, it is clearly shows us that majority of the Bodo women of the study area are conscious about their social role of the society. Moreover, the total respondents who agreed with the conscious of social role of the Bodo women have also expressed that some rites and rituals of the Bodo society can not be performed without the presence of the women. Moreover, 30 respondents which are about 10% of the total sample size have no idea and could not respond on the part of social role of the Bodo women.

The second question put to the respondents was: Is the status of women in your society is equal to male? The Option provided for the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't Know. The table no. 5.3 shows us clear reply of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.3: Showing responses on status of Bodo women in the society.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	131	43.6%
2.	No	162	54%
3.	Don't Know	07	2.4%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure 5.4:** Pie diagram showing Social Status of Bodo Women.

The data in figure 5.4 reveals that the status of women in the society is not equal to men. It shows that 162 (54%) of the total respondents were not agreed with equality of social status of women with men. The 131 (43.6%) were agreed with the question that status of women in the Bodo society is equal to men. The data also shows that 2.4% of the total respondents did not answer on the question. It is to be mentioned that social structure of the Bodos is based on the patriarchal system, even though they also enjoy equal freedom with man in performing their duties. The Bodo women have been playing significant role in the family and also in socio-economic life. Anjali Daimary President of Bodo Women Justice Forum (BWJF) has stated that without equality for women, the overall progress of the society is not possible, though we claimed to be member of a modern society, the women still suffer gender and other discriminations and even the supposedly rich and advanced nations have failed to provide equal rights to women (Boro S. , 2014). However, in practical life or due to the patriarchal characteristics, male enjoyed more freedom than female and their status is higher than the women. In most cases of the social functions and ceremonies male enjoyed higher position than female. So, the above data shows that status

of women is not equal to male which indicates contrary of Article 15 of the constitutional provision that prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of sex.

The third question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that female education is eminent for all round development of society? If yes why? Respondents have been given the following option: a) Increase literary rate, b) Increase income potential, c) Self respect and dignity and d) Others. Table No. 5.4 and 5.5 has shown clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.4: Showing responses for the need of female education.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	273	91%
2.	No	22	7.33%
3.	Don't Know	05	1.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

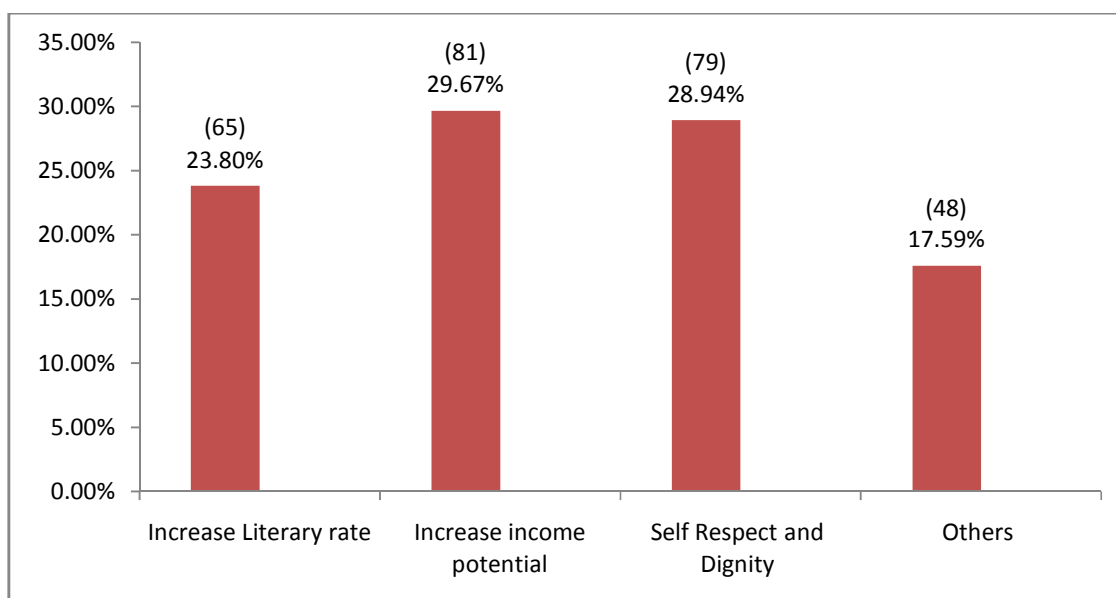
The data reveals that most of the respondents were agreed with imparting female education in the society. 273 (91%) out of 300 respondents opted for imparting female education is eminent and important for all round development of the society. It is found that only 22 which are about 7.33% of the total sampling unit gave negative response in regard to the imparting female education. They are of the opinion that imparting education is not only important factor for the development of society, rather women can contribute with other ways for the growth and development of society by involving in the various activities of the present day life. Moreover, they preferred giving better education facility to their male child, since they have to look after their family which will become the guardian of the family and such tendency of the society leads to violation of Article 26 of UDHR as well as

contrary to the norms of Article 10 to 14 of Part-III of the CEDAW Convention that has advocated right to education for all and focusing women education. The 5 (1.67%) of the total respondents did not response on the question. However, the above data shows that imparting female education is really important for over all development of the society.

**Table No. 5.5: Reason for imparting Female Education.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Increase literary rate	65	23.80%
2.	Increase income potential	81	29.67%
3.	Self Respect and Dignity	79	28.94%
4.	Others	48	17.59%
Total: →		273	100

*Source: Field Survey*



**Figure: 5.5:** Bar diagram showing the reason for imparting female education of the respondents.



The data in figure 5.5 shows us that out of the 273 respondents who are agreed with the imparting female education for the all round development of the society have expressed different reasons for the importance of female education. It is found that 23.80% of the respondent opted for the reason to increase literary rate by imparting female education. Further, 29.67% of the respondent opted for increasing income potential which is the reason for the imparting of female education in the society, while 28.94% respondent opted for the reason to achieve self respect and dignity of the women by imparting female education. Lastly, 48 respondents which are about 17.59% opted for other reasons for imparting female education in the society.

The fourth question put to the respondents was: Is there a sufficient facility of co-educational institutions in your area? Respondents have been given the following option: a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. The response provided by the respondents has been shown in the Table No. 5.6.

**Table No. 5.6: Showing responses on sufficient facility of co-educational Institutions.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	126	42%
2.	No	170	56.67%
3.	Don't Know	04	1.33%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The frequency table shows that there is no sufficient facility of co-educational institutions in the study area. The data reveals that out of the 300 respondents of the sample units 170 which are about 56.67% opted for insufficient facility of co-educational institutions, while 42% of the total respondents admitted the availability of sufficient co-educational institutions in the study area and only 4 which about 1.33% have no idea on the establishment of co-educational institutions. It is to be mentioned that Educational

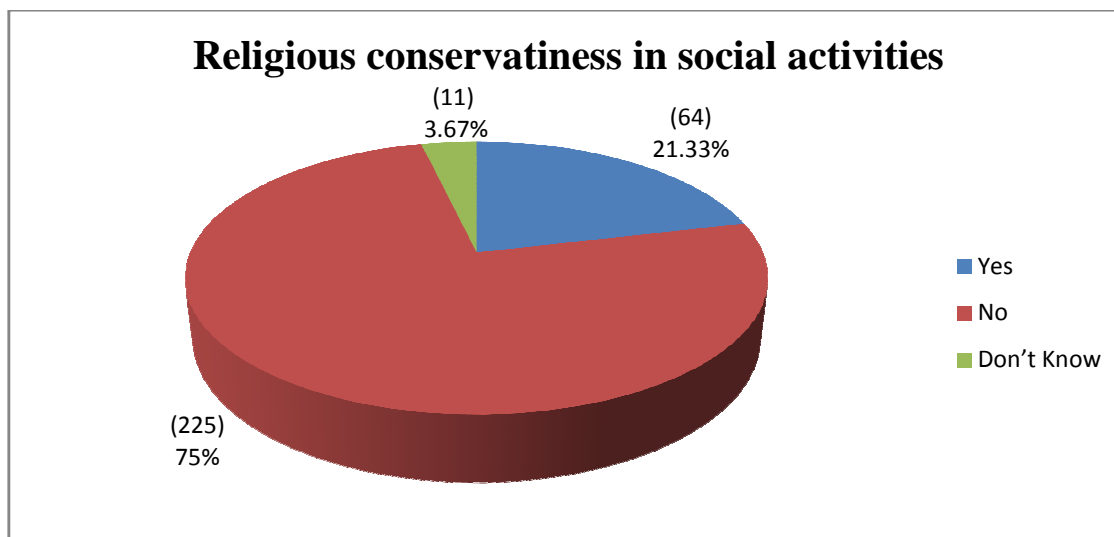
institutions which is a considerable importance in the society has a role of shaping our goals and values. It is the instrument of socializing and transforming of our socio-cultural values and norms. A society can be developed and progressed only, if there is proper establishment of educational institutions. The respondents were of the opinion that the educational institutions which were need to be established in some backward areas for imparting primary education for all are still left. The establishments of private institutions were mostly set up in the urban areas and these are still left in the rural areas for which people are unable to attain quality education. The government institutions which established in rural areas were lacking behind in giving quality education in the society. So, the data reveals that most of the respondents of the sampling units are not agreed with existence of sufficient co-educational institutions in the study area.

The fifth question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that there any religious conservativeness in regard to the women participation in social activities? The Option provided for the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. The table no. 5.7 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.7: Religious conservativeness in regard to women participation in social activities.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	64	21.33%
2.	No	225	75%
3.	Don't Know	11	3.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.6:** Pie diagram showing response of Religious conservativeness in regard to the participation of women in social activities.

The data from the table 5.7 and figure 5.6 shows us that most of the respondents of the sampling units were opted for negative response. Out of the 300 total respondents 225 respondents who constitutes 75% were not agreed with the religious conservativeness in regard to the participation of women in social activities. However, 64 respondents who constitute 21.33% were opted for positive response, while 3.67% did not response on the question put to them. Traditionally, Bodo community worshiped *Bathou Dharma* or *Bathou Religion* as Sidney Endle described that the religion of the Bodos or Kachari is distinctly of the type commonly known as 'animistic'. It is to be mentioned that among the Bodos some of them also adopted Christian religion as well as other religions. The religion in Bodo society which played a important role in the formulation of their social pattern, status, economy, mode of living and way of thinking, but such conservativeness to the participation of women in social activities has not been seen. However, the *Garja Puja* which is a important religious ceremony of the Bodos and in that Puja women are generally not allowed to enter in the *Garjasali* or altar place of *Garja Puja* as women does have not any role to perform in this puja. So, such binding on women participation in religious ceremony shows patriarchal dominance in the Bodo society and this has violated right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as per Article 18 of UDHR. However, most of

the respondents opined that there is no a religious binding or conservativeness in regard to the participation of women in social activities.

The sixth question put forth to the respondents was: Is it justified to present gifts or cash to the bridegroom during marriage? If no why? Respondents have been given the following option: a) Effect weak economic family, b) Loss of self esteem among the women, c) Promote domestic violence and crime, d) Others. Table No. 5.8 and 5.9 has been shown clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.8: Showing response on giving cash or gifts to the bridegroom during marriage ceremony.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	102	34%
2.	No	195	65%
3.	Don't Know	03	1%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

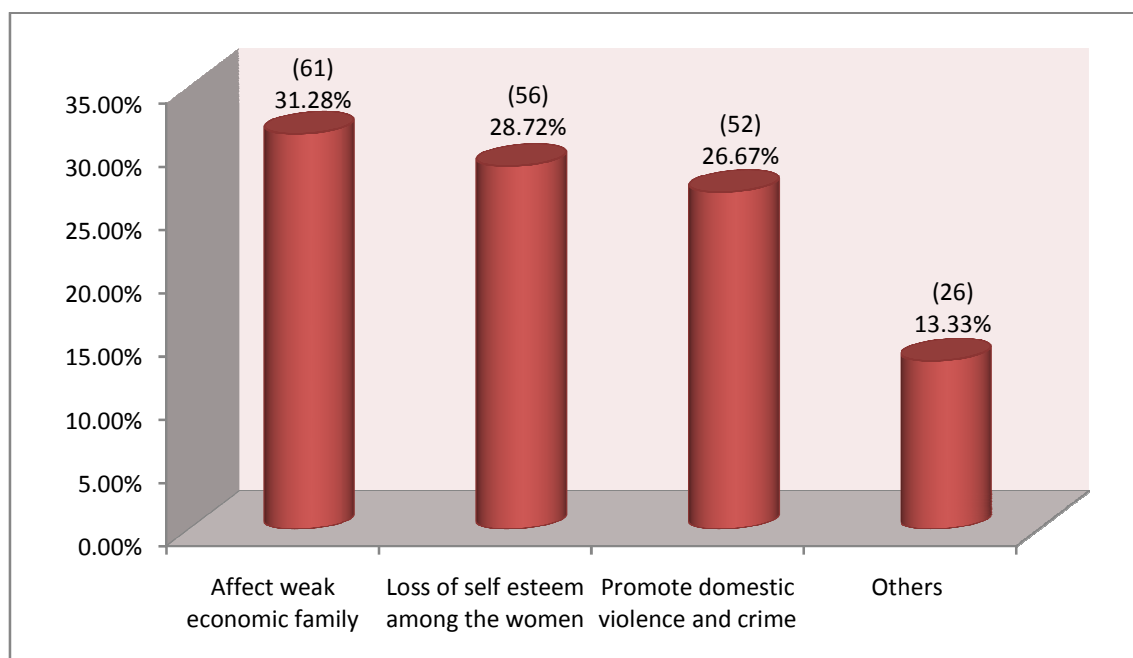
The data reveals that most of the respondents were not agreed with the giving cash or gifts to the bridegroom during marriage. 195 (65%) out of the 300 respondents were not in favour of giving such items, while 102 which about 34% were agreed with the giving cash or gifts and 1% of the total respondents do not know the reason which is justified or not justified for giving cash or gifts to the bridegroom at the time of marriage. It is to be mentioned that in a traditional Bodo society, male members of a family enjoy the rights on their paternal properties. In absence of any male child, the practice of distribution of paternal property among the daughters is also prevalent in the Bodo society and they can enjoy such properties even after their marriage. So, in regard to this, parents of the bride gives gold, cows, pigs, fowls even allot land to her daughter after the marriage of their daughter. But, there is no such demand for gift or cash from the bridegroom's family during marriage. Parents of bride's family give some cash or gift to their daughter during marriage

with their love and honour. However, most of the respondents were not in favour of giving such items to the bridegroom during marriage, as they were of the opinion that these practices effects middle class family as well as to the poor economic family background and this has leads to violation of Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961.

**Table No. 5.9: Showing reason for not giving cash or gifts to the bridegroom during marriage.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Affect weak economic family	61	31.28%
2.	Loss of self esteem among the women	56	28.72%
3.	Promote domestic violence and crime	52	26.67%
4.	Others	26	13.33%
Total: →		195	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.7:** Bar diagram showing reason for giving cash or gifts during marriage.

The data in figure 5.7 shows us that out of the 195 respondents who were not agreed with presenting gifts or cash have expressed different reasons. 61 respondents which about 31.28% were opted for the reason that it has affect weak economic family background, while 56 respondents of the sample units which constitute 28.72% were opted for loss of self esteem among the women. Further, the respondents expressed that giving cash or gifts to the daughters promotes domestic violence and crime and women become victim for which 52 (26.67%) respondents were opted for this reason. Lastly, 13.33% cites other reasons for not agreeing with giving such items during marriage. It is to be mentioned that though there is no dowry system in Bodo society but some parents used to give cash or gifts or even property to their daughters which affect the economically unsound family.

The seventh question put forth to the respondents was: Is there widow remarriage system in your society? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. Table no. 5.10 will show us clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.10: Showing response on Widow Remarriage system.**

Sl. No.	Response received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	300	100%
2.	No	0	-
3.	Don't know	0	-
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that out of the total 300 respondents of the sampling unit, all the 300 respondents which constitute 100% have opted for positive response. They have admitted that the widow remarriage system is prevalent in Bodo society. It is to be mentioned that in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Bodo society is said to have intermingled with the mainstream Hindu society or they have been influenced by their thoughts, when the Hindu society was under the control of many social evil practices like sati system, dowry system, child marriage etc. But, such practices could not influence

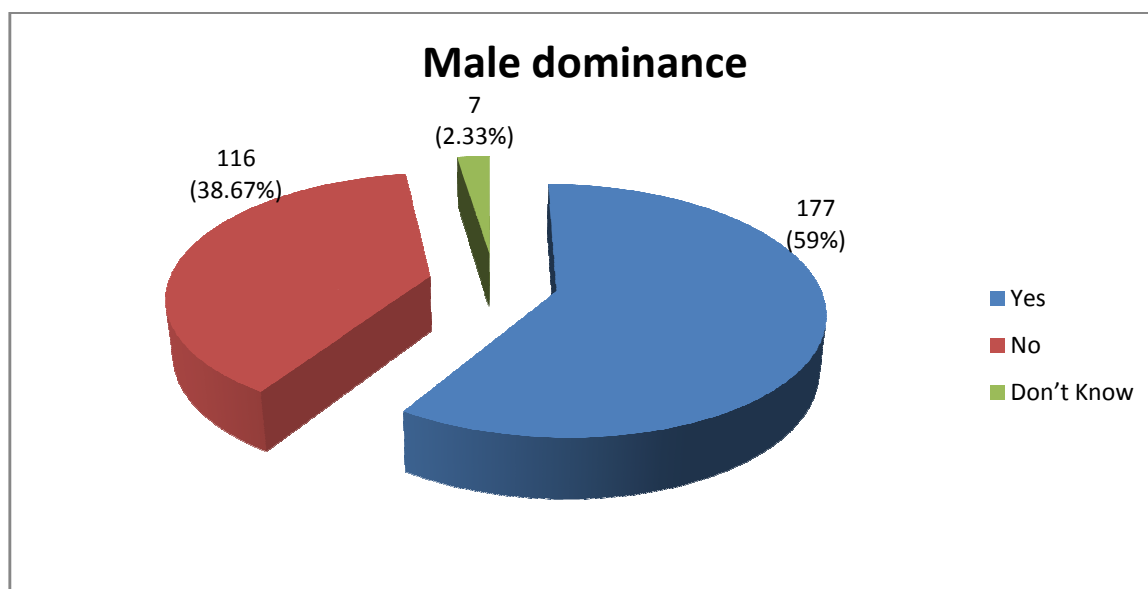
whole system of Bodo society. In Bodo society, a widow can marry other person after death of her husband unlike sati system. However, there is certain restriction in the widow remarriage system of Bodo society, where a widow can marry only younger brother of her deceased husband but not with elder one, if she had to remarry with the brothers of her deceased husband.

The eighth question put to the respondents was: Is there any male dominance in your domestic affairs? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. Following table no. 5.11 shows us clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.11: Response of Male dominance in domestic affairs.**

Sl. No.	Response received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	177	59%
2.	No	116	38.67%
3.	Don't know	07	2.33%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.8:** Pie diagram showing response of male dominance in domestic affairs.

The table no. 5.11 and figure 5.8 reveals that out of the total 300 respondents 177 which about 59% were agreed with male dominance in their domestic affairs. It is noted that Bodo society which is primarily patriarchal in nature has the evidence of male dominance in most of the decision of domestic affairs. Because, the male become the guardian of the family and being a head of the family male had to decide on the matters arising out of the family. But such patriarchal attitude of the society leads to violation women's dignity and rights according to the Article 1 & 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. However, 116 respondents which constitute 38.67% were not agreed with male dominance in the domestic affairs. They were viewed that male and female are equally treated in the Bodo society. In every matter of domestic affairs female members also have given importance and they are not dominated. They opined that while taking any decision on the family matters or in any such problems women were also consulted. It is evident that elements of matriarchal system are also found prevalent in the Bodo society and women had considerable authority in certain social and domestic matters as women played an indirect role in decision making in a family or at the village level. The *ghwrjia* system marriage where husband moves out of his family and stays in his wife's house with his in-laws forever, indicates the matriarchal streak. Lastly, the 7 respondents which constitute 2.33% were did not response on the question put to them. Hence, the data clearly shows us that there is existence of male dominance in domestic affairs.

The ninth question put forth to the respondents was: Is there any case of female torture in your family/area? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. The following table no. 5.12 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.12: Response of female torture in the society.**

Sl. No.	Response received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	60	20%
2.	No	220	73.33%
3.	Don't know	20	6.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



Table no. 5.12 shows us that most of the respondents were not agreed with existence of female torture in the Bodo society. The data shows 220 respondents which constitute 73.33% were given negative response. The Bodo society though dominated by the male members, but such female torture in the domestic affairs does not prevail. The female are also equally respected and treated in any social functions and activities. Harassment in the name of dowry or others does not exist in the Bodo society. Moreover, 60 respondents which are about 20% of the total respondents opted for existence of female torture in the family. They were viewed that women are harassed and torture by their husbands and with their in-laws. Wives were beaten and torture by the husband while they take alcohol for no reason and for the scarcity arises in the family. They were beaten up by their husband accusing improper treatment towards them. On the other hand, in-laws of some family members harassed their daughter in-laws for silly reasons of their domestic matters which indicate the violation of legal rights of women as per Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, and 20 respondents which about 6.67% were do not know about such female torture in the domestic affairs of the Bodo society. Hence, the above data clearly shows us that female torture in the study area does not exist.

The tenth question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that women are mostly become victim in witch hunting cases? If yes why? Respondents have been given the following option: a) Illiteracy, b) Male domination in the society, c) Others. The response provided by the respondents has been shown in the Table No. 5.13 & 5.14 which will show us clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.13: Showing response on Witch Hunting.**

Sl. No.	Response received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	95	31.67%
2.	No	168	56%
3.	Don't know	37	12.33%
Total: →		300	100

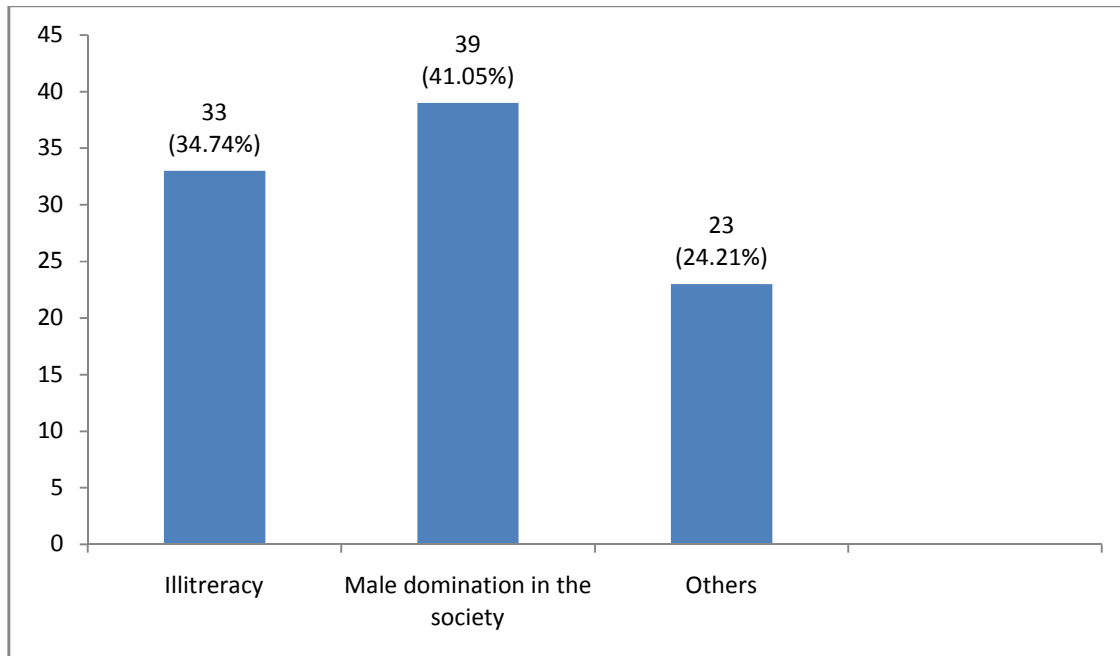
*Source: Field Survey.*

The frequency table reveals that most of the respondents were not agreed that women are mostly becomes victim of witch hunting. The data shows that out of total 300 respondents 168 respondents who constitute 56% were given negative response. It is to be mentioned that there is a superstitious believe of witchcraft in society which does not only exists in the Bodo society but it's prevailed in other society as well. The belief of witches which is the grave evil and the incidents of witchcraft or practicing unapproved form of black magic believe to be prevailed in the Bodo society even today, which leads to suspicion of practicing witchcraft. So, there is a superstitious belief of *Daina* (male witch) and *Dainy* (female witch) in Bodo society and due to this superstitious belief many innocent people have been killed in the name of witch hunting. In such cases both male and female become victim of witch hunting. Further, 95 respondents which constitute 31.67% were agreed on the issue that mostly women were become victim of witch hunting and it indicates that the witch hunting cases violates the provision for protection of women's rights laid down by Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (CEDAW), as for example it violates the Elimination of discrimination in areas of economic and social life between men and women and accord to women equality with men before the law and in civil matters. While 37 respondents which about 12.33% were not given any specific comment on the question put on to them, as some of the respondents afraid of giving comment on existence of witchcraft practices in their area.

**Table No. 5.14: Showing reasons for which women becomes victim of witch hunting.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiteracy	33	34.74%
2.	Male domination in the society	39	41.05%
3.	Others	23	24.21%
Total: →		95	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.9:** Bar diagram showing reason for women becoming victim of witch hunting.

If we analyse the data from figure no. 5.9 shows us that out of the 95 respondents who were admitted that women were mostly become victim of witch hunting, have given different reasons for which women were mostly suspected in the cases of witch hunting and they become victimized. It is found that out of 95 respondents 33 respondent which about 34.74% were viewed that due to problem of illiteracy women become victim of witch hunting, while 39 (41.05%) opted that male domination in the society leads to victimization of women in witch hunting cases, as women were vulnerable and their voices sometimes were not heard by the others and they become easily targeted. Hence, male domination in the Bodo society is also the reason where women suffered. Further, 23 respondents who constitute 24.21% cites other reasons for which women were mostly become victim of witch hunting cases.

## 5.4 BODO WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The very important aspect for the development and growth of an individual and the society is depends upon their economic condition. Good economic conditions of an individual not only helps in ensuring stability in the society but it also helps in bringing peace amongst the nations and thriving human culture. The most important factor which affects in the maintenance of family life is based on the economic condition of an individual. The basic needs of the family in maintaining day to day life such as food, housing, clothing, education, health care etc, largely depends on the level of income and resources available within the family and such resources of the family reflects the status of the society as well. However, to pinpoint the role of Bodo women in economic aspects several questions have been put to them to get the clearer picture.

So, in order to understand economic conditions of the study area the first question put to the respondents was: Do you think that Bodo women are economically self dependent? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Yes, c) No and c) Don't know. The table no. 5.15 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.15: Showing response on women's economic dependency.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	104	34.67%
2.	No	196	65.33%
3.	Don't know	0	-
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that most of the response to this question was negative. It is found that out of the total 300 respondents 196 respondents which constitute 65.33% were opted for negative response. They were of the viewed that most of the women in Bodo society are not economically independent, as their economic condition depends on the men. Traditionally, there is a belief that men are the bread earners of the family and all other

works should be done by the women for which most of the women becomes dependents on their husband. On the other hand, 104 respondents which about 34.67% were responded that they were economically independent. It is to be mentioned that Bodo women have a large contribution to the family economy and they work within and outside in all areas for the family's economic interest. Along with normal household work as housewife, they also work equally with the male counterparts in all agricultural and allied activities attached to the family. Further, women who were involved in other economic activities have admitted economic self independent. However, the data shows us that most of the Bodo women in the study area are not economically self dependent and their economic condition depends on their male counterparts.

The next question put to the respondents was: Do you think that women should take primary role in economic sector? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Economic Independence b) to support family economy and c) others. The table no. 5.16 and 5.17 will show us the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.16: Showing response on taking primary role in economic sector.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	198	66%
2.	No	86	28.67%
3.	Don't know	16	5.33%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

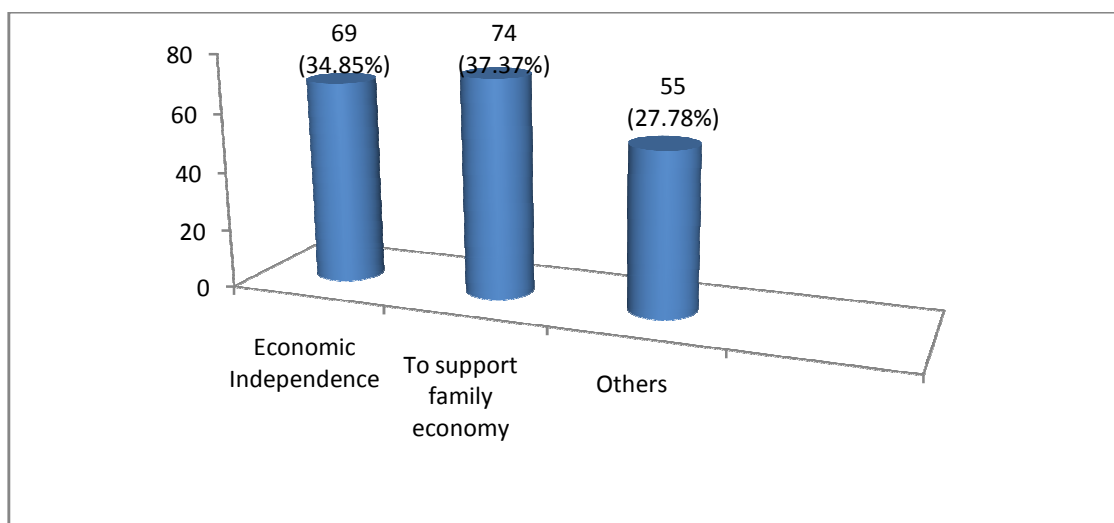
As shown in the table no. 5.16 out of 300 respondents 198 respondents of sample unit which constitutes 66% agreed that Bodo women should take primary role in economic activities. They opined that women are also key agents for the development and they play important role in economic and social change. Empowering them is not only important for the well being of the individual families but also for economic productivity. As most of the Bodo women of rural areas of Kokrajhar district were involved in agriculture and allied

activities, so for the growth of the individual and family economy, women should take primary role in economic sector. On the other 86 respondents which constitute 28.67% were not agreed with women's active involvement in economic sector, they cited that historically and socially women were viewed as weaker sex than male counterpart. Women have to shoulder the responsibility of family planning, bringing up of their child and they also have to work all other domestic related works. Women are faced gender discrimination in different works. Moreover, there are also some social structural conditions for which Bodo women could not participate actively in all economic spheres. Their active participation in economic sector may hamper domestic life of the family. But this attitude of the society has violated norms of CEDAW convention of Part-III of Article 10-14 which has outlined women's economic rights. While 5.33% (16) were don not know about the good impact and bad impact of the economic participation of Bodo women. However, the data reveals that most of the respondents have agreed with the active participation of Bodo women in the economic sector.

**Table No. 5.17: Reason for taking primary role in economic sector.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Economic Independence	69	34.85%
2.	To support family economy	74	37.37%
3.	Others	55	27.78%
Total: →		198	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.10:** Bar diagram showing reason for taking primary role in economic activities.

Table no. 5.17 and Figure no. 5.10 shows us that 198 respondents who were opted for positive response have opined some reasons in which 69 (34.85%) favoured taking primary role in economic sector will bring economic independence of the Bodo women. 74 respondents which about 37.37% were cited that active involvement of Bodo women will enhance the capacity to support family economy, while 55 (27.78%) opted for other reasons for which Bodo women have to take primary role in economic activities.

The next question put to the respondents was related with the getting of beneficiary schemes or projects of Bodo women implemented by the government. The table no. 5.18 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.18: Showing response on getting share of governmental schemes.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	102	34%
2.	No	193	64.33%
3.	Don't know	05	1.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the table shows us that most of the respondents were opted for negative response. Out of the 300 total respondents 193 respondents which about 64.33% cited that Bodo women were not given due share while implementing governmental beneficiary schemes or projects and they were deprived of it. They were viewed that women were discriminated in distributing beneficiary schemes and most of the schemes or projects either it may be central government scheme, state government schemes or BTC schemes most of them are enjoyed by the male counterpart only. However, 102 respondents which constitute 34% were agreed with the obtaining of equal share while implementing governmental schemes or projects. Bodo women who are eligible, competent and deserving for availing schemes, gets the share of governmental schemes, while 1.67% (5) respondents of the sample unit were not aware of getting share in implementing governmental schemes.

In order to understand the wages of women workers, the next question put the respondent was: Are women get equal wages as male counterpart in any labour work? If no why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Male dominance b) Discrimination and Bias, c) Others. Table no. 5.19 and 5.20 has shown the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.19: Wage equality of women in labour work.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	83	27.67%
2.	No	211	70.33%
3.	Don't know	06	2%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the table no. 5.19 reveals that 211 out of total 300 respondents which constitute 70.33% opted for negative response. They were vied that women were not given

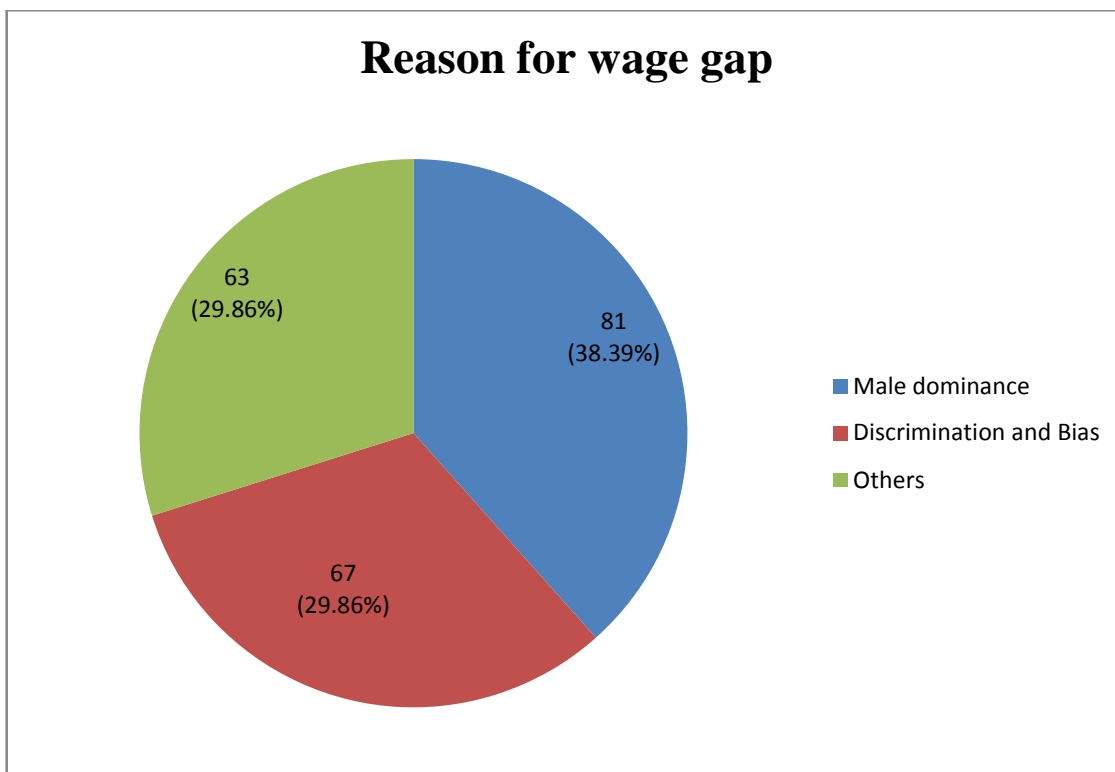


equal pay for equal work though there has been growing focus on women's empowerment and gender equality in our public discourse. According to survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2017 there has been a tremendous level of disparity in wages for women in India where men earn more than their women counterparts even in the similar works and the gender pay gap reflects 30 per cent. There have been several laws to protect the right of equal pay for men and women like 'Equal Remuneration Act of 1976' which was made for providing equal remuneration for men and women workers and to prevent on the grounds of gender (Waghmare, 2018). But, still women were deprived of getting equal wages which also indicates violation of constitutional rights of women as per Article 39 (d) where state has to ensure equal pay for equal work to both men and women. Further, 83 respondents which about 27.67% were agreed that women are also getting equal wages as male counterparts, they were cited that women who works similar jobs in professional or non professional or in other labour works gets equal wages as men, but the differentiation of wages depends on the nature of work where they involved. Lastly, the 6 respondents which constitute 2% do not know inequality of wages between men and women.

**Table No. 5.20: Reason for gender wage gap.**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male dominance	81	38.39%
2.	Discrimination and Bias	67	31.75%
3.	Others	63	29.86%
Total: →		211	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.11:** Pie diagram showing reason for gender wage gap.

Table No. 5.20 and Figure No. 5.11 reveals that there are different reasons for gender wage gap. 211 respondents who expressed women are not getting equal wages as male counterpart in any labour work, where 81 respondents which constitute 38.39% have opted male dominance in the society as well as in work places is the main factor of unequal pay of wages. On the other, 67 respondents which about 31.75% have opted for discrimination and bias on the grounds of gender is the reason of wage pay gap, while 63 (29.86%) respondents were cited other reasons for which women do not get equal wages as male counterpart.

The next question put to the respondents was related with the understanding of equal opportunities in getting governmental jobs for women. Table no. 5.21 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.21: Employment level of women in governmental jobs.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	111	37%
2.	No	178	59.33%
3.	Don't know	11	3.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

As shown in table no. 5.21 most of the respondents do not agree that women will get equal opportunities in governmental jobs as men. 178 respondents out of the total 300 respondents which constitute 59.33% cited that Bodo women were not getting equal opportunities in terms of governmental jobs as men. It is to be mentioned that Article 16 of the Indian Constitutions provides equal opportunities in matters of State services. The opportunity which every citizen of the country shall be eligible for employment or appointment under the State according to their conditions and capability without discrimination on grounds of caste and gender, but such opportunities are not prevailed in actual practice. They are of the viewed that women were given less importance in the time of appointment on the ground that women are incapable and they have to look after their child and have to bear family as well as other household burdens etc. for which they have been neglected. Moreover, partiality and favoritism were practiced at the time of appointment by the concerned authorities. 111 (37%) respondents agreed that Bodo women were also enjoyed equal opportunities in governmental jobs as men, as employment or appointment in any government offices or organizations are depends on their required qualification or criteria for the appointment. As per the provision of reservation policy of the government and with their performance women are also get equal opportunities in governmental jobs with men. Moreover, they have cited the example of BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council) Secretariat of Kokrajhar where maximum grade-iv employees are Bodo women, while 11 (3.67%) respondents were do not know whether women are getting equal opportunities in governmental jobs or not. However, the above data shows us that most of

the women are getting equal opportunities in governmental jobs according to their capability and required qualifications.

The next question put to the respondents was: Are the women of your area involved in small business establishment? If yes how? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Weaving, b) Vegetable vendors, and c) Others. Table no. 5.22 and 5.23 will show us clear response of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.22: Involvement of women in small business activities.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	129	43%
2.	No	164	54.67%
3.	Don't know	07	2.33%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that out of total 300 respondents 129 respondents which about 43% were agreed that women are also involved in small scale business activities. They viewed that Bodo women were not only involved in household work rather they were also participated in small business sector. They were involved as vendors, entrepreneurs and even some of the Bodo women also become contractors, policy agents etc. They were also directly participating in different business activities now-a-days. However, 164 (54.67%) respondents cited that most of the Bodo women were not involved in the business activities. Traditionally and socially women have to abide by the direction of their male counterpart in the family and they become dependent on male, since the Bodo society is patriarchal by nature and male were become dominant in every domestic affair. Women can not do whatever they like unless permitted by male for which it is difficult for them to involve in such business activities or other activities. Moreover, most of them are involved in the household work instead of participating in business sector. Hence, data shows that most of the respondents were not agreed with participation of women in small business activities,

while 7 (2.33%) respondents were does not know the involvement of women in small business activities of their area.

**Table No. 5.23: Response showing Business Profession where women were involved.**

Sl. No.	Business profession	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Weaving	56	43.41%
2.	Vegetable vendors	39	30.24%
3.	Others	34	26.35%
Total: →		129	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The frequency table shows that out of 129 respondents 56 (43.41%) were opted for weaving as the profession of business establishment. Traditionally Bodo women love to weave cloths and they weave their cloths in their own handlooms. Woven cloths includes *Dokhona, Aronai, Gamcha, Endi Chadar, Muga Chadar, Seema Chadar* (bed sheet) which women are mostly used it for commercial purpose along with family used. Some women entrepreneur have opened weaving centre in urban areas and they have been venturing out weaving as their business profession. 39 respondents which about 30.24% were opted vegetable vendors as the business profession where Bodo women were involved. They viewed that in the present time many Bodo women were involving as vegetable vendors both in village and town market and they are now trying to establish it as their source of income, while 34 (26.35%) were opted other way of business profession for Bodo women, as other than weaving and vegetable vendors some of the Bodo women were engaged in different fields of business establishment.

The next question put forth to the respondents was related with the involvement of Bodo women in Sericulture Activities. The table no. 5.24 will show the response provided by them.

**Table No. 5.24: Showing response of involvement of women in Sericulture activities.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	137	45.67%
2.	No	154	51.33%
3.	Don't know	9	3%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that out of 300 total respondents 137 respondents who constitute 45.67% were agreed with the involvement of Bodo women in the Sericulture activities. Traditionally women folk of Bodo community were involved in the sericulture activities. They learn to weave different type of cloths from their early childhood from their elders. Bodo women woven 'endi ji' or 'eri' cloth during cold seasons which is popular warm cloth in the Bodo society and these cloths are sold in the market for considerable price. Sometimes the *Eri* silkworm and their cocoons are sold in the market for their livelihood. They viewed that most of the women living in rural areas still involved in the sericulture activities. But, 154 respondents which about 51.33% of the viewed that most of the Bodo women were not involved in the sericulture activities in the present time, as these activities are undertaken by some NGOs, Entrepreneurs and also by governmental departments. They were viewed that due to lacking of scientific technology and technology know-how, they could not provide large production. Cloths weaving industries and commercialization of woven products are also inadequate in the area. Further, the new generation of Bodo society could not adapt with traditional mode of production for which less women were participate in the sericulture activities. Lastly, 3% (9) respondents were did not response the question

put forth to them. Hence, the data clearly shows us that most of the Bodo women do not engage in the sericulture activities.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Are the women of your area interested in Self Help Groups? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) To be economically independent, b) To support family economy, c) Others. The table no. 5.25 and 5.26 will highlight the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.25: Showing response of participation of women in Self Help Groups:**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	230	76.67%
2.	No	58	19.33%
3.	Don't know	12	4%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

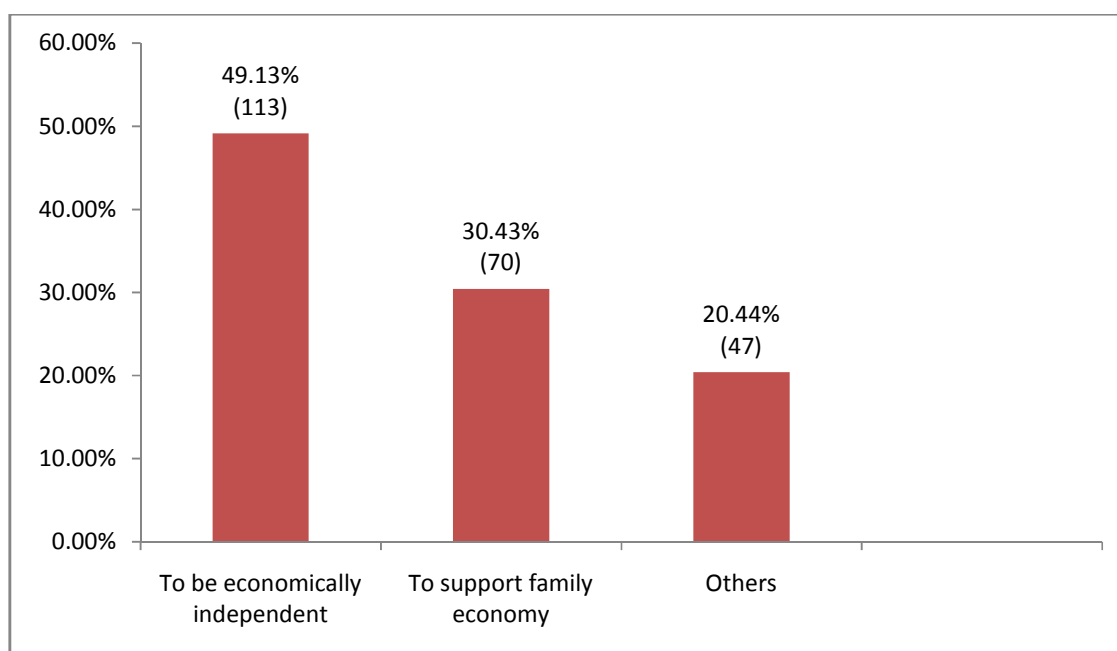
The data from the table no. 5.25 reveals that many people in the study area are interested in Self Help Groups. Out of total 300 respondents 230 respondents who constitute 76.67% were showing that most of the women are interested in Self Help Groups. They cited that Self Help Groups is a platform or tool for women economic empowerment. The Bodo women mostly from rural areas form Self Help Groups with 15-20 members to obtain governmental schemes to work in the field of poultry farming, piggery and weaving etc. Moreover, through SHG they offer training on capacity building, skill labour and counseling to the underprivileged women. On the other, 58 respondents who constitute 19.33% were showing disinterest in Self Help Groups. They were viewed that though SHGs provides opportunity of economic empowerment but considerable number of women or groups are yet join in Self Help Groups willingly or unwillingly. It is to be mentioned that SHGs have some problems which are non-rotation of leaders, lack of long term view, lack of discipline to conduct regular savings and record keeping, difficulties at the time loan disbursements and others. Further, most of the SHGs do not get

governmental schemes properly, while 12 (4%) respondents do not know whether women of their area were interested in Self Help Groups or not. However, the data reveals that most respondents of the study area were showing interestedness of women in SHGs.

**Table No. 5.26: Reasons for participation in Self Help Groups.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To be economically independent	113	49.13%
2.	To support family economy	70	30.43%
3.	Others	47	20.44%
Total: →		230	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure: 5.12:** Bar diagram showing reason for participating in Self Help Groups.

The figure 5.12 reveals that 230 respondents who were agreed that women of the study area were interested in Self Help Groups have expressed different reasons for the participation of women in SHGs. 113 (49.13%) respondents were opted for the



participation of women in SHGs is to become economically independent. Further, 70 respondents who constitute 30.43% were opted for the participation of women in the field of SHGs is to support family economy, while 47 (20.44) respondents were cited other reasons for the participation of Bodo women in the Self Help Groups.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think women should be given economic freedom in the family? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Yes, b) No and d) Don't know. The table no. 5.27 will show us detail response of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.27: Showing response on the need of economic freedom in the family.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	262	87.33%
2.	No	33	11%
3.	Don't know	05	1.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data of the table no. 5.27 shows us that most of the respondents of the study area are agreed with economic freedom of women in the family. Out of the total 300 respondents 262 respondents which constitute 87.33% were cited that for the overall development of the society women must be economically empowered. In a traditional Bodo society women's access to resources is mostly constrained due to practice social norms of patriarchy and this has institutionalized subjection of women in the society as well as in the family. The actual practice of women empowerment lies with the economic independence of women. The economic dependency of women will reduce only when women will be given economic freedom in the family. On the other hand 33 respondents which about 11% were not agreed with the economic independence of Bodo women that should be given in the family, as socially women have to engage in the household works and primarily they have to look after their child and thereby empowering economic freedom in the family may

hamper their family environment. Moreover, they were cited that economic factors are not stronger than social factors. But, such attitude indicates contradiction to the provision of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 where conference was noted for economic independence of the women. Again, 1.67% (5) respondents do not know the impact of positivity and negativity of economic freedom towards the women in the family. Hence, the data reveals the clear of the respondents that women should be given economic freedom in the family.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that lack of infrastructure facilities are a major problem in the way of economic development of women? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Lack of Industry, b) Lack of skill training and c) Others. The table no. 5.28 and 5.29 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.28: Showing response on the lack of Infrastructure facilities as hindrances of economic development of Bodo women.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	247	82.33%
2.	No	46	15.33%
3.	Don't know	07	2.34%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the table no. 5.28 reveals that out of total 300 respondents 247 respondents who constitute 82.33% were agreed that lack of infrastructure facilities is the main problem for economic empowerment of Bodo women. It is to be mentioned that infrastructure facilities which includes social infrastructure and physical infrastructure. The social infrastructure i.e. education and health is also equally important for women but lack of sufficient education on vocational training or skill training obstruct women's participation in economic sector. Further, health care facilities to the women are not

properly accessible for which they faced difficulties while participating in different economic sectors. On the other, the physical infrastructure which includes facilities of transportation, communication and industry etc, the lack of small scale industry and insufficient resources has discouraged women in participating economic activities. While 46 (15.33%) respondents were opted for negative response, as working in all economic conditions is not favorable for women. Bodo women primarily who looks household works in the family could not participate in forms of economic activities. Further, gender disparity and treatment of women with different perspective may also discourage them; hence, the lack of infrastructure facilities is not only the factor in the way of economic development of women. Out of total respondents 7 which about 2.34% were do not know about the factors which lead to the problems in women's economic development.

**Table No. 5.29: Obstacles in the way of economic development.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Lack of Industry	81	32.79%
2.	Lack of skill training	112	45.35%
3.	Others	54	21.86
Total: →		247	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that 247 respondents who agreed with lack of infrastructure facilities are the main problem in the way of Bodo women's economic development and they have cited different reasons. Out of that 81 respondents who constitute 32.79% were opted for lack of industry is the major obstacles in the participation of women for economic development in the study area, on the other 112 respondents which about 45.35% respondents were opted for lack of skill training is the main problem in the participation of Bodo women in different economic activities, while 54 (21.86%) were cited other reasons for which women are unable to participate in the various activities of economic development.

## 5.5 BODO WOMEN IN POLITICAL DIMENSION

Participation in political process is a key to women empowerment and a means for realizing the goal of gender equality. No society can assert or claim its full identity of development unless women are given equal political power at all level. It is to be acknowledged that India's exclusive patriarchal dominance failed to provide political platform to women over the years. Women have to confront with patriarchal attitudes while making political choices and they become just a silent majority. It is really surprising that having a population of over two million across the north eastern states of India, the Bodo community could produce only two women law makers in the state assembly of Assam. Smt. Pramila Rani Brahma, the present minister of social welfare department of Assam and Smt. Kamali Basumatary, MLA were the only Bodo women legislature even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, to understand women's role in Bodo politics related questions have been asked to the respondents. The first question put to the respondents was: Do you think that Bodo women are conscious about their political role in the society? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. The table no. 5.30 will show us clear response of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.30: Showing response on political consciousness.**

Sl. No.	Received Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	235	78.33%
2.	No	65	21.67%
3.	Don't know	0	-
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data shows us that out of 300 respondents 235 respondents which constitute 78.33% agreed that women are conscious about the political role in the society. They opined that Bodo women were actively participated during the time of Bodoland Movement, as the movement was launched by All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) in 1987

for the separate homeland of the Bodos. Many Bodo women were actively involved during the movement under the able leadership of late Upendra Nath Brahma who was a dynamic leader of Bodos. The formation of women organization AATWWF presently as ABWWF has brought consciousness among the women in the field politics. Since then Bodo women have been gradually inspired to participate in politics and also become more conscious in the field political spheres. On the other, 65 (21.67%) respondents were opined that Bodo women are not conscious about their political role in the society. They were of the opinion that women are burdened with managing the responsibilities of households and other familial duties, as their societal structure compelled them to be limited in the household works. Women are still made to believe that their primary concern should be their husband and children, hence such control and limitation over women prevents them from active participation in politics and thereby they lacks political consciousness.

The next question put to the respondents was: Do the Bodo women cast vote during election? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) To participate in democracy, b) To choose good representative and c) Others. Table no. 5.31 will show the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.31: Table showing casting of vote during election.**

Sl. No.	Received Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	285	95%
2.	No	15	5%
3.	Don't know	0	-
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the table no. 5.31 reveals that out of 300 respondents 285 (95%) respondents opined that Bodo women were cast their vote during election. They opined that casting of vote during election is a civic duty of every citizen of a country. It is to be mentioned that in the Assam Assembly election held in 1991, the participation of Bodo

voters was very poor due to disturbed political situations, as government was unable to find out political solutions of Bodoland issue. Further, large number of Bodo voters abstained from the exercising of their franchise in the 1996 Assembly election too, due to non fulfillment aspirations and genuine demands of the Bodo people. However, they opined that from the later period the Bodo people including women were participated in every election and cast their vote regularly, while 15 respondents who constitute 5% were opted for negative response. They opined that in spite of their voting, the representatives of the constituency could not fulfill their aspirations, needs and development for the people. Moreover, improper enrollment of voters names in the voters list also another factor for which people do not go vote.

**Table No. 5.32: Showing reasons for casting of vote.**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To participate in democracy	71	24.91%
2.	To choose good representative	183	64.21%
3.	Others	31	10.88%
Total: →		285	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the figure no. 5.32 reveals that 285 respondents who opined that women were cast their vote during election expressed different reasons, out of which 71 who constitute 24.91% have expressed the reason that casting of vote during election is to participation in the democratic system of governance. They opined that since voting is a civic duty of every individual and it is an integral part of democratic process through which people can participate in the politics of a country. 183 (64.21%) respondents were opted for choosing of good representative to hold public office. They opined that voting is constitutional right that every citizen can have it and this privilege has been given to every person to elect good individual who can be the agent of change in the society, as every

votes counts and this responsibility lies on every individual. Further, 31 (10.88%) respondents were cited other reasons who usually do not go for vote.

The next question put to the respondents was relating to understanding of participation level of Bodo women in election rallies in the study area. The table no. 5.33 will give a clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.33: Table showing Participation of women in election rallies.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	131	43.67%
2.	No	158	52.66%
3.	Don't know	11	3.67%
Total:→		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data from the table 5.33 reveals that out of the total 300 respondents 131 respondents who constitute 43.67% were agreed that Bodo women are also participating in the election rallies. They are of the opinion that different political parties in the region like BPF (Bodoland Peoples' Front), UPPL (United Peoples Party-Liberal), Congress and BJP (Bharatya Janata Party) and others were organized mass rally, cycle rally, bike rally etc. and women are also participated in those rallies during election along with male counterparts. In an interview on dated 04.01.2018, 11.00 AM (Gossaigaon) with Smt. Hirabai Narzary, former ABWWF leader viewed that "Involvement of Bodo women in the various meetings, dharna or protest programmes etc. have been seen from the Roman Script movement of 1974-75 and from Bodoland movement of 1987. The formation of women organization i.e. ABWWF has greatly influenced participation of women in the election rallies of General Election, State Assembly Election and BTC election, but joining in such programmes, women had to take consent from their guardians and husbands." 158 respondents who constitute 52.67% were not agreed with the participation of Bodo women in the election rallies in the study area, they opined that women in the patriarchal social

structure do not allow more freedom to them to negotiate and access of interaction in the public sphere and in the electoral competitions, as most of the women have to bear the responsibility of household works of their family. Women's participation in the election rallies as well as in other political programmes depends on the wish and pleasure of the male counterparts and they have to take consent from their husband or guardian. Such attitude of the society contradicts the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, as it has recommended full participation of women in policy making institutions like in political bodies etc. as well as CEDAW Convention of Article 7-9 of Part-II of women's rights of political participation. Moreover, they also opined that women were facing difficulties in attending rallies due to their familial works as well as their ignorance of the political programmes, while 11 (3.67%) respondents were do not know participation of women in the election rallies of their area. However, after the formation of BTC in 2003 most of the Bodo women are gradually turning up and used to participate in the election rallies.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do the women of your area are active member or worker of women wing of any political party? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Yes, b) No and c) Don't know. The table no. 5.34 will show us the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.34: Involvement as party worker.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	112	37.33%
2.	No	176	58.67%
3.	Don't know	12	4%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals that most of the respondents were given negative response as out of the total 300 respondents 176 respondents who constitute 58.67% were opted for negative



response. They are of the opinion that memberships of any political party were seen mostly from male and women were not given equal position in the party. Women members in the primary level, district level and central level of any political party like BPF, UPPL or others were dominated mainly the by male counterparts, as most of the major responsibilities were given to male which set discrimination on the part of women. Though different political parties have their own women's wing but their involvement is very negligible.

On the other hand, 112 respondents which about 37.33% were agreed with the involvement of Bodo women as party worker or member of different political parties like BPF, UPPL, BJP, Congress and others. They opined that transition in Bodo politics has been seen after BTC accord as women are coming out from their household works and joined in the different political programmes. In an interview on 17.07.2018, 10.00 AM (Hatimata, Kokrajhar) with Smt. Pratibha Brahma, women activist turn politician who contested with the ticket of newly formed United Peoples Party (UPP) in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly election from 30<sup>th</sup> Kokrajhar East (ST) constituency against Pramila Rani Brahma of BPF viewed that "Women participation as party workers gradually increasing, as they felt necessary to raise their rights and privileges and more women need to participate in Bodo politics by involving themselves as party membership and to work for the development of women and community as whole". Hence, in the present time women were coming out and joined as the member of the women's wing such as Smt. Jaymati Basumatary, Hirabai Narzary, Munmun Brahma, Parbhathi Brahma and others who are the active member of Kokrajhar district BPF Women's Wing, while 12 respondents which constitute 4% do not know about the involvement of women in the women's wing of different political parties of the study area.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do the women are participating in the local administrative bodies like VCDC or Panchayat in your area? If no why? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) Unwillingness in Politics, b) Male domination and c) Others. The table no. 5.35 and 5.36 will highlight the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.35: Table showing participation of women in local administrative bodies.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	66	22%
2.	No	219	73%
3.	Don't know	15	5%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

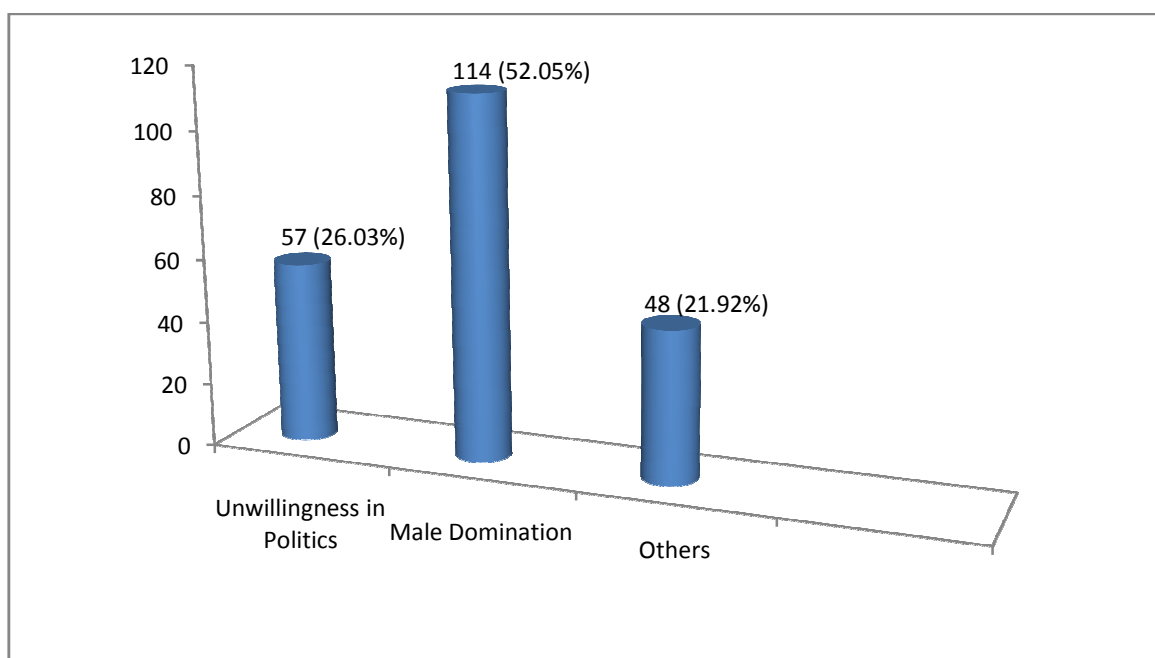
The data from the table no. 5.35 reveals that 66 respondents which about 22% think that women are participated in the local administrative bodies in Village Council Development Committee (VCDC), as VCDC is the local administrative body arranged in Bodoland Territorial Council. It is a grassroots administrative body in BTAD which is an alternative body of Village Panchayat. It is to be mentioned that in the swearing-in-ceremony of 3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Council of BTC which was held in the Secretariat field, Bodofa Nwgwr, Kokrajhar on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2015, the Chief Executive Hagrama Mohilary announced that women will be inducted as Chairperson and members in VCDCs in the BTC area. Hence, it is admirable that Banargaon VCDC, Debargaon VCDC and Simbargaon VCDC under Kokrajhar block have women chairperson along with 3 to 4 members to the VCDC. Further, in some VCDCs of the Dotma, Gossaigaon and Debitola block have women chairperson along with general members in the committee. Moreover, they are of the opinion that by participating in the local government or in VCDC, Bodo women are promoting themselves in the field of political empowerment and encouraged others to take part in the decision making process. On the other hand 219 respondents who constitute 73% were opted for negative response. They opined that participation of Bodo women in the VCDC or in the local government body is undermined, as women were not given due share in VCDC. They also viewed that the role of VCDC is to bring socio-economic development along with political empowerment at grassroots level in the BTC region but it lacks equal representation. Most of the members and chairman are occupied by male counterparts only where women were discriminated to large extent. While 15 respondents which about 5%

have no clue about the participation of women in the local administrative body. Hence, the data shows us that there is less involvement of Bodo women in the local self government.

**Table No. 5.36: Reasons for less participation of women in local administrative bodies.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Unwillingness in politics	57	26.03%
2.	Male domination	114	52.05%
3.	Others	48	21.92%
Total:→		219	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure No. 5.13:** Bar diagram showing reasons for less participation of women in local administrative bodies.

The table no. 5.36 and Figure no. 5.13 reveals that out of the total 219 respondents who were opted for negative response have given different reasons for which there is less participation of women in local administrative bodies, as out of 57 (26.03%) respondents were opined that unwillingness in politics is one of the factor for which we could not see women representative in local bodies. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment

guaranteed the large number of participation of women local government where 33% members of the decision making are the women as per Article 243 D (3) of the Constitution, even though it is seen that large number of women do not take part in the process. But, it is to be mentioned that in VCDC there is no election process like Panchayat for which the outcome is different. They are of the opinion that disinterested of women in participation of local self government is the main reason. Further, 114 (52.05%) respondents expressed that male domination in the local administrative body is the reason for which few women are only represented. They opined that male dominated society would not allow a free run to women local members, as they also opined that in most cases male members outnumber the women members and they are not sensitive to the issue of gender discrimination which also indicates the violation of CEDAW Convention of Part-II of Article 7-9 where it stated equal representation in public spheres. Hence, male domination is one of the major factor for which there is less participation in the local administrative bodies, while 48 (21.92%) respondents have cited other reasons for the less involvement of women in the local administrative bodies.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you satisfied with the present number of representatives of Bodo women in State and BTC Politics? If no why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Discrimination and Bias, b) Unequal distribution of ticket and c) Others. The table no. 5.37 and 5.38 will show the clear response of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.37: Showing response on satisfaction level with the women representatives.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	87	29%
2.	No	204	68%
3.	Don't know	09	3%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

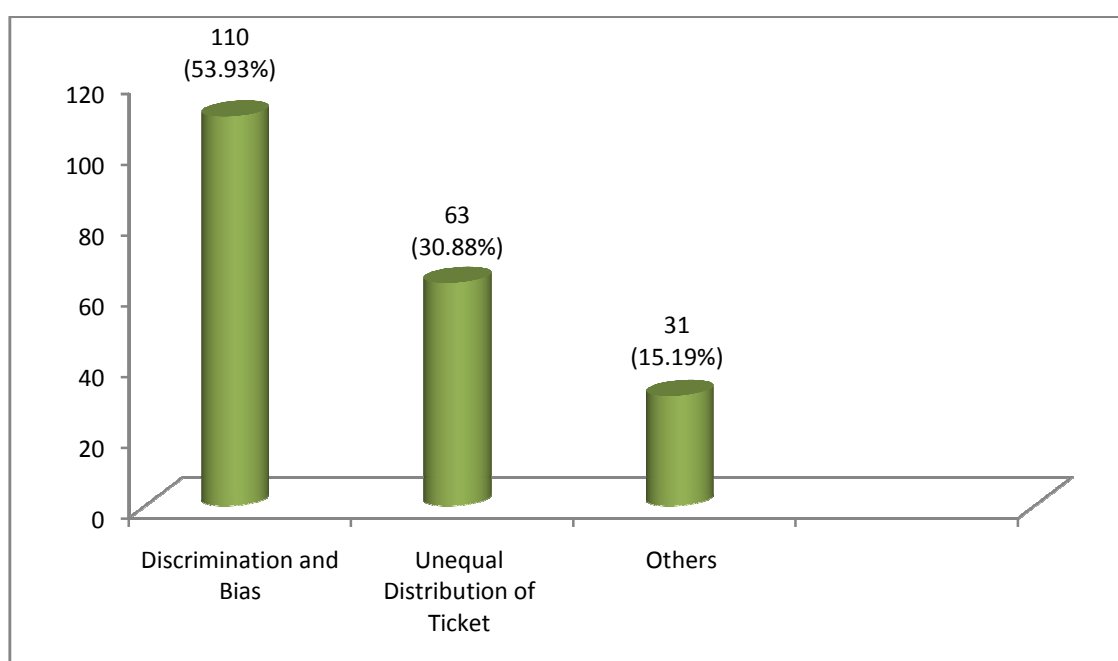
The data from the table no. 5.37 shows us that out of 300 total respondents 204 respondents which about 68% were not satisfied with the women representative of the present BTC politics as well as with State politics. They opined that Bodo community could produce only two Bodo women legislature in State Assembly of Assam, one is Smt. Pramila Rani Brahma who representing Kokrajhar east (ST) constituency and Smt. Kamali Basumatary who is representing 64 Paneri constituency of Udalguri district which is not satisfactory to large extent. Again, in the last 3<sup>rd</sup> BTC Legislative Assembly election out of 40 legislative constituencies not a single Bodo woman is elected from Kokrajhar district or even from other three more districts, though there were inspiring women candidate who contested in the election. They opined that more women representative is require in both State and BTC politics to take part in the decision making process. However, the data shows us that 87 respondents who constitute 29% were agreed and satisfied with the present representatives of women in the state and local politics. They are of the opinion that political consciousness among the Bodo women was started very late due to long patriarchal political dominance among the Bodo politics. They opined that political space was not given to the women, as it was only from 1991 when Pramila Rani Brahma was elected as independent candidate backed by ABSU to the Assam Assembly. It was only from Bodoland movement that led to the formation of women organization called ABWWF under the initiative of ABSU and ABWWF has contributed towards bringing consciousness in the socio-economic and political fields. The emergence new Bodo women leaders have created political space and environment for women in the present day politics. Further, they opined that participation of Bodo women in BTC politics is also gradually increasing. Hence, the 29% respondents of the sample units of the study area were satisfied with the current position of the women representative in the politics, while 9 (3%) respondents have no clue on the women representation in the State and Politics.

**Table No. 5.38: Reasons for dissatisfaction over low level of women representation.**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
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1.	Discrimination and Bias	110	53.93%
2.	Unequal distribution of ticket	63	30.88%
3.	Others	31	15.19%
Total: →		204	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure No. 5.14:** Bar Diagram showing reason for dissatisfaction over low level of women representation.

The frequency table 5.38 and Figure No. 5.14 reveals that out of 204 respondents who were not satisfied with female representation in the state and local politics have cited different reasons, as 110 (53.93%) respondents have opted for discrimination and bias towards women is the reason for unequal representation in politics. Further, 63 (30.88%) respondents have expressed that unequal distribution of ticket during election is the main reason for less women representation in BTC as well as in the State politics. They opined

that male candidates were given more preference than female candidate while distributing the ticket. It is to be mentioned that women are not only marginalized or discriminated in terms of seat allotment to contest election but also within position and rank of political parties. Moreover, women of the study area opined that most of the aspirant women candidates were denied ticket by their political bosses during the last BTC election, while 31 (19%) respondents cited others reasons for reasons for dissatisfaction over low level of women representation in state and local politics.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you favour more women representatives in Indian Parliament and State Assemblies as well as 33% reservation of seats for women? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) To participate in the decision making process, b) To make women politically more empowered, and c) Others. The table no. 5.39 and 5.40 will highlight the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.39: Showing response in favour of women reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	252	84%
2.	No	31	10.33%
3.	Don't know	17	5.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

The data reveals us that most of the respondents were opted for positive response, as out of total 300 respondents 252 respondents who constitute 84% were agreed with participation of more women representatives along with 33% reservation seats for women in parliament and state assemblies. It is to be mentioned that Constitution of India has guaranteed several rights and privileges to all citizens of the country, as the Article 325 and 326 guaranteed political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to

vote, respectively, again Article 243 (D) provides for the political reservation to women in every panchayat election (Siddiqi & Ranganathan, 2010). But in spite of these provisions women's participation in politics is not satisfactory, as women are not equally represented. They are of the opinion that women must be treated equally to be politically empowered, so that they can take part in the decision making body to work for the greater development of women in general. On the other, 31 (10.33%) respondents were not agreed with 33% reservation of seats for women and representation of more women in national as well as in state politics. It is also to be mentioned that the bill for 33% reservation of seats for women was passed in Rajya Sabha in 2010 but the bill did not pass in the Lok Sabha due to protest from some political parties, as the bill could have been biggest milestone in the parliamentary practices of Indian politics. The respondents opined that reservation of seats is not only way to make women politically empowered but problem is with faulty and improper execution of government policies and programmes. Moreover, they also viewed that it is impracticable for a Bodo woman or women in general to involve in active politics due to their social responsibility of household works and societal patriarchal structure, as women have to bear more burden when it comes to balancing work and family. Lastly, 17 respondents which constitute 5.67% have no idea on the reservation of women and necessity of more women representatives in the parliament as well as in the state legislature.

**Table No. 5.40: Table showing reasons for reservation of seats:**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To participate in the decision making process	116	46.03%
2.	To make women politically more empowered	105	41.67%
3.	Others	31	12.30%
Total: →		252	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



The data from the table no. 5.40 reveals that 252 respondents who agreed with the reservation of women and more women representation have cited different reasons in which 116 (46.03%) respondents have opted that the reason for the reservation of seats in politics is to make more participation of women in the decision making processes. They opined that through reservation more Bodo women legislature can participate in the policy making body of governing institutions and can bring upliftment in the society. Moreover, 105 (41.67%) respondents of the sample units have opted for the reason of reservation of seats for women is to make them politically more empowered, so that they can be represented equally with man. They opined that due to lack of reservation of seat, representation of women in the legislative bodies has resulted very negligible one, while 31 respondents which about 12.30% were cited other reasons for the need of reservation of seats for women.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that Bodo women can participate with same force in politics as male counterparts? If no why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) Strong male dominance, b) Work and Family, c) Societal and Cultural norms, d) Others. The table 5.41 and 5.42 will show the clear result of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.41: Table showing level of women participation in politics with male counterpart.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	115	38.33%
2.	No	176	58.67%
3.	Don't know	09	3%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

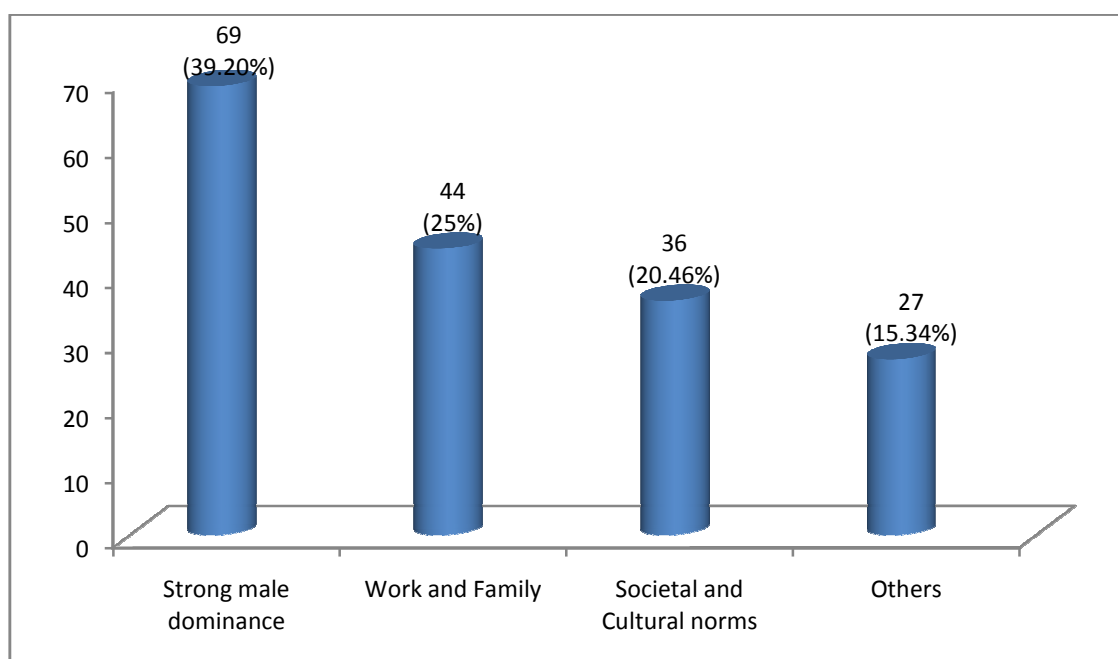
The data from the frequency table shows us that most of the respondents have given negative response. Out of the total 300 respondents 176 (58.67%) respondents were not agreed with the capability of Bodo women in participation of politics as male counterparts. They opined that socially constructed gender inequality and patriarchal influence in societal and familial periphery of Bodo society affects across the organizational workforce of political context, as women were faced difficulties while competing with male counterparts. Moreover, women's economic dependency and insufficient financial capacity hamper their participation in electoral process, as it is to be mentioned that most of the Bodo women do not possess sound financial capacity. On the other hand, women are also faces difficulties while campaigning for election, as they can not dedicate whole time due to their involvement in household and community works. Further, the political bosses of the party have doubt on winning capability of women and they even refused to bear expenditure incurred during the time of campaigning. This prevalence in the Political party system has also violated recommendations of Beijing Conference and Platform for Action of 1995 which political parties need to nominate women candidate for election in one third of the constituencies. The 115 (38.33%) respondents were agreed that Bodo women can also participate with same force in politics with male counterparts. They opined that decision of the political parties not to allot seats to women attributed to lack of wining ability of women. It is to be mentioned that the wining ratio of the women candidate is significantly higher that male candidate, as in the last 2014 general election women's success rate was 9 percent compared with 6 percent of male candidate. They are of the opinion that Bodo women had been integral part of autonomy movement, they are capable of participating equally as male counterparts in the field of politics, while 9 (3%) respondents have no idea on the participation of women in politics with same force as male counterparts.

**Table No. 5.42: Showing reason for unequal political participation.**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strong male dominance	69	39.20%

2.	Work and Family	44	25%
3.	Societal and Cultural norms	36	20.46%
4.	Others	27	15.34%
Total: →		176	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure No. 5.15:** Bar diagram showing reason for unequal participation in politics.

The data from the figure no. 5.15 shows us that out of 176 respondents who opted for negative response have cited various reasons, as 69 (39.20%) respondents have expressed that strong male dominance in the society is the reason for unequal participation of women in politics and because of male dominance in the Bodo society, women could not participate equally in the field of political activities. Further, 44 respondents who constitute 25% cited work and family burden is the main factor for which Bodo women could not

involved in political spheres as male, moreover, 36 (20.46%) respondents have opted societal and cultural norms of the Bodos have influenced feelings of inferiority of women in social hierarchy. Moreover, 27 (15.34%) respondents have cited other reasons for unequal participation of Bodo women in the political dimension.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Do you think that Bodo women should play more active role in political affairs? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was:- a) To promote gender equality, b) good governance and c) Others. The table 5.43 and 5.44 will highlight the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.43: Table showing necessity of active role to be played by women in politics.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	264	88%
2.	No	31	10.33%
3.	Don't know	05	1.67%
Total: →		300	100

*Source: Field Survey.*

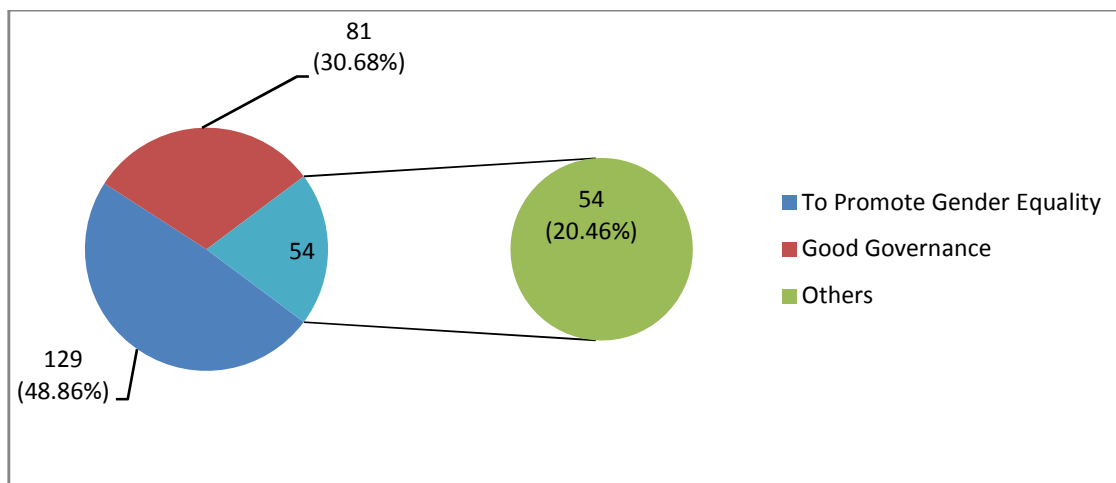
The frequency table shows us that most of the respondents were given positive response in regard to greater role to be played by the Bodo women in political affairs. Out of the total 300 respondents 264 respondents who constitute 88% were agreed that Bodo women should play more active role in political affairs. They viewed that no society can claim developed unless women are politically empowered. Bodo women who have participated in the language movement of 1974 also actively involved in the statehood movement of 1987 led by ABSU. This has resulted signing of memorandum of settlement

on February 20, 1993 where Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was created, but this accord could not fulfill the demands and aspirations of the Bodo people and again another Bodo Accord was signed on 10 February, 2003 and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was created accordingly where Bodo women have also equally contributed along with male in these long struggle. These achievements of Bodo community would have been impossible unless women were involved in it. They opined that Bodo women need to play more positive role for the political empowerment of Bodo women, also to participate in the decision making body for governance. While 31 (10.33%) respondents were not agreed with the active involvement of Bodo women in politics, as they opined that involvement in political affairs is not only the way of empowerment rather mindset of the society along with the attitude of the individual towards women should also change. It is the responsibility of male counterpart that women should also be given individual freedom to choose according to their needs. Further, it is also to be mentioned that traditional prejudices like women are incapable and inferior is one of the obstacle towards the empowerment of women in various angles. Lastly, 5 respondents who constitute 1.67% have no clue on the involvement of Bodo women in political affairs will make them more empowered.

**Table No. 5.44: Showing reason for the active participation of women in politics.**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To promote gender equality	129	48.86%
2.	Good governance	81	30.68%
3.	Others	54	20.46%
Total:→		264	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure No. 5.16:** Pie diagram showing reason for the need of active involvement of women in politics.

The data from the figure no. 5.16 reveals us that 264 respondents who agreed with the active involvement of women in political activities would lead to empowerment of women have expressed different important reasons. 129 respondents who constitute 48.86% were opted for promoting of gender equality through participating in the political affairs; as they opined that gender gap in the political participation weaken the empowerment of Bodo women in various angles. Moreover, 81 (30.68%) respondents were expressed that the reason for the involvement of Bodo women in the political affairs is to bring good governance in the public body without gender bias. They also opined that participation of Bodo women in political processes is important in strengthening democracy and it will encourage other marginalized Bodo women to be empowered. While 54 (20.46%) respondents were cited other reasons for the need of active role to be played by the Bodo women in political affairs for empowerment.

The next question put forth to the respondents was: Are you hopeful with the activities of Bodo women organizations for the empowerment of women? If yes why? The option provided to the respondents was: a) to raise women's issues and challenges, b) to make women politically more empowered, c) to provide opportunities for women, d) Others. Table no. 5.45 and 5.46 will show us the clear picture of the respondents.

**Table No. 5.45: Table showing expectation level from the Bodo women organizations.**

Sl. No.	Response Received	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	203	67.67%
2.	No	87	29%
3.	Don't know	10	3.33%
Total: →		300	100

Source: Field Survey.

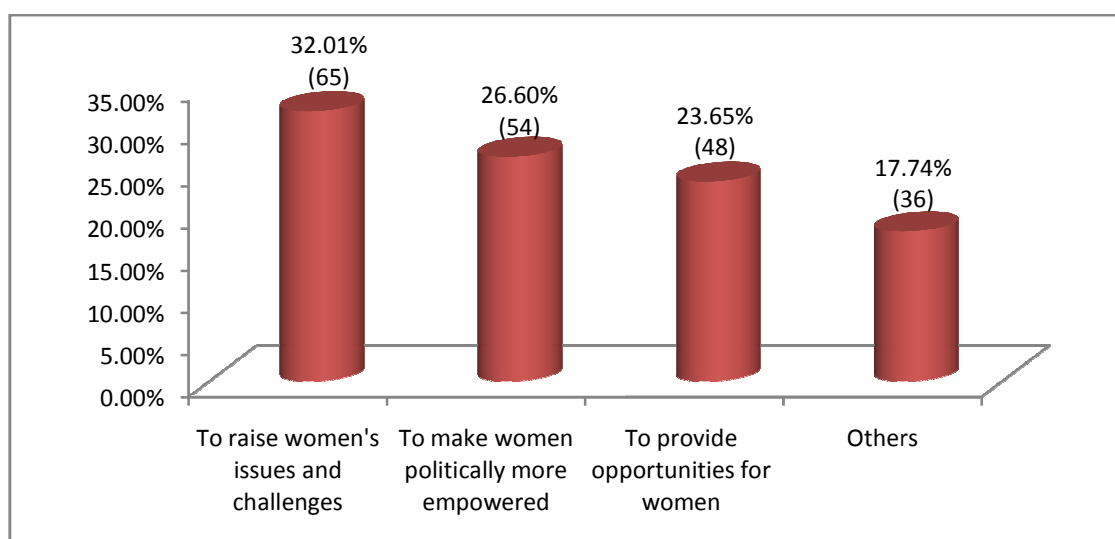
The data from the table reveals that most of the respondents were opted for positive response, as out of total 300 respondents 203 respondents which constitute 67.67% have high expectation from the Bodo women organizations for the development of women. They are of the opinion that it was AATWWF (All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation) formed in May, 1986 under the initiative of ABSU and Pramila Rani Brahma was became first President of the organization where AATWWF's member were took active role in ABSU's movement for separate statehood of the Bodos. Later in 1993 AATWWF changed its name to ABWWF (All Bodo Women Welfare Federation) as most of the members of the organization were from Bodo community. They opined that formation of ABWWF has awakened the Bodo women in many aspects of their life socially, economically and politically. Further, formation of Bodo Women Justice Forum (BWJF) under the leadership of Anjali Daimary in 1993 has further strengthened Bodo women to be more conscious and aware about their rights and privileges as Bodo women were suffered during the conflict situations and their rights are violated through various means and ways in the society. The respondents opined that they are hopeful with the activities of Bodo women organization for the overall development of women. On the other hand, 87 respondents which about 29% have no expectations with the activities of women organizations, as they opined that though ABWWF took vital role during statehood movement of ABSU which was vigorously started from 1987, but women's organizational role in the contemporary period is declining. They viewed that premature death of Upendra Nath Brahma in 1990 was also another reason, again in the post BAC Accord of 1993 women's involvement in public and political

activities is diminishing. Moreover, the activities done by BWJF are also not widely identified by the Bodo women, as most of the Bodo women were silently complied and ceased with political activism and leadership. Hence, the respondents of the sample units were not optimistic with the activities done by Bodo women organizations for the overall development of Bodo women, while 10 (3.33%) respondents have no clue on the role played by the women organizations of Bodos for their empowerment activities.

**Table No. 5.46: Reason of expectation from the organization.**

Sl. No.	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To raise women's issues and challenges	65	32.01%
2.	To make women politically more empowered	54	26.60%
3.	To provide opportunities for women	48	23.65%
4.	Others	36	17.74%
Total: →		203	100

*Source: Field Survey.*



**Figure No. 5.17:** Bar diagram showing reason for expectation from the women organizations.



If we analyse the data from figure no. 5.17 it is evident that 65 out of 203 respondents constituting around 32.01% of the respondents were optimistic with the activities of Bodo women organization viewed that they want women's organizations to raise their issues and challenges, as Bodo women were facing various atrocities like molestation, rape, witch hunting, domestic violence, trafficking and also some evil practices against women etc. in the society. Around 54 (26.60%) respondents were expressed that women organization need to play active role in empowering the Bodo women in every political activities as well as in socio-economic and cultural spheres of the society. They wanted women organization to encourage and motivate Bodo women in participating various economic and political activities so that they can involve in the decision and policy making institutions to make women more empowered. Moreover, 48 (23.65%) respondents were expected women organization to provide opportunities and privileges for the Bodo women. They expressed that women were discriminated in obtaining various facilities of government's schemes and projects or other beneficiary items etc. which were not properly distributed in various levels and they were deprived of it. They also opined that women organization should urged government machinery to provide better education facilities for girls and other economic facilities to make women economically independent and developed. While 36 respondents which constitute around 17.74% were cited other reasons of expectations from the Bodo women organizations for the overall development of women to a large extent.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

Thus, from the above analysis, it is found that Bodo women have played a significant role in the various social and political aspects of the society. Bodo women who have key role in the society have enormous contributions in their social progress. Their involvement in the social and cultural fabric can be noticed in their participation in the social rites and rituals. Though the social structure of the Bodo society is patriarchal in nature but their role socio-cultural life of the society is also equally important with their active participation in various fields of the society. Moreover, women's role in economic and political field is very significant. Traditionally, Bodo women have been involved in

different economic activities which they have also contributed in their domestic life. On the other, their participation in political field is really praiseworthy, as Bodo women were actively participated in the different phases of Bodo movement which gave them opportunities to test their leadership capabilities as well inspired them to take part in the decision making.

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