

## Chapter: 5

### Social system and its' change

#### 5. The social system:

The social system is one by which the people of a society meet their needs. The *Bodos* social system is composed of different layers and it begins from the family. These layers are the family, village and the *samaj*. Out of these layers the family and village system is more popular than the others. In the traditional system of social organization of the *Bodos*, many changes have been observed. Different social organizations, like the school, education, religion and govt. institutions etc. have led to changes in the system. In case of the tribal people of North East India, many changes have been occurring in respect of social system, for example the *Riangs* of Tripura. According to Janet Florine Tellis, 'the traditional administrative patterns are mainly village based and confined to the community itself. The link between the clans and political organization has broken down owing to the disorganization of the council of the chief. This can further be substantiated by the fact that the villages are no longer named or identified in the names of clan chief. Though officially the village chieftainship was abolished in principle in 1955 after enactment of acquisition of chief's right act 1954 in practice, the chief of a village exists among the *Riangs* who maintain a council of his own.'<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.1. Change in the family system:

The family is a universal societal foundation, whose members share a social space based on kinship relations, conjugality and parental ties. The meaning of the family can be explained in biological and social aspects. In the biological aspect

---

<sup>1</sup>. Tellis, Janet Florine : Thesis entitled, The Riangs of Tripura; A study in Social Transformation, G.U. (Unpublished), 2014, p- 154

the family is one in which man and woman become husband and wife by certain institutional modes. The sexual and affective relationships exist between them and bring up children. On the other hand, in the social aspect the family is one in which the family members have responsibilities towards each other. The family is smaller in size with respect to other social, organizations, associations and groups. The character of the family is universal, because it exists in all societies. The *Bodo* society is also having family system. The *Bodos* family can be divided as, nuclear, joint and extended families. In these three types, the power and function, responsibility, management of family and other activities or problems related to family are based on the tradition of their society.

### **5.1.1. Nuclear family:**

The nuclear family is a family in which only husband and wife as well as their children are found. In the *Bodo* traditional nuclear family, the responsibilities are shared between both husband and wife. The various issues related to the family, like the finance, cultivation, future planning of the family are shared between the couple and emphasis is put on husband.

Today, most of the activities of the family are undertaken, based on the profession of both husband and wife. If the husband is service holder, he undertakes economic activities of the family. On the other hand, if the wife is service holder, she undertakes the financial burden of the family and if both are service holder sharing is taking place between the couple.

### **5.1.2. Joint family:**

The family in which more than one pair of married couples with their children live together is known as the joint family. In the joint family the head of family is regarded as the father of married couples in the *Bodo* society. He takes responsibility of the family and looks after the family's properties. The income of every person of family is shared by him. In the absence of a father, mother is regarded as the head of family. The income of the family is to be shared with her, and she looks after, same as her husband. She tackles and takes responsibility of every problem of the family. The separation from a joint

family of a married couple is based on the due permission from the head of family. If both the parents are not alive or mentally dormant, the eldest brother bears the responsibility of the family and if he is not available, eldest sister bears the responsibility.

Nowadays, this type of the *Bodo* family system is relegating. The separation from joint family of a couple is also based on the decision of couple.

### **5.1.3. Extended family:**

The extended family is composed of husband, wife, father, mother, children and relatives. In the *Bodo* extended family, the head of a family is father. If father is not alive or unable to run the family, responsibility is directly shifted to the mother and if the mother is not in a position to run, eldest son takes the responsibility.

At present, due to the development of education, changes in income of family and knowledge development, change in the family system is found and head of family is regarded based on the skill and capacity of management. According to Mahesh, 'the system of family has undergone qualitative changes because of industrialization, urbanization, migration, revolution in the field of transport and communication, increasing influence of the state and the influence of the individualization philosophy of life. The changes have been so fast in some parts of the world. With the advent of industrial civilization with modern technology the system and functions of the family fatedly changed.'<sup>2</sup> Earlier, maximum numbers of joint families are observed. But, today, the maximum numbers of extended families are available in the *Bodo* society.

## **5.2. Dispute and settlement in family:**

The dispute in a family is controlled by father. If he fails, a few villagers are invited and settled. Nobody is allowed to *akhai khwkhwinw* (beaten) the father. If somebody does, he is punished by the villagers and regarded as profaned by the religion. A consecration, *udrainai* is to be performed by him. A

---

<sup>2</sup> . C, Mahesh : Indian Society and Social Change, University of Calicut, 2016, p-23

person who creates disturbances in a family has to obey all the decisions put on him and thus solved the problem and not visit to court or somewhere.

At present, if parents and villagers fail, the matter goes to the court. The consecration is also not found and a few younger generations do not respect the parents and elders as earlier.

### **5.3. Separation from family:**

Among the *Bodos*, the separation is not allowed during the time of parents are alive. Somehow, if any couple wants to separate from a family, the separation should be based on full co-operation of all the family members. In their tradition, the youngest son is inheritor of the houses constructed by the father. The eldest brother should be separated from the joint family and on descending another brother should follow him, with due permission from the parents and villagers.

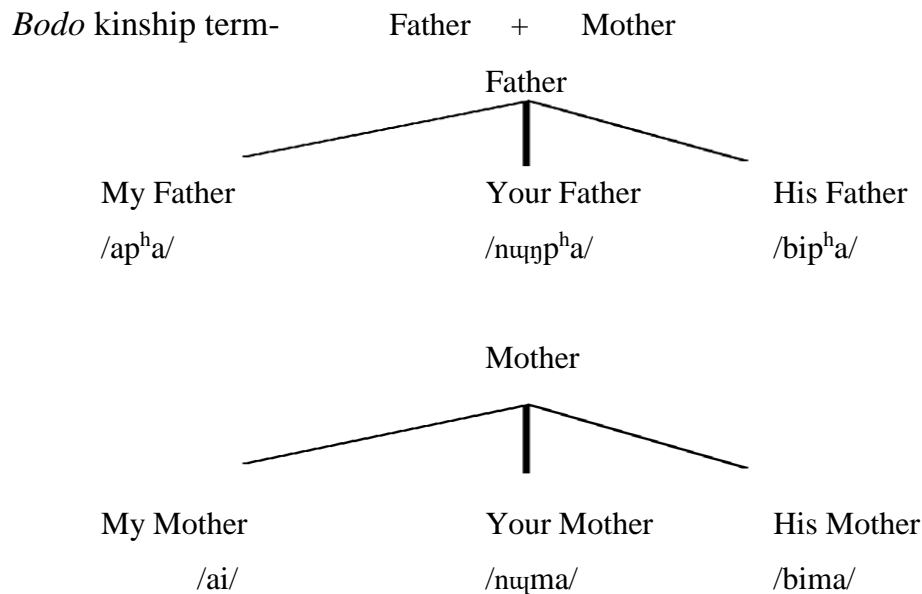
The parents of family invite head and a few respectable villagers chalk out the matters. Every member of the family is attended and head of a family introduces the matter. After detail discussion, both durable and non-durable properties are divided. As a symbol of respect, the parent's property is given a few bigger to eldest son. Today, the sharing of property, bigger to the eldest son is not found. The separation is also found within a few months or years.

### **5.4. Kinship term:**

The *Bodos* have common kinship term which they use both in a family and outside. The kinship terms are the words which represent the members of a biologically related group, such as father, uncle, cousin, son, forefather etc. These are known as relative terms also for their indication having relation to lineal group The *Bodos* kinship term can be divided as, blood related kinship term and non blood related.

In *Bodo*, the kinship terms are formed by prefixing different personal pronominal prefixes and these prefixes represent first, second and third personal relations.

The *Bodos* kinship terms are shown below,



In the above, by prefixing /a/, /nuŋ/ and /bi/ kinship term of father and mother are forming from the first, second and the third personal relatives. The blood related kinship terms are remaining as usual, but the kinship terms which are formed from non-blood or as per the social law are relegating among them. There are some non-blood related kinship terms, which are formed as per the social laws. These kinship terms are:

#### 5.4.1. *Khwrnia swnai* (accept as a son):

The *khwrnia swnai* kinship term is made by a couple, who do not have any child. The couple brings a child from the parents who are agreed to offer their child. As per social law in the presence of the villagers a certificate is written as,

Sri..... (name of child) is become an own child of Sri.....(name of husband) and.....(name of wife) from today. From today, he is an inheritor of properties of the couple and has broken his or her relations with former parents and kith-kin.

The *Bodos* treat same status as father, mother and son in social function. The issue of a certificate is abolished in the *Bodo* society. Again, economically sound people take medical treatment to have a child.

### 5.4.2. *Gwrjia thanai* (son in law staying):

The *gwrjia thanai* means residing of a groom after marriage in the bride's family. This tradition is followed to the parents, who are having only daughter. The *gwrjia thanai* is also two types, as *thagubwi* and *wngkharlangnai*. Sukumar Basumatary opines in it girl's parents get, a certificate from the groom as below,

'From a village..... (name of village) of..... area (name of area), son of Sri.....(name of father) and Smt..... (name of mother), Sri..... (name of boy) is settled as a *gwrjia* with Miss..... (name of girl) daughter of Sri..... (name of father) and Smt ..... (name of mother) of..... (name of the village) of..... area (name of area). From today Sri ..... (name of boy) is entered into the family of Miss..... (name of girl). In future, if Sri..... (name of boy) try to separate (divorce), the *Bodo* society will take stern action against him.'<sup>3</sup>

After, the *gwrjia* a new relationship is formed, between the two families and their relatives. But, it is observe that the *gwrja* system is minimized and in spite of not having son, the couple does not keep *gwrja gwrja*. If they face problems, the couple calls their daughter and son-in-law.

### 5.4.3. *Dongkha thanai*:

*Ongkha* is applicable in case of un-natural die of a newly married husband of a wife. The parents of a dead husband arrange re-marriage of their daughter-in-law and thus new relations are formed. Under this marriage, the husband has to abided by the suggestion of the wife and has no any property right.

This marriage system is obsolete today and the kinships formed from the *dongkha thanai* are abolished. The economic developments, educational factors, influences of other communities have led to change in this aspect.

---

<sup>3</sup> . Basumatary, Sukumar : Boro Ayen, Onsumoi library, 1999, p-10

#### 5.4.4. *Gurgusia*:

If a woman leaves the family of earlier husband along with her children, after her husband die and re-married to someone. Those children are known as *gurgusia*. The kinship formed between the second husband with her children is known as *gurgusia* kinship.

The property rights and status of the wards are in due acceptance of a new father. If the new father accepts the children as his own, in future they get status of claiming property of new father and if not after get adulthood they left out mother and look for their future settlement. On the other hand, *gurgusia* have right to the property of former father and the closeness of relation.

#### 5.4.5. *Oma lanjai homnai (pig tail)*:

The *oma lanjai homnai kinship* is formed, while a person settles in a place where he is far from his kith-kin and the family members. In this relation, a person has to break all his relations with earlier relatives and a new relation is formed by a person who he found best in his life. This is also known as *senga bahagi* or *thwiao habnai bahagi* relation.

In the *Bodo* society, this relation is also accepted as the relation formed from blood relationship. In the formation of relation, he gives a certificate, with whom he wants to form, before villagers in black and white as,

‘Today Sri.....(name ) of..... (surname) is entered to ..... (surname of new relationship). He has broken all the relationship with earlier kith-kin and no permission is allowed to contact with them. In the different ceremonies of the earlier family he is not permitted to attend. From, today he is entered to the..... (surname of new relationship) and become family member of Sri.....(name of person whom he has formed).’<sup>4</sup>

But, the *oma lanjai homnai* system is obsolete today and found the people staying each other with full co-operation. The developments of mass-media, transport and communication, development of science and technology

---

<sup>4</sup>. Basumatary, Sukumar : Boro Ayen, Onsumoi library, 1999, p-8

and influence of the neighboring communities have brought changes in this aspect.

#### **5.4.6. *Bisigi khanai:***

If a person wants, a close friend, a *bisigi* relation is formed. If *bisigi* is made between a pair of male it is termed as *bisigi* and if it is made between a pair of female which is known as *bilw gw*. After *bisigi* or *bilw gw* the relation between the two families and their relatives, become just, like the blood related kinship.

The *bisigi* or *bilw gw khanai* is made in some social function or ceremonies of a family. In the *bisigi khanai*, a pair of brass dish is taken, where incense stick, earthen lamp, banana top leaf, a pair of betel nut-leaf, a pair of one rupee in each dish, are kept. The person, who is going to form this relation, recites *mantra*, mentioning the items offered and gathering of the people. The mediator faces towards the north and the pair, faces face to face towards the east and west. The mediator recites a *mantra* of *Bisigi khanai* as,

*'Aham*

*Nwi dinwi ang..... (name of mediator) gothia*

*Nwng apha Bathouni Bwrai*

*Dohai lananwi*

*Sun, okhaphwr, hathorki hala,*

*Dwima dwisa, biphang laiphang,*

*Emphou enla, daoma daosa*

*Ha dwi, bar, or, okhrang*

*Beao nujaphwinai raijw rajaphwr khou*

*Sakhi dwnnanwi*

*Bithang ..... Arw ..... Jwng*

*Orai thwiso thangsoni lwgw khana hwbai.*

*Dinwiniphrai bithang mwnha*

*Angwse deha ongo baidi jabai*

*Sasea sasekhou hephajab hwlai sigwn*

*Swrbaya sasekhou raikhumabla*



*Sasea sasenw khithana hwlaisigwn.*<sup>5</sup>

(English rendering: ‘*Aham*, Today I am ..... (name of mediator) is going to form a friendship between Sri..... and Sri ..... taking the name you , Oh God *Bathou Bwrai*. Oh God today, I have taken the name of the sun, stars, rivers and streams, flora and fauna, insects and birds, earth, water, fire, sky and the people gathering here, I have made them witness. From today they will be friend up to the end of their life, they are just like one soul. If somebody back bites another, they will share it each other and will help each other.)

As the *mediator* finishes his recitation, the people gathered in ceremony pour water into body of the *bisigi khagra*. The frequency of *bisigi khanai* is minimized. Today, the friendship is observed among the people, but the rite is not followed. In the friendship of modern time they call the relation as usual and do not call the kinship *lugua* formed from *bisigi khanai*.

### **5.5. Village system and its change:**

Each and every society has a traditional law, to judge the culprit and to give equal justice to the members of its society. In other word, it is an area of protecting to its members and to provide support, benefit to the people, thereby fostering social welfare, justice and the equality. This law is termed as social law. The social law has certain rules and regulations that solve social conflicts and social problems of a society.

The law can be divided into several branches. The branch of social laws is punishment to the culprits, the law for the judgment against un-justice, the right to work, the right to social security, right to property inheritance, religious right and protection, immigration law and agrarian law as well as other laws, which are related to all legal proceedings. The *Bodo* society has also a rigid social law and they use to judge and protect equal rights to its members of the society or *samaj*. Today, this rigid social system is becoming flexible and most of the problems are settled at police station and court.

---

<sup>5</sup> . Informant: Bangal Basumatary, age 48 years

The village council is having much power and responsibility. The different householders collectively made a village. The village means a unit or council of different families which is less than the 300 families where different administrators and intellectuals are found. After forming a village, they form a village unit through the certain rite and rituals for the fair and smooth functioning of the village community. Sarba Nanda Das opines, ‘village council and chieftainship are their traditional administrative organs, tribal laws, customs and institutions are democratizing in nature and are common among all the tribes. But presently, these institutions are also diluting their strength due to imposition of a constitution of constitutional law after independence of the country.’<sup>6</sup> A damnatory person is the head of village administration which is known by them *gami bengiri*. He looks after the village and takes lead role when and wherever necessary is aroused in the village. The villagers appoint a *halmaji* as an assistant to the *gami bengiri* for the communication of message to its villagers whenever needed. If the meeting is to be convened in the village for a certain issue, first, the *gami bengiri* gives an order to the *halmaji* to call a meeting. The *halmaji* gives message to the villagers that there will be a meeting. Then they conduct a meeting in presence of the villagers and consensus is come out regarding the problems and issues.

However, at present, two types of village systems are observed, i.e. system of rural area and another system of the urban area. When a *Bodo* village system was formed and handed down is not obvious. The *Bodo* village system was much disciplined in earlier abided by every villager. But the materialistic nature and influence of other people, village systems are changing among the *Bodo* society. In town or in a few developed areas, the families do not join in a village council is observed.

---

<sup>6</sup> . Das, Sarba Nanda : Thesis entitled, Socio-Economic Changes in A Boro Village of Assam; A Study on Lechera Village in Barpeta District Assam, G.U. (unpublished), 1995, p-19

### **5.6. Village administration:**

In the *Bodo* society, the administrative system can be divided into village administrative and *samaj* administrative system. If the matter cannot be settled in the village, it is referred to another layer of administrative system which is known as *samaj*. The *samaj* is another administrative body which is formed by the intellectuals of the locality. In the *Bodo* society, the *gami bengiri* is the head of the village administration. To solve a problem arises in the village; he calls for a meeting with the help of *halmaji*. The *gami bengiri* is all in all in the village and his administration is honored by villagers.

Today, many other organizations, both the religious and non religious organizations are found. In these organizations, they settle the problem, like the *Bathou* religious organization (*mainao, laimwn*), Brahma religious union, Christian religious union etc. solve the problems with the help of their respective religious heads. The non religious unions, like ABSU, ABWWF, etc. also try to solve the problems arise in the society. The position of the *gami bengiri* is decreasing today.

### **5.7. Village council:**

To maintain unity and peace, including all the members of village, two persons are important in a village. They are *gami bengiri* and *halmaji* (messenger). The *gami bengiri* decides and settles various issues with the help of the villagers. The *halmaji* has to obey the suggestion of *gami bengiri*. There was a strong bond of unity among the *Bodos*. Each and every one of the village co-operate with each other in each problem. Today this bond of unity is breaking among them due to political issues and parties. The *gami bengiri* and *halmaji* system are abolishing. They have formed the village council, selecting a president, a secretary, cashier and all the villagers as member. The president or secretary takes main role to solve the village's problem.

### **5.8. Joining in the village:**

If somebody wants to join in a village council, he has to request and express his willingness to the *gami bengiri*. As per convenience, *gami bengiri*

suggests *halmaji* to call a gathering of the villagers at person's home who has desired to join in the village. In the evening at least one person from each family gathered at yard and shares a *jou dabkha*. During the sharing *gami bengiri* introduces the matter to the villagers mentioning the objectives of gathering as,

'*Nwi* ..... (name), *nwnghanga*, *nwngni thangkikhhou bungna ladw*.'<sup>7</sup>

(English rendering: Hello, Mr. ...., Please share the objective of your inviting to the villagers.)

The guardian along with the family members stands in front of the gathering and shares his willingness to join in the village. Then the guardian offers Rs, 101/- along with a pair of betel leaf-nut on a banana top leaf to the *gami bengiri*. The *gami bengiri* accepts, offering on behalf of the villagers and money is accounted to the village fund. The person joined in the village council can have a share of the village property whatever they have in the village from this day. The guardian and family members bow down to each and everyone present in the gathering.

Nowadays in some village the *dabkha* is not accepted and in a few villages, system is found in different ways. According to Binanda Boro in *Jabranga Fwthar*, 'Rs 501/- is to be paid to the village council along with *goi-phathwi thouse* to the people attended in gathering. He has also to pay the amount of money equivalent to per person share in the village.'<sup>8</sup> The gathering is also not held at the yard, but at the village meeting centre. The person who has willing to join in a village has to give pre-application to the village president or secretary and in a pre-prepared format.'<sup>9</sup>

However, the amount of money to be paid is different to the village to village and is based on the village fund or property. For example, in the *Rowta* Teacher Colony, to join in the village council, the Rs, 201/- for membership fee,

---

<sup>7</sup> . Informant: Maniram Boro, age 74 years

<sup>8</sup> . Informant: Binanda Boro, age 70 years

<sup>9</sup> . Narzary, Mabel, ed., *Teacher Colony (Nijwmpuri) Gamini Samajni Gangse Songbijir*, Teacher Colony Village Committee, 2012, p-16

Rs, 300/- for electricity, Rs, 500/- for road, Rs, 51/- for yearly membership fee are to be paid.

### 5.9. Separation from the family:

If a person is separated from a village, he offers a *jou dabkha* to the villagers and begs pardon, as

*'Sibinang raijw, raja, ai, apha, bida, phonbai nwnghangmwn. Dinwi ang nwnghangmwnao aroj gabkhonai jaywdi, angha..... jaigayao no gwdan khahwibai. Gamikhou nagarthonai jabai. Jodi ang iyunao mabaphwr jahwnni thakhai phwiphinwbla gamini phisa hwanna ajaophingwn<sup>10</sup>.*

(English rendering: Honourable my dear villagers, you are just like my father, mother, brothers and sisters. Today, I beg pardon from all of you. Dear villagers, I have sheltered at the village..... and made family there. In future, somehow, if I have to return in the village, please treat me as a son of village and accept as a villager and allow me to stay her again.)

As soon as his speech comes to an end he bows down to each villagers and nothing village property is shared to him. Today, in separation from village council, the offering is not made. Nothing hard and fast rule is found. Somebody of the village offers something and someone does not offer anything. In the *Jabranga Fwthar* if a person separates from a village, he should pay Rs, 101/- to the village fund and should donate some amount of money (as per his willingness) for community *Bathou thansali*. According to Lobindra Boro 'while a person separates from the village, he respects each villagers along with parents. The *Bathou* altar is divided into different shares as per the sons of the family and if two sons, the altar is divided into two and the villagers take, Rs, 51/- from the couple as per social law.'<sup>11</sup>

### 5.10. Dispute in the village:

The *Bodos* are simple in nature and have a soft corner for the strangers. In a village, if a dispute takes place they try to solve it in a peaceful manner. If

---

<sup>10</sup>. Thaneswar Basumatary, age 65 years

<sup>11</sup> . Informant: Lobindra Boro, age 50 years

fails in the village council, send the matter is refer to *somaj* or locality basis. The victim lodges a complaint to *gami bengiri* paying, Rs, 12.50/- to judge, against his enemy. The application given to *gami bengiri*, with such money is known as *sabrihwnai*.

As soon as the *gami bengiri*, receives a *sabri* from the victim, he suggests *halmaji* to call for a gathering of the villagers from both villages, the victims and for whom a complaint has been made. The *gami bengiri* tries to settle the matter in the village. The villagers and *gami bengiri* elect a few aged persons who are knowledgeable in judge. If the *gami bengiri* and knowledgeable persons fail, a few judges from neighboring villages are invited. They enquired into the matters from both sides. The *gami bengiri* calls both the parties and suggests to be as usual and not to repeat the same in future.

Today, these judgment are relegating from the society and money is not charged only Rs, 12.50/- and for *khawali bad* Rs, 5/- and fined as per the crime. Most of the people do not want to settle the matter in village council and go to the court instead.

### **5.11. Punishment of the culprit:**

They judged the category of mistake and divided into *bad* system. Based on the crime, beyond the financial fine as per the *bad*, they fined extra money on the culprit. As per the social law if anyone does not abided by the social justice, such person is also made boycott from the society. If someone kills a human being, he is regarded as a greatest sinner in the society and is also given physical punishment. They treated him in every activity of the society as a sinner and not allowed to take part in religious activities too.

They give physical and financial punishment to the thief and dacoit as per the *bad* system and the money is charged from them beyond the *bad* system to control their manners. If someone is trapped for such crime, the *samaj* calls for a meeting and severe physical punishment is given. According to Sukumar Basumatary, 'there is a rite among them to bring a culprit under control. All villagers gathered in a village and look for who are having greatest pig in the village and the pig is killed without consent of the owner. The owner of the pig

has right to demand money or item whatever or how much he wants from culprit.’<sup>12</sup>

Nowadays, if matter is minor it is judged at village council and otherwise it is referred to the judicial court and the culprits are given punishment as per the IPC judicial law. The fine is charged as per crime and demanded by the victim. The *oma sunai* tradition is obsolete.

### **5.12. Property inheritance:**

The son has only right to inherit the parents’ property. According to Kameswar Brahma, ‘generally it is observed that the entire property of the family is distributed among the sons only. In the *Bodo* society daughters do not have the right to property when there are sons.’<sup>13</sup> There are certain traditions regarding the property inheritance. Rameswar Boro opines, ‘if they have more than one son, the eldest son is to be separated from main family and he is given property higher than the rest.’<sup>14</sup> The female children have no right to her property and the paternal relatives are right to have their uncle’s property. The social law, regarding right to the property is as given below-

- The inheritor of the property is son
- If husband expires and have only daughters, the widow will be inheritor of the property
- The daughters have no right to father property. The nephews have right to inherit the uncle’s property
- If a couple does not have relatives or inheritors, the couple gives their property to someone giving will power
- If a person married *gwrjia* as per the willingness of parents of his wife, he has right to inherit father-in-law’s property and
- If a woman has no willingness to have divorce with her husband, the husband has to share his property with the wife. But if both have willingness, she will not have any right to property.

---

<sup>12</sup> . Basumatary, Sukumar : Boro Ayen, Onsumoi Libray, 1999, p-16

<sup>13</sup> . Brahma, Kameswar : A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boros, Bina Library, 2009, p- 25

<sup>14</sup>. Informant: Rameswar Boro, age 75 years

Nowadays, the high share inherited by eldest son is not available, irrespective of sex, children are right to have parents' property; the right to inherit uncle's property is eliminated. The parents also give their property as per their willingness to their children.

### **5.13. Boycott:**

The traditional village administration of the *Bodos* is bounded by their rites and customs. 'In a village if a person does not obey the norms of the village, does not attend the village meeting and remains regularly absent in the village programmes or activities and lives as he likes, such person is boycotted from the village society.'<sup>15</sup> The visiting of villagers in his house is restricted and is a social offence, nobody should talk to him, share his food and nobody should visit in his family functions etc. There are certain factors behind the boycotting a person, these are-

- If he does not abided by the village administration
- If he converts to other faiths, like Christian or non Hindu religion and
- If a person repeats the same thing again and again.

Today, boycott system is not observed among the *Bodos* of the Udalguri district. Most of the *Bodos* are converted into different new faiths, like the *Christian, Satsangi, Vaishnav* or other sects. If people are repeated the same thing, the family is not boycotted by the society. But action is taken as per the decision of the village council and if fails, the matter is referred to the court.

### **5.14. Business:**

The barter system was prevalent among the *Bodos* since the time immemorial. Gunabhiram Baruah opines, 'in ancient time there was no coin or money. There was barter system. Everybody has to arrange the goods necessary for their day to day life.'<sup>16</sup> Today, the barter system is relegating from the *Bodo*

---

<sup>15</sup> . Informant: Ananda Goyary, age 58 years

<sup>16</sup> . Baruah, Gunabhiram : Assam Buranji, Assam Pakashan Parishad, 2012, p-139



society. Thus, from this point of view, it is obvious that the change in this aspect among the *Bodos* is due to the increased in money supply and change in attitude of the people toward business. The *Bodo* women are started to trade in vegetables, like the *lapha, lai, thaso, tomato, potato, onion, garlic, ginger, chili, ladies finger, fish, meat, etc. and, cloths like, dokhona, jwmgra, gamsa* and *gosla*.

At present, some of them have given up the cultivation. According to B.N. Bordoloi, 'in the employment market it has been seen that some of the present unemployed *Boro-Kachari* youths have taken to diversified occupation at their own accord either by availing bank finance or by arranging finance from out of their own resources.'<sup>17</sup> They have established some business, like the showroom of machine tools, stationery, fertilizers shop, grocery, cloths shop, internet cafe, bike showroom.

### **5.15. *Gatha janai* (helping work):**

The *gatha janai* is a traditional helping work. If a family cannot be completed some domestic work within a stipulated time, then *gatha janai* is invited by the family. It is invited in case of the paddy reaping, thatch cutting and in other activities. In this system nothing is needed to offer, but somebody offers the *jou dabkha*, potato fry or curries to share with drinks. Someone offers old buffalo (not cow) to share meat, which is not capable of the cultivation. The distribution of such buffalo meat is known as *bangon janai*.

Today, *gatha janai* and *bangon janai* is not found among the *Bodo* society. Every work is converted into the payment system.

### **5.16. *Phathwi lai bisinai* (divorce):**

The *phathwi lai bisinai* is applicable while there is unhappiness between the couple. It is socially accepted and it happens on the ground,

- If there is not happiness between husband and wife,
- If husband is addicted to the drinking, gambling, destroys the family property and involves unsocial activities

---

<sup>17</sup> . Bordoloi, B.N., ed : The Boro- Kacharis, Venture of Low Price Publication, 1987, p- 20

- Either husband or wife becomes inhuman and have an illicit sexual relation with someone
- If a husband gets second marriage and makes unhappy in family and
- If a wife becomes impotent.

While these problems are faced between the couple, either wife or husband lodges a complaint to the *hadungwra* or *gami bengiri*. The *hadungwra* or *gami bengiri* calls a meeting and presides over in the meeting. After consensus or as per the demanded of the victim the property is divided and last rite is performed. A betel leaf is allowed to hold equally to the husband and wife in presence of the villagers. Both the husband and wife pull the betel leaf so that it tears. If betel leaf tears equally, it signifies both are happy, if not, who gets less, it signifies that she or he is not happy in breaking relation of husband - wife.

Nowadays, the gathering and following of *phathwi lai bisinai* is not found among the *Bodos* of the Udalguri district, if either husband or wife faces such problem, they go to court and settle the matter. As per the judgment of the court, the couple separates from each other and the property is shared as per IPC law.

### **5.17. Child adoption:**

They adopted as the system of *khwrnia swnai*. The adoption is made by the couple who does not have children. The couple brings a child from the parents who are not able to take care for their child and agreed to offer. As per social law they bring an infant or child as a family member and in the presence of villagers a certificate is written as,

‘Sri.....(name of child) has become an own child of Sri.....(name of husband) and..... (name of wife) from today. From today, he is an inheritor of property of the couple and has snapped his/her relations with former parents and kith-kin.’<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> . Basumatary, Sukumar : Boro Ayen, Onsumoi Library, 1999, p-8

The adopted child has right to inherit the property of adoptees. Nothing religious rite is hard and fast in earlier. Today, the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* of the district perform the rite as followed by them on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of child issue in the case of adoption also, like the *jwnwm asarni aroj methai* (prayer for birth), *gwrlwi gotho tharnaini bima biphani aroj* (praying of parents to the God in the name of child) and *gwrlwi gotho tharnaini jowi aroj* (collective praying God in the name of child).

### 5.18. Different fine or fee system:

They have traditionally fixed fees and fines which are accepted by all and everyone has to follow it. If different rites, crime, deed, they have to pay such amount to the society and such amount of money is received by the *gami bengiri* and accounted to the village account or *samaj*. These fees and fines are-

- In the *nalis* or application to have justice Rs, 12.50/-
- In case of the *asan thebnai* or bride asking a pair of one rupee coins
- To bring a bride from a village, Rs, 25/- is to be paid to the bride's parents and parents has to pay Rs, 12.50/- to the village.
- In the *nirig bosonai*, Rs, 10/- is to be given to the parents of the bride for marriage camp fire and if fails on that day another more Rs, 10/- is charged from the groom.
- If someone elopes a girl, he has to pay Rs, 100/- and the people who are accompanied with him are to pay Rs, 50/- each and again Rs, 50/- is to be paid to the *samaj* by the boy for humiliating the society.
- If divorced, a couple has to pay Rs, 25/- each to the *samaj* as a symbol of respect, because divorce is beyond the norms of the *samaj* (society)
- If anyone haves illicit sexual relation Rs, 25/- by man and Rs, 10/- by a woman. In rap Rs, 25/- and Rs, 12/- to the *samaj*, beyond other expenses as demanded by the victim.

- If have food in the Christian religious family, Muslim or other than Hindu or food restricted by the society, like the beef, fox, cat, dog, beer, vulture etc. Rs, 12/- and the expenditure for the religious consecration.
- For the *agor (agrong) bad* Rs, 25/-, *daokhi bad* Rs, 12/-, for *phongslod bad* Rs, 12.50/-, for *khawali bad* Rs, 5/-, for *khoulbwd bad* Rs, 5/- and
- If anyone repeats the same thing as restricted by society, Rs, 25/- and boycotted from the society.

Today, these amount of fees and fines are changed. In the *nalis* still Rs, 12.50/- is charged. The amount of money is taken differently from village to village and area to area. In the case of crime, fine is charged as per the crime. The newly married couple has to pay Rs, 1000/- to the *sikhlyphwr* (damsels) of the village for separating from bachelor.