

## Chapter: I

### Introductory

#### Geographical Background:

Assam is situated approximately in the area covered by  $89^{\circ} 42' 05''$  E to  $96^{\circ} 01' 14''$  E longitudes and  $24^{\circ} 08' 11''$  N to  $27^{\circ} 58' 15''$  N latitudes<sup>1</sup>. It is bounded on the north and east by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh respectively, on the south by Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya and on the west by Bengal. Assam is famous for extremely rich flora and fauna. Her landscape is dominated by the lush green valley of the mighty Brahmaputra with many tributaries big and small all flowing to join the great river at various point of its course. Also many marshy swamps and beels add to its depression. According to Alexander Mackenzie<sup>2</sup>, once Assam was consisted of entire hill ranges of north, east, south of the Assam Valley and also the western slopes of the Himalayan mountain situated in between Bengal and Burma. Assam is considered to be the nerve centre of almost all the bordering states of North-East Indian- Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya sharing also two important international boundaries with Bhutan in the North and Bangladesh in the south-west<sup>3</sup>.

Assam was celebrated by various names at different times. Her territorial limits also had been fluctuated at various times. It is said that there was a continuous process of integration and disintegration of the region as a whole. Pragjyotisha and Kamarupa were the geographical names given to a kingdom which eventually came to be known, in later times, as Assam with expanding and contracting boundaries, according to political conditions prevailing in different periods<sup>4</sup>. Pragjyotisha was ancient name of Assam which is mentioned very frequently in the *Mahabharata*. The *Puranas* and *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa mention that Pragjotisa and Kamarupa are the old name of Assam. According to *Yogini Tantra*, Kamarupa comprised the territory between Karatoya and Dikrai<sup>5</sup>.

Hiuen-Tsang who came to the court of Bhaskaravarmana in 643 A.D. kept in record the perimeter of the country more than a myriad *li* or 1667 miles in circuit. The

Chinese pilgrim made tour from Pun-na-fa-tan-na (*Pundravardhana or North Bengal*) on the east more than 900 *li* or 150 miles. After crossing a large river he reached Ka-mo-lu-po (Kamarupa). This river is referred in the Tang-Shu as Ka-lo-tu, which was most probably Karatoya river<sup>6</sup>. To the east of Kamarupa there were series of hills and hillocks without any principal city stretching to south-western China. Kamarupa lays 1600 *li* to the west of Upper Burma beyond the black mountains and in Eastern India, 600 *li* to the south of Pundravardhan with the river Kalotu between the two counties<sup>7</sup>. The inference of the General Cunningham<sup>8</sup> is that the country must have comprised the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley as well as Koch-Bihar and Bhotan. The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta which composed by Harisena, the poet-laureate of Samudragupta made a reference to Kamarupa as a frontier territory. It is the earliest epigraphical inscription in which the name Kamarupa is mentioned<sup>9</sup>. However, it is also stated that during the medieval period Assam was known as Kamarupa. The *Kalika Puran* portrayed that when Naraka of Mithila became king of Assam and was placed in charge of the goddess Kamakhya, the name Pragjyotisa was changed to Kamarupa<sup>10</sup>.

### Topography:

Assam is the second biggest state in North East India with an area of 78,438km<sup>2</sup>. There are now 33 districts along with some autonomous council. Among the autonomous council Bodoland Territorial Council is also one of them which was formed in 2003 comprising four districts- Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri of Assam. Assam may be divided into two natural divisions on the basis of topography i.e. i) the plains and ii) the Hills. Out of total area of Assam (½ or 200square kilometer) is plain area and hill area constitutes (200 sq. kilometer). Today's Assam contains an area of 54,000 square miles, of which a little over 24,000 square miles constitute the plain districts, 19,500 the southern hills and the rest the trail hill tracts to the north<sup>11</sup>. The plain area of Assam is further divided into two- i) the Brahmaputra Valley which cover the vicinity over 4,000 km from the Manah river on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra to the foot of the Himalayans with the total length of 720 km and 80 km in breadth with rich alluvial soil<sup>12</sup> and ii) the alluvial Barak plain which is characterized by the presence of low hillocks and numerous swamps or beels with the length of about 85 km east to west and about 70 km breadth north to south. The total length of the plain is about 6962 km<sup>2</sup> and the river

Barak flowing through the valley from the mountain ranges lying to the south of Nagaland through Manipur Hills and then entering Cachar, Silchar, Karimganj in Assam and Sylhet in Bangladesh<sup>13</sup>. The Barak plain is bounded on the north by North Cachar hills, on the east by Manipur hills and on the south by Mizoram hills which open only to the west<sup>14</sup>. Likewise, the hills are also sub-divided into two- i) Karbi plateaus and ii) North Cachar hills. Thus, topographically Assam is divided into four units- i) the Brahmaputra Plain ii) the Barak Plain iii) the Karbi Plateau and iv) the North Cachar Hills.

### Soil:

Soil being the most important natural resource has shaped the fortune of the nations in the past and present as well as future and also shaped their culture and outlook. In the formation of the soil of the Assam geology, topography and climate most probably play a vital role. On the basis of geological structure and chemical composition the soil of Assam may be divided into three types as- i) red loam soil ii) laterite soil and iii) alluvial soil<sup>15</sup>.

### Climate:

Weather and climate are important factors in determining day to day and longer term activities and modes of life. The climate of Assam belongs to sub-tropical belt and characterized by coolness and extreme humidity, heavy summer rainfall and winter drought, however, owing to orographic feature the climate in the valley is humid monsoonic. Although micro-level variations in general prevailing weather conditions are also found. Based on the temperature and precipitation a year is dividable into four seasons namely winter season (December-February), pre-monsoon season (March-May), monsoon season (June-September) and season of retreating monsoon (October-November)<sup>16</sup>. Generally, the climate of hills is nourishing while that of the plains is comparatively warm in summer and cool in winter. Accordingly, the climate of Assam is characterized by alternate cool and warm periods with high humidity, especially from May to November. Regarding the climate of Assam it is also recorded that Assam can broadly be divided in two seasons- cold season and rainy season with another two short

seasons namely spring and autumn representing the transition between cold and rainy seasons and between rainy and cold seasons respectively<sup>17</sup>.

### Rainfall:

Yearly rainfall in Assam is always bountiful as it receives typical monsoon rain but sometimes unfavorable distributed. Variations of rainfall also found in Assam from season to season and rainy season generally commenced in the last week of May or early part of June continuing up to the month of September. During this period the average rainfall in the state is about 180 cm<sup>18</sup>. The rainfall gradually disappears in this region when south-west monsoon departed by the last part of September and first week of October. Maximum rainfall is occurred during the month of June, July and August. B.C. Allen, E.A Gait and C.G.H. Allen<sup>19</sup> say that storms crop up during the spring month, generally accompanied by high winds and heavy rainfall. Severe thunderstorms occur in the pre-monsoon seasons and rainfall is lowest during the winter season.

### Temperature:

Being the sub-tropical land, the maximum temperature in the plains of Assam never goes beyond 90°F or 32°C and in winter the plains of Assam have a minimum temperature of about 8°C or about 47°F. The cold season is in between the middle of November to the middle of February. During this period temperature goes down below 15°C with clear sky<sup>20</sup>.

### Earthquake:

North-Eastern parts of India are within the earthquake zone. Assam being the part of the North-Eastern region, geologists are of the opinion that it lies in the seismic region and liable to suffer from severe earthquake as Assam is within the belt of the eastern earthquake zone spreading across and cross connects the Pacific. For this reason earthquakes become common phenomena in Assam occurring several times in a year<sup>21</sup>. John M'Cosh<sup>22</sup> recorded about the earthquake which occurred in Assam as frequently earthquake were occurred in Assam. B.C. Allen, E. A. Gait, C.G.H. Allen and H.F. Howard<sup>23</sup> also informed us regarding the severe earthquake sock in Assam that all previous seismic disturbances were, however, completely eclipsed by the earthquake of

June, 12, 1897 which was the most severe and disastrous of which there was any record in Assam. Many of the buildings in Gauhati and Sylhet were completely demolished, and much damage was done in Goalpara, Nogaon and Darrang. The death toll of the natives rose up to 1,540 and two Europeans also lost their lives. Hem Barua<sup>24</sup> says that June 12, 1897 earthquake of Assam was no less disastrous as the one of August 15, 1950. These were the two of the big five earthquakes which recorded in the history of mankind, according to the experts of the United States.

### Forest:

The north eastern states of India including Assam belong to one of the twelve mega bio-diversity hotspots, rugged hills, expansive valleys and large rivers constitute the varied spectrum of surface features of the state of Assam<sup>25</sup>. The forests of Assam are great natural resources of the region which covers about 28 per cent of the total area of Assam. In fact, the forest has immense value in all aspect as it help enhance natural water supply, soil erosion, besides providing valuable raw materials for a number of industries as well as they have a moderating influence on the climate providing recreational facilities to human society<sup>26</sup>. As per the forest report 2011 of Forest Survey of India, the estimated tree cover in Assam is 1,564 sq. km. which is 1.99% of geographical area of the state and 27,673 sq. km. is covered by forest in this state i.e. 35.28% of the total area of the state. Thus, 29,237 sq. km. is covered by forest and tree which is 37.27% of the geographical area of Assam<sup>27</sup>. The forests of the Assam can be categorized as- i) tropical evergreen forests ii) mixed deciduous forests iii) pine forests and iv) savannah forests<sup>28</sup>.

In Assam the area which is kept for wildlife protected is about 3923 sq. km. Out of these 3823 sq. km., 1978 sq. km. is in the five (5) national parks and the other 1932 sq. km. in eighteen (18) wild life sanctuaries. The Kaziranga National Park, the home place of the one horned Rhinoceros and Manas National Park are two world heritage sites in Assam recognize by UNESCO<sup>29</sup>. Assam has five national parks, seventeen (17) wildlife sanctuaries, three tiger reserves, two biosphere reserves, two world heritage sites, five elephant reserves and forty six (46) important bird's area.

## River:

Assam is endowed with a large numbers of rivers which traversed in its different parts or places. The two principal rivers of Assam are as under:

### The Brahmaputra:

The Brahmaputra, one of the greatest rivers in the world is originated from the great glacier mass of Chema-Yung-Dung which is located to the south-east to the Manasaravor, a lake of the Mount Kailash of South-Tibet and flows through China, India and Bangladesh before merging into the Bay of Bengal through a joint channel with the Ganga<sup>30</sup>. With its total catchment area of 5,80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which is identical with the Tamchuk, Khambab, Matchang Tsangpo or Kubi-Tsangpo in Tibet. It is also known as Chiang or Siang in Arunachal Pradesh. The Brahmaputra has received numerous tributaries during its long course of journey. Twenty-two (22) tributaries joined in Tibet, thirty-three (33) major tributaries in Assam Valley and three (3) large tributaries meet in Bangladesh. Out of thirty-three (33) major tributaries of the Brahmaputra valley twenty (20) are from the north and thirteen (13) are from the south bank<sup>31</sup>. The principal tributaries on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra are Subansiri, Dihang, Ranganadi, Manas, Aai, Phuthimari, Dikrang, Pagladiya, Champamati etc. The major tributaries on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra are Burhi Dihing, Disang, Dikhow, Dhansiri, Kopili, Jinjiram, Bhogdoi etc.

### The Barak:

The Barak, the second largest river basin in the North East India with an area of 41,000 sq. km., covering 16% of the total area of the region originated in the southern slopes of the Barail ranges of the Mao-Maram area in the Senapati district of Manipur, flows into western and southern hill than to Cacher, Karimganj and Surma Valley of Bangladesh. The important tributaries that are received by the Barak on the north are Jiri, Jatinga, Bogapani, Jadukata and on the south are Sonai, Dhaleswari, Singla, Langai, Manu, and Khowai<sup>32</sup>.

### Mineral Resources:

So far, mineral resource of Assam is concerned, no doubt, it has abundance of mineral resources. Among them petroleum, coal, natural gas, limestone, gold, iron, salt, etc. are the most important. Oil was first discovered in 1889 at Digboi. Digboi Oil Refinery was established in the year 1901 by Assam Oil Company. The oil fields are available in many places of the Assam namely Digboi, Naharkatiya, Hugrijan, Rudrassagar, Lowkowa, Geleki, Namti, etc. There are two types of natural gas- i) Associated Natural Gas which found with petroleum and ii) Free Natural Gas which found independently. Assam, being rich in petroleum product, has immense potential of natural gas. The deposits of limestone in Assam are found in the districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills<sup>33</sup>. Clay deposits are found in many places of Assam, however, many of them have not been properly explored. The types of clay that available in the state are- Pottery clay, Fire clay, Kaolin (China clay), Fuller's Earth and Oil well drilling clay<sup>34</sup>. The natural resources like gold, iron, salt etc. are also found in Assam.

### Fauna & Flora:

Assam being the eastern part of India stands as the gateway through which the Oriental as well as Palaeartic fauna spread across the country. It occupies an important place in the wildlife map of India for her rich and rear birds and animal species. The tropical and sub-tropical moist evergreen and semi-deciduous forests of Assam ensures the best survival mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and arthropods along with other invertebrates, etc.<sup>35</sup>. Assam is the home of two hundred thirty (230) forms of mammals and one hundred seventy five (175) species, nine hundred fifty eight (958) species and sub-species of birds and one hundred eighty seven (187) species of reptile along with rich fish fauna. Assam is proud of producing the world famous one horned rhinoceros. Rhinoceros is the state animal and most distinguished animal fauna of Assam, which is state's pride.

Out of seventy eight (78) families of the birds of India, fifty nine (59) families are found in Assam. Some notable birds available in Assam are- peacocks, vultures, kites, hawks, falcons, black winged kite, pariah kite, hawk eagle, fishing Eagle, painted sand grouse, common sand grouse, hill myna etc.<sup>36</sup>. White-winged wood duck is the state bird

of Assam. The available lizards in the Assam are- wall lizards, smooth house lizards, tree geckos, giant house lizards and forest geckos are important<sup>37</sup>. Common cobra, Assam cobra, king cobra, common krait, big Indian viper, bamboo pit viper, etc. are found in Assam<sup>38</sup>. Among the amphibian frogs, toads, newts, salamanders, caecilians etc. are important. Indian newt, skipper frog, cricket frog, green frog, bull frog, Himalayan frog, Assam frog, torrent toad, etc. are commonly found in Assam<sup>39</sup>. Among the fishes, angling and sports fishes, cat-fishes are found abundantly. The putitor mahseer, mosal mahseer, jungha, bokar, Indian trout, alwan, seenghari or *tengra*, aar, khagqa, pungus, silond, garna bacha, goonch, brown trout, murrall, etc. are some of the important fish faunas of Assam<sup>40</sup>. Assam is well known for her rich flora. Of the various flora, mention may be made of the valuable trees like- *sal (shorea robusta)*, *nahar (mesua ferrea)*, *hollock (terminatia hollock)*, *sai (shorea robusta)*, *cham (artocarpus chaplasha)*, *chama (michalia champaka)*, *sonaru (cassia ceiba)*, *amari (amora wallichii)*, *simul (bombax ceiba)*, *agor (aqualaria agalocha)*, *bonsum (phoebe goalparensis)*, *bakul (minosop elengi)*, *bagipoma (chikaasia species)* etc.<sup>41</sup>. Out of seventy four (74) species of timber, two-thirds are commercially exploited. The flower plants such as rose, sunflower, lotus, *bokful*, *sewali*, orchids etc. are commonly seen in the state of Assam. The medicinal plants like *amlaku*, *thokra*, *dumur*, *van-tulsi*, *neem*, *kamranga*, *tezpata*, *kalmegh* etc. are also very common. In addition to rice, maize, millet, mustard, potato, pulses, jute, cabbage, pumpkin, melon, plum, etc. are also grown abundantly<sup>42</sup>. The state flower of the Assam is Foxtail Orchids which is known as *Kopou phul* in Assamese.

### Lake and Island:

The state of Assam does not have big lake, however, there are numbers of swamps and wetlands, locally known as beels. Of the lakes, Chandubi and Haflong occupied a very important place but later is artificial lake. Majuli is a river island in Brahmaputra with the total area of 1,250 square km. which is the largest river island in the world. Because of the erosion, the area of the island is reduced to 421.65 sq. km in 2001.



## Peopling:

India is called the melting pot of all races because historically it has been associated with tremendous human movement. S. K. Chatterji<sup>43</sup> was rightly observed, India as the land of Ocean of human races since the time immemorial. In fact, migration becomes a universal phenomenon which touches every place in the world. Assam being the part of India is also known as the land of great anthropological museum. Being a transitional location between South and South-East Asia, Assam has been settled by a number of migrants from different places within the country and across the country. In this regard M. Taher<sup>44</sup> also expressed the same view that Assam has been receiving migrants from the north, east, south and west. As regards to the origin of the people of Assam and their early migration is still unsolved and disputed. According to Hem Barua<sup>45</sup>, the Austro-Asiatic, Dravidians, Tibeto-Burman, Mongoloids and Aryans migrated and settled in Assam. M. Taher<sup>46</sup> classified four racial traits in North East India as Proto-Austroloid, Mongoloid, Aryo-Mongoloid-Dravidian and Aryo-Mongoloid.

## Ethno-History:

Ethno history emerged as a sub-discipline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of studies of acculturation. It is an illegitimate product of two antagonistic disciplines, history and anthropology. Works such as *Perspectives in American Indian Cultural Change*<sup>47</sup> and *Cycles of Conquest*<sup>48</sup> are milestones in the development of studies of acculturation into what already had come to be called ethno history. Since then, ethno history, though described as a method by many of its practitioners, has tended to be recognized as a significant sub-discipline within anthropology. The ethno historian must be able to evaluate the accuracy and authenticity of primary sources.

Historians and anthropologists now have no difficulty agreeing that ethno history is the method which combines both historical and ethnological to search knowledge of nature and causes of change in a culture defined by ethnological concepts and categories. Ethno history represents both history and ethnology which purpose is to bring into being academic progeny who bear the diachronic dimensions of history and the synchronic sensitivity of ethnology.

The subject of study of ethno history is culture and thus ethno historian ideally focuses on the whole culture of an ethnic group or society as a developing entity over

time and space. Although they put emphasis on particular aspect of culture, their analysis is still ethnologically oriented by their assumption that no part is to be understood without reference to its place in the whole. Another feature of ethno history is its emphasis on socio-cultural change, an emphasis it shares with history and with some anthropology. The most important aspect of ethno historical approach is use of historical methods and materials.

The present work is to throw light on the ethnographical account of the Bodo, one of the oldest tribal communities of North East India, who are supposed to be one of the earliest inhabitants in Assam with powerful kingdom at *Dimapur* and then at *Maibong* and *Khaspure*<sup>49</sup>. There are very little written records as well as very few works on the Bodo, for which an anthropological approach- ethnographical study is necessary. Ethnography is the basic level of scientific description of the races of mankind in social and cultural terms<sup>50</sup>, its meaning is to study or write about people- a systematic description of contemporary cultures discussing a wide range of observations on the different aspects of life of a particular community. Ethnography means the study of individual cultures. It is primarily a descriptive and non-interpretative study<sup>51</sup>. Ethno history is a kind of historical anthropology that study cultures of the recent past through oral histories, the account of explorers, missionaries, and traders, and through investigation of records like land, birth, death and other source materials. The ethno-historical analysis of cultures is a valuable approach to understanding change and plays an important role in theory building<sup>52</sup>.

In English the Bodo may be described as Indo-Mongoloids; this term defines at once their Indian connection and their place within the cultural milieu in which they found themselves, as well as their original racial affinity. Their culture is the part and parcel of Mongoloid culture which has greatly enriches the culture of Indo- Aryan Assamese. They enter into reciprocal contact with other races in different historical periods as a result of which cultural assimilation took place with a large amount of racial fusion<sup>53</sup>. The Bodo who have been dwelling in different parts of the North East India particularly in Assam with their distinctive cultural and linguistic traits, belong to Mongoloid stock of Indo-Mongoloid or Indo-Tibetans racially. People of the different races of Austric, Dravidians and Aryan speech as well as Mongoloid or Sino-Tibetan speech in Himalayan and North- Eastern India intermarrying with each other, which

effect to the original culture however, in the process of the cultural assimilation and fusion, the Bodo have been maintaining their own distinctive identity through the ages<sup>54</sup>. The word Bodo used to indicate the greater Bodo races as well as the particular Indo-Mongoloid branch, the people who have yellowish complexion, prominent cheek, bones and snub nose, mainly settle down in Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Ladhak of Kashmir etc. with the similarity of their culture and tradition<sup>55</sup>. In the society of the Mongoloid races no class division was existed in the past nor do they have such division at present, which is sharp distinction from the Hindu society. The Indo-Mongoloid Bodo who inhabited in the region between the Sonkos river and the Brahmaputra river are known as Meches later on Bodo, the people on the Kachari hills come to be known as Kacharies, those who inhabited in Dimapur are called Dimasa, Tripuri or Kok Borok of the Tripura and so on<sup>56</sup>. The questions to have different languages of Indo-Mongoloid in different places of North- East India, physical Anthropologist tried to develop explanation for human variation. In ancient time Eastern and North Eastern India were the home of the heterogeneous Indo-Mongoloid Kirata people with diversity of their own dialects. Definitely they might have developed a common language for exchanges of ideas in inter ethnic level. The Bodo groups inhabited in the various parts of the North-East India become divergent from one another and became distinct socio- cultural and the linguistic group. Why it is happened? The most important factors which led to linguistic and cultural divergent are the breakdown of communication network. The sub-groups of the Indo- Mongoloid spread in different parts of the North-Eastern region in different geographical circumstance but belong to Tibeto-Burman languages, sharing many common structural and physiological features. It may presume that because of geographical difference and physical distance, linguistic variation prevalent among them. Language variations exist; to some extent cultural variation also appear among the Mongoloid people of North-East India in spite of sharing common major structural and physiological feature in their languages in the remote past. The degree of difference is greater in which the means of communication is separated by physical barriers and diversity, degree is less where communication is good and fair.

The Bodo have been maintaining their distinctive cultural traditions- customs, belief, social system, dresses and the ornaments, songs, music and so on. As the

forefathers of the Bodo were illiterate, no written accounts or documents were kept about their historical background, but from their oral history, folktales and folk songs, we may reconstruct the history of the Bodo. They have distinctive rich folktales, myths, legends, songs, proverbs, culture and tradition since the time immemorial. *Bathou* is the traditional religion of the Bodo. However, many of the Bodo converted into the other religion like Hinduism, Christianity, etc. due to the cultural contact with Indians and other parts of the worlds, which resulted a death blow to the traditional religion. The Bodo had well established social and cultural system with self sufficient economy. The language and literature of the Bodo are only the means for existence and survivable of the Bodo community.

The area of study is Brahmaputra valley of Assam pertaining to the Bodo community. The Bodo, the tribe of our concerned, are mostly concentrated in four Districts of Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam namely Baska, Chirang, Udalguri, and Kokrajhar. In these four districts of Bodoland Territorial Council, total Bodo population in 1991 was 7.15 lakhs which was about 13.43 per cent of the total population of these districts. After a decade in 2001 the Bodo population increased to 8.42 lakhs, accounting for 13.73 per cent of the total population. By 2011 census, Bodo population has recorded around 16 lakh which was about 15 per cent of the total population<sup>57</sup>. The Bodo language was included as one of the languages of the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule of Indian constitution on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2003.

### Objectives and the scope of the problem:

The proposed ethnographical study aims at studying the Bodo with special reference to migratory habit, food habit, material culture, kinship system, distinctive social formation, mechanism of social control, economic life, religious life, the condition of living of the people, conversion and so on. In short it attempts to give a clear pictures of socio-economy, socio-religious and cultural life of the Bodo in totality. So far, no serious studies on the Bodo tribe have been done by any scholars and historians by utilizing all available sources of both primary and secondary. As a result of which we have ample scope to do research on the ethnographical study.

## Review of literature:

No serious research based study of the ethnographical study of the Bodo has yet been made by any other scholars utilizing all the available sources both primary and secondary sources. It is also fact that on some areas like- society, religious, customs and traditions etc. of the Bodo have been brought to light by some scholars in their respective works, but some still await thorough investigation and the treatment within a wide canvas.

Khameswar Brahma has made a painstaking effort to bring to light the origin and migration, life cycle, religious festivals, black magic of the Bodo in his work *A Study of Socio Religious Beliefs Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*. But we find some of the areas have not received the attention they deserved. Another noted scholar S. K. Cheterji has also dealt with origin and Mongoloid tribes of North East India in his book *Kirata Jana Kriti* but information supplied by him on the tribe of North East India is scanty to some extent however, their historical authenticity is beyond doubt. *History and the Culture of the Bodos* of Satyandra Nath Mondal edited by Bonny Narzary, *Folk Literature of Bodos* of Anil Boro, *Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu* of Bhaben Narji, *The Boro-Dimasas of Assam* of Medini Choudury, *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition* of Sekhar Brahma, *The Kacharis* of Rev. Sedney Endle, *The Kiratas in Ancient India: Historical Study of their Life* of G. P. Singh, *Culture and Civilization Reclaiming Identity A Discourse on Bodo History* of Jadav Pegu, *Social Mobility: From Traibalism to Indialism: The Bodos: (The Aboriginal People of Eastern India)* of Dr. Binoy Kumar Brahma, *Boroni Subung Harimu* of Binoy Kumar Brahma, *Boro Harimu Arw Tunlai Bejirnai* of Indramalati Narzary, *Burlungbutur Hayenao Boroni Swdwmshri* of Dr. Premananda Mwshahary, *Folk-Songs of the Bodos* of Mohini Mohan Brahma, *Boro-Kacharini Kuga Metai* of Bhaben Narji have also supply very valuable information. Even though some gaps still exist in the earlier work, which needs to be filled in.

Other important sources which utilized in this study included some of the ancient Indian literary texts, foreign classical or Greek and Latin sources and personal interviews. The ancient Indian literary texts mainly included some of the Vedas, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Arthsasthra etc. Besides, we also used foreign classical or

Greek and Latin sources like *Le Nepal Etude Historique d'un Royan "me Hindou"*, Vol.- II of Sylvian Levi, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, Vol.- I of A. A. Macdonell & A. B. Keith, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Vol.-I of R. T. H. Griffith, *The Texts of the White Ajurveda* of Ralph T. Griffith, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy* of J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* of J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature* of J. W. McCrindle, *India as Described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism* of B. C. Law, *The Periplus of the Eastern Sea* of W. H. Schoff, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia* of G. E. Gerini, *Travels of Fa-Hien or A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (A.D. 399-414) of James Legge (Eng. Tr.), *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (A.D. 629-645) of Thomas Watter, *Alberunis India*, Vol.-I of E. C. Sachau (tr.), *Travels of Marcopolo* of Sir Henry Yule (Tr. & Ed.), *Ibn Battuta's Travel in Asia and Africa* of H. A. R. Gibb (Tr.), *Secret Lands where Women Reign* of G. Bertand, *Ethnography of Ancient India* of Robert Shafer, "Kirata-A Study on Some Ancient Indian Tribe" of Kasten Ronnow, *Bulletin de l'Ecole francaised' Extreme Orient* of Pelliot. Personal interviews included the interviews with various knowledgeable persons, intellectual persons as well as *Ojas* (shaman) and elderly persons who possessed the knowledge of past history of the Bodo.

### Methodology:

The methodology of the study is obviously anthropological one adopting ethno-historical or inter-disciplinary method with the combination of the use of historical sources and ethnological field work. Accordingly the work is primarily based on field investigation for collecting first hand data as well as also based on all the literary texts. The technique of anthropological data collection– participants, observation, interview methods, both structure and non-structure, case study, genealogical methods are adopted. The collected data have been analyzed both quantatively and the qualitatively whenever necessary.

The present work is accordingly put in order into the following chapters:

Chapter one is introductory which deals with geographical background of the study area which include a brief account on topography, soil, climate, rainfall,

temperature, earthquake, forest, river, mineral resources, fauna and flora, lake and island, peopling and ethno-history.

The second chapter made an attempt to highlight on the origin, antiquity and identification of the Bodo.

Chapter third throws light on the migration and settlement of the Bodo based on the ethnographical or ethno-historical background of the community. In this chapter we deal with their ancestral home, present dwelling of the Bodo, mainly the North-East India, demographic structure and their migration during different time periods since time immemorial.

Chapter fourth is on the Social and Cultural Life of the Bodo which includes family, village, kinship, inheritance and succession, food preservation, house construction and life cycle.

The fifth chapter describes the Religious Life of the Bodo. It presents detailed account on the traditional religion, rites, rituals and ceremonies as well as conversion.

Chapter sixth throws light on the economic life of the Bodo. The economic life of the Bodo is mainly concentrated on the agricultural and other economic activities including tools and technology.

The seventh chapter is conclusion. This final chapter deals with overall recapitulation of our research work on the Ethno History of the Bodo of Assam.

### **Endnotes**

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