

## CHAPTER 4

### SOCIETY AND ORAL HISTORY IN BODO FOLK LITERATURE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Bodos have so many oral histories which are orally transmitted generation to generation. In the society, the people should not understand to preserve the oral histories that is why some of these were death and some of these were survive. The socio-cultural pictures like events, incidence, way of living, peace and sorrow, system of work etc were reflected in the oral history.

#### 4.2 BALLAD

The word Ballads is called “*solo methai*” in Bodo. In English the Ballad, this tells a story or events of a song. So, the term Ballad is from the Provencal ballad, a dancing-song and “ballad and ballade both originated in the poetry which accompanied dancing and implied musical declamation in a collective refrain.”<sup>1</sup> In Bodo there is no exact word of the Ballad. So, in Bodo language it is a long narrative of a story. Therefore it may be a single story, an entire tale or a single event. In Oxford Dictionary defined, Ballad is “A simple, spirited poem in short stanzas, narrating some popular story”<sup>2</sup>. Kittredge describes Ballad as “A song that tells a story, or to take the other point of view- a story told in song. More formally, it may be defined as a short narrative poem, adapted for singing, simple in plot and metrical structure, divided into stanza, and characterized by complete impersonality.”<sup>3</sup> According to Ker observation, “It is not a narrative poem only; it is a narrative poem lyrical in form or a lyrical poem with a narrative body in it”.<sup>4</sup> Gerould writes, “A Ballad is always a narrative, is always sung to a rounded melody and is always learned from the lips of others rather than by reading”.<sup>5</sup> The above mentioned definitions it is clear that the Ballad is a narrative poem which tells a story and is of unknown authorship.

The folk literature of the Bodo is said to be rich in respect of ballads, but they have hardly been preserved and recorded. Only the fragments of a number of ballads have been

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<sup>1</sup> Goswami, P. Dutta. (2015). Ballads and Tales of Assam. Guwahati: Gauhati University Press. p-7

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from, Ibid. p-7

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from, Ibid. p-7

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from, Ibid. p-8

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from, Boro, Anil. (2010). Folk Literature of Bodos. Guwahati: Mahamaya Graphics. p-142

preserved. In Bodo folk literature, there are three types of Ballad, such as Mythical Ballad, Historical Ballads and Realistic Ballad. Specially, Mythical Ballads are recited as *Kherai* worship as well as chanting, *Zara Phagla* songs (the human incarnation of *Monshing Shing* or *Bathou* God) and *Phuthli Haba* song (doll marriage). The Historical and Legendary Ballads have been depicts the heroic deeds of the legendary Bodo warriors Bachiram, Daoharam, Gambari sikla, Birgwsri sikla and Cheobar Zwhwlao who fought heroic battles against the Bhutiyas and Mughal invaders.<sup>6</sup> The Ballad of Amla-Ciba may be recognised as Historical Ballad or Realistic Ballad in Bodo.<sup>7</sup>

There are following some of the Bodo Ballads which reflects important social picture of Bodo society-

### **Mythical Ballad**

The songs and *mantras* (chanting) chanted during *Kherai* worship appear to contain no story, but they contain references to the Bodo Gods and Goddesses who occupy their world view and mythology.<sup>8</sup>

For example, the following charms contain references to the Gods and Goddesses and indirectly narrate their stories:

*aham mahadeo maha phrabhu  
phagla thakur, aie bormani phwrza phwrni  
sainasi thakur  
bole he aphaphwr aiephwr  
wjwng swr dongbaow  
budaru raja dong, sali mainao dong  
asu mainao dong, bwrai raja dong, zwmwn zwla  
zekhai mara, kholai mara, gambari  
dwhwmsri, mwmsri dong  
he aiephwr aphaphwr  
nwngswr ajikhalini devotha nonga  
orai dinni devotha  
dohai de aphaphwr aiephwr  
gamini aie aphaphwrkhrou such bai such khalam  
nwngni phisa phisou mwjagwi lakhinangwn.<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Mochahary, Hemanta. (2014). Unpublished Thesis- "The reflection of society in Bodo and Assamese Folk Literature: A comparative study". p-105

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from, Das, Hemanta kr. (2008). Unpublished Thesis- "Asomiya aru Boro Lokogeet: Eti Tulunamulog Adhiyan". p-300

<sup>8</sup> Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p- 143

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from, Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-143

In English,

Oh! lord mahadeo  
 oh pagala thakur, mother bormani, prajapati  
 sainasi thakur  
 oh you mothers and fathers  
 who are here on this side?  
 there are budaru raja and Sali lakhimi  
 and ahu lakhimi and bura raja  
 also there are zwmwn zwla, jakoimara, kholoimara  
 and gambari, dwhwnsri and mwnsri  
 oh you mothers and fathers  
 you are not deities of today  
 you are ancient ones  
 I charge you, oh fathers and mothers  
 to keep our villagers in happiness and prosperity  
 keep their children safe.

Here may also mention examples from the songs of *Phuthli Haba* (doll marriage) as specimens of the Ballads of Magic. The songs of doll marriage extant among the Bodos recount the tale of the marriage of *Raona Raoni*, who is believed to be the first man and woman to be wedded.<sup>10</sup> Following songs of doll marriage which recount the marriage of *Raona and Raoni*:-

*debia phwthangw, debia phwthwiyw  
 debi nongabla dinaonw thwiyw  
 nokhrangnifrai namainayalai swrmwn?  
 raguni-phaguni wrwi hwnnanwi bungnaiswi  
 debi gangkhana, debi gangkhini  
 ram chandra dwrbini jangkhlajwng  
 namainanwi horgwn raguni-phagunikhou  
 horpha bwini jinwi phathalikhou bona janan thangbai  
 horseao snigang (seven) phathali bonanwi jajubnaiswi  
 aio basa raguni-phaguni  
 ma khalamkhw?  
 mwngis nwgwrao, aphad saliao or gwilia!  
 bima jabla phisaya naina thaya jayw  
 singao gwiya ha, sayao gwiya satha  
 sanwi bwini thangnw nwnswrw  
 gosaini nwgwrao!  
 ma bwrwi thangnw nwnswrw  
 thangablwbw jaya nwnswrw  
 Raguni-Phaguni nwi bwini lai  
 aio thangnswi thangnswi!  
 dinwibw thangw, gabwnbw thangw  
 jinwi bwswr gidinbai  
 aio abo raguni!*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p-146

*bobe lamathing thangnangou?*  
*anan gurua- anan gurua*  
*hagra gejerao- anan gurua*  
*wrwndandali- anan gurua*  
*“raguni-phaguni nwi bwinijwng”*  
*anandi gurua raguni-phaguninw*  
*lama khwnthina horgwn*  
*naga-nagia gorongthing swanwi horbai*  
*phathalphuri jaigakhou mwnphinbai nama abo raguni?*  
*phaguni agwi mwnphinbai*  
*naga-naga-naga-nagi-nagi-nagi.<sup>11</sup>*

In English,

*debi* sustains, *debi* destroys  
 one dies even in day light in his absence  
 who were those that descended from heaven?  
 reply came: *raguni-phaguni*  
*debi gangkhana, debi gangkhani*  
 Ram Chandra will descend them down with  
 the ladder of *dorbi*  
 sister *raguni* consumed twelve leaves over laid  
 seven leaves in one night  
 oh *Raguni-Phaguni* dear  
 what have you done?  
 there is no light in the world of man and in the court  
 when the mother eats something  
 the daughter cannot sit idle  
 there is no land (soil) below, no umbrella above  
 twin sisters- thou goest to  
 the city of the gods;  
 how do you go there?  
 but you can't help going too  
*raguni-phaguni* sisters twin are going  
 they moved on the first day and the next day  
 whole twelve years they moved  
 oh sister (elder one) *raguni*  
 which road to take?  
 almighty god, oh almighty god  
 in the wilderness  
*Raguni-Phaguni*, oh sisters dear  
 goest thou to the city of the gods!  
*anandi* guru will show the way to *raguni-phaguni*  
*naga-nagi* sent them through the holes  
 have we reached the nether world once more  
 oh sister (elder) *Raguni* dear?  
 yes *Phaguni*, we have reached  
*naga-naga-naga-nagi-nagi-nagi.*

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<sup>11</sup> Basumatary, Baneswar. (1993). Phuthli Bibah (Laithun vol-III). Kokrajhar: Book Binding Industry&Press. pp-60-61

## Historical or Legendary Ballad

In the Bodo society there are fragments of Historical or Legendary Ballad. Among these fragments of Ballad the *Bashiram zwhwlao's* (hero) ballad is prominent. It is a legendary ballad which depicts *Bashiram zwhwlao* as a warrior. Following ballad specify that while *Bashiram* hero goes to fight against the Bhutias in that moment girls are encouraging him. Like-

*danhang suhang ada Bashiram san mwkhang  
akhra barini akhra bugdao  
ada akhra bugdao  
hajw khoroao daoha nangnw  
goraiya mabar jwgdao  
danhang suhang danhang suhang  
ada Bachiram san mwkhang  
thaga thanglaigwn hajw khoroao daoha nangnw  
thwia thwilaigwn hajw khoroni gongar subaphwr  
danhang suhang ada Bashiram san mwkhang.<sup>12</sup>*

In English,

cut and spear into them  
o' my elder brother, *Bashiram*  
your face is dazzling like the sun  
charge your horse quickly  
lash it with the cane  
the cane that is freshly brought  
from the cane grove  
speed up to the battle that is going on  
on the top of the hill  
cut and spear into them  
o' my elder brother, *Bashiram*  
with you sunlight face  
to that battle on the hill-top  
those who have not yet marched  
will all now march  
to death the top hill's Bhutiyas  
cut and spear into them  
o' my elder brother, *Bashiram*, sunlight face.

It is known that the Ballad reflecting the shield, sword, animals like horse, elephants are essentials of war. So, in the battle to help *Bachiram* hero another elder brother *Daoharam* along with sons of community heros are requested. The Ballad is as-

*phwi wi Boro phisaphwr nwngswrw phwi*

<sup>12</sup> Boro, M.R. (1995). Boro Loko-Sahitya Geet-Pot. Hajo: Priyadini Printing Press. p-7

*daoha nangnw thangdini*  
*dahal thungri lananwi bikha phwrdannanwi*  
*duthangphwrkhou hwswdini*  
*ada Bashiram zwhwlao*  
*nwnglai goraya dabrailangdw*  
*akhraya bugdaonanwi nwgw hwswangdw*  
*naihor honwi naihor duthangphwrkhou*  
*hailalai huilalai phwilaigou*  
*naga nanglaigwn hajw gophayao*  
*thwia thwilaigwn duthangphwra*  
*derhalaigwn jwng Borophwra*  
*dagi ada Bashiram zwhwlao dagi nwgw*  
*zwhwlaoni phisa, birni phisa nwnglai utrinw hagwn*  
*ada daoharam zwhwlao nwngbw daogalangdw*  
*nwngbw lamayao bengsohwidw.<sup>13</sup>*

In English,

come o' *Boro* sons, you are come  
 to go to fight  
 to take shield and sword with strong hearth  
 to move enemy  
 dear elder brother *Bashiram zwhwlao*  
 you ride the horse quickly  
 with cane stick you follow them  
 to look that enemies are coming rhythmic movement  
 and to fight them at the hidden corner in the hill  
 and to death enemies  
 and we *Boro* people are win  
 don't be afraid dear elder *Bashiramzwhwlao*  
 you are a son of hero, son of fighter you are win the battle  
 dear elder brother *Daoharamzwhwlao* you too move forward  
 you too blockade the road.

Again in another Ballad reflects that to protect the motherland with the help of shield and sword. The Ballad is as-

*phwi, phwidw Boro phisaphwr*  
*nwngswrwbw phwidw daohayao thangdini*  
*bikha phwrdannanwi akhayao thungri dwinanwi*  
*hajw gophayao daoha nangnw*  
*thwia thwilaigwn suthur santriphwra*  
*phwidw boibw khouse jadw.<sup>14</sup>*

In English,

come come *Boro* sons  
 you too come to go to battle  
 with hearth with sword

<sup>13</sup> Brahma, M.M. (2011). Boroni Khuga Methai. Kokrajhar: Mahamaya printing works. pp-02-03

<sup>14</sup> Boro, M.R. Op.cit. p-8

and to fight them at the hidden corner in the hill  
to death enemy soldiers  
come together be unite.

Therefore, in Bodos have fragments of Ballads in *Gambari sikla* and *Birgwsri sikla*. In ancient Assam the *Gambari sikla* (heroine) was only one women merchant of *gambari* woods which have carried a story in Boro society. She fought against immigrants (mughal) by riding horse with the help of swords. The Ballad such as-

*swrba Bangal phwibai*  
*malaini deshkhon sekho phwibai*  
*dagi dagi rouniaphwr*  
*dong jwnghabw Gambari sikla*  
*jenthara jwngbw biswrjwng alamala.*<sup>15</sup>

In English,

some unknown immigrants have come  
to invade other's country  
don't be afraid oh' soldiers  
we have *Gambarisikla* among us  
we shall never be defeated by them.

On the horse back with sword like Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and *Gambari* heroine which fought against immigrants (mughal). Hence, like *Gambari sikla* another heroine *Birgwsri sikla* too fought against Mughal's commander in chief Ram Singh and this kind of Ballad is too found in Bodo society.

In Historical Ballad, the *Seobar zhwlaos* (hero) Ballad are there in Bodo. He was a Lawyer. Before pre India Independent with the help of British soldiers he defeated the Bhutiyas. The success of *Seobar* hero's Ballad-

*mena-muna gongarphwr wngkharbwgou*  
*Seobar zhwlaokhou butharnw phalw phalw*  
*Seobar zhwlaoa lananwi British Rounia*  
*phwigou gongar subakhon gaoharnw phari phari.*<sup>16</sup>

In English,

the Bhutiyas are coming  
to kill *Seobar zhwlaos*.  
the *Seobar zhwlaos* too came with British soldier  
to shoot the Bhutiyas.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p-9

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p-10

## Realistic Ballad

*Amla* and *Siba*'s Ballad is too recognize is as Historical Ballad. Thus some scholar said too it may be called as a realistic ballad. When killed by police on behalf of Boro Language's Roman Script Movement in 1974. The *Amlaram Boro* and *Sibaram Boro* were the first martyrs of Roman Script Movement in Barpeta Road. Hence, these memories an emotional fragments of Ballad to generate. The fragments of Ballad is as follows-

*aio, Amla-Sibani jiu gwmalangbai  
roman hangkhwni hangamayao  
buhumni gejerao gaojwng lwgwse  
harikhou sinai hwbai mungkhlong jananwi.*<sup>17</sup>

In English,

oh' *Amla-Siba* are no more  
in Roman Script Movement  
in the world with too own  
to recognize the Boro community by martyr.

## Imaginary Ballad

Among in Bodo Imaginary Ballad earliest in orally transmitted the Ballad of *Baobuli* is as s fragments of Ballad.<sup>18</sup> Earliest the Bodos are called *Baobuli* is a king of wind. The Bodo people are expert in harvest. They are well known like an old technique to use fertilizer to good harvest. Thus the depict of tale- one a day an old man with village young go to visit new land for harvest and ready to temporary settlement for cultivation. Later than reaching a forest land they are fire to jungle and trees. And the fire is become too much as a result to invite the King *Baobuli*. The fragments of Ballad is-

*riu riu riu riu  
aio, he Batha raja derhabai  
Borma raja jenbai  
phwidw he Baobuli maharaja  
sohai hwphwidw.*<sup>19</sup>

In English,

the tune of wind (*riu riu riu riu*)  
oh' the king of *Batha* is win  
the king of *Borma* is defeat  
come o' King *Baobuli*  
to help us.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p-10

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from, Das, Hemanta Kr. Op.cit. p-302

<sup>19</sup> Boro, M.R. Op.cit. p-15



### 4.3 MYTHS

The oral narratives which told about past story and in truthful manners are called myth. It is an important branch of prose narratives which are accepted to be true and cited as authority in situations involving ignorance, doubt and disbelief. Myth is a story presented as having accoutred in a previous age explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs etc.<sup>20</sup> According to Bascom defines, “Myths are prose narratives which in the society, in which they are told, are considered to be truthful account of what happened in the remote past.”<sup>21</sup> And he says, Myths are always associated with theology and ritual and are embodiment of dogma and they are usually sacred.<sup>22</sup>

Myths are mostly related to ritual and religion. They tell us about the origin of the world, man and nature and also about the gods and goddesses and their teachings. There are myths or mythical tales in Bodo recounting the story of creation and origin of the world and man. Some myths found in the Bodo oral tradition narrate the origin of natural phenomena.<sup>23</sup> There are so many mythical tales extant among the Bodos. These are- myths about the creation of the universe, human beings, gods and a goddesses, ghosts and spirits, natural objects, birds and animals etc. and also stories about the creation of the musical instruments which are closely connected with the religious ceremonies and festivals. Some stories are related with the origin of the social systems, social customs and traditions.<sup>24</sup>

The mythical tales have been cited as examples:

#### a) I. Myths of Creation

Among the *Bodo-Kacharis* themselves there is a belief that they have been created by the great God ‘*Aham Guru*’ on this earth. The following are the myths of the creation of the universe of human beings, gods and goddesses, ghosts and spirits, natural objects, birds, animals etc.

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted from, Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-155

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from Ibid. p-155

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from, Brahma, Kameswar. (2015). A study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos. Delhi: Asian Offset Printers. p-117

<sup>23</sup> Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-156

<sup>24</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. Op.cit. p-118

The God *Aham Guru* initially created two birds: one male and another female. The female bird laid three eggs. Then there was a vice from the God *Aham Guru* that three different lives would be born from the three eggs in course of time after a long gap. The female bird began to sit on the eggs. But thousands of years passed sitting on the eggs and there was no sign of birth of any life. The female bird broke an egg out of curiosity, but no sign of life could be seen inside the egg. Then the female bird became sorry. Suddenly there came another heavenly voice with an advice not to break the other two eggs, otherwise the universe would be destroyed. The voice advised the female bird to spread the broken pieces of the egg here and there. As it was done, from the broken pieces evil spirits, ghosts, various insects, plants and trees were born. The newly born creatures, the spirits and ghosts roamed about helplessly finding no food for them.

The earth was not created by the God till that period. The God *Aham Guru* felt the necessity of the creation of the Earth after the creation of some creatures. Then the God ordered the birds and other small creatures to bring soil from the bottom of water, unfortunately none could bring the soil from the nether world, which was well guarded by the watchmen of the king of the nether world. The God *Aham Guru* sent two old fishes *Magur-Maguri* to the nether world to bring the soil.

The old fishes *Magur-Maguri* went to that and collected as much soil as they could but, on the way they were caught red-handed by the guards and were heavily punished. On their return *Magur-Maguri* died on the way and remained untraced. Then the God *Aham Guru* sent the birds and other creatures to find out the whereabouts *Magur-Maguri*. After a long search the crow found the old *Magur-Maguri* lying dead and informed the God *Aham Guru* accordingly. Having the news of the death of *Magur-Maguri* the God *Aham Guru* sent the mongoose to the heaven to fetch the ‘death stick’ (*mora laothi*) and the ‘life stick’ (*jia laothi*) from his bed room. The common moina (*daosri*) was sent to bring the ‘fan of sorrow’ (*dukhuni gisib*) and the ‘fan of peace’ (*sukhuni gisib*), while the parrot was sent to fetch leaves of the ‘*lairanglai*’ (a kind of dwarf plant leaf). The dead bodies of *Magur-Maguri* were first beaten with the ‘death stick’ and then with the ‘life stick’. Soon the ‘*Magur-Maguri*’ came back to life. The God *Aham Guru* enquired them about their experience of their trip to the nether world. *Magru-Maguri* related their experience. The God *Aham Guru* was requested to create the earth with the small quantity of the soil sticking to the heads of the ‘*Magur-Maguri*’. The God consented to do the same. The Bodo Kacharis believe that as the Earth was created with a small quantity of soil, and thus the

area of land is smaller than the area of water. After creating the Earth the *Aham Guru* sent a small bird (*dao thifling*) to test the soil with her legs and to see if the earth had become hard by the rays of the sun. The small bird informed the God *Aham Guru* after testing properly that the earth was not yet hard. Then the God levelled the earth. At the time of levelling some portion remained high and some low. The high portions became the hills and the low portions the plains, the rivers, ditches, etc.

After many years had passed human beings were born from the other two eggs. That was the beginning of the human beings on this earth and the Bodo Kacharis are descendants of those human beings born from the two eggs. From the first egg '*Mwnsing sing Bwrai*' (male) and '*Mwnsing sing Burwi*' (female) were born and from the second egg '*Diba Bwrai*' (male) and '*Dibi Burwi*' (female) were born. Just after their birth the four human beings desired to go to heaven. But heaven was meant only for those who were free from any kind of sin. The God *Aham Guru* however allowed them to go to heaven with the warning that during the journey if any one of them looked back then he or she would fall down on the earth. On this condition '*Diba Bwrai*' and '*Dibi Burwi*' and '*Mwnsing sing Bwrai*' and '*Mwnsing sing Burwi*' started for heaven. When they had reached mid-way, there was some quarrel on the earth among the creatures. Hearing the noise of the quarrel *Diba Bwrai* and *Dibi Burwi* looked back and all of a sudden they fell down on the earth. After few days they approached the God *Aham Guru* and requested him to provide them with enough food. In reply the God *Aham Guru* told them, "The children of your original human beings '*Mwnsing sing Bwrai*' and '*Mwnsing sing Burwi*' would come to live on this earth. You will get worship from them and you will be their saviours." So, '*Mwnsing sing Bwrai*' and '*Mwnsing sing Burwi*' were the first human beings created by God *Aham Guru* and their children are believed to be the ancestors of the different groups of human beings, the Bodo Kacharis being one such groups.<sup>25</sup>

One other myth have found in Bodo Kacharis which tell about the origin of the God and the human beings. Below following the myth is as-

## II.

In the earliest there was neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars in the universe. The *Adi-Anadi Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* (the almighty) also remained silent. Once in a fine

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<sup>25</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. Op.cit. pp-118-120

holy moment, *Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* desired to take a form and to lead a life in that form. Suddenly a deep feeling originated in his heart and he uttered loudly: “*laoba laoswm, khaoba khaoswm, ada gwswm dwiao barswm.*” (with the five working organs and five principles of knowledge to enter into the sea of social life). And with this voice a great figure with light appeared in the air. As *Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* appeared in his full figure he is known as ‘*Sibrai*’. From the mouth of ‘*Sibrai*’ the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and the rivers, the birds, the insects, and the beasts were created.

After the creation of the universe *Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* created the human beings and the deities. While the *Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* completed the figures of both the human beings and the deities and started to give life by giving water of immortality to the human figure from a pot made of stone, *Anan Gosai Binan Gosai* was disturbed by the Satan and he failed to give water from the pot of stone. He was compelled to give water from the leaves of arum (Bodo= *thaso*) to the figures of the human beings, while to those of the gods he was able to sprinkle water from the pot of stone. So, the gods became immortal and the human beings became mortal.<sup>26</sup>

This myth is also illuminate that the Bodo Kacharis origin of their own race.

b) Myths about the origin of the *Kherai* worship and dance

(A story of Jara Phagla)

Once upon a time there was an old man. His name was Jara Phagla. People called him phagla jokingly, but he was not phagla (mad). He had five sons, who were all grown up. During the course of time all the sons of the old man were married. But as the family grew enormously in size, the old man found it difficult to maintain the family. His granary became empty. So, one day he asked his sons to go in search of fertile land and set up a farm there. His obedient sons did accordingly. They went in search of fertile land for cultivation and started farming far away from home. The old man here in charge of his original place was supervising his family and his daughter in-laws. He loved them as every old man and guardian in the family does. Of course he liked one of them best. Her name was Mongli. She was the youngest of the daughter in-laws. He loved her because she was not only beautiful but also she was expert in household activities. The old man wanted her to remain near him. He took excessive care of what she had done and what she had eaten.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp-120-121

This type of behaviour on the part of the old man created a misconception in her mind. She misinterpreted his intention and being alarmed fled away one day early at dawn. Finding her missing, the old man went in search of her and moved from place to place. He could not find out her where about. But he did not take rest. He went on searching for Mongli. He forgets to take food. He forgot to take care of his dress and health. So people called him phagla (a mad man). After many days the old man dreamt a dream. An old man appeared before him in dream and told him to perform the *Kherai puja* with the help of the musical instruments like *kham* (drum), *serja* (violin), *siphung* (flute) and *jotha* (cymbal). The old man invited all his sons and performed a grand *Kherai* worship in the night of full moon, as the musical instruments were played, a woman appeared there from somewhere and began to dance as the *Doudini*. This woman was non but Mongli, the lost daughter in-law of the old man. This is how the *Kherai* was originated. The old man who performed the *Kherai* worship was *Manshing sing Bwrai* and the old man appearing in dream was *Bathou Bwrai*.<sup>27</sup>

This mythical tale is widely extant among the Bodo human society. Another mythical tale also found in Bodos, such as *Alari Damra* story as recounting the origin of the *Kherai* worship and *Kherai* dance.

#### c) Myths about Natural Phenomena

In the Bodo society there is a creation myth recounting the origin of thunder and lightning. This mythical tale narrating the story of marriage between a brother and his younger sister, recounts the origin of natural phenomena like thunder and lightning. The tale is as follows:

In ancient past an elder brother with his younger sister lived in a village. They became grown up and arrived at the age of marriage. The elder brother secretly fell in love with his younger sister. He fixed up a date to marry her. She was completely in the dark about the marriage. In their courtyard paddy was exposed to the sun to get it fit for husking. Their grandmother was driving away the birds that came down on the courtyard to eat the paddy. "Go away, you birds, do not eat our paddy. Our grand son and granddaughter, *Raona* and *Raoni* are to be married soon. The paddy is meant for their marriage celebration (feast)." *Raoni* was surprised at these words of her grandmother. In

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<sup>27</sup> Boro, Anil. Op.cit. pp-157-158

order to save herself from her wicked elder brother, she flew away to the sky. *Raona* saw his sister and followed her. *Raoni* showed him her back (hip) and abused him bitterly in the name of their mother. She flew above the clouds. Out of shame and anger, *Raona* began to roar, *Raoni* showed him her back and that became the sparkle of lightning on the clouds. The voice of *Raona* became the roaring of thunder.<sup>28</sup>

There are also mythical tales in Bodo society recounting the origin of the rivers and other natural phenomena.

#### d) Myths about musical instruments

There is a mythical tale extant among the Bodo society narrating the origin of the musical instruments like *senja* (violin), *siphung* (flute).

Once upon a time there was an old man named *Khoria-bwrai*. He had two sons. The name of the elder son was *Dhansing*. The name of the younger son was *Mansing*. One day early in the morning he got up and got himself ready for ploughing in the field. At that time he heard the cock crowing in a strange sound. The cock said as it went on crowing repeatedly for a number of times, "One who eats my head will be the king." The old man was surprised to hear it. He wanted to prove it whether what the cock said was true or not. So he killed the cock and toasted its flesh in the fire. Then he left for the paddy field to plough. He instructed his wife to keep the toasted meat preserved until he returned from ploughing. But his two sons came back hungry after playing and consumed all the meat without even bothering to ask their mother. When the old woman discovered it, she became alarmed that the angry old man would kill the two innocent sons for this fault of theirs. So she instructed them to flee away before their father arrived. Accordingly, they ran away to a far off place crossing the jungles and rivers. They were continuously running for seven days and seven nights. *Mansing*, the younger brother became tired and thirsty. So *Dhansing*, the elder brother went in search of water. But he could not come back with water to his brother. As he went near a pond to bring water he was instructed by the heron king to mount on his back. As soon as he mounted on his back, the heron-king flew swiftly past to the capital of a king who died the last night. The courtiers and ministers who were in search of a new king crowed *Dhansing* to be the king of the country. In this way what the cock said proved to be true. The elder brother was fortunate enough to consume the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp-164-165

head of the cock. But the younger brother remained there in the jungle in the midst of wilderness. After some days he saw in his dream that his brother had become a king. So he went in search of his brother. But his brother (now a king) could not recognise him. So he had to lead a miserable life as a cowherd of the king. He recalled the days of his past and began to weep as he tended the cattle in the field. He dreamt a dream one day. A *sijou* (euphorbia plant) tree appeared before him and told him to do one thing to get rid of his sorrows and sufferings. He was instructed in his dream that he should fell the tree and makes a *serja* out of it. He dreamt the same dream for three consecutive days. He did accordingly. He was instructed by the *sijou* tree in the dream how to make the musical instrument. He collected the skin of *hargila* (hadidogla), the screw of *bijou* tree, the stand (*ghora*) of odal tree, the string of horse's mane to make the instrument *serja*. He learned how to play on the *serja* and turned melodious tunes. He became famous as a musician. People came to know about his supernatural power to create miracles with the help of the *serja*. He could usher in rain and thunder, river to earth and new leaves in the branches of trees. The king somehow came to know about his power and invited him. *Mansing* went to the king's court and played on the *serja*. He narrated the tragic story of his own life to the accompaniment of the tune of *serja*. The king was highly impressed by his recital. He came to know that the performer was no other than his younger brother. He donated a half of his own kingdom to him and married him to a beautiful maiden. They lived happily together.<sup>29</sup>

This mythical tale narrates the origin of *serja*, a musical instrument of the Bodos. There are also mythical tales in the Bodos narrating the origin of the musical instruments. E.g. - *siphung* (flute) and other musical instruments like *kham* (drum) and *jotha* (cymbal), but this myth does not contain elaborate description as to the origin of other instruments.

#### 4.4 LEGENDS

Legend is another important sub genre of oral/prose narratives. Oxford Dictionary defines; "Legend is a story from ancient times about people and events that may or may not be true".<sup>30</sup> According to Grimm's characterized, "The legend is related to the Marchen; it is localized, down-to-earth, and has historic validity".<sup>31</sup> According to Maria Leach, "The

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp-161-162

<sup>30</sup> Ahmed, Kasim Ali. (2012). Folklore of Assam. Guwahati: EBH Publishers. p-61

<sup>31</sup> Dorson, R.M. ed. (1972). "Folklore and Folklife". Degh, Linda. 'Legend Genres'. London: The University of Chicago Press Ltd. p-73

line between myth and legend is often vague; the myth has its principal actors the gods. The legend is told as true; the myth's veracity is based on the belief of its hearer in the gods who are its characters".<sup>32</sup> In Bascom's opinion, "Legend are prose narratives which like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today. Legends are more often secular than sacred and their characters are human". Legends recount the tale of wars, victories and heroic exploits of the legendary heroes and heroines. Besides telling the tales of buried treasure, saints, ghosts, they serve as the "Verbal equivalent of written history".<sup>33</sup>

The legends thus constitute an essential sub genus of the prose narratives. These have been classified into the following sub types: i) Etiological and Eschatological legends, ii) Historical legends, iii) Mythical legends and iv) Religious legends. Etiological legends are explanatory stories about the creation of the world and the origin of things. Historical legends contain local historical accounts. Mythical legends recount the tales of supernatural beings. Religious legends are the tales about gods and mythical heroes who occupy our religion.<sup>34</sup> And according to the motif and structural point of view, these legends may be classified into three principal genres: a) Legends of events, b) Legends about person, and c) Place legends.<sup>35</sup>

The Bodos have rich in legendary tales (*zwhwlaolari solobatha*). Here in Bodo society the legends are may be effortlessly fit in the above sub types of legend. Following are some of the legends which extant among the Bodos is as –

### **Legends about person**

- i) The legend of *Gambari sikhla*, a Bodo heroine

The legend of *Gambari sikhla* recount the heroic exploits current among the Bodos as a legendary heroine. She was a queen of *Bijni* area. At that time, the king of *Bijni* had to pay tributes to the king of *Bhutan*. *Gambari sikhla* did not like to recognise the superiority in power of the king of *Bhutan*. She did not be indebted loyalty to the king of *Bhutan*. So, she tried to bring the king of *Bhutan* under her control and tried to overpower him. But she

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted from, Ahmed, Kasim Ali. Op.cit. p-61

<sup>33</sup> Quoted from, Boro, Anil. Op.cit. pp- 165-166

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p- 166

<sup>35</sup> Ahmed, Kasim Ali. Op.cit. pp-61-62



is unsuccessful. She fought with the king for a long time. She camped at a place near Gossaigaon town. She dug out a big tank. This is popularly known as *Padma Phakri*. But *Gambari sikhla* loses her life while fighting against the king of *Bhutan*.<sup>36</sup>

ii) The legend of *Zaolia Dewan*, a Bodo hero

This legend current among the Bodos tells the story of *Zaolia Dewan*, a legendary hero of the Bodos. He was appointed *Dewan* under the king of *Bijni*. At that time the king of *Bijni* was made to pay tributes to the king of *Bhutan*. The king of *Bijni* entrusted *Zaolia Dewan* to collect gold and other valuable materials as revenue or tribute to be deposited in the treasury of the king of *Bhutan*. But *Zaolia Dewan* decided to stop paying tribute to the *Bhotiya* king. He was very courageous and energetic. He was a hero with an independent bent of mind. He declared himself sovereign and stole a bronze plate from the royal court of *Bhutan*. As a result there was a heavy fighting between *Zaolia Dewan* and the king of *Bhutan*. It is said that the soldiers of the *Bhutiya* king were defeated in the battle.

A variant of the same legend says that *Zaolia Dewan* had his education and training in *Bhutan*. He was deputed by the king of *Bhutan* with the help of a charter to rule over the *Sidli* area. *Zaolia Dewan* entrusted Bijit Narayan (*Bema Pharia*) with the charter (handed over to him by the *Bhutiya* king) in good faith. But Bijit Narayan betrayed him. Bijit Narayan was on the lookout for a chance to snatch away the *Sidli* kingdom from *Zaolia Dewan*. He wanted to take revenge on *Zaolia Dewan* for one more reason. He did not like *Zaolia Dewan's* love affairs with his daughter. So Bijit Narayan refused to return the charter when *Zaolia Dewan* demanded it. *Zaolia* became enraged. His anger grew more violet when he came to know that king Bijit Narayan had sent his daughter away from his eyesight. *Zaolia* declared war against the king and laid siege on the capital of the Bijit Narayan kingdom. The king of Bijit sought the help of the *Bhotiya* king. *Zaolia* fought a heroic battle against the *Bhutiya* soldiers for seven days and nights at a stretch. *Zaolia* was mercilessly killed by the enemy soldiers while he was drinking water from a stream laying his arms aside. Places like *Dolital*, *Runikhata*, *Deborgaon*, *Charaibil*, *Zamduar*, *Moinaguri* are said to have some connections with the name of *Zaolia Dewan*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. Op.cit. p-136

<sup>37</sup> Quoted from, Boro, Anil. Op.cit. pp-169-170

There are also legends extant among the Bodos like- *Birgwsri sikhla*, *Cikhna Zwhwlaio*, *Daori Sikhla*, *Chandramali* and *Khathia Budang*, *Embusrwn Zwhwlaio* etc. They are embedded oral history and they narrate the origin of the name of some places.

### Place legends

#### iii) The legend of the origin of the place *Zam Duar*

The legend is related with the name of a place, located 60 km away from *Gossaigaon* town. The place is now an important place of visit. According to the legend current among the Bodos a trench was dug out near the bank of the *Sankos* River and it extended up to the bank of the *Raidak* River in north Bengal. Legend goes that the trench was dug out by a great hero named *Zaolia Dewan*. The trench dug out in the foot hills of the Bhutan mountain range did help the hero in fighting against the Bhutanese King. The word ‘*zam*’ means ‘enemy’ or ‘death’ and ‘*duar*’ means ‘gate way’. The trench dug out by *Zaolia Dewan* was the door or gate-way which the Bhutanese soldiers could not break through. It is said that the Bhutanese soldiers could not succeed in the battle. The legend is a place legend telling a story about the name of a place. It is also associated with the legendary hero *Zaolia Dewan*.<sup>38</sup>

#### iv) The legend of the origin of *Birjhora*

*Birgwsri Sikhla* was a Mazumdar or Choudhury deputed by the British to collect revenue from the tenants. She was also known as *Theng Phakhri*. She was very courageous and straight forward. She remained a spinster till death. It was the system that the Mazumdars had to collect revenues and deposit the same along with valuable goods to the British India Government. *Birgwsri Sikhla* had to engage as many as twelve Bodo youths of stout figures to carry the valuable goods to Goalpara., where the office was located. In case the Mazumdars failed to deposit the fixed amount of revenue and valuable goods, the British Government imposed penalties on them. *Birgwsri Sikhla* determined not to pay the revenue. As a result she was regarded as defaulter and pressed hard to pay the arrears. She was compelled to fight against the British soldiers to stand firm on her determination. She fought against the British soldiers tooth and nail. But she had to flee in the long run and take rest in a small hillock near the present township of Bongaigaon. One day as she went to a nearby stream to drink water, the British soldiers attacked and killed her. Her long

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p-166

sword lay on the bank on the stream. One saint saw the sword and took it with dignified belief that it belonged to some deity. A temple was built there. This temple is now known as *Bageswari mandir* (temple). It is believed by some people of the area that the sword belonged to *Birgwsri Sikhla*. The name of the temple and the place where it is located is believed to have derived from the name of the legendary heroine. Birgwsri>Birgaswar>Bargeswar>Bageswar>Bageswari.

The name of the place Birjora is also believed to have derived from the name of Birgasri. The legendary heroine took rest in that place once. Assamese term '*Birjiroa*' means a place where a hero or heroine took rest. The word *Birjora* or *Birjhora* has come from *Bir-jiroa*.<sup>39</sup>

This legend is a place legend telling a story about the name of a place. It is also associated with the legendary heroine *Birgasri Sikhla*. There are some more legends of this type. Such as- *Daori Gathwn*, *Sikhnajhar/Sikhna Zahar* etc.

#### 4.5 WORK SONGS

Songs which are sung by the workers at the time of working in the paddy fields, at the context of fishing, harvesting and so on are called work songs.<sup>40</sup> These songs are generally known by the Bodos as *maonai dangnaini methai*. Work is a habit of every society. Every race or community has a habit of work. Bodo community is also the work habituated community. Bodo people are generally cultivators. Their main source of living is cultivation. Therefore they share direct relation with nature. Bodo cultivators indulging are dependent on natural things for sustaining their lives. As such we found the notes of natural things like-rivers, plants, animals, birds in the folk songs of these people. Bodo cultivator indulges in the work songs to get them recreational or refreshment from tiresome or troublesome of works. In such songs we mainly found the notes of their enjoyment, endurance (patience), sorrow and the ways to their livings. Some customs and social behaviour of their living also have taken place in such kind of songs.

Followings are the some kinds of work songs. This are-

- (i) Songs of newly reclaimed land (*Hadan siphainai methai*).

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, pp-168-169

<sup>40</sup> Sarma, Nabin Ch. (2006). Oral Songs of the Tribal communities of Assam. Guwahati: Bohniman Printers. P-86

- (ii) Songs of cultivators (*Abadari methai*).
- (iii) Songs of wood collection (*Badari methai*).
- (iv) Songs of collecting vegetables (*Mwigong khanai methai*).
- (v) Song of fishing (*Na gurnai methai*).
- (vi) Song of weaving (*Ji danai methai*).
- (vii) Songs of rice husking (*Mai sounai methai*).

**i) Songs of newly reclaimed land (*Hadan siphainai methai*):** Bodo people used to go from one (old) place to another (new) place in search of place which is suitable for habitation is high soil for cultivation. Songs sung during the time of newly reclaimed land. Such as-

*thudwlwi lwgwphwr phamu jahwini  
ha gwdan nubwdwng ang jahar bariao.*<sup>41</sup>

In English,

let's go friends, to dwell in the new place  
I have come across a beautiful land in the forest.

Again we found a lot of songs of such kind, such as-

*hinjao hwua boibw  
khwuse jananwi halao thangni  
hadankhwu siphai tharnangwu  
aaio maibra, jwsa golai mwnder  
gasibw gaijwb tharnangwu  
aaio gaijwb tharnangwu.*<sup>42</sup>

In English,

both men and women  
let's work together  
and plough the new plot of land  
and plant summer crops  
like *maibra* (a species of paddy) and *jwsa* (a kind of fragrant fine rice)  
plant all the varieties  
oh friends lets plant all the varieties.

This above song reflects the custom of Bodo people of both men and women indulging in the work of cultivation and also the reflects the traditional customs of leaving one place in search of new place highly suitable for dwelling.

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<sup>41</sup>Narzary, Indramalati. (2010). Mainaw Borainai. Guwahati: Mahamaya Graphics. P-19

<sup>42</sup>Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-111

**ii) Songs of cultivators (*Abadari/ haluaphwrni methai*):** This song mainly contains the song sung by the cultivators during the ploughing and work time. Such as-

*sunì khafalni halua dehaha  
daojla dao gisibblanw mwsuw haluakhwu phwjanagw  
okha naiblanw nangwl-jungaljwng khomlainagw.<sup>43</sup>*

In English,

a former of cursed fate  
rises in rooster's call each morning  
and has to lead the bulls  
to battle in the field with plough.

Again,

*bwrai wi wi bwrai wi  
wi- okha naisi naisi  
hal huhunnaiya  
honwi sanjaha sanalai  
jwubwbai.<sup>44</sup>*

In English,

hey oldie  
you started your ploughing  
at the break of dawn  
but look up the eastern sky  
the sun has already soared high.

If Bodo cultivators even after hard work season of work field to fulfil the needs of his family, they indulge in such songs to console their pain, endurance, tiresome etc.

*sandungkhwu sandung hwna  
okhakhwu okha hwna  
gaiw jwng phuw jwng  
theobwnw jwng manw mwnjarwga?  
hai, haire khaphal.<sup>45</sup>*

In English,

not being afraid of the heat of the sun  
and the shower of the rainy days  
we plant the crops and pull out  
the crops to plant  
but till then we have to starve  
o!cursed fate of ours.

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<sup>43</sup>Brahma, Lakheswar. (2007). Bwisagu arw Harimu. Kokrajhar: Mahamaya printing works. P-49

<sup>44</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-55

<sup>45</sup>Basumatary, Birendra Giri. (2009).Boro Harimuni Mohor Musri. Guwahati: Mahamaya graphics. p-28

**iii) Songs of wood collection (*Badari methai*):** Bodo people had a custom of doing business of woods as they want to forest for cutting woods. They used to maintain their living by cutting woods from forest and sent it off. People who are indulging in such activities of cutting woods and collecting are called “*Badari*”. As such when *Badari* ready to go to forest for collecting woods they got joked by songs of the following-

*sari sari dongphangni badari  
silai dong dong  
bannai hwuaya  
sonaram saprasi.*<sup>46</sup>

In English,

lined in a column  
they are the lumberjacks  
and the man who wields a rifle  
is *Sonaram saprasi*.

In ancient times, under Goalpara district now in Kokrajhar district, at *Parbatjora* sub division of BTAD, Assam, Bodo people were used to go there for cutting Sal trees. The sister-in-law used to sing following songs to his brother-in-law in request to bring for her the *sal*, *gandwi*, *makhu* and so on-

*wi gumwi gumwi  
parbatjhorayao dongphang dannw  
thangbwla thangbwla  
sal, gandwi, makhu angnw  
danna labw nangwnhai gumwi  
phab nangwnhai.*<sup>47</sup>

In English,

hey dear brother-in-law  
when you go to *parbatjhora*  
to cut the wood  
you must bring me *sal* (handloom),  
*gandwi* (one of the two beams of a handloom on  
which the yarns and woven cloths are rolled up) and  
*makhu* (turtle)  
and if you don't  
may you be cursed.

Again, when *badari* (wood cutter) go to hill to cut wood his dearest one songs as follows-

*hajw khoro hajw khoro*

<sup>46</sup>Brahma, Nileswar. (1993). Balabganwi Boroni Khonthai. Kokrajhar: Aronai Press. p-22

<sup>47</sup>Narzi, Bhaben. (2010). Boro Kackarini Khuga Methai. Kokrajhar: Dwimary DTP. p-30

*Baokhungri Baokhungri  
Parbatjora Parbatjora  
dongphang dannw thangbwla thangbwla  
athingao rua buogwn de ada  
samswnng sengwra.*<sup>48</sup>

In English,

when you go to cut the woods  
on the crest of the hills  
*Baokhungri* and *Parbatjora*  
be careful of your axe  
wounding your feet  
dear *Samswnng*, the young man.

**iv) Song of collecting vegetables (*Mwigong Khanaiao khonnai methai*):** The collecting vegetable for cooking is mainly the duty of women. They are the smartest in the field. Bodo women indulge in the various melodious songs during such works. Such songs are-

*thuhai lwgw be mwigongkhuonw khana thangni  
aie aphayabw haba hora  
bida phongbaijwngbw railaithaoa  
bwthwra thangbai khwndw khwndw  
jwngni bwiswabw thangbai halw dwilw.*<sup>49</sup>

In English,

dear friend  
let us go for collecting wild vegetables  
our parents don't marry us off  
brothers are unaware as well  
each season passes by us  
as years glide through us.

Again, they sung when to collect the vegetables in the near hill sides-

*phwi hai lgwphwr  
Nakhathi hajwao  
olodor mwigong, sibru mwigong  
khanw thangni.*<sup>50</sup>

In English,

hey dear friends  
let us go to Nakhathi hill  
to collect *olodor* and

<sup>48</sup>Brahma, M.M.Op.cit. p-28

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. p-15

<sup>50</sup>Chainary,Swarna Prabha. (2011). Thunlaini Phithikha. Baganpara: Nilima Prakashani. P-72

*sibru* vegetables.

And again, song sung in the time of collecting the vegetables-

*phwi hai lwgwphwr*  
*thu hai lwgwphwr*  
*Dodora khonayao*  
*dingkhia mwigong khanw thangni.*<sup>51</sup>

In English,

come dear friends  
 let us go to the edge of Dodora  
 to prune the wild fern vegetable.

v) **Songs of fishing (*Na gurnaiiao khonnai methai*):** The tradition of fishing existed in the Bodo society from the ancient time. Bodo people went out for fishing in group in the rivers, lakes. They go to fishing with singing a lot of songs. Such as-

*phwi hai lwgwphwr*  
*thu hai lwgwphwr*  
*dubli khonayao*  
*jugurup jugurup*  
*na gurni.*<sup>52</sup>

In English,

oh, come on friends  
 lets go friends  
 to the corner in the paddy field  
 to catch fish.

In another song we found –

*phwi hai lwgwphwr*  
*sansari bilwao nathur honi*  
*nathur hothao thao samu khonthao*  
*jugur gur jugur gur*  
*gurdw hai de lwgw*  
*hogapha mapha muru gapha.*<sup>53</sup>

In English,

come dear friends  
 to the *Sansari* lake  
 to catches prawns, small fishes and snails  
 do not let any to go away, put in the utensil as far as you can.

<sup>51</sup>Informant: Goyary, Jayanti (Age-42, Moutara, Bongaigaon, Assam)

<sup>52</sup>Basumatary, Birendra Giri. Op.cit. p-58

<sup>53</sup>Chainary, Swarna Prabha. Op.cit. p-69



**vi) Songs of weaving (*Ji danaiao khonnai methai*):** Bodo women are expert in weaving. They weave different cloths which are need for their family. As such the work of weaving has an inevitable relation with Bodo society since time immemorial. Bodo women indulge in songs during their work of weaving such as-

*de hai lwwg bima burwini  
danai lunai agor ernaikhuo swlwngdini  
sikhri bidwl swbnai  
okhrangao dao birnai  
agor erwi erwi boinibw sigangao  
khinthani lwwg khinthani.<sup>54</sup>*

In English,

come friends come  
let's learn how to weave  
taught by old mother  
butterfly sucks flower's nectar  
birds fly in the sky  
weave it in different way  
let's show friends let's show.

In these songs to express the women traditional weaving system as well as traditional culture and customs are also reflects. Such as they want from granny how to weave viz-

*thu hai lwwg  
abwinifrai danai lunaikhuo swlwngdini  
bibarao sikhri banaikhuo  
okhrangao dao birnaikhuo  
bwrwi ernanguo swlwngdini.<sup>55</sup>*

In English,

let us dear friend  
learn weaving from granny  
and learn the art  
of weaving into tapestry  
the picture of butterflies on flower  
and birds high in the sky.

In another song it is found that -

*huri wi wi huri wi  
wi okha naisi naisi  
khun lunaia*

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<sup>54</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-6

<sup>55</sup>Brahma, Laksheswar. Op.cit. p-30

*honwi lapha saikhoalai  
urao mari mari gablangbai.*<sup>56</sup>

In English,

hey old lady  
spinning cotton into yarn  
so early at daybreak  
look the *laphasaikho* bird(a kind of bird)  
has flown across in lament.

Bodo women are having deep relation with weaving. Like that their imagination and memories are also so deep and prosperous. When a girl remember her dearest one at the time of weaving if she makes mistake in beautiful design in her loom, she worry and sing song such as-

*thang khal thang sal gabnai  
habab ada sal gabnai  
nwnghuo gsw khangnanwi  
agor ernaia khana nangbai.*<sup>57</sup>

In English,

tiktok tiktok sounds  
of the loom dear  
as I remember you  
I forget to weave the beautiful design.

**vii) Songs of rice husking (*Mai sounaiao khonnai methai*):** Husking rice and making local rice beer etc.is the social behaviour and traditional customs in the Bodo society. These songs are mainly related with Bodo women. These songs reflect the social behaviour and traditional customs of the Bodo people. Such as-

*mai swuru ru swuru phagli  
mai swuru ru swu  
nangjamadwi hathai galaoa  
phainw namaidwng  
jwu thaisesw songhai lokhai  
jwu thaisesw song.*<sup>58</sup>

In English,

you break grain into rice  
your gluttonous son-in-law  
is all set to come  
cook the rice bear

<sup>56</sup>Brahma,M.M. Op.cit. p-55

<sup>57</sup>Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-114

<sup>58</sup>Informant: Basumatary,Rohini kr. (Age-79, Mazpara,Dudnoi,Goalpara, Assam)

a rice bear.

During husking they sing, such as-

*san jarang jarang  
mai swunaia, dumphe gorania  
honwi ual gaihen jwngnw dakraibaidwng.*<sup>59</sup>

In English,

the sun has been rising  
and its hit has been increasing  
husking of paddy by *dumphe*  
has been so rapid and rude.

Again, another song sung-

*sal sirini gaihen jwng  
dumbru khaosrani ualjwng  
bihari sanwijwng  
dum dum dam dam swulaibai  
honwi alonga.*<sup>60</sup>

In English,

with the piece of *sal* wood called *gaihen*  
with the husking utensil made by half of *dumbru* wood  
the co-wife  
are busy at breaking grains into rice.

These songs are reflect the traditional making local wine and graining rice etc. as well as reflect the socio-cultural pictures of Bodo community.

## 4.6 COWBOY SONGS

Cowboy songs are an important sub-genre of folk literature. In the field to tending of cow which songs are sung by the cowboys, it is call as cowboy songs. In Bodo is known as “*laokhar methai*”. Therefore lullabies and nursery rhymes are created for the babies. Accordingly, cowboy songs are also created of the children. Hence children or cowboys are singing and enjoy in tending. Such songs as-

*engkhwr khili grwo grwo  
mabar ja  
mabar udui suphung  
nwnswr jagwn guphung guphung*

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<sup>59</sup>Brahma, M.M.Op.cit. p-48

<sup>60</sup>Ibid. p-49

*dahri gangsw daja*  
*khisraigwn*  
*hal bwnw hayabla manjaya mwngwn.*<sup>61</sup>

In English,

reed plant to grow  
 eaten fast  
 to be filled up abdomen  
 you will become healthy and stamina  
 don't eat soft grass  
 will be diarrhoea  
 not to be plough will be punish.

In another song it is found that-

*okrang sa sa okrang sa sa*  
*serja damdwng hadi dogla*  
*lwi obong hadi dogla*  
*dulabatha swr birdwng*  
*jwng bagdaodwng*  
*guma daorai swr birdwng*  
*jwng bengthedwng*  
*dumbru khaosa emphusa*  
*kheleng kheseng gabdwng*  
*sandung gwsa jadwng*  
*dao khokling aiwi*  
*rindao rinsi gabdwng*  
*maniba dikharao aiwi*  
*maniba dikharao.*<sup>62</sup>

In English,

over sky over sky  
 the *hadidoglais* playing violin (serja)  
 oh' god, *hadidogla*  
*dulabatha* is flying speedy  
 we are suddenly frightened  
 the grasshopper is flying speedy  
 we blockade  
 a kind of *dumbru wood* insect  
 crying to thirst  
 the Sun was very hot  
 oh' the *Khokhling* bird crying so sad  
 for some reasons oh' some reasons.

At the evening time villagers own cattle are taking to the cowherd from the grazing field. So, that time in the way they are sing song such as-

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<sup>61</sup>Narzi, Bhaben. (1983). Boro-Kacharir Geet-Mat. Guwahati: Choudhury Enterpraise. p-65

<sup>62</sup>.Boro, M.R. Op.cit. P-116-117

*laokharphwr laokharphwr*  
*mwswoa hwdw hwi ha hwi ha*  
*sana habbai sw nab ha*  
*gaoba gao mwswo hwkko*  
*goliao hwlant thokho thokho*  
*golini dora mwjangwi khathenanwi phwi*  
*mwsa rangkhinia jadwng swphwi swphwi*  
*bundaya thwibai bundiya dong*  
*gabwi gabwi jabai morong khorong*  
*dagab bagini dagab nwn*  
*dwijlangsekhwo phisigwn jwng*  
*meseng swophwibla thangphin nwn.*<sup>63</sup>

In English,

o, cowboys o, cowboys  
 to drive cattle to be sound *hwi ha hwi ha*  
 the Sun enter in the west  
 own cattle are take cowherd separately  
 cowherd's door extremely bind  
 hot tempered tiger in an unwanted manner  
 male tiger is died female tiger is live  
 become crying thin and slim  
 don't cry dear don't cry you  
 in summer season we adopt you  
 in autumn season you may go.

Again, in another songs are found such as-

*o, laokharphwr laokharphwr*  
*ma nagirdwng nwnswr?*  
*biji khanda nagirdwng.*  
*biji khandakhwo manw?*  
*siphi thoila suthenw.*  
*siphi thoilakhwo manw?*  
*mwisw raganw phinnw.*  
*mwisw rangakhwo manw?*  
*goalparayao langnanwi dantharhwinw.*<sup>64</sup>

In English,

o, cowboys o, cowboys  
 where are you search  
 search of piece of needle  
 where need piece of needle  
 to sewing cloth  
 where need of cloth  
 to wore buffalo  
 where need of buffalo

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<sup>63</sup>Narzi, Bhaben. Op.cit. p-66

<sup>64</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-10

to take Goalpara to kill.

#### 4.7 LULLABY AND NURSERY RHYMES

Lullaby and Nursery Rhymes songs are mainly sung to amuse the infants or children and to coax a crying baby. In Bodo it is known as “*Gotho Burkhainai Methai*”. This kind of songs is created on animals, birds, moon, star etc. In these songs the themes are very attractive but the meanings may or may not be real and some words are not justifying the meaning. At night, in the full moonlight sitting in the courtyard taking child in arms sing lullabies. The teenager girl who looks after a child or the parents or grant parents of the child sing lullabies like the following to cajole a crying baby. Child language in Bodo moon is called “*dudu*”. Following songs as:

*wi dudu phwi phwi*  
*wi dudu phwi*  
*nwng phwiabwla*  
*thalir thaise hor*  
*thalir thaise horabwla*  
*thalir thainwi hor*  
*wi dudu phwi phwi.*<sup>65</sup>

In English,

oh, moon come down  
 oh, moon come down  
 if you don't come then give one banana  
 if don't give one banana give two bananas  
 oh, dear moon come down.

Like, in reply to the child, it seems to be replied back by the moon:

*thalir gwiabla- makhwo hwnw anglai?*  
*dangsemani daokha jalangbai*  
*bwraiphwra phwinanwi jabai omasi*  
*burwiphwra gandwng dokhona thaosi.*<sup>66</sup>

In English,

I have no banana- to give you  
 crows eaten a bunch of banana  
 old man are feeling sad  
 old woman wore *dokhona thaosi*.

Like that, in the evening or night sky the brighten stars are also creating sing songs:

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<sup>65</sup>Narzi, Bhaben. Op.cit. p-60

<sup>66</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-7-8

*hathorkhi rigi regang  
thangkhu thophlaya gang.*<sup>67</sup>

In English,

twinkling stars  
tobacco luggage to feel thirsty.

The Bodo lullabies are created by a teenager girl, as known as “*bokhali*”. Absents of mother and father of child the *bokhali* to amuse or to cajole a crying baby sing song like as-

*ao agwi ao dagabswi  
aiea thangdwng dwi lainw  
du agwi du dagabswi  
apha thangdwng hathaiao  
da phwibla nwngnw  
mithai labwphagwn  
ao agwi ao dagabswi.*<sup>68</sup>

In English,

o, dear sister don't cry  
mother goes to bring water  
sleep dear sister sleep don't cry  
father goes to market  
if come to bring you sweet meat  
o, dear sister don't cry.

Children are to be afraid of animals like, cat, fox, tiger, elephant etc. etc. Because children are feeling these are very dangerous animal. So, if baby is crying then like the following lullabies are sing and to stop crying baby-

*na bathwn sikhao gwmbwr mao  
dagab dagab agwi angni nao.*<sup>69</sup>

In English,

pounded fish thief (cat)  
sit in grave  
don't cry my dear sister don't cry.

Another one like as-

*bogolorid geb geb  
angni abouni khuga gageb geb*<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid. p-8

<sup>68</sup>Das, Hemanta Kr. Op.cit. p-69

<sup>69</sup>Boro, M.R. Op.cit. p-23

<sup>70</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-9

In English,

*bogolorid* crying sound is *geb geb*  
my grand child mouth is flat.

So, grandparents are to feel ashamed and compare to *bogolorid* bird's sounding *geb geb*. While baby cries then his or her mouth looks so ugly and flat.

Again, in another lull also sang to stop crying baby.

*sangrema lilii liu*  
*oma bundani philwu.*<sup>71</sup>

In English,

unsteady glow-worm  
male pig's intestine.

Sometimes, they touch children hand and armpit and to do some activities to amuse children. Like lull are,

*wngkham song song*  
*wngkhri song song*  
*nw ja nw ja*  
*ali dan dan*  
*wrwibw lama gwia*  
*horwibw lama gwia*  
*thu jwngha khangkhrai khono hwini*  
*jogno jogno.*<sup>72</sup>

In English,

cooking rice  
cooking curry  
to eat to eat  
cutting line(ali)  
this side no way  
that side also no way  
let's go to collect crab from the holes.

If children are known among the birds is cock. In Bodo community crying cock's sound will be lull of children. Therefore cock is the symbol of hero. So, if can eat cock's head it will be a king. This thought to become encouraging children to courage.

*gogre ge go*  
*amaini no*  
*angni khorokhwo jai jayw*

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p-9

<sup>72</sup> Narzi, Bhaben. (2012). Boro-Kacharini Subung Thunlai. Kolkata: Ajanta Printers. p-26



*biyw raja jo.*<sup>73</sup>

In English,

*gogre ge go* crying sound of cock  
uncle's home  
who eat my head  
he/she will be a king.

Agriculturist Bodo communities people their children are take over the *bokhali* (teenager girl) and parents go to the paddy field. That time if baby is cry then *bokhali* sings song as follows to lull-

*dao khunthulu khunthulu bongphang murani thia  
alai bilai gabbabw raobw lanai gwia  
jogrob jogrob mwsablabw raobw nainai gwia.*<sup>74</sup>

In English,

wood pecker of the tree stamp of parrot  
none of them to take even scattered crying  
none of them to look even when dance.

Another lull are also sung to stop crying baby such as-

*da gab sona.... da gab sona  
nwngni nwmpa nwmaya  
phega laru lanw thangdwng  
da gab sona... da gab  
da gab sona....da gab sona  
nwngni bida phongbaiya  
baro diga gelenw thangdwng  
da gab sona... da gab.*<sup>75</sup>

In English,

don't cry my dear, don't cry my dear  
your mother and father  
gone to bring sweets  
don't cry my dear, don't cry my dear  
your brothers are gone to play  
don't cry my dear, don't cry.

Bodo Childs are afraid of *harsa* (non Bodo) children. So,when the babies do not want to sleep they made afraid to be slept. Following lulls are the example when crane are walking in the water slowly it will be sing lulls:

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<sup>73</sup>Boro, M.R. Op.cit. p-24

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p-23

<sup>75</sup> Informant: Basumatary, Rohini. (Age-79, Mazpara, Dudnoi, Goalpara, Assam)

*daobo daobo ganga robo robo  
harsa gotho nubla dwiao jobo jobo.*<sup>76</sup>

In English,

oh crane, oh crane your wings are tender and soft  
you look at *harsa* boy with splash in water.

Folk belief and superstition is the part and parcel of society. So, children are also becoming this kind of habit. While baby is injured, cut or cure then need to chant for fair. So, elderly people are untruly chant to lull them,

*holdong moldong jarilong  
nasrai mase gang dong  
ang oja dong.*<sup>77</sup>

In English,

*holdong moldong* are the charms  
the charms I say  
the fish *seng*  
has got wings  
I am the *Kaviraj*.

Another one, if any problem of eye or anything like dust, sand are inside eye occurs then elder people chants follows to lulls-

*sil sila  
nwngni megon mwjaga labw  
amwkhani megon gajria lang, u phu  
honwi silaya birlangbai.*<sup>78</sup>

In English,

oh kite, oh kite, listen to me, I say  
give him your good eye  
and take his affected eye  
I blow at his eye 'u phu'  
with my breath  
oh look this over  
the kite has flown away.

#### 4.8 PROVERBS (*BATHRA PHAO*)

The Proverbs are most important assets of Bodo Society. It is an integral part of Bodo folk Literature. Proverbs are especially the outcome of a socio-cultural reality to

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<sup>76</sup>Boro, M.R. Op.cit. pp-24-25

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. p-25

<sup>78</sup>Brahma, M.M. Op.cit. p-10

provide a glimpse into the social, cultural mode and behavioural patterns of a particular group of people.<sup>79</sup> The Bodos have a rich store of proverbs, which reflects such important social pictures of the Bodo society. If a single sentence which is not express directly but indirectly describe it is called as *Bathra Phao* (Proverbs) in Bodo society. With these the Bodo human society's livelihoods are closely connected. In the people society, there are so many celebrations, festivals, customs, marriage and works with these have proverbs are make use of these days. If some sentence would become an inconvenient to direct tell then this kind of sentence will be told with use of proverbs. Therefore, with utilize of proverbs to provide a lesson their people. *Roger D. Abraham defines, "Proverbs are short and witty traditional expressions that arise as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings. Each proverb is a full statement of an approach to a recurrent problem. Proverbs take a personal circumstance and embody it in impersonal and witty form. Proverbs are nearly always stated in the form of a single sentence."*<sup>80</sup> A proverb is usually used to suggest an attitude or a mode of action in relation to pass judgment on a situation. Alan Dundes defines that proverbs is "Impersonal vehicles for personal communication."<sup>81</sup> According to Standard Dictionary of folklore has defined a proverb as, "A terse didactic statement that is current in tradition. It is the wisdom of many and the wit of one."<sup>82</sup>

There are various kinds of proverbs are found in Bodo society. The different Scholars and folklorist are classified the riddles are in different categories. According to R.M. Dorson proverbs may be classified in some sub-types is as-

- 1) Positive Equivalence
- 2) Negative Equivalence
- 3) Positive Causational
- 4) Negative Causational

Therefore, Dr. Anil Boro also defines, the proverbs of the Bodo folk literature may be classified into the following sub-types such as-

- 1) Animal Proverbs
- 2) Weather Proverbs

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<sup>79</sup> Mochahary, Hemanta. Op.cit. p-31

<sup>80</sup> Dorson, R.M. Op.cit. p-119

<sup>81</sup> Quted from, Mochahary, Hemanta. Op.cit. p- 31

<sup>82</sup> Quted from, Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-206

- 3) Medical Proverbs
- 4) Legal Proverbs
- 5) Religious Proverbs

Following may be discussed regarding the use of proverbs of Bodo village people and on the basis of the theme content. Such as-

### **Proverbs related with advice**

1. *Nangou tharbla mwkrakhounw phi*

*Thwinwswiblabw sikhaukhonw daphi.*<sup>83</sup>

(If necessitate to keep a monkey instead of keep a thief.)

Because a monkey cannot stay steady but when necessary monkeys do massage the body of the owner. But when a owner is fall in danger a thief never going to help. The behaviour of a thief cannot belief forever. In this sense this proverb being use.

2. *Bwthwr thanayaonw thiyari jakha*

*Som thanayaonw bibara khakha.*<sup>84</sup>

(Be ready in the season, pluck the flower in time)

Through this proverb it is mention that all the works should complete in time. As for example a student should study in time and he has to complete the course. Because the time never wait any one.

3. *Bwswrse mai jaywikhonw dagab*

*Hinjao haba rwgwickonw gab.*<sup>85</sup>

(Do not cry when you will not get crops for a year,  
but you cry when will get wife without knowing any work)

All the crops related with season. Sometimes you will not get crops in a year because of some reason. In this case you do not cry and worry. But when you will get a wife without having proper knowledge of the works of a family. In this case you have to worry for your

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<sup>83</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. (year). Bathra Phao. Place: press. p-32

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p-39

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p-39

future. Because Bodo people expect that the Bodo women should be expert in every side. Whereas women are plays such an important role for development of a house.

4. *Mwiderkhrou sunangou khaphalao*  
*Mansikhrou bungnangou sigangao.*<sup>86</sup>

(Stab the elephant in forehead; tell a man in front of him)

If you kill elephant you have to stab in its forehead then only it will die. Otherwise the elephant may hurt you. Same cases if you want to say something to a person do not go through another person. Without doing your own work does not depend on another person otherwise you will not get in success. In this case this proverb being reflected.

5. *Mablaba somao haijeng gwrangkhoubw nangou jayw.*<sup>87</sup>  
(Sometimes a dry ginger also become important)

Through this proverb it is explain that in the people's life everybody is important. Do not neglect the people whether he is poor, small or inferior. Sometimes a poor or inferior person may also become important for you.

### **Proverbs in order to character of person**

1. *Jiboua jibouni aithing nuyw.*<sup>88</sup>

(The snake only can see the other snake's legs)

Same case a person can recognised the another person of the same character. Like a thief only can recognised another thief.

2. *Dwiya dwi gaikhera gaikheranwkha.*<sup>89</sup>

(The milk is milk and water is water)

Through this proverb it is explain that both milk and water different in colour and quality. May be both are liquid. Same cases the qualities of the people were not same.

3. *Bima mwjangbasw phisayabw mwjang.*<sup>90</sup>

(If character of mother is good then daughter's character also good)

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p-42

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p-46

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p-20

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p-29

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p-36

Some children were following the character of their parents. If a mother teaches good character their children will learn the good character. Same case if a mother teaches bad character the children will follow the bad character. So, in this proverb it reflects the character of parents and children.

4. *Sikha gwdana santham*  
*Hinjao gwdana dantham.*<sup>91</sup>

(New knife only for three days; new bride only for three month)

Through this proverb it is explain that the quality of a knife were seen after three days when you are using regularly. Same case the character of a bride is known after three months only whether her character is good or bad. It is come out after marriage only. Before three month no one knows exactly.

5. *Hasrao haya habru jaya.*<sup>92</sup>

(A loose soil never become muddy)

Through this proverb it is explain that a loose soil will not become muddy or soft after mixing with water. Same case a person when he is doing always bad work he never can change his character and cannot adjust with other persons.

## Marriage related proverbs

1. *Lai noga lapha noga*  
*Phisa hinjaokhou khanw hwnblanw khana hornw.*<sup>93</sup>

(Not *lai* not *lapha* ( a kind of vegetables)

It is not easy to give my daughter to someone)

It is proverbs explain that *Lai* and *Lapha* (vegetables) is available sometimes and become easy to give those who ask. But a daughter is not like a vegetable to get marry easily if someone asked suddenly. In that case the parents of a girl need to observe the characters of the proposed groom.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p-53

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p-55

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p-49

2. *Thuri nubla bathi garw.*<sup>94</sup>

(If you see thatch, you will throw *bathi* (a pole for carrying loads))

In this proverb reflected that where there is thatch people use to go there to cut. In that time before cutting the thatch people use to throw a pole to carry thatch. Same case this proverb reflects that when there is a bachelor (an unmarried boy) in a family, to make couple some people takes a responsibility to search an unmarried woman.

3. *Khanthal jabla atha nagw*

*Hinjao jobla letha nagw.*<sup>95</sup>

(Eating jackfruit puts one into gum

Marring a wife puts into trouble.)

Jackfruit has sticky gum. When one cut and eat it one's sure to have sticky gum on hand. In the same way when one marries a wife a person gets into trouble. The freedom of bachelor life ends when a person gets married. Because the responsibility of looking after the family and kids come upon him.

4. *Sat dandali dao hw.*<sup>96</sup>

(Chase the birds from long distance)

When a person cannot express something face to face directly, he tells the matter indirectly.

5. *Jerao jwn nuyw beo goi khithou garw.*<sup>97</sup>

(Where the garbage is seen, there the betel-nut sheet is thrown.)

In the same way when a family is in need of their son getting married they take the '*Biban*' (taking *biban* is a system of Bodo marriage) to be for negotiation of marriage to be bride's home. To express activities this proverb is used.

**There are some proverbs in the Bodo society where religions and the depth of philosophy reflect. Like-**

1. *Mwidera gabw odal gudiao*


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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p-24

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p-9

<sup>96</sup> Basumatary, Birendragiri. Op.cit. p-44

<sup>97</sup> Narzi, Bhaben. Op.cit. p-63

Mansia gabw sijou gudiao.<sup>98</sup>

(Elephant cries (trumpets) near the *Odal* tree (cordial myka)

Men cries near the *sijwu* tree)

According to the Bodo's social philosophy, elephant cries near the *Odal* tree in the jungle. In the same way Bodo people cries or prays near the *sijwu*(euphorbia plant) tree. When mankind is surrounded by anxiety and sadness, fate and misfortunes the Bodos pray near *sijwu* and invoke the Almighty *BathwuBwrai* to be delivered from all evils and sins.

2. Laoba laoswm

khaoba khaoswm

Ada gwswm

dwiao barswm.<sup>99</sup>

This proverb has a deep meaning. Here the characteristics of five senses or sensory organs are imbibed. The power which enables a person to survive in the world comes from our senses or sense organs. The five sense organs are- eyes, nose, tongue, ear and the skin. This helps a person to see, to smell, taste/lick, listen and feel. There are another five organs which is used for working activities like- hand, legs, genitals, anus and the respiratory organs. This organs or the organs of feel is a must, then only a person in life can battle for survival and jump into the life competition. This is shown in this proverb.

3. *Bathouni bandwa bandwba*

*Siphungni goronga gorongba*

*Sijwuni siriya siriba*

*Thaigirni bikhonga khongba*

*Boroni phongongba.*<sup>100</sup>

(Knot of the Bathwu is five

Holes of the flute is five

Lines of the *Sijwu* are five

The Bodos first speech language is five)

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<sup>98</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. Op.cit. p-41

<sup>99</sup> Basumatary, Birendragiri. Op.cit. p-39

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p-39



The five knots of the Bathwu has five aims or have meanings. Bathwu is unending, innumerable, formless, invisible, omniscient and victorious. The ‘*Sijwu*’ has carried down this aim and energy/power. This power or the elements are- *ha* (land), *dwi* (water), *bar* (air), *or* (fire) and *okhrang* (the sky). These five elements or the power is the beginning or the root of everything . The *Bathwu* is made of these five elements or power. The Bodos worship these five primary elements. So, the Bodos religion is *Bathwu*.

### **Proverbs explain the destiny (luck) of a person-**

1. *Khaphalao thaywbla mwsou haluayabw gaikher hwyw.*<sup>101</sup>

(If there is good luck, even the bull gives milk)

This means sometimes some the impossible work becomes possible. To express such situation this proverb is used.

2. *Khaphalao thaywbla na gwrnabw bidwi dwiyw.*<sup>102</sup>

(If there is luck, even the dry fish lays egg)

We dry fish for future use. If the dried fish lays egg it is surprising and impossible. In the same way to express something impossible occurring in reality, this proverb is used. For example, if luck and fortune is there, a poor boy can one day be highly educated and a great person. To express this situation this proverb is used.

3. *Khaphalao thaywbla siriniphrai gwglwiblabw thwiya.*<sup>103</sup>

(If there is good luck, a person even survives after falling down from high step)

The Bodos believe that life and death is predetermined and a person never dies before his time, even if he/she faces many misfortunes. He/she even survives the most dangerous fate. This proverb is used to express such situation.

4. *Khaphalao gwiabla dwikhanai bidwiabw gola jayw.*<sup>104</sup>

(If there is ill luck, even the laid egg gets rotten)

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<sup>101</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. Op.cit. p-7

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p-8

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p-9

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p-10

The Bodos believe that everything is predetermined. That's why when there is ill luck even the achieved opportunity at hand goes out of our hand. So, to express the unfulfilled dreams or aims, this proverb is used.

**There are other proverbs besides those discussed above-**

1. *Okha thangkhangna khophri homnai.*<sup>105</sup>

(To unfold the umbrella after the rain stops)

This proverb is used to express the situation when a person gives ideas and opinions after the work is done. Umbrella should be used when there is rain. So, to express post work suggestion, this proverb is used.

2. *Onla khariao agan thaywi.*<sup>106</sup>

(No footprints on *Onla Kharwi*)

*Onla* is a sticky curry made of rice powder where no marks can be traced. So, in the same manner, when a person uses valueless, illogical and meaningless words this proverb is used.

3. *Aal jal matha halangni jwnjal.*<sup>107</sup>

(The witless *Matha halang's* has many problems)

As mentioned in the story *Matha halang* has had many problems in life. He had a difficult life. His life with wife and children, cows and goats, chicken and pigs was a difficult one. Because he was a silly guy and has no idea about the problems of having a family. So, there was always domestic violence and fights among the family members. As a result his family life became a failure filled with any problems. To express such situation when a person fails to maintain and manage his family, this proverb is used.

4. *Gorai nubla sing bayw.*<sup>108</sup>

(Seeing a horse one breaks his backbone)

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p-1

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p-1

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p-3

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p-17

When a person while going out for another place looks for means of transport and don't like to go on foot, this proverb is used. So, to express the situation where a person makes someone work in his place feigning to be ill, this proverb is used to show such character.

Through the proverbs discussed above, the socio-cultural pictures of the Bodos are reflected. Through these proverbs the ongoing socio-cultural practices of the Bodos where they express their day to day struggle in survival and their experiences are vividly expressed.

#### **4.9 RIDDLES (*BATHRA GANTHI*)**

Riddles are the most important genre of folk literature, which are honestly related to a society. Riddles are brief and specific, which are traditionally and orally handed down generation to generation by the mouth of people. It is questions intended to amuse or entertain and puzzle. So, in human society it is use in for rejoice and mind refresh. Thus the children's to be enjoying, surprising and to be thinking for that basis the sentence will be prepared knot. So, in Bodo it is called "*Bathra Ganthi*" (sentence knot). Riddles are like short epigrammatic questions asked in a playful contest situation. It is asked primarily for the special occasion like, ceremonial and recreational purpose. Therefore, Roger D. Abrahams has defined, "*Riddles are questions that are framed with the purpose of confusing or testing the wits of those who do not know the answer.*"<sup>109</sup> Riddles are complete through the mutually joined rhythm and tune. Scholars are told riddles are very oldest folk literature. To ask riddles the children's mind walk to the imaginary world and so that they like it very much. *Riddles are epigrammatic questions; but there is difference between an ordinary question and a riddle. A riddle is always confusing and metaphorical; but an ordinary question is not.*<sup>110</sup>

There are lots of riddles in Bodo society, which are orally transmitted generation to generation through human mouth. Riddles are always confusing or puzzling but not an ordinary questioning. Therefore, there are different scholars and folklorists defined their own view point. According to Anil Boro, the riddles of the Bodo folk literature may be classified into the following sub-types such as-

- i. Descriptive riddles

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<sup>109</sup> Dorson, R.M. (ed). Op.cit. p-130

<sup>110</sup> Boro, Anil. Op.cit. p-214

- ii. Joking or reverse riddles
- iii. Wisdom riddles
- iv. Puzzles
- v. Parrody/Catch riddles.

According to, Birendragiri Basumatary's observation riddles of the Bodo folk literature may be classified as-

- i. Riddles of among cultivators
- ii. Riddles of among youthful boys
- iii. Riddles of among women
- iv. Riddles of among children.

Below following as examples the riddles extant in Bodo society are may be cited under the above analytical categories:

### 1.Descriptive Riddles

In descriptive riddles question to be ask in description form. So, it is easy to answering. Descriptive riddles are enigmatic questions in descriptive form. It is also known that descriptive riddles are a true riddles. Therefore, asking a riddle some are ask question with the description form. Such as-

- a. *hagoumani mwsabai*  
*mwsawi mwsawi*  
*gannayasw gulangbai.*<sup>111</sup>

(While dancing as much as it can dance, the dress of its body pull out.)

Ans- *Swrkhi* (an implement made of bamboo to twist tread)

The *Swrkhi* are used by Bodo women folk in the time of weaving where tread are spinning with *Swrkhi*. Here the moving of *Swrkhi* is called dancing and diminish of tread is called stripes of its body.

- b. *sandung dungjabai*  
*orao hangjabai*

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<sup>111</sup> Basumatary, Birendra Giri. Op.cit. p-42

*degrao desi khalam jabai*  
*unao hasungaosw thwn thwn jaiga mwnbai.*<sup>112</sup>

(To burn in hot sun shine

And toasted with fire

Crushing by the grinding tools

Then hardly packed inside the bamboo pipe)

Ans- *napham* (fermentation of dried fish with arum and sour in the bamboo pipe by way of airtie)

The small fish are dried up in the sun heat and it toasted with fire. Then after it was grinded by the wooden tools and it was put hardly inside the bamboo pipe.

c. *undwiao thwrwb thwrwb gosla ganw*  
*derbla laobla engarlagw.*<sup>113</sup>

(During infancy it puts of cloths layer after layer but as it grows up all the cloths of its body are discard)

Ans- *wua meoai* (bamboo sprout, shoot)

To make a curry it is necessary to discard all the covers one after another of the bamboo shoot. It is reflect in this riddles.

d. *amaini noao thangbai*  
*thangba thanganwi phwiphinnw rwga jabai.*<sup>114</sup>

(When it has gone to maternal uncle's house

But it has unable to come back in its own house)

Ans- *sen* (fishing trap)

The maternal uncle's house is dearest during childhood. So, with the name of maternal uncle the riddle is created. When a fish enter inside the *sen* (fishing trap) and it is unable to

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p-43

come back. Same thing a child when he goes to maternal uncle's house he is forgot to come back. It is mention in this riddles.

## 2.Joking or Reverse Riddles

To amuse and humorous intention, the joking riddles are asking question. As example-

- a. *thoblolai jakhanglai*  
*ali khwyw, ma belai?*<sup>115</sup>

(Sometimes hiding and sometimes appearing on the surface that raises embankment, what is this?)

Ans- *biji* (needle)

Needle is used to sew a cloth. When sewing a cloth then the needle appearing and hiding inside and outside the cloth.

- b. *jaba jananwi khinw rwgwi, ma belai?*<sup>116</sup>

(After eating no tendency to stool, what is this?)

Ans- *gandu* (pillow)

To make a pillow the cotton is hardly put but it was never put out. So, it is reflect in this riddles.

- c. *bida phongbai sabrwi*  
*nathai khuga hala hala.*<sup>117</sup>

(There are four brothers but the mouth of four brothers is wide open)

Ans- *salkhuntha* (posts of the loom)

The Bodo women folk while weaving they used four post of the loom. This four post being cut half portion at the top and joining between the two post.

- d. *dwi sing sing*

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>116</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. (2006). Bathra Ganthi. Barpeta Road: Shivam Offset Printers. P-10

<sup>117</sup> Basumatary, Birendra Giri. Op.cit. p-42

*agor erw. Ma belai?*<sup>118</sup>

(The weaves beautiful design under water, what is that?)

Ans- *samu* (snail)

The snail moves under the water and then after the moving some mark or lines are found curvedly. So, it is called weaves design. Like the Bodo women weaves beautiful design on their cloths.

### 3. Wisdom Riddles

Wisdom riddles are related to the varied fields of knowledge like- geography, science, religion and language etc. This riddles are depends on the diverse knowledge and experiences of people performance. The knowledge is how far catching; it is seem to be the questions ask. As example,

a. *barnikhruibw gwbarsinwi*  
*kharnw hayw swr?*<sup>119</sup>

(Who can run faster than air?)

Ans- *gsw* (mind)

In this riddle, it is mention that because even the air cannot run faster than mind. Just in a few seconds the mind of a person may change or think in different way.

b. *hajwnikhrui jwusin*  
*ma belai?*<sup>120</sup>

(What is higher than the mountain?)

Ans- *mwjang mwnnai/onnai* (love)

The love is always higher than the mountain. No one is higher than it.

c. *jaiha mohor gwia*  
*bi nogablanw raobw*

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p-42

<sup>119</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. Op.cit. p-22

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p-34

*thangnanwi thanw haya.*<sup>121</sup>

(A thing without shape but without it no one can live)

Ans- *dwi* (water)

The water does not have its own shape. But without water the creatures cannot live. It is mention in this riddle.

*d. gubunnw jesebang hwyw  
gaoniao bangsinsw bagw.*<sup>122</sup>

(The more you give to other, the more you learn)

Ans- *swlwnghai* (education)

If a teacher tries to teach a student more and more than the teacher will get more knowledge and experience.

#### **4.Puzzle Riddles**

Puzzle riddles are asking a problematic question and answers to which required attentive use of intelligence mind and cool brain on the part of the receiver.

*a. rajani daomasar  
birdaoyw, birkhlayw  
jaiga nawi nawi  
dwi lww.*<sup>123</sup>

(the peacock of a king

flying in the sky up and down

searching different place to drink water)

Ans- *bwrsi* (fishing hook)

Here in this riddles discussed about a pole which are used in fishing and also explain about the fishing hook.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p-12

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p-8

<sup>123</sup> Basumatary, Birendra Giri. Op.cit. p-42



b. *okhanaiblanw thoblolai jakhanglai jayw.*<sup>124</sup>

(in the early morning it has goes down into water and come back on the bank)

Ans- *balthing* (bucket)

The bucket is used to dive water from the well every day.

c. *jese bwgwn, ese sungwn.*<sup>125</sup>

(if you more sip it becomes shorter)

Ans- cigarette/ biri

The cigarette or biri becomes shorter when you smoke it.

d. *bipha laoga, bima jibri*  
*phisa khagw khri khri.*<sup>126</sup>

(the father is taller, mother is shorter

but it gives birth to babies to a large extent)

Ans- *goi biphang* (areca-nut tree)

The areca-nut tree is tall so here it is called “*laoga*” but the leaves of this is looks ugly and it gives fruits frequently.

## 5.Parody/Catch Riddles

The asking a question with joking or humorous mode it is called parody riddles. These riddles are deals with the jokes, knowledge and catching ability of the peoples. Following are some examples of parody riddles in Bodos-

a. *okhanaiblanw daokhi mwnamsuyw.*<sup>127</sup>

(in the early morning it breathe in the smell of the excrements of fowl (rooster)

Ans- *hasib* (broom)

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>126</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. Op.cit. p-24

<sup>127</sup> Basumatary, Birendra Giri. Op.cit. p-43

In the early morning the women are cleaning the garbage, excrements etc. Further before raising the members of family/husband the women are having the traditional habits of cleaning/sweeping the threshold.

*b. bunglwi ada jabda*  
*jabla budrang*  
*jayabla swrlab.*<sup>128</sup>

( o' brother *Jabda* tell me

when you eat-full belly

when you do not eat you are shrink)

Ans- *thoila* (sack)

If you put any kind of things in sack its look very big but without the putting any kind of things is look shrunken.

*c. bima daduri*  
*phisa jidkhonai mohor gwsa.*<sup>129</sup>

(the mother looks ugly

the daughter is looking beautiful)

Ans- *gwmbri* (a kind of fruits)

The plant of *Gwmbri* looks very ugly which may suffer from itch. But the fruits of its looking fair or slim.

*d. abadbw maoa swr biyw*  
*gong gwiabalsinw ha jaow?*<sup>130</sup>

(no cultivation and without horn it dig the soil who is he?)

Ans- *oma* (pig)

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p-43

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p-42

<sup>130</sup> Kherkatary, Dipali. Op.cit. p-2

The pig has no horn. But the pig with its mouth digs the soil and makes it cultivable for the crops. So, in this riddles it is reflect.

It has been found that rich stocks of riddles of the Bodo folk literature which are reflect socio-cultural pictures of the society. Since today riddles are prevailing in the Bodo society. Among these some are written form and some orally exist in the society.

#### **4.10 SUMMARY**

In this chapter study was done about the important assets in Bodo folk literature of society and oral history. Since ago there is lots of oral history in Bodo society. But among these some are dead due to lack of written records or documents, no book publication and non preservation. Among these only a few Ballad, Myth, Legends are found. And in this chapter as well as discuss about the Bodos work songs, cowboy songs, lullabies and nursery rhymes, and proverbs and riddles which are integral part of the Bodo folk literature.