

Chapter: 3

Life cycle and its change

3. The life cycle:

The life cycle is a series of changes in the life of an organism, including reproduction that takes place in the life of an organism. In an organism, life cycle commences from its independent life form to its established state where the offspring is produced. The life cycle of human beings is – birth, marriage and dead. The rites and rituals of the people of different countries of the world are changing. The *Bodos* observed some customs and traditions related to the birth, marriage and dead. The changes are also taking place in the life cycle of the *Bodos*.

3.1. Rite, tradition related to the birth and their changes:

The *Bodos* have different rites and rituals which are related to the birth. These are *mwdwmbari nainai*, *jagintai nenai*, *hinjao sebnai*, *bwlw hwhwnai*, *uthumwi hanai*, *thukhwinai*, *khodal damnai*, *boraina lanai*, *dwiao baonai*, *dwisarnai*, *mung dwnnai*, *wngkham dwonai*, *khwma thuphlongnai*, *khanai sinnai*, *phanphlnai* and *jwnwmsan*. Nowadays, the rites and rituals related to these aspects are changing and some are obsolete from the society.

3.1.1. *Mwdwmbari nainai* (pregnancy prediction):

They are very meticulous about *mwdwmbari nainai* when menstruation discontinues, they detected that she is a pregnant. The married woman discloses her pregnancy to her mother-in-law or any other female member of the family. The mother-in-law or husband is always anxious about the pregnancy of her daughter-in-law or wife.

This system of pregnancy prediction is minimized in the *Bodo* society. The *Bodos* who are economically good and educated are adopting medical consultation with the doctors, nurses, medical helper (*asha*) or using the modern method of pregnancy detection instruments (like the kit).

3.1.2. *Jaginai nenai* (attending delivery):

The *jaginai nenai* is a custom, which is followed by the *Bodos* of the Udalguri district. As soon as a woman gets severe pain to issue a child either the husband or a family member calls a few aged women of the village, who are expert in *jaginai nenai*. On this day, at the *Bathou* and *ising* a pair of betel nut & leaf, a *gasa* is set fire and offer in the name of Gods and Goddesses, so that they help issue of the child. The women smeared mustard oil, on the body of a pregnant woman and even at the vagina too.

Today, this custom is not found among the *Bodos* who are converted into different religions. The delivery woman is taken to hospital and the *asha* or some relatives from both sides are accompanied.

3.1.3. *Hinjao sebnai* (woman charge):

The *Bodos* followed strict virginity since the time immemorial. They believed if both husband and wife do not have any profane; the issue of child takes place normally. On the other hand, if, both or any one has profaned, the woman gets difficulty in delivery. They believe, if the parents are profane, the child may be dumb, deaf or physically challenged. The wife and husband are separately taken to *ising khona* (near *ceres* or *Mainao*) and an aged woman charges one by one, whether they had illicit sexual relation during un-married time. The aged woman asks to the husband as,

'Nwi abou nwngha gwdwphwr swrjwngba

Mabaphwr swmwndw dongmwn nama?

Nwi abwi amwkhia hagoa hagoa jatharbai,

Phab nangwn abou dongobla khinthadw

(English rendering- My dear grandchild, have you earlier any illicit sexual relation with anyone? Dear grandchild, see my granddaughter amwkhj... is getting difficulties in issue. If you had, please confess, otherwise you will be sinner.)

If yes husband replies-

Ou lwi abwi amwkhjwng,

(Yes dear grandmother with)

If more than one girls-

Amwkhijwng, phwrlajwng-----

(With with.....)

If not-

Gwithralwi abwi raojwngbw...

(No, grandmother, not with anybody)

Then ask to pregnant woman-

Nwi abwi nwngha gwdwphwr swrjwngba

Mabaphwr swmwndw dongmwn nama?

*Phab nangwn abwi dongobla khinthadw.*¹

(English rendering - My dear granddaughter, have you had, earlier any illicit sexual relation with anyone? Dear grand-daughter, if you had, please confess otherwise you will be sinner.)

The pregnant woman replies same as husband to the woman and if both husband and wife are thought profane an *agorbad udrainai* is offered, giving a chicken and a pigeon in the name of Gods and Goddesses. They believe, if both or any one of them lies, the wife may die. According to Ripi Basumatary, 'there was a method of forecasting whether the issue will be normal or not. If gets difficulties in issue banana flower or *tulsi* is smashed with water and fed. In spite of it, issue is not taken; unearthing *bamun dari*, the future is forecast. If *bamun daria* unearths easily the issue will be normal, if not consecration is required, they believed.'²

¹ . Informant: Phulmoti Brahma, age 85 years

² . Informant: Ripi Basumatary, age 60 years

At present, the *sebnai* tradition is obsolete from their society. If, the child is not issued at a stipulated time, as per due suggestion of the doctor, caesarean is made. The govt. facilities, developments in education and health infrastructure are influencing in this aspect. In the *Phwsabnai Bathou*, in some parts of the district an *agarbad udrainai* is observed, but chicken is not offered in the name of Gods and Goddesses, time to time prayer is taken in the family and well being of the couple, child and the family. The *Brahma* religious people offer *jogya ahuti* for the consecration.

3.1.4. *Bwlw hwhwnai* (strengthen):

They believed, if the *bwlw* (strength) comes, the child is issued normally and it should be utilized in the proper way. For the *bwlw hwhwnw*, they take support from different materials. According to Kameswar Brahma, ‘they use an *uwal* (big mortar) to strengthen.’³ A jute sack is unfurled at the ground and *uwal* is placed on it. Balaisri Mushahary opines in this regard as, ‘they also used wooden log or chair; these items are tightened to pole or *khuntia* so that it does not misplaced.’⁴ The pregnant woman is allowed to kneel down at the sack and take support from *uwal*, touching on it. In spite of giving force, if child is not issued, they believe religious consecration is needed.

Today, the use of *uwal* and *thoila* is not observed in the *Bodo* society. The *jaginai nenai* custom is not found. The rich or educated *Bodo* families take the pregnant woman to hospital, if symptoms of issue appear. The tradition of *bwlw hwhwnai* with the help of *uwal*, wooden log or the chair is obsolete.

3.1.5. *Uthumwi hanai* (naval cut):

They cut the naval of a child by a bamboo split (*owa theul*) keeping on a shuttle (*makhu*) and remaining part of naval is buried in front of the *nomano*. Some people use to bury the naval at the corner of their *bari*. The naval is placed

³ . Brahma , Kameswar : Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos, Chiranjib Brahma, 1989, p-4

⁴ . Informant: Balaisri Mushahary, age 76 years

gently in the ditch. They believed, if it is dropped, the child becomes *bagdaola baigra* (coward) in the future. It is tied by a cotton or *muga* thread. Khusti Daimari says, ‘if the child is male, the cord is tied for five times and if female seven times.’⁵ They also believed that the widow or widower should not be allowed to cut the navel and if such people are allowed, unnatural die of child may be taken place.

The tradition of believing, the bitter hand, sweet hand and the sour hand of a woman are also prevalent among them. So, the woman, whom they think ‘bitter hand’, is allowed to cut navel. If such woman is allowed, the navel of a child dries quickly. Nothing medicine was used at navel and cut keeping a three fingers’ long. If a navel is not dry within four to five days, dried soil or ash or dried spider web or vermilion is put. The use of *owa theul* is obsolete and use, the scissors, blade, cutter knife and other instruments as well as use medicine.

3.1.6. *Thukhwinai* (bathing):

The mother bathes newly born baby with tepid or lukewarm water. If the mother is unable, she does only formal rite and an expertise or elder woman does it. The child is sprinkled with *dwi gwthar* mixed with some *dubri hagra*, *tulsi* and a golden ring. During the time of bathing aged woman or grandmother recites the following words,

‘Nwi gotho, nwngha gwdw mamwn

Harsa na, bangal na jungalmwn

Da nwngh Boro nokhor, Boro bimani gwrbwao

Jwnwm mwnbai I

Dinwiniphrai nwngh sase Boro subung janangsigwn II.’⁶

(English rendering- Oh child, from which community you are belong to earlier? Whether you are a non- *Bodo*, or Muslim or *jungal*, today you have born from the womb of a *Bodo* woman in a *Bodo* family, from today you will be a *Bodo*, of a *Bodo* family.)

⁵ . Informant: Khusti Daimari, age 78 years

⁶ . Brahma , Kameswar : Aspect of Social Customs of the Bodos, Chiranjib Brahma, 1989, p-5

After bathing child, a dry cloth is wrapped up and laid on a *songrai*. This custom is changed and the people who are converted into other faith do not follow it and the child is not placed at *songrai*, but on a suitable bed.

3.1.7. *Khodal damnai* (spade playing):

When the newly born baby falls at the ground from mother's womb, the child is observed whether sense is having or not. If the movement of the body of a child is not found, to have a sense of the baby, a woman, whose husband alive or ever died any child, which they called *khoro gojo nongwi*, picks up a spade and beats it by a stick and mentions names of parents like, *Merga, Gali, Laoga, Laogi*, etc. If the child is male, she moves anticlockwise for five times and if female seven times of the *nomano*. During the playing of spade she says-

'Nwi khwnadw, nwi khwnadw

Nwi ringkhangdw, nwi ringkhandw

Jwngni noao jwnwm jadwngbla

*Jwngnaonw phwiphindw.*⁷

(English rendering- Oh child, listen to us, oh child listen, Oh get up, oh get up and cry, if you are really a our family member, come back to our family.)

In spite of spade playing if the child is not awakened, they believe a child is died and if comes sense, believe alive and named the child, like the *Khodal* or *Khodali, Benga, Bengi, Undugadura, Undugaduri* etc. The custom is prevalent among the *Gudi Bathouaians*. Today, it is obsolete; they take medical consultation with the doctors.

3.1.8. *Boraina lanai* (child welcome):

The mother-in-law or if not, an elderly woman, who attended in child issue offer a small offering in front of *nomano*. A pair of betel nut and leaf, a *laijou*, a glass of water, either *tulsi* or *dubri hagra* are required for this offering. If child is female a *jw daosa* and if child is male a *jwla daosa* is required to offer in

⁷ . Informant: Podomi Boro, age 65 years

the name of *Duwari Bwrai* or *Duwari Buri*. A *laijou* is placed in front of door of *nomano* and everything are placed on *laijou*. Then in *boraina lanai* prayer is recited as,

'Nwi Duwari Bwrai-Duwari Buri
Door kheonaini thakhai nwnswrnw
Daosa mase hwnai jabai.'⁸

(English rendering- Oh *Duwari bwrai Duwari buri*, a chicken is offered in the name of you for opening the door.)

They believe, if it is not offered child cries off and on or some diseases, like the *mwkhra khaia nangnai* (kwashiorkor), stomach ache etc may be infected. Again, if does not eat mother's milk, they believe, the child is angry (*khudridwng*) on the couple or family. According to Sabitri Boro, under such situation an aged woman of family offers, the betel nut and leaf, new cloths, money (like, Rs 10 or 20 or 30 or as she likes) on a *bota* and pray,

'Nwi gwdan abaou / abwi (calling based on relation)
Nwng jwngni sayao manw bwrabkhw?
Jadw nwmani gaikhera
Dwkhudamwn abaou / abwi.'⁹

(English rendering- Oh grand-child/ grand-daughter, why you have angered upon us? Have your mother's milk; do not angry on us, grandchild/ granddaughter.)

The woman follows this rite for the sake of *khudrinai*. Earlier, a newly born baby is regarded profane. The religious consecration is made, sacrificing animals at the *Bathou* altar with the help of an *oja*. But, due to religious reformation, the consecration is made praying and singing among the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians*. They pray as,

Stayi- Nwi..... anangosai
Nwi.....swrjigiri phaligiri
Bwrai Bathouni bandwnwini bandwjwng
Jwnwmlanai borobimani gwrwbikhayao

⁸ . Informant: Jyothi Basumatary, age 65 years

⁹ . Informant: Sabitri Boro, age, 65 years

Gwdan gotho iyun jwlwini
Jabaibiyw borophisa boronokhorni I
Sethi antara – Sijou gudiao Bathousaliao
Boraibai najaobai nwngh phisakhou jwng II
Mansi mohorai gwthar thangkhiwng I
Bathouni mung asarjwng
Dinwi gwthar khalarao
Apha gwthar sanao II
Nwithi antara- Bwr bidwng apha aroj gabdwng
Jwng boybw khousewi nwngni serao
Dinwi gwthar khalar apha jwnwm sanao
Bwr hordw bwr sarsridw
Iyun jiuni undwi gothoni
Thangna thanaini mansi mohorwi
*Mulug songsarao apha mulug songsaraoII.*¹⁰

(Eng rendering- Oh, God, Oh creator, caretaker, taking the names of two fencing of *Bwrai Bathou*, you have born in a *Bodo* family, you're a new child for future generation of the *Bodo* family. At *sijou*, at *Bathou* altar, we have welcomed you and accepted as a our family member, as a human being, with a holy spirit, obeying the religious rites of the *Bathou* religion, today on this date and day, we have welcomed you. We have all together prayed before you God, today on this holy birthday, please bless us God, for the well being of future life of the child, in this world so that he can live peacefully.)

The other prayers are sung for the sake of religious consecration which is followed among the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians*. The praying and singing is a development in the last decade of 20th century, while *Gudi Bathou* is reformed to the *Phwsabnai Bathou*.

¹⁰ . Borobazar A. C. Du. Ba. Mo. (Suju Afad) : Bamwn, Borobazar Anchalik Committee, All Bathou Mahasabha (Reprint), 2016, p- 66

3.1.9. *Dwiao baonai* (offer at the water):

The *Bodos* believe, if the dirty items used at delivery are washed at the water, an offering should be offered in the name of *Khwina Santhi* (now *dwi Khungri*), the Goddess of water. They worship *Khwina Santhi*, the Goddess of water to back pardon and propitiate, at *gathwn*. A *thuri* is planted, a garland made of cotton and flower is hung on it and a pair of betel nut-leaf is offered. The woman who is going to wash cloths and other material pray to Goddess saying as,

'Nwi bima khalai dwiphwn,
Gajri muwa sunai janwswi
*Gajri damwn.'*¹¹

(English rendering- Oh God, do not angry on us, unknowingly we have thrown and washed wastage materials.)

The washing and offering to the bank of water are relegating, some of them do not plant *thuri* and only a pair of betel nut-leaf and flowers are offered. They also wash the materials use at delivery at the family's facilities. Washing at pond, river and stream is prohibited by the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians*.

3.1.10. *Dwi sarnai* (feast providing):

Generally after seven days of child issue a grand feast is provided to the women who are attended. The pork, chicken, rice beer and other edible items are provided to them. They honor, the women attended in delivery by giving a pair of betel nut-leaf and a *phali* to each. At last, both the parents of the child bow down to the women and people, attended in *dwi sarnai* and everybody blesses the couple and child for the bright future.

Again, after one month a feast is provided to the people who are taken more difficulties in child issue same as *dwisarnai* which is known as *bijni janai*. This custom is available in the *Bhakatpara* area of the district, like in the *Punia*, *Kakalsinga*, *Bebejinga* and *Barasara*.

¹¹ . Informant: Chitramali Basumatary, age 60 years

3.1.11. *Mung dwnnai* (naming):

The tradition of naming child is in the hand of grandfather or grandmother and they named as they like. The name is not given up to six to seven months or may be more than it. There is a traditional belief regarding the naming. Bhaben Narji opines as, ‘if newly born baby or frequent child mortality occurs to a couple, then child’s name should be named, like the *Swimakhi*, *Omakhi*, *Daokhi*, *Khakhreb*, *Rankhw* or others.’¹² The child of those bad names are not taken back by the Gods and Goddesses, vice-versa.

Today, such naming is eliminating from the society and the parents select and named. A few of them follow the *panjika* and select the name. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* take a *tharnai day* (consecration day) on 11th day of issue, singing different prayers along with the villagers, accompanying the musical tunes of the *kham*, *siphung*, *jotha*, *serja*, *jabsring* and harmonium is a part of it. The prayer is,

‘Aham
Wng hring khling phwt se
Wng hring khling phwt se
Wng hring khling phwt se
Ode apha nuwathari Bwrai Bathou
Nwngnw swrjigiri, phaligiri, phwthwigiri,
Nwngnw swrjidwng be mulugni gaswibw
Dongnaimani jib jibi dongphang laiphang
Khwnasong apha khwnasong
Nwngnw swrjibai bandwba
Mulugao jor juli jananwi
Jwngni gwr bwao jwnwm mwnbai sase gotho
Bikhounw jwngdinwi asarnwini
Gwthar nemkhanthi maninanwi
Nwng aphakhou dohailana
Aphad saliao nujanai raijw-raja

¹² . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -96

Phwrkhou sakhi khalamnanwi

*Sri/Miss..... mung dwnnai jabai.*¹³

(English rendering- Oh, unseen God *Bwrai Bathou*, you are the creator, caretaker and destroyer, you have created living creatures of this world, like the birds, animals, insects, listen to us oh God *Bathou*, you have created *bandw ba* (*Bathou* religion), the knot of marriage have created a child in mother's womb, today, we are obeying the rituals of *Bathou*, taking the name of you, in front of people gathering here, we have named the name of child as Sri/ Miss.....)

This type of prayer is not available among the *Bodos* earlier and they offered only *salami*. Today, in every offering as well as consecration of the family the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* take prayers with the rhythmic tunes of the *kham*, *siphung*, *jotha*, *serja*, *jabsring* and harmonium.

3.1.12. *Wngkham dwonai* (feeding):

The *wngkham dwonai* rite is a recent origin which is not available in the *Bodo* society. The child is not allowed to eat rice up to seven to nine months. The child is first time feed rice and people attended in ceremony is also given. This first time feeding rice to child is known as *wngkham dwonai phwrbw*. In this ceremony, forecasting fortune of child is also done and the items, like the money, pen & pencil flowers, earth etc. are kept at the centre of yard, where offering will be made. The child is allowed to sit near to those items and they watch, out of those items which one the child touches first. If touches flower, they believe the child will be ritualistic, if touches money, will love money, if touches book or pen or pencil, will become educated in future, if touches earth, child will become a rich man, etc.

3.1.13. *Khwma thuphlongnai* (ear perforation):

The ear perforation takes place during infant. It is basically for female child not for male. While child grows it is perforated on nose. The ear or nose

¹³ . Borobazar A. C. Du. Ba. Mo. (Suju Afad) : Bamwn, Borobazar Anchalik Committee, All Bathou Mahasabha, 2010, p- 96

perforation is made only by an expertise woman. But a male child is perforated while he suffers from gonorrhoea. Sumoti Boro says, ‘the tradition of perforation is not found today. The male or female doctors are allowed to perforate and some are taken to beauty parlor.’¹⁴ The nose perforation is minimized. Earlier every woman puts on ornament at nose. The perforation is made only a hole at ear, toady, two, three or many holes are perforated to use of ornaments at ear.

3.1.14. *Phanphlanai* (offer for the sale):

The tradition of nominal offer to sale and taking here and there is available among the *Bodos*. Regarding *phanphlanai* Bhaben Narji opines as, ‘this rite is followed while frequent infant mortality is taken place to a particular couple. They believed, if nominal offer to sale is done, infant mortality does not happen to a couple and they get rid of it.’¹⁵ Either mother or father keeps a child on a basket and carries on head and moves one village to another. The parent brings back child to family and an offering is propitiated in family sacrificing chicken.

On the other hand if infant mortality or *mwkhra khaya nangnai* occurs they are not taken to hospital for medical treatment and the couple observe the *sarab phwdnai*. There are certain rites regarding the *sarab phwdnai*. ‘In *sarab phwdnai* the child is offered to the cowboy. The cowboy accepts the child and in evening says-

	<i>Swrnwba gotho nangou nama?</i>
	(Is anybody wants to have a child)
Parent	<i>Ou jwngw nangou,</i>
	<i>Labw jwngnw hornw hagwnna?</i>
	(Yes we want, will you give us?)
Cowboy-	<i>Bidibla, jou jora jwngnw hor</i>
	<i>Thakha jora, goi jora hor</i>
	<i>Oblasw jwng hwgwn.</i>

¹⁴. Informant: Sumoti Boro, age 55 years

¹⁵. Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -24

(Then give us a pair of bottle of wine, a pair of coin, a pair of betel nut-leaf. We will give you.)

Later, the parents accept the child and offer *salami* well being of the family, child and parents.’¹⁶ This offering in the name of infant mortality is completely vanished from the *Bodo* society.

3.1.15. *Jwnwm san* (birthday):

The tradition of the birthday celebration is not prevalent among the *Bodos*. A few people who are economically sound used to celebrate this ceremony in modern time. They offer as per the rites of their respective religion. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* take an *araj* inviting the villagers and beg blessings from the *Bathou Bwrai* for the well being of child.

However, it is to be noted that there is changed in respect of life cycle related to birth. There are certain factors, like the change in the attitude of the people, religious reformation and conversions and development of medical science.

3.2. Rite, tradition related to the marriage and their changes:

The marriage is a social custom of the human beings and after marriage a person becomes socialized. It is a system in which a pair of male and female is united or socially tightened together for sharing responsibilities.

They called marriage *haba* and its term is derived from their two words, *ha* and *ba*. The *ha* means earth or soil, *ba* means carry on back. In fact, the *ha* means worldly life and the word ‘*ba*’ implies adoption and acceptance of social life. According to Bishnu Prasad Rabha, during the marriage *barlangpha* also says-

‘*Nwi apha, bi gwdan hinjaoa*

Dinwiniphrai nwngni bisi

Arw nwngnw bini bisai,

¹⁶ . Informant: Thanesar Basumatary, age 65 years

*Dinwiniphrai nwngrw be hakhou badw.*¹⁷

(English rendering: Oh dear son, from today, she is your wife, you are her husband, from today, you have taken, the responsibility of a family.)

The *Bodo's* marriage involves some rituals as the pre marriage, during marriage, post marriage arrangements, types of marriage and marriage systems. According to Prafulla Chandra Rajbonshi, 'nearly 40 years ago, some interesting system existed in Darrang district. When a *Boro*-boy attained marriageable stage, the bride chosen by the boy was forcefully taken to the boy's house. Similarly, when a girl attained nubility, a boy chosen by the girl was forcefully taken to the girls' house. Nowadays, these systems have become obsolete.'¹⁸ Today, this custom is not available, if it is done by anyone he will be punished as per either social law or IPC.

3.2.1. Pre-marriage arrangement:

There are some pre-marriage arrangements in the *Bodo* marriage system. These arrangements are made in social marriage, which are:

3.2.1.1. *Asan thebnai* (bangle hanging):

The *asan* means bangle, *asan thebnai* is a tradition of asking a bride. If a marriageable girl is found in a family and a boy is desired to marry her, the family members of a boy go to her family and put the *asan* at veranda of *nomano*. In this regard Dharmeswar Brahma says, 'a *sandi asan* is put at veranda of *nomano* of a girl.'¹⁹ As soon as the family achieves the bangle, girl's family automatically knows about willingness to marry with their girl and chalk out among the family members about the matter. The girl's family keeps bangle for a week until they come to the solution and if not interested in proposal they return it within a week.

¹⁷ . Boro, Madhuram : Bwirathi, Khonsai Bidang, Assam state text book production and publications limited, 2005, p- 26

¹⁸ . Rajbonshi, Prafulla Chandra : Thesis entitled, Change and Continuity Among the Bodos of Udalgui in Darrang district of Assam , G.U. (Unpublished), 1990, p-48

¹⁹ . Informant: Dharmeswar Brahma, age 58 years

The return of bangle is known as *asan phirainai*. On the other hand, if bangle is not returned, the processes of settlement start.

Now, the system is completely abolished and they contact directly with family members of the girl. The factor responsible for the change in this regard are due to the development of education, development of science and technology as well as the influence of other communities.

3.2.1.2. *Hinjao swngnai* (bride asking):

The *hinjao swngnai* is a tradition among the *Bodo* society. If they prefer, the boy's family members send a few villagers to the family of a girl who has entered to a marriageable age, In this process widower, physically challenged, spotted on body and who is having frequently children mortality are not allowed to go. Again in this time ode number of villagers are sent to ask for a bride, like the three, five or seven persons. Pairs of rice beer bottle and vaped wine (*jou gwrnan*) are necessary. As soon as they arrived at the yard of girl's family, out of them a person says,

‘*Thuri nubla bathi garw.*’²⁰

Then parents or guardians of a girl come to know that they have come for asking their ward. If, they are interested they allow the people to sit providing *khamphlai* and take out the bottles from bag and share wine and accept whatever materials brought for them. If not, not allowed to sit, do not accept all the materials brought for them. On the other hand, if the parents are interested they call the villagers and sit together and a person from boy's family says,

‘*Ada..... (name of parent or guardian of girl) jwng nwngniao phwibai. Bathraya jabai jerao thuri nuyw beao bathi garw; wngkham guphur nubla daokha silaya hali hali baphwiw. Jwngbw jabai dinwi bidinw. Khouranga jabai.....halamni (name of area)gamini (name of village) Musri.....ni (name of father)Musri(name of boy) phisala bithang*

²⁰ . Brahma, Kamal Kumar : Gwnang Raokhanthi, Bina Library (Reprint), 2013, p –188

Musri..... *phongbai* (related to boy) *nwnghangni gibi phisajw thoraina*
..... (name of girl) *khou nayphwinai jadwng*.²¹

The girl's family also arranges some items from them. The villagers from boy's family return back giving word of next visit. On this day, if girl is interested to visit boy's family to observe the boy's property, family, house and village etc. then a day is fixed for it.

But, due to the development in education, communication and influences of other communities, it is obsolete today. On the other hand, the bringing of a pair of rice beer bottle and *sereb* is not necessary.

3.2.1.3. *Khalar thi khalamnai* (date settlement):

The one process of the *Bodo* marriage system is *khalar thi khalamnai*. The *khalar thi khalamanai* means the settlement of date for marriage. It is fixed on a day, on which they believe sacred and follow the *Bangla* calendar. The date is not fixed on Tuesday and Saturday as well as on *omabwisa*. They do not take date in the month of *Bhadra*, *Push* and *Choitra*. On this day, relatives of family are invited and as per *logno* or *subha karma* written on *Bangla* calendar they settle the date. On this day whatever items to be brought from boy's family are placed before them.

According to the book *Boroni Dwrngari Nem Khanthi*, 'facility of consensus between a boy and a girl (*houa hinjao nailaihwnai*) was not allowed.'²² At present, when a marriage is about to set between a boy and girls, a chance is given to sharing their views, if interested. The development in education, mass media, electronic and communication, changes in the attitudes of the people, they settle the date as per convenience from both the family. The time, day and month are not taken as a factor among the Christianise *Bodos*. The *Bathouarians Bodos* are also settled the marriage, in the day or evening which is not accepted in earlier.

²¹ . Basumatar, Sukumar : Haba, Swranglama Publication, 1993, p- 1

²² . Bargayary, Khanteswar & others, eds : Boroni Dwrngari Nem Khanthi, D.B.D.G. (Asarba Arw Bad), 2005, p-8

3.2.1.4. *Goi khaounai* (betel nut cutting):

The betel nut cutting or *goi khaonai* is a process of *Bodo* marriage system. It is a custom of finalizing the date of marriage. On this day, from the boy's side goes to the family of a girl, taking betel nut-leaf, sugar, *biri* (smoke), tea leaf and fried rice (*muri*). It is celebrated let to know the villagers regarding marriage settlement. All the villagers are invited and distributed betel nut and leaf as well as other items.

This custom is different from village to village and area to area of the district. The *hadungra* directs, the boy's party to distribute *goi sari*. According to the Premanand Machahary, 'a betel nut is to be cut into four pieces and two youths are engaged to perform the distribution. The villagers attended from groom party get five pairs and bride's party gets six pairs.'²³ The *goi khaonai* tradition is becoming less use.

3.2.1.5. *Swmwndw phiraynai* (new relation formation):

The *swmwndw phirainai* is observed in girl's family just eve of a few days of marriage. On this day the villagers are gathered and at the centre of yard, a place is cleaned and plastered by mud. The *gambari khamphlai*, a *don*, full of rice, a pair of betel nut and leaf, two coins of a rupee, earthen lamp and incense stick are placed and the earthen lamp is lighted. The guardians from both families sit facing each other. According to Sukumar Basumatary, a villager is made a mediator, whom they called *raisongra*. He says before people attended-

'*Raijwphwr, khouranga jabai..... halamni* (name of area)
gamini (name of village) *Musri.....ni* (name of father) *Musri* (name
of boy) *phisala bithang Musriphongbai* (related to boy) *phisajw
thoraina(name of girl) khou haba khalamnai jasigwn. Dinwi
swmwndw phirainai san. Bekhainw nwnghangmwn khou jo khalamnai jadwng.
Raijwphwr bithangmwnha sigangao ma swmwndw jalaywmwn jwng mithi rwnga.
Bini sigang bithangmwnha mabaphwr swmwndw dongbla bithangmwanni swmwndw*

²³ . Machahary, Premanand : Thesis entitled, Socio- Political Life of the Boros in Karbi Anglong District of Assam, Torendra Nath Brahma, 2004, p-111

*phwrkhrou phirainai jabai arw dinwiniphrai bithangmwnha bibiai arw bijamaijw.*²⁴

Today, it is become obsolete and is done on the same day of date settlement in due consensus of both families. In it two *khwrwndis*, two top banana leaves, two *aronais*, five betel nuts and leaves in each *khwrwndi* and a *douri* are needed. A *douri* recites the following prayer for new relation formation and parents of boy and girl follow him,

Aham

Wng hring khling phwt se

Wng hring khling phwt se

Wng hring khling phwt se

He apha Bwrai Bathou

Ang dinwi ha dwi san okhrang

Arw beohai nujaphwinai

Ai apha raijw raja

Bida phongbai bibo binanao

Mwnkhrou sakhi khalamnanwi

Dinwini gwthar khalarao

Bibiai khanw ladwng

Beohai maba dai dwiphwn

Maophlangba jwngkhrou

Onnanwi nimaha hwdw

Gwthar gsw lananwi

Apha Bwrai Bathouni

Serao somai laywdi

Jwng sanwini bibiai khanaya

Thangna thajasim orai swmwndw thathwng

*Dohai apha.*²⁵

²⁴ . Basumatary, Sukumar : Haba, Swranglama Publication, 1993, p- 12

²⁵ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 195

(English rendering- Oh God *Bwrai Bathou*, today, taking the name of sun, water, sky, earth, air and before the brothers, sisters, and the people attended here, I have decided to settle a new relation between two families. If somehow, I have undone, please forgive me God, and hope this new relation will be for forever, oh God the *Bathou Bwrai*.)

3.2.1.6. *Khatha khourang*(finalized message):

The *khatha khourang* means consent message sending from the boy's family to a girl's family. It is sent within two days before the marriage date. The two or three persons including guardian goes to the girl's family and give the message that by hook or by crook on previous fixed day, they are coming to take a bride. The *khatha khourang* is top most important earlier. But due to the development of communication technology, nowadays, the consent, given over phone is also observed.

3.2.1.7. *Mwdwm besen* (body price):

The *Bodo* society believes the bringing up children in a family is not an easy work; it involves sweat and blood. Bringing a girl from another family means bringing great property. The women are respected very much. So, the boy's family wants to offer a price to girl's family if accepted. Inviting all villagers in bride's family, a *mwdwm besen* is observed. On this day a holy place is prepared at yard of a girl's and different items are offered. According to Kusti Daimari in this rite guardians of both families are asked to sit near holy place and mediator asks some questions to the guardians,

'*Nwng mabaphwr mwdwm besen janw nama?*'

(Do you want something?)

Parent : *Ang jaya*

(No please, I do not want)

Mediator : *Nwng mabaphwr lubwiyw nama?*'

(Do you want to take something?)

Parent : *Ang rang jorabw lubwiya.*²⁶
 (No, even I do not want single money)

The mediator asks him to take *endi begor* (castor seed). If girl's father or guardian says, yes I want, then whatever he asks, boy's guardian has to provide him. Taking *endi*-seed implies nothing property or price is needed and if takes flowers, it implies that he wants respect. Then *mwdwm besen* observation comes to an end. The items brought to the girl's family are shared by the people attended in programme.

The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians*, observe it with the help of a *douri*, five rupees coins and Rs. 25.50 (to donate to the village unit) are required. A *douri* introduces the matter to villagers and receives five rupees coins as - Firstly, father-in-law donates, one rupee to son-in-law hopping for his lifelong happiness with his daughter. Secondly, a coin is offered for new relationship, to and fro and hopping carefulness from the side of new relatives. Thirdly, a coin is donated hopping for information of well and woe. Fourthly, for witness of *barlangpha* and fifthly, if there were some far relation, to mean the broken of these relations and thus body price observance come to an end.

3.2.1.8. *Jonali thangnai*:

The *jonali thangnai khanti* is applicable in case of eloping and *kharsonnai*. If a boy elopes or a girl directly comes to boy's family without consent of her family, a marriage cannot be settled. The prior permission is needed from the girl's family.

So, the guardian of boy sends a few male villagers to inform the matter, that he is going to get married with his daughter and asks permission. Bhaben Basumatary says, 'in the *jonali*, if girl's family does not support the proposal from boy's family, the boy's family hands over girl to her parents. Again, if she comes back, than no proposal is required from the girl's parents. The guardian of a boy can settle the marriage.'²⁷ The information giving and begging prior

²⁶ . Informant: Informant: Khusti Daimari, age 78 years

²⁷ . Informant: Bhaben Basumatary, age 60 years

permission from the girl's family is known as *jonali thangnai*. Nowadays, in spite of elope or *kharsonnai*, the *jonali* is not done and social judgment is made. In social judgment, if it is not settled, the matter is referred to the court.

3.2.2. During the marriage time:

Earlier, during the time of marriage, they adopted different arrangements. Today, in these arrangements a few changes have been found and some old customs are rooted out from the *somaj* and new customs are nesting in the *Bodo* society. It includes as:

3.2.2.1. Decoration:

The *Bodos* decorate the marriage *sainasali* (*pendal*) with the help of natural items, like the banana leaf and tree, thatch, bamboo etc. The lighting was made by lantern not by generator or lighting materials. In the *pendal* bamboo poles are used and every bottom is placed to the north and west. If any bottom is placed south or east in groom's family, the bride's party charges fine for it vice versa. A fire place is made at yard for boiling tea and two persons are given responsible for it. At present, this tradition is obsolete and *pendal* is made by tarpaulin or tent. The use of plantain as dish is not found. The tent system is developed due to economic development, influences of other communities.

3.2.2.2. *Biban langnai* (responsible shouldering):

A small earthen pot is prepared and a person is given responsibility for shouldering it. A sun is drawn on a pot and on another a moon. The shoulderers, shoulder with the help of a bamboo pole fixing by a *theul*. A pot brought for bride is kept at veranda of *nomano* and another is brought back to the groom's family

Today, the *biban langnai* system is changed and five persons are required for the *dhwrwm biban*, *mainao biban*, *laokhar biban* and two packed *biban* (*saha muri*, *goi phatwi*) in the *Phwsabnai Bathou*. According to Bhaben Basumatary, 'the earthen pot, where the sun is drawn as well as betel leaf-nut and sugar is put is known as *dhwrwm biban*. The second numbers of earthen pot, where moon is

drawn and milk is put is known as *Mainao biban*. The third packet contained of fried rice (*muri*) and tea leaf is known as *sahamuri biban*. The fourth packet contained of betel nut-leaf is known as *goi phathwi biban*. The last packet contained fruits, mustard oil, or some edible items is known as *laokhar biban*. This *biban* is snatched by the cowboys. These *bibans* are most urgent in the *Bodo* marriage.²⁸ The cowboys are not available, so the *laokhar biban* is placed on the place where shoulderer feels better. The bringing of *biban* from groom's family is mandatory. Today, it is not mandatory, if both the families are far from each other, the preparation of the *biban* in someone's family of bride's village is also observed.

3.2.2.3. *Hinjao laynw thangnai* (bride bringing):

In the social marriage a journey is set for based on distance between the bride and groom's families. On this day, holy water is sprinkled to the people who are going to bride's family and bow down to the *Bathou* altar as well as to the head of family. The widow, widower, people stained on the part of the body, blind, deaf, physically challenged are not allowed to accompany. The head of the family begs blessings from the *Bathou Bwrai* and recites silently,

He apha Bathou Bwrai

Nwi jwng sath gathwn barnanwi

.....(name of boy) ni hwnjao gwdan lainwswi

Lama sama buhud bira jana khwiphwd aphwd dajahw

Mwjangwi mwjang souphwihwdw

*Nwngni phisa sanna guar megonjwng naidw.*²⁹

(English rendering- Oh God, the *Bathou Bwrai*, today, we are going to bringing a bride for , crossing the many river and waters. So, please do not let troubles to the people, please save us God.)

The journey starts and on the way betel nuts and leaves are offered at river and to the big trees. In some villages at the time of returns, road is blocked by

²⁸ . Informant: Bhaben Basumatary, age 60 years

²⁹ . Informant: Bhaben Basumatary, age 60 years

people or by the bamboo pole and request to see bride's face or ask for betel nuts and leaves. This custom is marginalizing, the widow, widower, deaf, physically challenged are also allowed.

3.2.2.4. *Phangkha souhwinai* (messenger arrival):

The *phangkha souhwinai* is also a marriage process of the *Bodo* society. At present in the *Udalguri*, both the *phangkha* and *barlangpha* are used. On the eve of arrival of groom's party two persons, wearing white *genji*, green *gamosa* and taking an *aronai* on neck have to come. They are known as *phangkha*. The widowers are restricted in taking this responsibility. In the old tradition a woman or a man, or anybody who acts as a mediator, gives time to time information of arrival of boy's party to girl's family, who is known as *dewani*. Today, it is very much essential and should be only a pair of married male persons irrespective of mediator.

3.2.2.5. *Barlangpha*:

The *barlangpha* is a person who is the main role bearer of the *Bodo* marriage. The *barlangpha* is used as means of entertainment on the way and only a person takes the role of *barlangpha*. He jokes with people and acts some humorous acts. Nowadays, *barlangpha* is not used in those acts. The five *barlangphas* are used in carrying five *bibans*, like the *dhwrwn biban*, *mainao biban*, *laokhar biban*, and two other packets by the *Phwsabnai Bathou*.

3.2.2.6. *Swsonnai* (welcome to *nomano*):

The bride is generally taken to the *nomano* and not to other houses. In the door an earthen lamp is kept for bride and she breaks by trampled (in *Bothabari* area) or on a bamboo sieve a sickle is placed, water is poured across it and she should run into *nomano*. In some other places a rice of *don* is placed at door of *nomano* and she should kick *don*, so that it falls down. This tradition is abolished in today's society. She is welcomed by *bwirathi jora* to the *nomano* and allowed

to rest. It is because of social change, development of education and change in the attitude of the people as well as religious conversion and reformation.

3.2.2.7. *Hinjao gwdan thukhwinai* (bathing):

The bride and groom take a bath before marriage is set and they are taken to river or well. 'The musical band is accompanied and *bonjar* are used as lighting. But this custom is changed in modern time; both the boy and girl take bath before marriage is set and come in well make up.'³⁰ On the other hand in the Bhakatpara and Khoirabari areas of the Udalguri district, in morning, girls, children, women and people go to river to patch water for bride's bathing. The musical band, dancing and singing are accompanied.

While the boy's party arrives, she goes to have a bath. A banana plant is planted and she moves around it taking a knife and crying. According to Suniram Basumatary, 'mother or sister-in-law or any other relative pours water on her at each moving. She also pins banana plant by a knife at each moving until banana plant is broken. Later she is smeared by mustard oil or grinded green turmeric or grinded pulse.'³¹ After bathing, the walking on ground is prohibited. So she is lifted by her brother or father or uncle any other relative and make up by her friends. Today, the bathing system is not available and both the bride and groom take bath alone and get ready for the marriage.

3.2.2.8. *Haba dannai* (marriage settled):

The marriage is set or *danw* at the *Bathou* altar or making temporary *Bathou* outside main yard. This rite is made reciting some *mantras* and taking the witness of the different Gods and Goddesses. Somebody settles marriage with the help of *jogya ahuti* or *vaidic* rite, somebody at *mandir* or *ashram*. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* settle it making a *gambus*. They pray and sing different prayers, for example,

³⁰ . Informant: Bimala Boro, age 48 years

³¹ . Informant: Suniram Basumatary, age 55 years

Stayi- *Nwi apha nwi apha //*
 Dinwi gwthar juliao
 Nwngni swrjinai
 Bibarni mala ganhwbai, ganhwbai, ganhwbai
Sethi antara- *Gwja sindur phwta phunna*
 Jiuni orai lwgw khalamna
 Sat sat khira labai,
 Dinwini gwthar sanao //
Nwithi antara- *Bwr hordw nwng apha.....*
 Nwngninw khathiao bwr bidwng.....
 Bor-khwinani sukhu jiuni
 *Somaina songsar janaini||.*³²

(English rendering- Oh father (God), oh father today on this sacred marriage we have made a garland of your created things, The vermilion has put on forehead, taken as a life partner for the whole life and promised to stay whole life on this holy day, Bless us God, we are praying for it before you, for the welfare of bride so that she can live peacefully.)

In the *Phwsabnai Bathou* marriage is set, making a *gambus*, contained the places of *Mainao*, *Bathou* and *Baraja* from left to right. The singing and praying continues with the tune of musical instruments, asking for blessings from the Gods and Goddesses for the new couple. On the other hand, the marriage is settled in the midnight or as per the *logna*. Today, it is settled as per the consensus of both the families as well as villagers. It may be in the morning or in the day or before the darkness.

3.2.2.9. *Habani mainao dikhangnai* (ceres lifting at marriage):

In *Phwsabnai Bathou*, during marriage or *khati phwr bw* ceres is lifted. Inside the *gambus*, earthen lamps, flowers, incense stick, betel nuts and leaves, two small bowls of brass containing paddy and rice are kept. After the end of

³² . Mazbat Dokora Du. Ba. Go. : Alari Bathou Aroj Mala, Mazbat Dokora Du. Ba. Go., 2015, p- 141

activities of marriage, bowls of brass are kept on bamboo sieve and bride carries it on head. The paddy is taken to the granary and rice is to the *maiwendw*. The bride and groom are taken to the *nomano* and bride's sister unknits the cloth of couple. The *Mainao borainai* in marriage is not available earlier.

3.2.2.10. *Oma ganai arw oma khobthang* (pig pointed and share):

The *oma khobthang* is a process of cutting a pig equally from head to tail and sharing between two families. 'It is shouldered by a *barlangpha* from groom's family. If, the pig is big, the *barlangpha* takes help from villagers.'³³ This system is not available at present. On the other hand, another system related to pig is, pig pointed or *oma ganai*.

In the marriage three or more pigs are killed and those pigs are laid at yard on banana leaves one after another, pointing heads towards east. When groom's party is leaving the bride's family, a guardian from bride stands to the east, near the pig heads. In front of gathering, a person whom they feel respectable of the village asks guardian touching the pig one after another as,

'Mangwnang.....(*amwkhini bipha/bimai*) (name of guardian)
nwnhthanga bobo omakhou janw? Bekhou na nwibekhou, na bwikhou?'³⁴

(English rendering- Respectable (name of guardian), father or uncle (relation to girl) of Miss(name of bride) which pig do you want to take (*janw*)? This or that one?)

The bride's guardian selects a pig as per his choice and pointed it by his leg. The pig which is pointed by guardian is than taken by bride's villagers. This is known as *oma ganai*. The custom is become obsolete today.

3.2.2.11. *Rongjanai* (merry making):

The *Bodo* marriage system is full of dancing, singing and merrymaking. In this regard Khusti Daimari says 'as soon as the *barlangpha* arrives at the bride's family he is locked with the damsels from village inside a room and allowed to

³³ . Informant: Maniram Boro, age 74 years

³⁴ . Informant: Bangal Basumatary, age 80 years

dance and sing.³⁵ To develop friendliness between bride and groom, *don* play, *khwrwndi* play and finger ring play are common among the *Bodos*. ‘In *don* play, two *dons* are placed in two sides and *bwirathis* have to displace it from one side to another. The gathered people in occasion observe it and have an enjoyment activities expressed from *bwirathis* displacement of *dons*.³⁶ According to Khusti Daimari, ‘in the *khwrwndi* play, anyone from the bride’s village, who can run fast takes the *khwrwndi* and runs. He hides in somewhere of the village and the *bwirathi* has to follow him and bring back. At a time, it is played for three to five times.’³⁷ In the finger ring play, a golden ring is hidden inside a rice of *don*. At first groom is allowed to hide and then to bride. If groom hides, bride has to find it out and vice versa and is played for three to five times.

This custom of folk games, like the *don*, *khwrwndi* and finger ring plays are not found. In those days, they sung different songs also to enjoy. Today, the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* sing song and enjoy in the marriage as,

Stayi- *Dagabswi agwi binanao*
 Dagabswi agwi binanao
 Dom bangalnw horakhwi
 Harsa houanw horakhwi
 Boro houanwsw raijw janwsw hordwng
 Aiphwr hordwng //

Sethi antara *Houa nokhorao thangnanwi*
 Bihao- bikhunjwni phwlerjwng
 Gwrwbhwinanwi raijw janwsw
 Hordwng aiphwr hordwng //

Nwithi antara *Dwrwm asarni bwswnjwng*
 Raijw samajni onnaijwng
 Alw gwjwnwi songsar janwsw

³⁵ . Informant: Khusti Daimari, age 78 years

³⁶ . Informant: Ripi Basumatary, age 60 years

³⁷ . Informant: Jyothi Basumatary, age 65 years

*Boro houanwsw hordwng aiphwr hordwng ||.*³⁸

(English rendering- Do not cry sister, we have not given you to a Muslim boy, even to a non-*Boro* boy and we have given you to a *Boro* boy, to share your life. After going to his family, take care about his relatives and the family members and we have given you to a *Boro* boy, to share your life. As per the religious rites, well wishing of the people and society, to share your life happily, we have given you to a *Boro* boy.)

3.2.2.12. *Nirig bosonai* (settlement from both side):

The *nirig bosonai* is a mentionable process of the *Bodo* marriage system. In *nirig bosonai* a mediator is needed. The flowers, castor fruits, betel leaf and nut, two rupee coins, two cups of tea, fried rice are placed at yard on a banana top. The guardians of both the families stand in front of it and they exchange their views and request to forgive each other if knowingly or unknowingly mistaken.

As soon as the exchange views are finished, out of items offered at banana top parent of bride touch anyone. The touching of item have respective meaning, if he touches money, it represents he wants to give money or property to his daughter, if touches castor it expresses that he does not want to give property or money, if touches flower it shows, his blessing, affection, love will be always with his daughter.

The *nirig bosonai* system is still observed among them. Today, sharing of wine is not found in *nirig bosonai* and they share two cups of tea.

3.2.2.13. *Bidai* (see off):

As soon *haba dannai* comes to an end at the bride's family, a farewell is made to the bride from the *nomano*. She bows down to all the kith and kin and respects to junior. The father must visit and if he is not in a position to go, on behalf of father, anyone from father's relation goes to the groom's family with the

³⁸. Borobazar A. C. Du. Ba. Mo. (Suju Afad) : Aroj Bidang, Borobazar Anchalik Committee, All Bathou Mahasabha, 2016, p- 77

villagers to make farewell. During *bidai*, the singing of different songs is found.

They sing as,

Stayi- Thangdwde phisa hinjao
Thangdwde malainiao
Janai badi mwnnanwi
Lwngnai badi mwnnanwi
Bwisw gwrlwi phisakhounw
Bilai horbai
Wi awi phisa hinjao
Nwngkhoulai bilai horbai

Sethi antara- Bikha landang landang
Khalam langbai
Wi awi phisa hinjao
Nwng angkhon khalamlangbai

Nwithi antara-Malai gamikhounw gaoni gami sanna
Malai nokhorkhounw gaoni nokhor hwnna
Thahwidw nwng awi thahwidwde
Malai biphakhounw gaoni bipha sanna
Malai bimakhounw gaoni bima hwnna
*Jahwidw nwng awi jahwidwdeII.*³⁹

(English rendering- Go my dear daughter, go to non-native family, we have felt unknowingly too much eating and drinking in the family, you are not attained the age of marriageable, though we have settled the marriage, Oh dear daughter, oh dear daughter. I am feeling something lost, something lost, oh dear. Think the non-native as your own village, think the groom's family as your own one, you go there my dear, think the groom's parents as your parents, you go there and stay as your own family.)

Phwsabnai Bathouarians sing different songs during the time of *bidai*, earlier nothing goods are given to boy, even he had to pay bride price to the parents earlier. Today, from bride's family some items, like the furniture, gas

³⁹. Mazbat Dokora Du. Ba. Go. : Alari Bathou Aroj Mala, Mazbat Dokora Du. Ba. Go., 2015, p- 153

stove, cylinder, bedding items are given along with the bride. The system is recent development among them and can be term nesting from neighboring communities.

3.2.3. Post marriage:

There are some post marriage arrangements among the *Bodo* and those arrangements are changing in modern time in their *samaj*. These are as follows:

3.2.3.1. *Athmongla or athimongol* (eight days observation):

The *athmongla* is observed after eight day of marriage. In it, bride and groom come to the bride's family. In the *athmongla*, three males and three females including bride and groom go to bride's family. The family members invite all relatives and the villagers. In evening, grand feast is provided to them along with wine, tea, meat, fish and others. A *dabka thaise* (a pitcher) *jou gisi* is very must essential.

In the modern time, no need to come, in three pairs and the providing feast to villagers and relatives are not compulsory. If guardians feel important they can invite as they like and a few friends of bride are invited, tea-*muri*, betel nut-leaf are provided. Later some money as demanded by damsels of the village, the bride's family has pay but not more than 1000/-. The bride begs pardon from them that she is separated from damsels as per social law.

However, somebodies who are able to give offer *dokhona*, blouse, shirt, *longpant*, *gamosa*, *genji* to the relatives or villagers who are taken great difficulties during marriage. This system of offering is known as *man baonai*. It is a recent development of the *Bodo* society.

3.2.3.2. *Bwirathi man* (offer to women pair):

The two pairs of women, a married and an unmarried *bwirathis* are very much essential in the *Bodo* marriage. An un-married pair is accompanied to bride's family during *athmongla*. A married pair is provided fish, meat as well as other items and separate time is set for them. In modern time, no hard and past

rule is found to take to the bride's family. Some other invites them on the next day of marriage along with the villagers.

3.2.3.3. *Jamai dhorshan:*

The *jamai dhorshan* or introduction of all father and mother-in-laws observation is taken place in both families. In the *jamai dhorshan* all father and mother-in-laws of boy whoever get time on pre-set day come to bride's family and vice-versa. A feast is provided and after taking it, they share their identity among each other.

Earlier, it was not a tradition of the *Bodo* society. Today the system is developing and everybody observes it. This can be termed as recent development and influenced from other communities.

3.2.3.4. *Alasi janai (visit as guest):*

In *alasi janai*, wearing new cloths the new couple goes to bride's family carrying items how much possible to carry with them. The items, like a pair of chicken, vegetable, wine etc are needed. After couple's visit, the normal to and fro from both families start.

At present, this tradition is not mandatory. It is based on time of groom for *alasi janaw*, if he is not in a position, the normal process of both families start just after the end of *athmongla*.

3.2.4. *Haba khanthi (marriage system):*

As per the *Bodo* custom, the marriage system can be classified into two, like the socially accepted and prohibited. The marriage system which is accepted by the *Bodo* society is known as socially accepted and the marriage that take place beyond the *Bodo* society's acceptance is known as prohibited marriage. The socially accepted marriage systems are *somajwng gonai janai*, *gwrjia thanai*, *kharsonnai*, *dongkha habnai* and love marriage. The *gwrjia thanai*, like the *thathainai* and *wngkharlangnai* are decreasing as well as the *dongkha habnai* are obsolete from the society.

3.3. Rite, tradition related to the disposal of dead and their changes:

They dispose dead body both by buried and cremation as well as suggestion of the dead person while he is alive. According to Bhaben Narji, ‘they believe, if the dead body is eaten by crow, vulture, fox, jackal, mongoose, the soul of dead person set free from sin and hence disposed the body at open place. On the other hand, within three or four days, if birds and other animals’ do not share, they believe he or she had sin in life and hence disposed it by buried.’⁴⁰ This rite is completely vanished from them and it is a most old custom. The rituals related to disposal of dead body are as follow-

3.3.1. *Gwri dannai* (carrier preparation):

To shoulder dead body a bamboo carrier is made, which is called *gwri*. The preparation of *gwri* should be completed with a bamboo. The bamboo stuff from which a bamboo is cut, from this stuff bamboo is not use in future for domestic purpose and use is restricted. If it is used there may be some troubles or problems in the family, they believe. In preparing the *gwri*, two equal bamboo poles and *lakhra* (spilt) are cut. The top and bottom of these poles and splits are placed parallel to each other in preparing *gwrw*. It is observed that the Christianise do not use *gwri*, they shoulder keeping dead body inside coffin.

3.3.2. *Khundung khanai* (thread tied):

During the time of displacement of dead body, each house is warped by an *awa khundung* to the edge of wall or roofing. Somehow if thread is not available, in place of it cow dung is plastered as a strip. On the way *awa* is snapped by a person, the shoulderer of dead body and its group followed him. If crosses water *awa* is hold from one bank to another and people walk over it. According to *Dularai Bathou Gouthun*, ‘the meaning of snapping *awa khundung* is broken the

⁴⁰ . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -137

relation between the soul of dead person with other family members and holding at water is to make a bridge for the departed soul.⁴¹ At present, plastering of cow dung is not found; by hook or by crook they collect *awa khundung*. The snapping of *awa* is not found and a *buntha* moves in air or here and there.

3.3.3. Cooking:

The *Bodos* believe, if food is not fed to the dead body during his died, after rebirth, his soul becomes gobbler. They cook foods for him so that in next generation he becomes nibbler. In the cooking food only left hand is to be used. A feast of chicken is prepared on an earthen pitcher without putting mustard oil and turmeric. The curry, rice, meat and other items whatever are cooked and stir are taken out by a *khadou*. All utensils use in cook and used by dead person during life time are thrown and keeping back in the family is restricted.

Earlier whatever cooked are fed at mouth of dead person, today just nominal feeding is made and items are thrown at a bowl or utensil.

3.3.4. *Dhukhu phwrmainai* (condolence):

The condolence is not made in old tradition. Nowadays a condolence is made in the name of dead person, hopping his soul to have a place in eternal with *Bathou Bwrai*. The *asari* beg pardon to the *Bathou Bwrai* on behalf of dead person, like if he has sin kindly forgive and allow, to rest with the *Bathou Bwrai* in heaven. When such pray is finished, each or everyone who is attended, offer flower to the dead body. If offering flower is over *asari* recites the *aroj* as given below in the *Phwsabnai Bathou*,

'Aham

Wng hring khling phwd se

Wng hring khling phwd se

Wng hring khling phwd se

Ode apha nuathari bwrai

⁴¹ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 178

Bathou anan gosai
Be mulugni dongnaimani
Gaswibw jiu jibikhou nwngnw swrjinai I
Nwngnw bandwba ronsainanwi
Mulugni si mi swrji hordwng I
Phwthwi hordwng boikhoubw I
Nwi dinwi be bubliao be nokhorni
Bithang a
Rungsari jalangbai I
Benikhainw megonao mwdwi
Khugayao khudwi lananwi
Gwsw gwrbwao besebangba dukhu hangma lananwi
Kharao marao gabjri hardwng nwnghaphani serao
*Dinwi be dukhuphwrao dohay apha dohai.*⁴²

(English rendering- Oh unseen God *Bathou Bwrai*, you have created creatures of this world, you have made *bandwba* and created creature, you are the care taker and destroyer. In this moment Sri has expired, we are looking blessings for dead person)

The other hymns are also recited by *asari* which is not available and condolence is performed in irrespective of religions.

3.3.5. *Gwthwi bangarnai* (dead body displacement):

As soon as dead body is supposed to be displaced pair of betel nuts, leaves, and flowers are offered and earthen lamp, incense stick and *dhuna* are set fire. The offering of these items are not available earlier.

3.3.6. Farewell to the dead body:

Every process is over; all the people attended in gathering come near to dead body and make a self condolence. The sons, brothers, villagers or anyone

⁴² . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 306

who is closely related to dead person shoulder *gwri* and before shouldering, the shoulderes, suspended the *gwri* for five time in case of male and suspended for seven times for female. A faith is found, if dead person does not like persons who are shouldering, he or she makes carrier, heavier and heavier. As soon as it is about to farewell from yard, *asari* recites a hymn, as following,

‘*Aham,*
Wng hring khling phwd se
Wng hring khling phwd se
Wng hring khling phwd se
Ode apha nuathari bwrai Bathou I
Dinwini be dukhuni somao
Nwng aphakhou gwsu gwrwbwao
Juna lananwi khulumhorbai I
Nwng nwngni phisa ni
Sikhou bwjobnanwi laphindw
Dwrwmni gwthar asarkhanthi
Nembadiywi bithangni sohokhou
Jwbtha khulum horbai I
Nwng onsula subungha
Baonai thinai sibinaiao
Jadwngbla gena gwrwnthi
Akhay khobjobnanwi nimaha
Bihorbai orai thwinai subungni
Siya swrgw rajjwao
Souhwinayni dohai apha
*Bwrai Bathou I.*⁴³

(English rendering- *Wng hring khling phwd se*, oh God *Bathou Bwrai*, today, in this sad moment, we have welcomed you in our heart, offered you, Please taken back the soul of Sri as your son, as per the religious rites we have fare

⁴³ . Borobazar A. C. Du. Ba. Mo. (Suju Afad) : Bamwn, Borobazar Anchalik Committee, All Bathou Mahasabha, 2012, p- 202

welled him, in our offer, if we have undone please forgive us. Oh God, let his soul to live in peace at heaven.)

This farewell is not made earlier time and is a recent development due to religious reformation.

3.3.7. *Dwi gwthar* (holy water):

The holy water is used and taken in two bamboo pipes, one for people and another for dead body. This is known as for *gwthwi* and *gwthang*. This water is prepared by an *oja*. For living people, it is placed in a pipe made in bottom and for the dead body in top. The holy water made for people is kept at home and for dead body is sprinkle on the way to burial ground. As cremation or bury is over it is kept aside from place with betel nut, *dhuna*, and other items whatever are carried. While people returned from burial ground the holy water made for people is sprinkle to people and thus believe to be consecrated. At present holy water is prepared at an earthen pot too. It is because of earthen pot available in market and suitable for carrying water.

3.3.8. Ditch preparation and disposed:

In the case of buried, a burial ground is prepared. Before digging a ditch, a coin is to be paid in the name of the *bwiswmuthi* as a value for purchase of land. A relative of dead person dig out land first and then the villagers follow him. As ditch becomes ready, the dead body is placed inside it and at first relatives puts soil for five times in case of male and seven times in case of female, then the villagers follow him. If a marriageable man or woman dies without get married, a coconut tree or banana plant is planted as a symbol of not getting married. This is known as *thalir gaigarnai*. The fire wood pyre is made five times for the male and seven times for the female. A chicken is cremated with dead body and another is set free, which is not found today.

3.3.9. Rite in the burial ground:

In the burial ground, the dead body is laid placing head toward the south. Before cremation, they offer water to the dead body by *phakri bilai*, reciting as,

'No lwngdw (name or relation

Dinwiniphrai nwnng ba nwnng jwnngba jwnngswi. '44

(English rendering- Leave us, have water, (name of dead person) from today we have broken our relation.)

Then, the dead body is put inside burial ditch. If cremated, then the lung of dead body is taken out, while it is half burnt, it is put inside a crab's hole. The reason for keeping the lung is the soul of dead person becomes happier in next rebirth life. This custom is relegating today. During the return, the people who are gone to the burial ground take bath at river or pond. Then, they gather in the house of dead person and they share wine. The sharing of wine is decreasing today. In a few villages of the Udalguri district, some women go to the cremation ground with pitcher of water to give water to the people attended in the burial ground. Earlier, the attending of women in the burial ground was restricted.

3.3.10. Consecration from the profane:

They believe, if the people go the cremation, they become profane. So, for the consecration, they took bath on the way, sprinkle holy water and chew *arji*. Any one of the family member makes ready for a glass of water with *tulsi* and *narji* at the gate. He chews the *narji* and puts on new cloths. At that moment, following words are recited,

'Dinwiniphrai nwnngjwnng swmwndw gwilalwi'

(mentions the relation, like, apha, adwi, ai etc.,)

nwnng jwngniphrai gwjan jadw. '45

(English rendering- From today, we have separated..... like father, uncle, mother etc. You stay separate and far from us.)

⁴⁴ . Brahma, Kameswar : Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos, Chiranjib Brahma, 1989, p-10

⁴⁵ . Informant: Bangal Basumatary, age 80 years

3.3.11. Prayer:

The praying is made in front of the *Bathou* altar, lighting an earthen lamp. The praying runs for five days in case of male and seven days for female. If due to some problems, prayer is not possible, after three day's earthen lamp is necessary to lit for five and seven days as per male and female respectively.

This custom of praying was not available earlier, today, it is found because of reformation of the *Gudi Bathou* to the *Phwsabnai Bathou*.

3.3.12. *Dosa garnai* (family consecration):

After ten days, for the consecration of family a *dosa garnai* is observed. Till *dosa garnai*, some edible items are to be avoided, like the mustard oil, turmeric and non-veg. items. The engage of family members in the cultivation and quarreling with someone are prohibited. Nowadays, some people observe it next day or after two or three days. On this day, household items and houses are cleaned and washed. The animal sacrifices, offering foods are adopted in the old custom.

Nowadays, it is transformed to praying and singing in the name of *Bathou Bwrai* and only a section of people who are still following the *Gudi Bathou* offer at the *Bathou* sacrificing animals.

3.3.13. *Gwthwisi baonai* (offer to the soul):

The word *gwthwisi* is combination of the two words, *gwthwi* and *si*. The *gwthwi* means dead, *si* means soul and *baonai* means offer. It is a rite remembrance to the soul of dead person. In it different edible items, like the cooked meat, fish, wine, rice beer, fruits and the items which are loved by dead person during life time are offered. The coins, cloths, dresses, etc are also offered in the name of him with the help of an *oja*. The offering takes twice in a year, i.e. on *1st Bwisag* and *1st Magh bangla* year. In *Phwsabnai Bathou*, the community singing and praying continue. They sing prayer as,

'Stayi: *Swrjigiri apha*

Onsai hordwde gosai thwinai subungkhou

Onsai hordwde gosai jwngni songsarkhou.

Sethi antara - Alw gwjwn souhainw hathwngswi

Biswr swrgw raijwao

Rujurumu thahwinw hathwngswi

Biyw mwdai raijwao

Nwithi antara - Munusni bandwkhrou thobsro bosona

Mithingani swmwndwkhrou neusina

Jaikharlangbai biyw jwngkhrou nagarna

Thamthi antara - Alw gwjwn souhwinw hathwngswi biyw swrgw raijwao

Rujurumu thahainw hathwngsai I

*Biyw mwdai raijwao II.*⁴⁶

(English rendering- Oh God, *Bathou Bwrai*, please take care for the dead person, please take care for us, let him be left for heaven peacefully, let have a place for him in heaven, he has separated from us, he has left from this world, please take care for us, let him be left for the heaven peacefully, let have a place for him in the heaven.)

The *si baonai* comes to an end, but this kind of singing and praying is not made in earlier, which is available at present in the *Bodo* society. This is because of religious reformation and conversion.

3.3.14. *Narji orgarnai* (jute leaf chewing):

When *narji* (dry jute leaf) is chewed, the *Bodos* believe the relation between dead person and family members become null and void. On the day of *gwithwisi baonai*, a place is cleaned to the southern side of the yard, a pair of betel nut and leaf is offered and earthen lamp is lit. A cook *narji* of five small bowls for the male and seven for the female is offered. The guardian of family offers it and kneels down and says,

'He rungsari nwnng be mulugniphrai rungsari jabai,

Nwnng da jwng bobeyao dong jwng mithimwnla,

Nwnng jeraokhithaya gwjwnwi thahwidw.

⁴⁶ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 316

Dinwiniphrai nwnng arw jwngni gejerni swmwndwkhrou
*Nagarnai jabai.*⁴⁷

(English rendering- Oh departed soul, you have expired from this world, now we do not know where are you? Wherever you are you be there, from today we have broken our relations.)

Then guardian chews *narji* and the relatives or other people attended in the ceremony also follow him. The people who are not interested to chew *narji*, people can put at lip only. In *gwithwisi baonai*, the *Gudi Bathourians* take help from an *oja*. The *oja* perform the offering. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* do not take help from *oja* the *douri* and family member perform it.

3.3.15. *Aroj sungrinai* (pray):

As soon as the *gwithaisi baonai* and *narji orgarnai* is over, the praying or *aroj sungrinai* is performed for the soul of dead person, hopping, love, affection, and forgive from the God. To perform the praying, people gather at the family's *Bathou* of dead person. The family members of dead person request the *Bathou Bwrai* to allow a place for dead person in heaven and pray as,

‘Stayi-	<i>O apha ! apha o!! apha...</i>
	<i>Nwnngnw jadwng, nwnngnw jadwng</i>
	<i>Nwnngnw jadwng apha swrjigi II</i>
<i>Sethi antara -</i>	<i>Mulug giding giding bengnaigiri</i>
	<i>Hajw hala jeraobw saglwbna thagra</i>
	<i>(O apha nwnngnw jadwng bwrai Bathou)</i>
<i>Nwithi antara</i>	<i>Apha thwidwng aphakhrou gardwng</i>
	<i>Ai thwidwng aikhou gardwng</i>
	<i>Theobw apha Bathou nwnghkou garakhwi jwng</i>
	<i>Theobw apha Bathou nwnghkou garakhwi jwng</i>
<i>Thamthi antara -</i>	<i>Nwnngnw jadwng apha mulugnigiri,</i>
	<i>Bar, ha, dwi, or, okhrangni bigwma</i>
	<i>Khangnaigiri, bajaigiri, phaligiri II.</i> ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ . Informant: Surendra Boro, age 66 years

(English rendering- Oh father, oh father, oh father, you are the, you are the, you are the creator. In the world, at plain, at hill and hillocks, you are there. Father has departed, mother has departed we have disposed them, though we have not forget you. You are the lord of this world, in the air, water, fire, sky, earth you are there; you are creator, care taker and destroyer.)

The *araj sungrinai* or praying is not done earlier. But in modern time, the *sungrinai* is made which is a recent development as a result of reformation of the *Bathou* religion. The *Bodos* converted into other religions do not perform *araj sungrinai*. A few of them perform the *jogya ahuti* taking *purohit* (priest).

3.3.16. Phandra (dead anniversary):

The *phandra* is observed for the soul of heavenly abode. There is a traditional faith, until *phandra* is performed, the soul of dead person remains nearby family. The members of family remain vegetarian up to end of the *phandra*. In the *phandra*, meal, meat, fish, wine, rice beer etc. are provided to the people attended. The curry of *thalir phosla* is cooked with chicken and pork. It is an important curry of *phandra* and given to the people attended. In *phandra* a cow for female or an ox for male is donated by the family to the villagers.

Nowadays, *thalir phosla* is not cooked and donating cattle are also not observed. In earlier, if a female person dies then a *bundi* pig and if a male then a *bunda* pig is killed. Today, the *Satsangi* and *Vaishnavi Bodos* do not provide non-vegetable items in the *phandra*. In the *Phwsabnai Bathou* if someone's husband dies, she uses to put on white *dohkona*, *blouse* and take white *jwmgra*. She takes care for the people attended and gives away of betel nut, leaves, tea and other items, just like the role of *bwirathi* in marriage.

3.3.17. Giyathi phojonai (eve observation):

The *giyathi phojonai* is made on the eve of *phandra*. On this day villagers or relatives of dead person are gathered and chalk out about activities of *phandra*.

⁴⁸ . Du. Ba. Go. (Suju afad): Baidasi, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 32

They make get ready for the materials to be used at *phandra*. The relatives and family members make religious consecration or *udrainai*. The foodstuff taking of family members or relatives in night is prohibited and if anyone wants to take food, he can take before the dusk.

But in old custom the *giyathi phojonai* is not available. Though the people or relatives take usual food (but vegetarian) and the fasting is not available.

3.3.18. *Dan sarnai* (gift fling):

In the old tradition a rice full *don* is placed at centre of yard, offering betel nut and leaf, incense stick, *dhup dhuna*, and other materials for the *dan sarnai*. The people attended at *phandra* offer coins or money in the name of dead person at a *don*. As offering money or coin comes to an end the people share foods and coins donated by the attended people are firmly mixed with rice and fling in air. The people snatch fling coins. Today, money is not fling in air and the money is accounted and donated to the village fund.

3.3.19. *Phaphli hukhlainai* (honor to shoulderers):

In the disposed of dead body four persons are needed for shouldering. These persons are honored on the day of the *phandra*. In the *phaphli hukhlainai* four shoulderers are allowed to sit facing towards west in queue, the five betel nuts and leaves are given to each, a coin is offered to each and the guardian begs pardon from them, saying as,

'Bannaiao mwnnai dukhu dahaphwrkhou baodw

*Onnani nimaha hwdw.*⁴⁹

(Whatever, the difficulties you bored in shouldering please forget all and forgive us)

The guardian kneels down to them and thus *phaphli hukhlainai* comes to an end. If *phandra* is not observed within a stipulated time, due to the financial

⁴⁹ . Informant: Lobindra Boro, age 50 years

and unavoidable circumstances, *phaphli hukhlainai* is also not observed, later it is observed along with *phandra* on the eve of it.

3.3.20. *Wngkham khurnai* (rice serving):

The serving of rice is another rite of the dead ceremony of the *Bodos*. As rice, curry and everything becomes ready, the people serve rice to the people attended in *phandra*. To serve food, the guardian has to beg pardon from a *douri*, the guardian offers, five betel nuts and leaves and a coin to *douri* to get permission. If a *douri* permits than the food is served. Earlier, such asking for permission is no needed, as rice and curry becomes ready; they could serve.

From the above, changes are observed in the rites and custom related to disposal of dead body. Nowadays, the growths of prayer, *araj sungrinai*, *har khodainai*, *giyathi phojonai*, *phaphli hukhlainai* are found. The changes are found in the ritual of *gwthwisi baonai*, *narji* chewing, *dan sarnai*, *wngkham khurnai* and *dosa garnai*. In the day of celebration also, the changes are observed, like the somebody celebrates the *dosa garnai* in two days or three days and somebody celebrate the *phandra* after seven days or one month or according to their financial conveniences.