

## CHAPTER: I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Bodo language and its salient features

Bodos are known as ‘Sons of the Soil’ in Assam. Bodos constitute the second largest language in the North and North-Eastern region of India. In India 22 scheduled languages have been identified as officially, educationally, as well as government levels. Bodo language is also one of them and progressing in every level. Bodo language has its own typological features in the levels of linguistics. It has many similarities in phonology, morphology as well as in structural features with the features of T.B. languages.

##### 1.1.1 Bodo language

Bodo language is one of the latest forms of development in Assam. The language of Bodos in their mother language is called ‘Boro Rao’. Bodos are living in a scattered manner and spread throughout the Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, West Bengal, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Bihar and some adjoining parts of outside India like Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Bangladesh etc. As mentioned by Madhu Ram Baro “*Boro is the offshoot language of Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the Tibeto-chinese main family itself.*”<sup>1</sup> The Bodo language speaking areas of Assam at present are stretching from Dhubri in west to Sadiya in east. Generically the Bodos of Assam belongs to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family within the great Sino-Tibetan family of languages and racially they are belongs to Sub-cast of great Mongoloid family.

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<sup>1</sup>. Baro, Madhu Ram: The Historical Development of the Boro Languang (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Priyadini Publications, Kamrup, Assam, 2001, P. 44.

Linguist Radhey L. Varshney has studied about the Sino-Tibetan group of language family and stated about the Bodo language as a minor language of Tibeto-Burman. He opined that *“This family is quite extensive, and consists of two branches Tibeto-Burman and Chinese, Burmese and Tibetan are the two major languages of the former branch but it has also several minor languages’, such as Garo, Bodo and Naga which are spoken in some eastern regions of India.”*<sup>2</sup>

Bodos are recognized as Scheduled Tribes as per the constitution of India 1950 and amended modification order in the year 1956 and S.T orders (Amendment) Act. 1976. Bodos are Nature lovers, they lived or settled in multifarious river valleys either it is big or small. They have their own culture, society and language, which is very rich and worth mentioning. Even great scholar Suniti Kumar Chatterji claims that the Bodos are coming from the great river valley Huang-Ho and Yang-tsze-Kiang. He identified them as ‘*Kiratas*’ or ‘*Indo-Mongoloids*’ and mentioned about their homeland as follows: *“The area of Characterisation for the primitive Sino-Tibetan speech appears to have been North-Western China between the head- waters of the Huang Ho and the Yang-tsze Kiang rivers.”*<sup>3</sup>

As per the classification given by Robert Shafer P.C. Bhattacharya had also observed the Bodo language belongs to the branch of Barish section under Baric Division of the Sino-Tibetan language family.

G. A. Grierson had describes the Bodos or Boro-Kachari as a member of the Bodo subsection under the Assam Burmese group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibeto-Chinese speech family.

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<sup>2</sup>. Varshney, Radhey L: An Introductory Text Book of Linguistics and Phonetics (Sixteenth Edition), Student Store, Bareilly, 2005-06, p. 407.

<sup>3</sup>. Chatterji, Suniti Kumar: Kirāta-Jana-Kṛti (Reprinted), The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata, 2007, p. 21.

The Tibeto-Burman sub- family under Sino-Tibetan language family classification by G.A. Grierson in the '*Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.1 (Part 1)*' as relevant diagram to the Bodo language is given below:

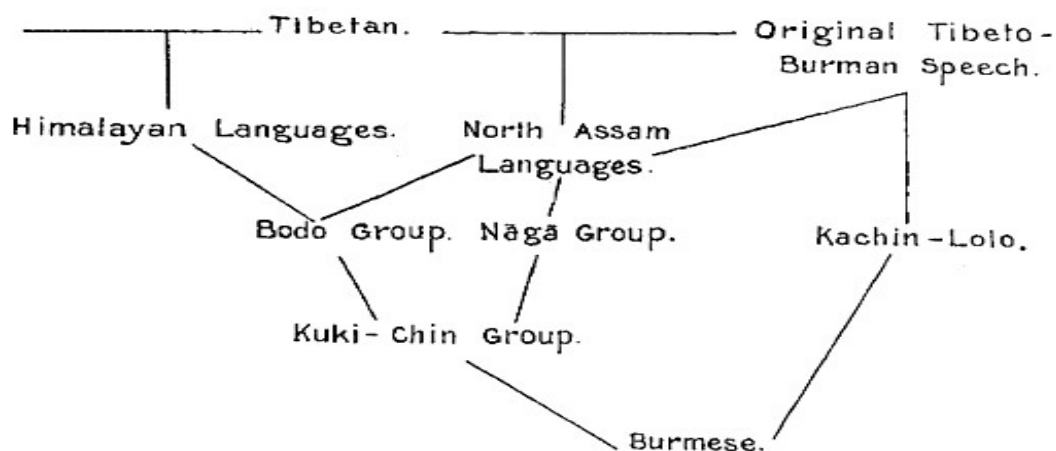


Figure: 1.1

(Extracted from '*Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.1 (Part 1)*', p.64)

The Sino-Tibetan language family classification by Pramod Chandra Bhattacharya as relevant diagram to the Bodo language from his '*A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro language*' is given below:

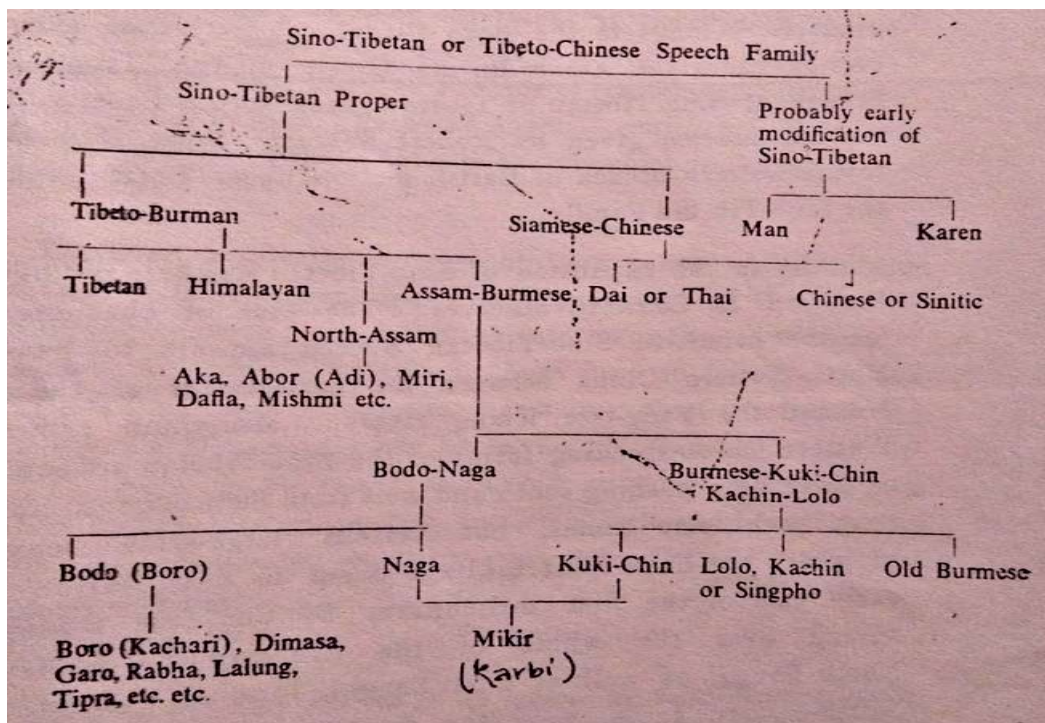


Figure: 1.2

(Extracted from '*A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro language*', p.8)

The Tibeto-Burman sub-family under Sino-Tibetan language family classification by Paul K. Benedict as pertinent diagram to the Bodo language is given below:



**Figure: 1.3**

(Extracted from '*Handbook of Proto-Tibeto-Burman*', p.4)

The Tibeto-Burman sub- family under Sino-Tibetan language family classification by James A. Matisoff as pertinent diagram to the Bodo language is given below:

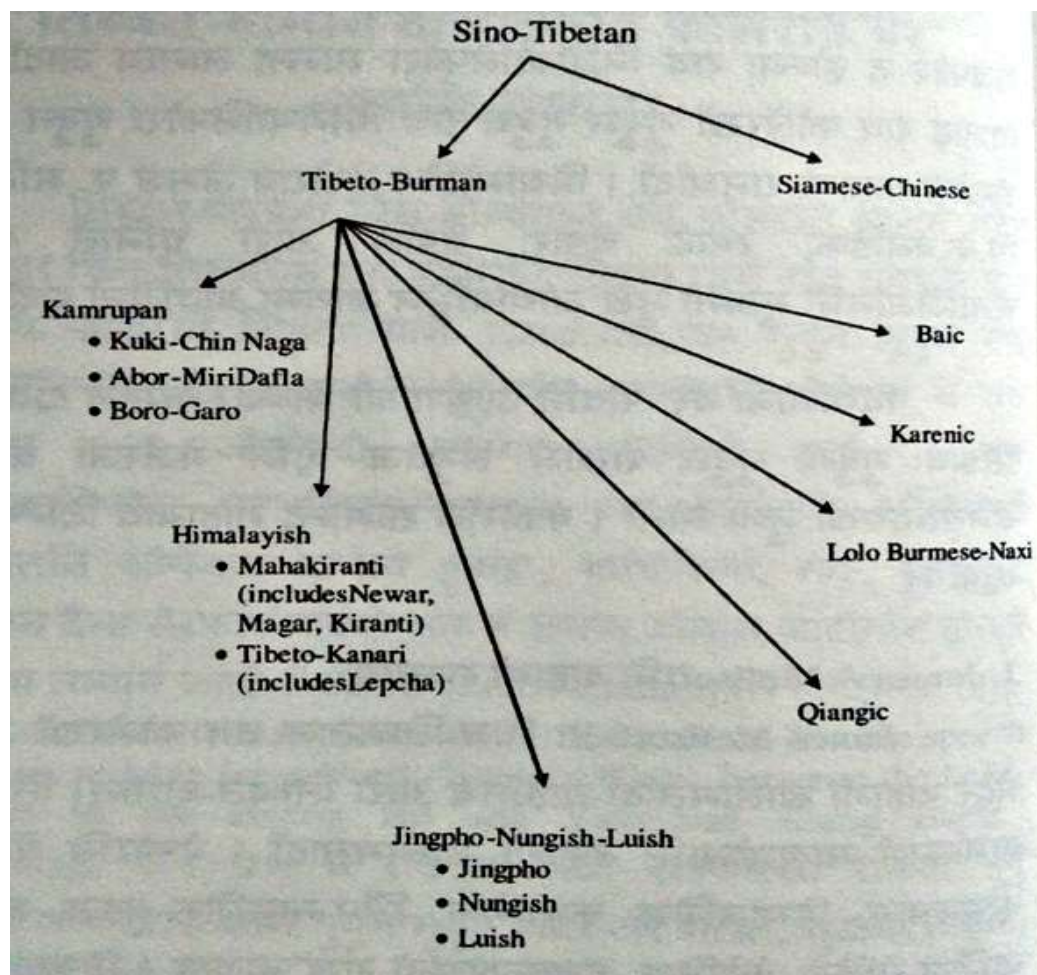


Figure: 1.4

(Extracted from '*Baidi Bithing Baidi Saoraitai*', p.12)

### 1.1.2 Salient features

Bodo language has its own phonemic features. It has many similarities with the features of T.B. languages. Some important phonemic salient features of Bodo language are stated below:

- i. Phonemic inventory of Bodo language consist of six vocalic phonemes i.e. / i, u, e, o, a /, eight diphthongs i.e. / iu, ui, eu, oi, ai and au/. All the vocalic Phonemes of Bodo language are voiced and short vowel. Long vowels are not occurs by this language.

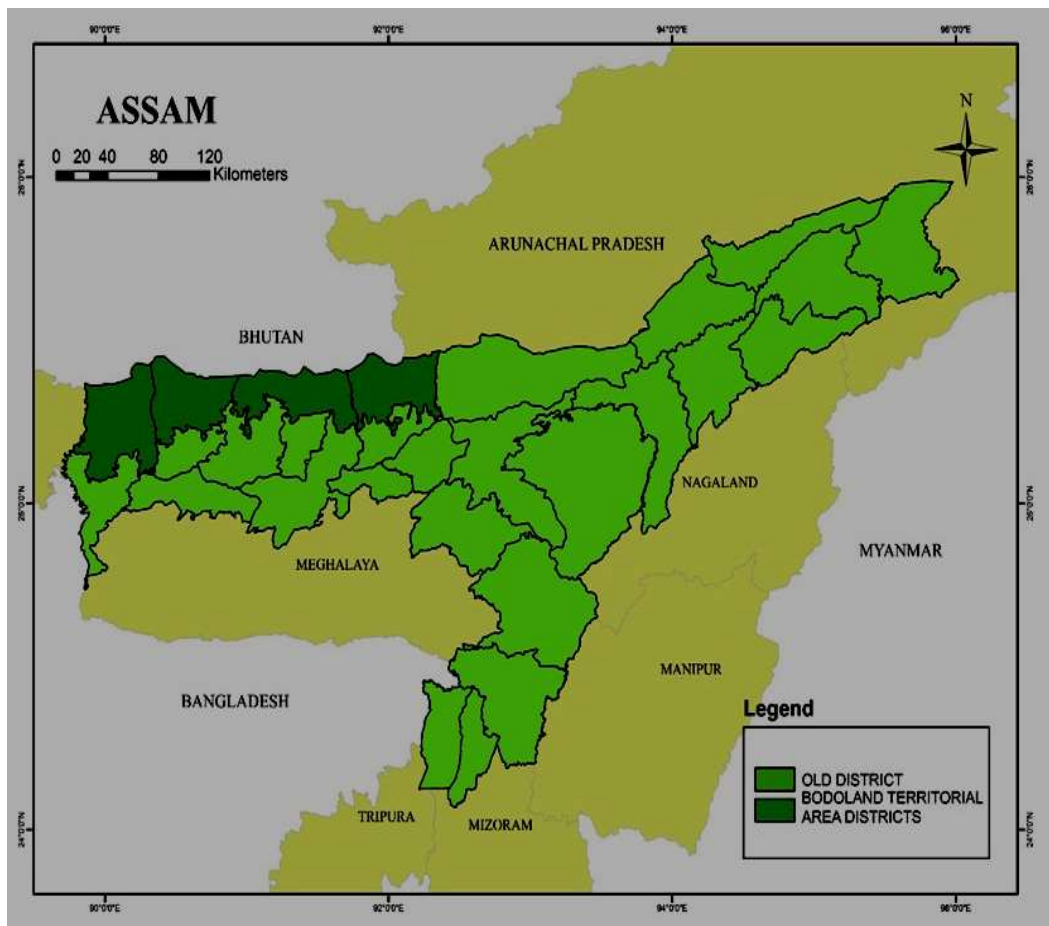
- ii. Using of / *u* / high back un-rounded vowel is one of the most special features of Bodo language. It is occur in all the positions of a word. Juncture, Tone and Intonation are the Supra-segmental features found in this language.
- iii. There are sixteen consonant phonemes in Bodo language i.e. / p<sup>h</sup>, b, t<sup>h</sup>, d, k<sup>h</sup>, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l, w, y /, where /w/ and /y/ are Semi vowels of Segmental features. Except this some other phonemes are also used in various loan words.
- iv. Consonant cluster in Bodo are occurs only in initial and middle positions of a word.
- v. In Bodo, Gemination sequence occur in two consonant sequences only which is merely used in middle position of a word and non-gemination sequence is occur in two consonant sequences as well as three consonant sequences. These are occurs only in middle position of a word.
- vi. The syllabic classification of Bodo language is of three types i.e. mono-syllabic, di-syllabic or bi-syllabic and poly-syllabic and from the structural form of syllable, it is of two types open syllable and closed syllable.
- vii. Two types of juncture i.e. Close juncture and Open juncture are commonly occurs in Bodo language.
- viii. In Bodo two tones are occurs high tone and low tone.
- ix. In intonation patterns three types of intonations are occurs i.e. High falling, Low rising and Level.
- x. Based on the manner of articulation there are minimum two different types of allophones in each vowel and consonant phonemes in Bodo language.

## 1.2 Demography

The total population of the Bodo community in Assam as per 2001 census was 12,96,162 against the total number of 13,50,478 Bodo community in the entire country. There are some major areas in Assam state where Bodos have their dwellings or habitations. These are: Kokrajhar District (Whole parts), Chirang District (Some parts of Goalpara and Bongaigaon District), Baga Ditriect (Northern parts of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup Districts), Udalguri District (Northern parts of Darrang) and Sanitpur, Northern parts of North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji, Goalpara District (Dudhnoi

and Dhupdhara areas), Boko- Chaygaon and Rani areas and South Guwahati-Sonapur-Khetri areas in the Southern part of Kamrup District, Morigaon District (Jagiroad-Morigaon areas) and Nagaon District (Rupahi Dhing areas), Sibsagar District (Southern most part), Karbi Anglong District (Howrahghat-Langhin areas), Dibrugarh District (North Eastern part), Dhubri District (North and Eastern parts).

Map of Assam indicating Four Districts of BTAD area is given below:



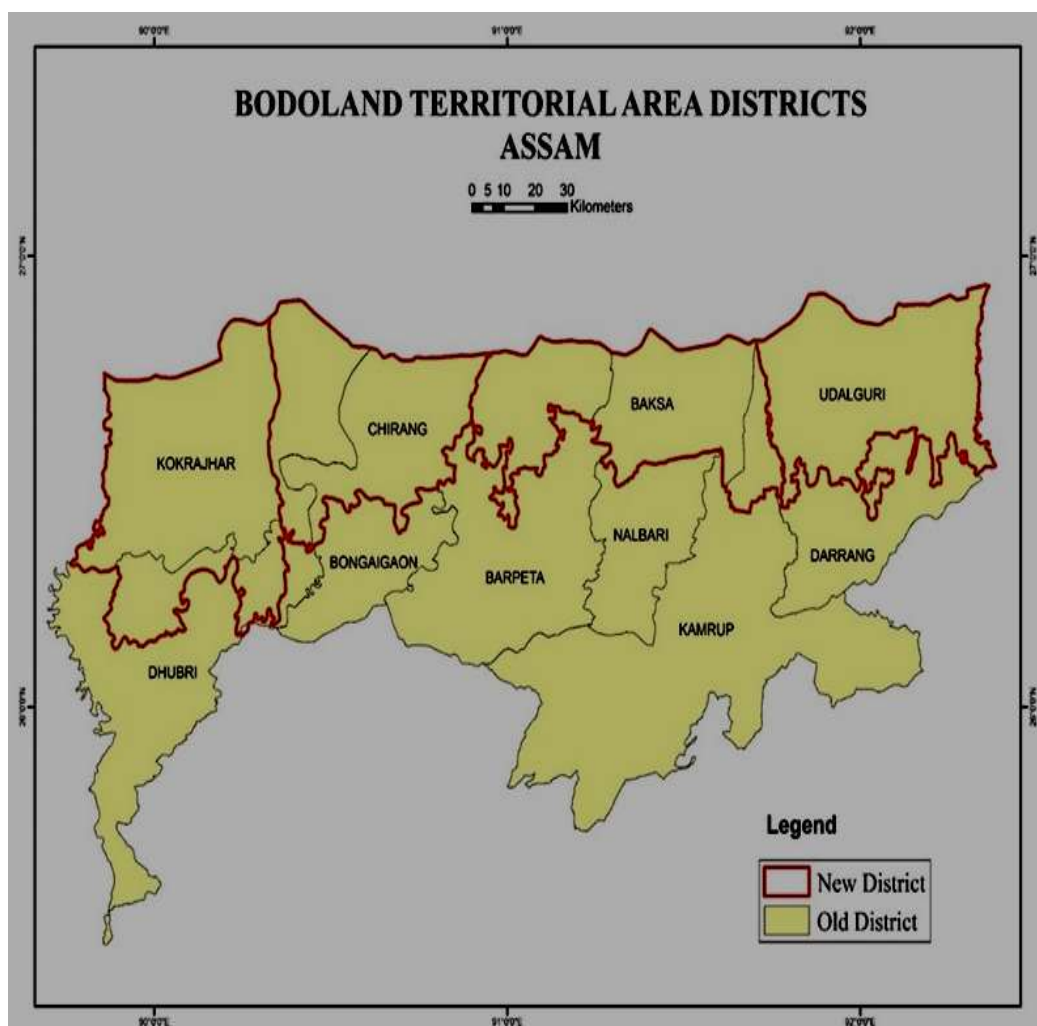
**Figure: 1.5**

(Extracted from *Geography Department, B.U.*)

Not only in Assam but outside the Assam also there are some Pocket areas of Bodo in the neighboring states. These areas are: Meghalaya State (Tikrikilla area of Garo Hills), Nagaland State (Dimapur area), West Bengal State (Northern part of Jalpaiguri), Nepal etc. It is remarkable that among the above areas of Assam the four Districts under the B.T.A.D. i.e. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bagsha and Udalguri are the area of Highest Bodo

habitation. Total geographical area of B.T.A.D. is approximately 8,970 Square Kms and 3082 villages are included under the territory. The geographical boundary of B.T.A.D. lies between  $26^{\circ} 7' 12''$  N to  $26^{\circ} 47' 50''$  N Latitude and  $89^{\circ} 47' 40''$  E to  $92^{\circ} 18' 30''$  E Longitude and is in the North Western part of Assam, India. The Administrative Head Quarter of B.T.A.D. is at Kokrajhar Town. By B.T.A.D. population census as on 2011 the population of Bodo speakers is 8, 59, 731.

Map of BTAD indicating Four Administrative Districts is given below:



**Figure: 1.6**

(Extracted from *Geography Department, B.U.*)



### 1.3 Present status of the Bodo language

The evolution of Bodo language is started from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To draw out the present status of Bodo language, its development as well as inclusion in different level of education system is given in chronological order as below:

- i. **Primary level:** The Bodo language was introduced as medium of instruction in the primary level in 18<sup>th</sup> May 1963.
- ii. **Lower Secondary level or Middle school:** In 1968 Bodo language was introduced as medium of instruction in Lower Secondary level or Middle school Vide Letter No. EMI-167/166/pt-2 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April.
- iii. **High school level:** Bodo language was introduced in High school level in 1972.
- iv. **H.S.L.C Examination:** H.S.L.C examination was conducted in Bodo Language for the first time in the year 1976 and total 612 candidates were passed out.
- v. **Pre-University (P.U):** Bodo language was recognized as MIL in Pre-University (P.U) under Gauhati University vides Circular No.4 of 1977 and that circular was communicated to Bodo Sahitya Sabha under Memo No. GU/VC/Com/17/77/14331 dated 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1977.
- vi. **Bachelor of Arts (B.A):** Bodo was recognised as MIL by the Gauhati University in 1980, North Eastern Hill University in 1978 and Dibrugarh University in 1994.
- vii. **Master of Arts (MA):** Under Gauhati University Master of Arts (MA) Course was introduced in Bodo Vides Order No. M/AC/Spl/1/97/5812-13 dated 25th November, 1997. MA in Bodo was introduced under Dibrugarh University in 2016.
- viii. **Elective Subject:** It was introduced as Elective Subject under Gauhati University Vide Letter No. M/AR/99/66 dated 31st July 1999. Elective Subject was introduced in Bodo under Dibrugarh University vides Letter No. DU/DR-A/ 6-11/03/374 dated 4th August 2004. Elective Subject under Assam University, Silchar Vide Letter No. AUD-107/2011/2659 dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
- ix. **Major Course:** It was introduced as Major Course under Gauhati University in Bodo Vide Letter No. M/AR/2006/55 dated 18th January, 2006 and under Dibrugarh University in the year 2011.

- x. **Advance Subject:** Bodo as Advance Subject was introduced in XI & XII standard under Assam Higher Secondary Education Council, Guwahati Vide Notification No. AHSEC/ACA/CS/11/96/184664-185564 dated 31st July, 2006.
- xi. **Certificate Course:** Certificate Course for Non-Bodo was introduced in 1980 under Gauhati University.
- xii. **Diploma Course:** In the year 1994 Bodo was introduced as PG Diploma Course under Gauhati University.
- xiii. **SLET:** Bodo subject was introduced as optional paper in State Level Eligibility Test under Gauhati University in the year 2003.
- xiv. **NET:** Bodo subject was introduced as optional paper in National Eligibility Test under UGC in the year 2011.
- xv. **Sahitya Ackademi Award:** Sahitya Ackademi Award was given for Bodo language from the year 2005.

Besides these, Bodo language was introduced as one of the Associate official languages of Assam in Bodo dominated area since 1985 and after MoS signed between the Govt. of India, the Govt. of Assam and the BLT on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003 the Bodo language is included in 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003. Further than of these Bodo language is now used as an optional paper in some competitive examinations like APSC, UPSC, TET etc. and it is ongoing process of becoming as a technologically developed computer language. In journalism section also it is developed and various programs in Bodo language are broadcast in All India Radio since 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1975 as regular programme, Guwahati centre and in Kokrajhar centre from 15<sup>th</sup> August 1998 as well as telecast through Guwahati Doordarshan Kendra and north Eastern TV channels from 2007.

#### **1.4 Area of the study**

The area of the study in research topic is based on spoken as well as written language of Bodos i.e. standard language which is used as the medium of instruction in Education system. Study is done on the basis of Linguistic analysis.

### **1.5 Aims and Objectives of the study**

Following are the aims and objectives of this Research study:

- i. To analyzing the basic segmental phonemes used in Bodo language is the principal aim.
- ii. Aims at focusing phonemic features and its process of identification.
- iii. Aims at analyzing phonemic distribution at various positions of words.
- iv. The study is taking in to consideration the allophonic process for empirical analysis.
- v. Also it is discussing the whole of the phonemic process keeping in view linguistic approach as adopted in computational linguistics which is to be applied in analyzing the phonemic data.
- vi. The close relationship between the phoneme and the orthographic rules as followed in writing the Bodo language and to some extent trends of script designing i.e. the script grammar will be taken in to consideration for analysis.
- vii. Aims to analyze the basic set of characters and arrangement as per class such as consonant, vowel, mātrās, diacritics etc. Also the allograph used in writing Bodo is presented in this study.
- viii. Besides the study aims to provide suggestions in need of modification of rule ordering characters within the syllable and to make easy the writing system.

### **1.6 Methodology of analysis**

The study demands a high order of scientific analysis keeping in view synchronic study. So analysis is done based on synchronic approach. Thus to determine and identify the properly articulated phonemes and the process of allophones in Bodo language is necessary to apply the computer aided linguistic analysis. The study is purely based on articulator and acoustic phonetics. To make convenient the structural analysis of phonemes and on the one hand, script grammar used for writing Bodo language is necessarily applied computational approach of modern linguistics. The study demands highly technological support of Computer software i.e. Praat, etc.

## 1.7 Data Collection

It has collected the related data from different sources. For Primary data collection, many places of Kokrajhar District have visited and collected the related data from various informants through interview and sound recording. To collect Secondary data, different libraries like, Dept. Library and Central library of B.U., District library of Kokrajhar, K.K. Handiqui Library of G.U. and E-library have visited and collected the related data based on the available written materials in the form of Thesis and books.

## 1.8 Hypothesis

- i. From extant analysis it seems that the process of phonemes are determined and identified based on contrastive distribution in identical minimum unit.
- ii. Allophonic variants play an important function in articulating phonemes in different manners. The primary analysis is based on focusing intrinsic structure and the process of allophones of the Bodo language.
- iii. There are minimum two different types of allophones in each phonemes defined based on the manner of articulation.
- iv. Scripts used for representing the letter have different types; such as Basic set of characters and the allograph. The study will be summarily described all the rules governing for suitable writing of the scripts in Bodo.

## 1.9 Review of the previous work on Bodo language

Some famous linguists or researchers have already studied the Bodo language and some new research works are also going on. In this way the process of development of the Bodo language is going on widely. Some of the previous works on Bodo language are listed chronologically as follows:

- i. **1847** '*Essay the first on the Kocch, Bodo and Dhimal Tribes*'  
While discussing about the linguistics studies in Bodo, monograph book '*Essay the first on the Kocch, Bodo and Dhimal Tribes*' in 1847 by B.H. Hodgson is the first book written about aborigines of India along with Bodo language and grammar. This book was basically written in three parts, part I.- Vocabulary, Part II.- Grammar and in Part III.- Location, Numbers,

Creed, Customs, Condition, Physical and Moral Characteristics of the people.

- ii. **1884** '*Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bàrà) Language, as spoken in District Darrang, Assam;*'

Rev. Sidney Endle was also the researcher on Bodo language to whom one has to take note for his pioneer work '*Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bàrà) Language, as spoken in District Darrang, Assam;*' in 1884. This is the first book written about Bodo language and grammar.

- iii. **1889** '*A short grammar of the Mech or Bodo language*'

The second book written about Bodo language and grammar was written by Rev. L. Skrefsrud '*A short grammar of the Mech or Bodo language*' in 1889. This book is written about Grammar of Bodo language.

- iv. **1903** '*Linguistics Survey of India*'

G.A. Grierson also incorporated his work materials on Bodo philology in the '*Linguistics Survey of India*', Vol.-III, Part-II, in 1903, which was one of the remarkable research worked on Bodo language.

- v. **1959** '*Boro Grammar*'

Through his creative work Rev. S. Holversrud wrote the rules and uses of Bodo language and title the Book '*Boro Grammar*' in the year 1959.

- vi. **1977** '*A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language*'

Promod Chandra Bhattacharya has also made a remarkable research work on Bodo language in the field of its phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. '*A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language*' in 1977 was the outcome of his authentic work.

- vii. **1963** '*Boru bhasar zotuwa bakyasawur*'

It is mentionable that in the history of Bodo language Gahin Chandra Basumatary an enthusiastic Bodo personality had written many piece of

article about Bodo grammar. In 1963 his '*Boru bhasar zotuwa bakyasawur*' ( বড়ো ভাষাৰ জতুৱা বাক্যাংশবোৰ ) article was published in '*Siphung*' magazine. This was a discussion about Idiomatic Phrases of Bodo language.

viii. **1963** '*Gibi Raokhanthi*'

Kamal Kumar Brahma had done a lot of works on Bodo grammar. He was the first Bodo persona who had written Bodo grammar in Bodo language. His pioneer works are '*Gibi Raokhanthi*' in 1963, '*Gwnang Raokhanthi*' in 1972 and '*Boro Raokhanthi*' (Boro grammar) in 1976.

ix. **1964** '*Boru bhasat songkhyabasok sobdoburor byawhar*'

It is an article about uses of the numerical words in Bodo language. '*Boru bhasat songkhyabasok sobdoburor byawhar*' ( বড়ো ভাষাত সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দবোৰৰ ব্যৱহাৰ ) was published in '*Bodo*' magazine in the year 1964 and in 1966 he had written an article namely '*Boru byanzon bornoburor ussaron*' ( বড়ো ব্যঞ্জন বৰ্ণবোৰৰ উচ্চাৰন ). This is described about the Bodo script in detailed. This article was published in '*Bodo Sahitya Sabha Souvenir*'. In 1977 '*Boru bhasar todbit-bisesya sobdoburor gothon*' ( বড়ো ভাষাৰ তদ্বিত-বিশেষ্য শব্দবোৰৰ গঠন ) and '*Is Bodo A syntactical Language?*' were published and in 1979 he had incorporated his works on Bodo language as '*Distinction of Gender in Boro*'.

x. **1990** '*Boro Rao: Boro Bhasa*'

Bhaben Narzi was also one of the enthusiastic populace in the field of Bodo language and grammar. He wrote '*Boro Rao: Boro Bhasa*' in Assamese language in 1990. In this book identification of Bodo phonemes were done with reference of the Assamese Phonemes and declension, person, gender, tense, number etc. were discussed thoroughly.

xi. **1990** '*The Historical Development of Boro Language*'

Madhuram Boro was the first linguist among Bodos. He was great Bodo personality who dedicated his best of knowledge and work for Bodo

philology as well as linguistics. In this regard his '*The Historical Development of Boro Language*' and '*Assamese and Boro: A Comparative and Contrastive Study*' were published in the year 1990. In 1991 his '*The Boro structure: A phonological and Grammatical study*' was published. This book was brought as a preliminary result of his linguistics research findings. He had also written Bodo grammar namely '*Gwgpu Raokhanthi*' in Bodo language in the year 1996.

xii. **2000** '*Boro Raoni Mohorkhanthi*'

Bodo linguists Phukan Chandra Basumatary has written about Bodo language in the aspect of linguistic analysis. In 2000 his work on Bodo language and literature was published namely '*Boro Raoni Mohorkhanthi*' and '*Boro Rao arw Thunlai*'. His '*An Introduction to the Boro Language*' was published in 2005 and it deals with the structural analysis of Phonology, Morphology and Vocabulary. Analysis has been done with linguistic approach from the synchronic perspective of the Bodo language. '*Linguistic and Cultural Affinities of Boro and Rabha*' Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis G.U. was come out in the year 2006 as a result of his deep research work on linguistics perspective. In 2017 he has published '*Raobigianni phora*', this book is mainly deals with the theoretical Perspective of Language and Linguistics.

xiii. **2004** '*Raoni Mohor (Part-I)*'

Swarna Prabha Chainary an enthusiastic linguist among Bodos' has also dedicated her best of knowledge and work for Bodo philology and linguistics. '*Raoni Mohor (Part-I)*' and '*Raoni Mohor (Part-II)*' a collection of articles on different aspect of language written by her and Phukan Ch. Basumatary was published in the year 2004 and 2008 serially. In 2006 '*Boro Raokhanthi*' a first book written by her on Boro grammar was come out in the form of Book. Here in this book discussion was begins with the definitions of language and discusses up to all the levels of language. In the same year 2006 her researches work on the topic '*Boro and Garo: A*

*Linguistic Comparative Study*' an unpublished Ph.D. Thesis G.U. was come out as a result of her deep research work on linguistics perspective.

xiv. **2013** '*Modern Bodo Grammar (Vol-I)*

Aleendra Brahma research scholar of the Linguistic in the department of Humanities and Social Science, IIT Guwahati has also written the book about Bodo language and grammar. His '*Modern Bodo Grammar (Vol-I)*' is published in 2013. This book is based on typological analytical study of the Bodo Morphology, Bases and Affixes.

xv. **2013** '*Jouga Boro Raokhanthi*'

'*Jouga Boro Raokhanthi*' a Bodo Grammar written by a Group of Editors on behalf of Bodo Sahitya sabha was also published in the same year 2013 by Bodo Publication Board, Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

xvi. **2015** '*Comparative Phonology of Bodo and Dimasa*'

In 2015, a research base book on Comparative linguistics written by Pratima Brahma namely '*Comparative Phonology of Bodo and Dimasa*' was published.

xvii. **2017** '*Comparative Study of Bodo, Garo and Rabha Phonology*'

It is also a research base book written by Musukha Bala Brahma on comparative linguistics. This book is published in the year 2017. In the same year she has written and published two books on vocabulary namely *Bodo Rabha Vocabulary* and *Bodo Garo Vocabulary*.

xviii. **2017** '*Word Formation Processes in Bodo: Affixation*'

This book is a linguistically analyzed book based on the morphological features and processes, with reference to affixation. This book is written by Dr. Daimalu Brahma in the year 2017.

Besides them some other new research scholars and also some institutional department of language studies like CIIL, NEHU, G.U., B.U. are doing study as well as research work on Bodo language.