

## CHAPTER –I

### INTRODUCTION

The Bodo are tribal ethnic communities of Assam. Great scholar S.K. Chatterji claimed that Bodos came from the great river Huang-Ho and Yang-tsze-Kiang. He identified them as ‘Kiratas’ or ‘Indo-Mongoloid’ and mentioned about their homeland as follows: *“the area of characterisation for the primitive Sino-Tibetan speech appears to have been North-Western China between the head water of the Huang-Ho and Yang-Tse Kiang river area.”*<sup>1</sup>

Now- a- days, the Bodo people are found in every districts of Assam. The Bodo people are the first inhabitants of the Brahmaputra Valley. They are now inhabited of different districts of Assam like Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Udalguri, Sonitpur, Goalpara, Kamrup (Metro & Rural), Dhemaji and Lakhimpur. The Bodo people living in the state of West-Bengal and the Nation of Nepal are called as Mech. The term ‘Bodosa’ which is pronounced as Borosa which means ‘son of Bodo’ was described by the Bodos.

On the other hand, the Hajongs are plain tribes of Assam. The Hajong people are the fourth largest ethnScity in the Meghalaya state. As per the Anthropologists, the Hajongs tribe is Indo-Mongolian race. It is said that the Hajongs migrated from Tibet and they lives in norther part of Cooch Bihar which is located near the Bhutan a place called Hajong.They are tribal people of North-eastern India and Bengal and the nation of Bangladesh. They are settled mostly in some parts of Goalpara and Dhubri districts and in some parts of sub-division of Manakachar (now district). They are settled near Brahmaputra valley.

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<sup>1</sup> Chatterji, Suniti Kumar: Kirati-Jana-Krti (reprinted), the Asiatic society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata, 2007, pp.21

The Hajongs believed that their ancestral place was in Hajo area of present Nalbari district of Assam. The meaning of Hajong can be comprehended as ‘descendents of Hajo’. The Hajongs are indigenous people. The Hajongs are also found in the Garo and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. They also live in the districts of Dhubri, Goalpara, Dhemaji and other districts of upper Assam and into the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Ratan Kumar Rai opined that the term ‘Hajong’ is derived from ‘Harajan’ which means a section of the people who had accepted a new occupation by abandoning the traditional one. According to him ‘Ha’ means to express sorrow and ‘Jan’ means people. The Hajongs were once a part of larger community of tribal people of Assam. In course of time they broke away from the greater community and formed a separate entity by accepting a new occupation.

**Political map showing the inhabitants area of Bodo and Hajong:**



Source: Internet:<https://images.app.goo.gl>

**Figure-1.1**

## **ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE BODO LANGUAGE:**

The Bodos are an ethnically and linguistically branch of Tibeto-Burman language family which is spoken by the Bodo people of North-Eastern India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The Bodo language, a branch of the Tibeto-Burman family is a rich language. The Bodo language is one of 22 scheduled languages given a special constitutional status in India. Bodo language is a major language of the Bodo group under the Assam-Burmese group of language. It shares some common features in respect of vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax with other sister languages of the Bodo group. The Bodo language is derived from Tibeto-Burmese family of language. The Bodo language is a Sino - Tibetan language officially using Devanagiri script.

Bodo language is one the latest forms of development in Assam. The language of Bodos in their mother language is called 'Boro Rao'. Bodos are living in scattered manner and spread throughout the Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Bihar and some adjoining part of outside India like Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Bangladesh, etc. As mentioned by the Madhu Ram Boro "*Boro is the offshoot language of Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese main family itself.*"<sup>2</sup> The Boro language speaking areas of Assam at present are stretching from Dhubri in west to Sadiya in east. Generally, the Bodos of Assam belongs to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family within the great Sino-Tibetan family of languages and racially they are belongs to sub-cast of great Mongoloid family.

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<sup>2</sup> Boro, Madhu Ram: The Historical Development of the Boro Language (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Proyadani Publications, Kamrup, Assam, 2001, 44.

Linguist R. L. Varshney has studied about the Sino-Tibetan group of language family and stated about the Bodo language as a minor language of Tibeto-Burman. He opined that *“this family quite extensive, and consists of two branches Tibeto-Burman and Chinese, Burmese and Tibetan are the two major languages of the former branch but it has also several minor language, such as Garo, Bodo and Naga which are spoken in some eastern region of India.”*<sup>3</sup>

### **ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE HAJONG LANGUAGE:**

The Hajong, originally a Tibeto-Burman language is now considered on Indo-Aryan family language with Tibeto-Burman roots. It is spoken by more than 175,000 ethnic Hajong's in states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal in India and Mymensingh district in Bangladesh. The history of the Hajongs reveal fact regarding their critical passage of time which is not free from controversy. Scholars and even the Hajong people themselves do not agree on their history. Some say that the Hajong originated in the Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh and then migrated to the northern areas of Bangladesh and into India. According to another account, the Hajong came from Tibet as descendents of the Kachari people and settled in the Kamrup area of Assam state for many years (The Bangla Observer: Culture of the Hajong Tribe). *“According to their own traditional belief, they originally inhabited ‘Has Pargana’ or in Hajo area of present Nalbari district. Due to some historical reasons they were force to leave Hajo area and they fled to Garo Hills from where they spread to Mymensing, Rajsahi, Sylhet, etc places of the Bengal”.*<sup>4</sup> According to Mr. Paresh Hajong, a reputed writer hailing from this community, *“the Hajongs, as*

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<sup>3</sup> Varsney, R.L: An introduction text book of Linguistics and phonetics (sixteenth edition), student store, Bareilly, 2005-06, pp. 407.

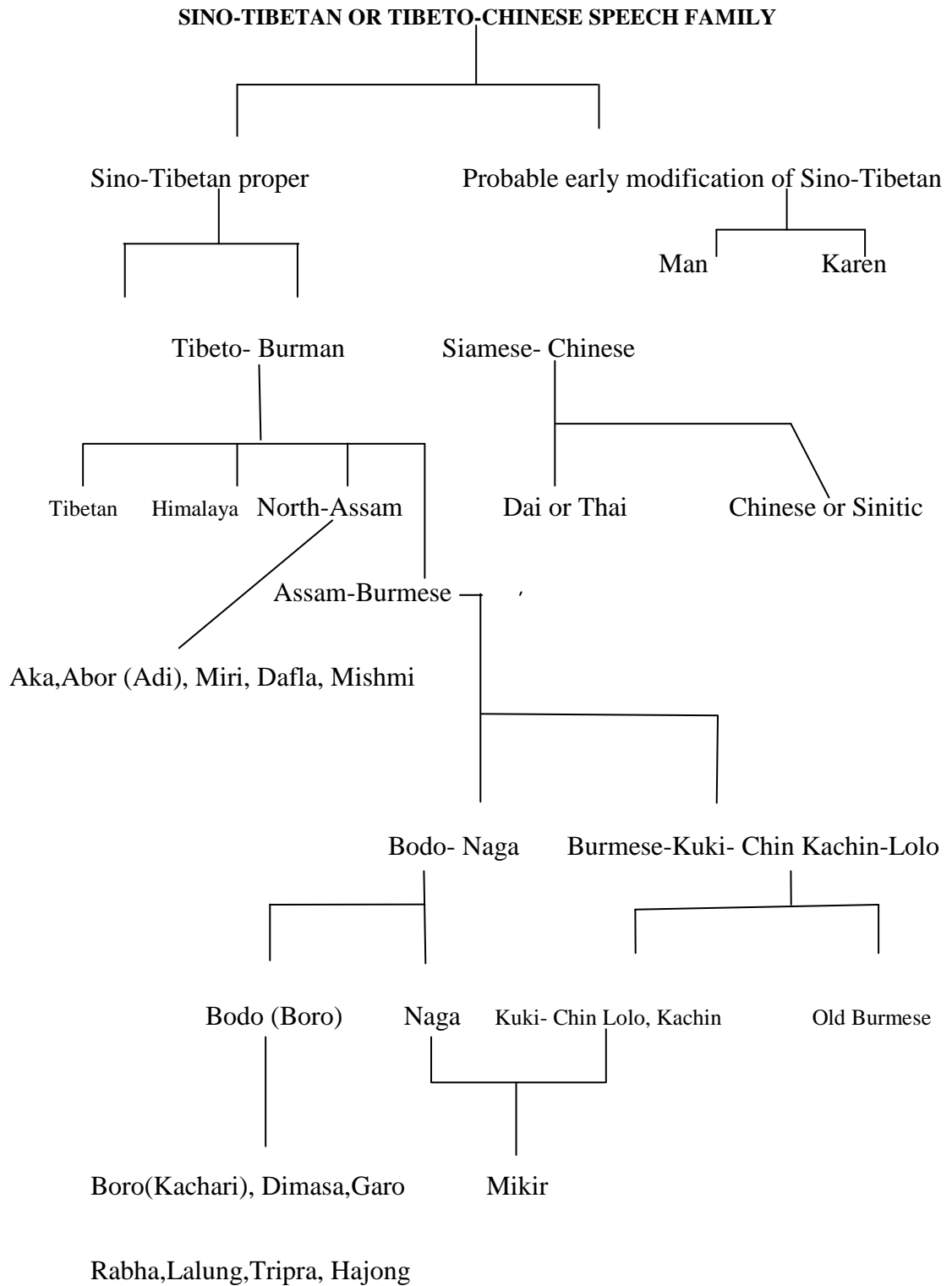
<sup>4</sup> Bordoloi, B.N, Tribes of Assam Part III, P 18

*the traditions say, are the descendants of Kartayabirjarjun, one of the greatest Khastriya kings of the Mahabharata era.”*

A grandson of Hajo founded the Koch kingdom, converted to Hinduism, and took the name Rajbongsi. Many people of the area apparently did the same, while others became Muslim. Those remaining faithful to Hajo began to call themselves “Hajbongsis” which later became “Hajong” “Hajong”’lain that some Mongoldoi tribes came to power in that area in the mid-1400. It is written in the Assamese script and Latin script. It has many Sanskrit loan words. The Hajongs originally spoke a Tibeto - Burman language, but it was largely mixed with Assamese and Bengali.

The language spoken by the Hajong people now may be considered an Indo-Aryan language, this is due to language shift from a Tibeto-Burman language. Old Hajong or Kati Hajong may be related to Garo or Bodo language. The Hajong language is written using both the Latin and Assamese script often for writing Hajong, the Assamese script is used.

A brief tabular representation of the Sino-Tibetan family is given from ‘Linguistic Survey of India’ based on S.K Chatterji’s ‘Kirata-Jana-Kriti’ of languages is shown below-

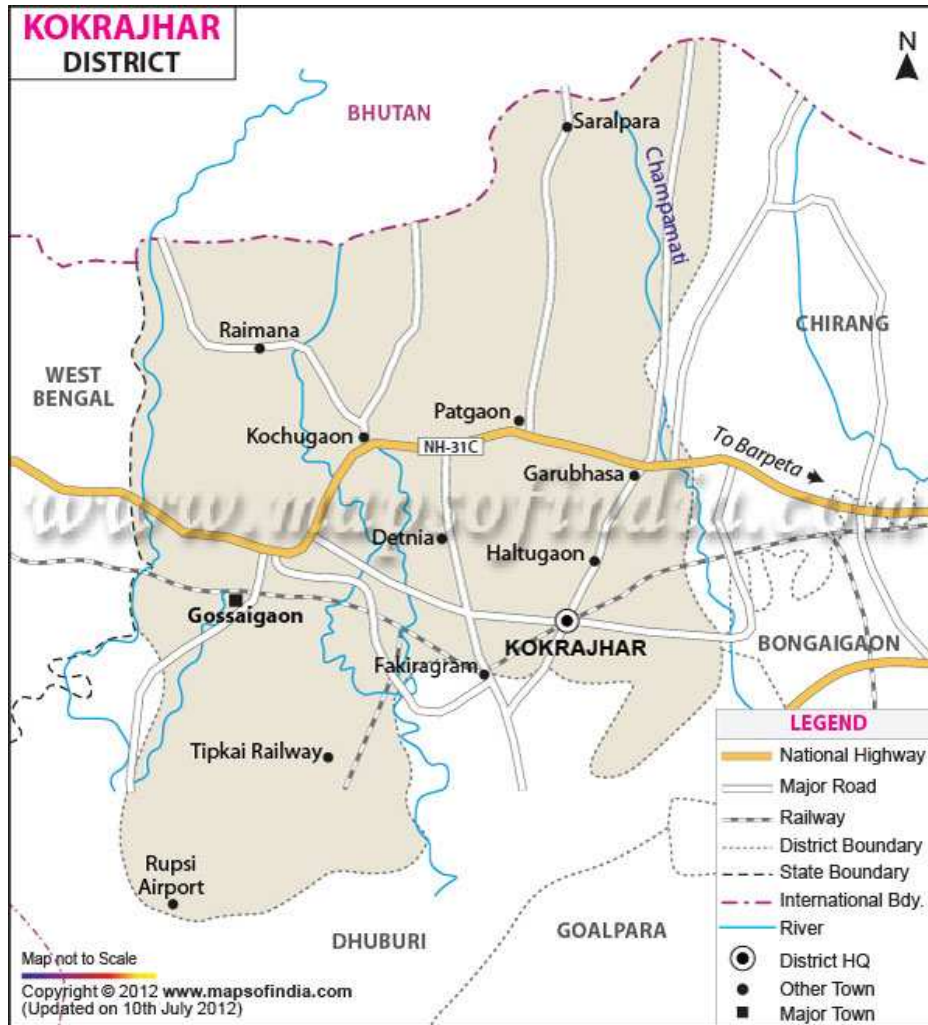


**Chart 1.1**

Chart of the Sino –Tibetan-Chinese speech Family

Source : (Extracted from ‘A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro language’,P.8)

**AREA OF CONCENTRATION AND DEMOGRAPHY OF BODO LANGUAGE:**

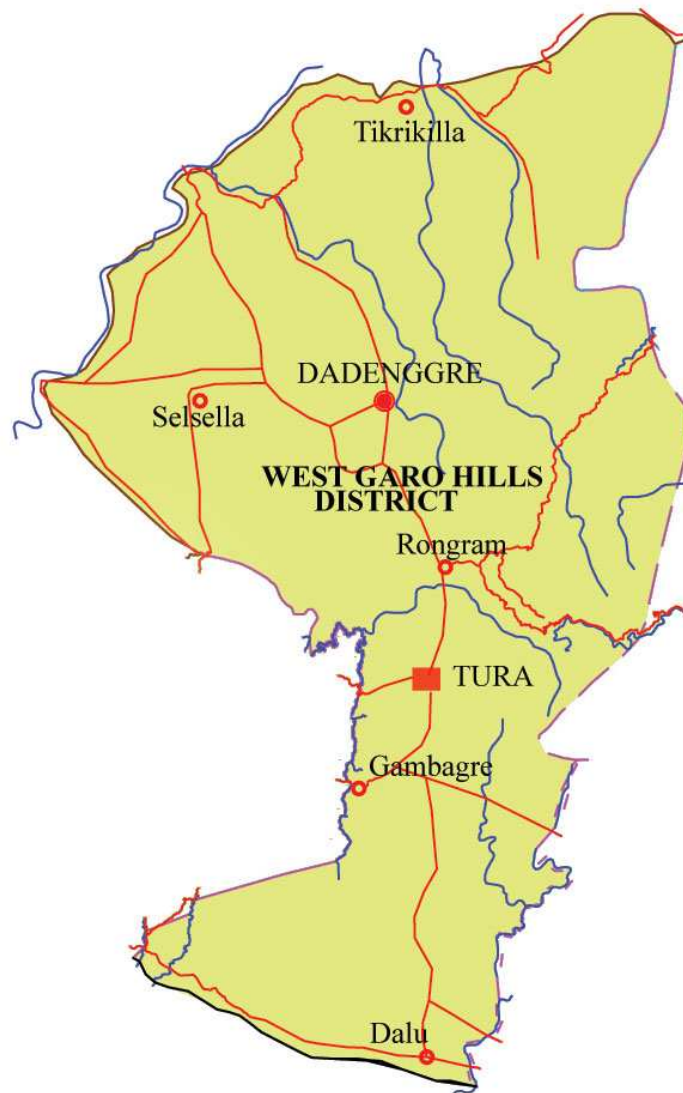


Source: [http:// images.app.goo.gl](http://images.app.goo.gl)

Figure-1.2

The Bodos are an ethnic and linguistic aboriginal group of the Brahmaputra Valley in the North East part of India. They are recognized as a plains tribe in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution. Dhemaji, Udalguri, Chirang, Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Kamrup (Metro& Rural), Sonitpur, Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Kokrajhar of Assam are considered the centre of the Bodo people.

**AREA OF CONCENTRATION AND DEMOGRAPHY OF HAJONG LANGUAGE:**



Source:[https:// images.app.goo.gl](https://images.app.goo.gl)

The Hajong people are tribal people of north eastern India and Bengal. They are the fourth largest ethnicity in Meghalaya. Hajong people are spread out across North East India, West Bengal and Bangladesh. Majority of the Hajong are settled in India. At present the population of Hajongs are more than 150,000 in India and 50,000 in Bangladesh.



The Hajong people are spread out across northeast India and Bangladesh with the majority of the population on the India side of the border. In India, Hajong are found in both the Garo and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, largely along the south west Garo Hills districts of Meghalaya. They also live in the Dhubri and Goalpara districts of lower Assam, Dhemaji and Arunachal Pradesh. In Bangladesh, Hajongs are found in the northern Dhaka division.

### **PRESENT POSITION OF BODO LANGUAGE:**

Bodo is the Sino-Tibetan language spoken primarily by Bodo people of the North Eastern India, Nepal and West Bengal. It is official language of the Bodoland Autonomous Region and co-official language of the state of Assam and India. It is also one of the 22 scheduled languages that are given a special constitutional status in India. From 1963, the Bodo language has been written using the Devanagiri script. Formerly the Bodo language had used Latin and Assamese script.

The Bodo language is closely related to the Dimas language and Tiwa language of Assam. The Bodo speaking areas of Assam stretch from Dhubri in the west to Sadiya in the East. The University Grants Commission has included Bodo as subject in NET examination. Both in Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Assam Public Service Commission, Bodo has been included as subject.

The Bodo language has a total of 22 phonemes: 6 vowels and 16 consonants. The Bodo language use tones to distinguish words. There are three different tones used in Bodo language. They are high medium and low. Bodo is a compulsory subject till class 10 in Bodo tribal areas of Assam. It is a medium of instruction in Bodo primary secondary levels school.

## **PRESENT POSITION OF HAJONG LANGUAGE:**

The Hajong language is written using both Latin and the Assamese script. The Hajong in Bangladesh use Bengali script. Often, for writing, the Assamese script is used. Hajong has 23 consonant phonemes, 8 vowel phonemes and 2 approximants which have some characteristics of consonant. The phonology of Hajong includes some vowel harmony. Hajong language has strong tendency to use postpositions rather than prepositions.

The language spoken by the Hajong people now may be considered as an Indo-Aryan language and it is due to a language shift from a Tibeto-Burman language.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The aims and objectives of proposed research works is to discuss about the use and function of morphological grammatical structures, smallest lexical, affixes found in both the language of the Bodo and Hajong. In case of typology in both the language of the Bodo and the Hajong their similarity will be taken into account. As the Bodo and Hajong are belonging to the same language family, affinities in features and typology, they are found to be fairly to a great extent. In proposed study, all these aspects from a typological point of view will be discussed keeping in view to the Tibeto-Burman typology. The uses and function of morphological grammatical categories will be taken into account.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The proposed study of morphological aspects on Bodos and Hajongs is a comparative study and has great significance for the scholars of language and

linguistic particularly in the area of Tibeto Burman studies. The role of affixes in morphological analysis is undoubtedly considered as greater importance. Though they are dependent or bound in nature no meaningful or extended word can be formed without the exponent of such kind of linguistic feature. It has a major significance in the typology of language. The study has surely conveyed information and knowledge about linguistic features of the language among the study has helped to understand the popularity to the sphere in communities. The study will help in approaching the structure of language and in some case, how it has co-relation with applied linguistics for the improvement of both the language of the Bodos and the Hajongs.

### **HYPOTHESIS:**

Initially in the proposed study some striking hypotheses have been adopted.

They are:

- a) Either it may be used in nominal and verbal category of words.
- b) Suffixes are almost similar.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

For the proposed work data has been collected, from two different sources i.e. primary and secondary. For collecting primary data, different informant of different area and profession have been selected and attempt was made to collect data from their normal conversation using observation method, writing down the affixes when and where it is necessary to collect primary data, conversation with writers and authors have been approached. On the other hand, for secondary data different written documents like books, magazines, newspapers and other have been collected and have been tried to collect affixes. For collecting secondary data, the researcher has visited

K.K. Handique Library, Gauhati University (GU), Department of Bodo library, G.U, Bodo Sahitya Sabha Library, Guwahati and Kokrajhar and other village/town libraries to make the research more authentic.

### **DATA COLLECTION:**

Data collection and identification is a serious task for any one of the researchers. The researchers will never be free from the puzzles and ambiguousness in the front phase of the work. It is a consistent duty to any of the researchers that necessary data need to collect from the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is mainly depended an empirical as well as door to door field investigation. Such kind of data has been gathered from the native speakers or active bearers. In such a context, interview and questionnaire method is mostly applicable. It makes convenient the process of identification of data. The other kinds of data have been gathered from secondary source which are mainly dependent on the published materials such as books on language, literature, culture, history, journals and periodicals, news paper and documentations in any form etc. Necessary reference related to the study has been consulted for verification of data and analysis. Finally for well designing of the study the methodology closely applicable to the research of language and linguistics will be adopted. As the research methodology concerns about scientific planning of research as well as logical designing it aims to follow up the necessary method.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Writers and Scholars have carried out some outstanding on the Bodo and Hajong language and cultures. Rev. S. Endle (1884) and J.D. Anderson (1895) made some primary works on Bodo language and culture. The major research works on

language has done by P.C. Bhattacharya in 1977. 'A Descriptive Analysis of the Bodo language' is Dr. Bhattacharya's credit of research work. He has discussed on the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis of Bodo language on the other hand, Madhuram Boro has also made distinctive study on the Bodo language. The results of study are: "The Boro structure" (1991) "The historical development of Bodo language" (2007) and so on Phukan Ch. Basumatary has credit of research work on Bodo language "An Introduction to the Bodo Language"(2005), "Boro Raoni Mohor Kanthi" (2010) and "Boro Rao arw Thunlai" are result of his consistent study. Some outstanding works has also made by Swarna Prabha Chainary who has credit of research "Bodo and Garo: A comparative linguistic Analysis" is a doctoral thesis on Bodo and Garo language. She has written Boro grammar (Boro Raokhanti) and some other papers on the languages of Bodo - Garo group of the NE. India. For example- Raoni Mohor Part I, II, III are worth mentioning in this regard. Scholars have also carried out outstanding study on the Hajong language and culture etc. Chakraborty Kanta has done research work, "Hajong Janagosthi Aru Teolor Bhasa Ek Bislesanatmak Adhuayan", "A demogenetic study of the pati Rabha and the Hajong of Kamrup district Assam" by Joyshri Bhuyan, "A socio culture study of the Hajong of Assam" by Nabin Chandra Suthar, "Age changes in some somatometric characters of the Hajong of Meghalaya" by Hiralal Das, "The Rabhas and Hajongs a socio political analysis since 1950 by Prasanta Chakrabarty" are the specimens of research work.

## **.MORPHOLOGY:**

Morphology is a branch of grammar which relates with the structure or forms of words. The internal structure of words is studied in morphology.<sup>5</sup> According to David Crystal, "*Morphology is the branch of grammar where the structure or forms of words through the use of morphe construct is studied.*"<sup>6</sup> In broad sense, morphology is the study of the patterns of word-forms. It studies how the words are formed, where they originate from, what their grammatical forms are, what the functions of prefixes and suffixes in the formation of words are and on what basis the parts of speech of particular language are formed, how the systems of gender, number, plural, function and how and why the word-forms change.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Basumatary, Phukan: An Introduction to the Boro Language, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, p.31

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.31

<sup>7</sup> Varshey, RL: An Introductory Text Book of Linguistics and Phonetics, (sixteenth edition), Student Store, Bareilly, pp.129