

CHAPTER: V

TRADITIONAL RELIGION OF THE BODOS AND ITS CONVERSION

The traditional religion of the Bodos is *Bathou*. A. K. Boro¹, R. N. Mushahary² and Satyana Nath Mandal³ opined that *Bathou* is a combination of two words i.e. *Ba* and *Thou*. *Ba* means five (5) and *Thou* denote deep or propounded principles. Thus, the *Bathou* word signifies five-fold principles. The Bodos worshiped Supreme God, *Bathou Bwrai* in different names like *Bura Bathou*, *Song Raja*, *Khuria* or *Khoriya Bwrai*, *Mohadeo*, etc. The symbol of the *Bathou Bwrai* is *Sijou* tree. So the *Bathou Bwrai* is also known as *Sijou Bwrai*, *Sijou Gosai*, *Sijou Raja*, *Si Bwrai*, etc.⁴ In the traditional religion of the *Bathou*, numbers of the deities are worship, so *Bathouism* may be regarded as polytheism. It is the fact that in *Bathouism* i.e. the traditional religion of the Bodos, not only the *Bathou*, the Supreme God is worshiped but other subordinate deities are also being worship. However, they also believed that there is one god who creates the universe. There is no beginning, no end, no father and no mother for *Bwrai Bathou*. It is He who creates everything. He is regarded as creator, destroyer, preserver, protector, giver and God of all souls.⁵

1. *Bathou* Altar:

In the traditional religion of the Bodos, *Bathou* altar is very important one. For the construction of the *Bathou* altar, a place is selected in the courtyard towards the east-south direction of *Noma No*. Before starting the construction of the *Bathou* altar, a *Dahab*⁶ (an altar made with soil for worshipping god) is made for worshipping *Bathou*.

Dahab is in circle shape which about 2 or 2.5 feet in diameter and 1 feet in height. A hole is made in the eastern part of *Dahab* for the plantation of *Sijou* tree. Some stones and pair of coins are placed in the hole. Milk is poured on the hole by the house owner and then planted the *Sijou* tree on that hole. Plantation of *Sijou* tree symbolized the existence of *Bathou Bwrai*. On the right side of *Sijou* tree basil plant is planted and *Jatras*⁷ (a kind of plant used by the Bodos in their religious ceremonies) is planted on the left side. Three bamboo sticks are placed in triangle shape i.e. in the eastern, northern and southern side of *Bathou Dahab*. They are joints together at the top. In the name of *Bathou Bwrai* a *Daosa* (fowl) is offered for the foundation of *Bathou* altar.⁸

Before final construction of *Bathou* altar, a ceremony called *Gwthwi Gwthang Baonai* (offering to departed souls) has to be performed by the family members with the help of *Oja* in the southern side of the courtyard. Main items of the ceremony are fowl, areca nuts, betel leaves, rice, *Dhub* (incense sticks) etc. In this ceremony, *Oja* mentioned the names of departed souls of the family as well as the names of earlier kings, renowned heroes and heroines like *Gambari Sikla*, *Sikwna Jwhwlao*, *Dwimalu*, *Kwrwm Sikla*, *Jarapagla* etc. with the following mantra:⁹

Ai fwi, fwi apha fwi,

Jwngni koroni jangsikwo bwkarpwi

Sijousi sira siriba

Bathouya bandwba

Taigir bikhonga khongba

Mwnsing sing Bwraini

Asarabw pongba.

Aiya twidwng aikwo gardwng

Aphaya twidwng aphakwo gardwng

Teobw bura Bathou moharajakwo

Pujinw garakwi jwngw.

Kangkla tugwn sari sari

Purge onni ali

Makwna bibara aini gontongni bali.

Mainao kamakhya sunduri borunsa sunduri

Bwrlı buri aiya

Bwr bansa hwgrani giri.

Miru girini ragam ragam ontai

Lwithwya babwnai,

Mwnaswnw dwi jo kalamnai.

Hajwni ha gwtar lananwi

Dwisa jirini dwi gwtar lananwi

Nwngswrkwo pujigwn jwngw.

Sereng sereng laijam bonanwi

Gupur onao jwngthi or pwjwngnanwi

He apha, Bwrai Bathou!

He ai, aphapwr!!

Ailing, kaji, abla kungur

Rajputur, manasw, bwrlı buri,

Rajkandra, songraja-songrani,

Alai kungri, bilai kungri,

Bandari, kumara, basmati, swodri,

Aipwr aphapwr,

Mainao maitansi.

Nwngswrbw Bura Bathou aphajwng fwipadw

Boybw jo japwidw.

Puja japwi,

Jwngni koroni jangsikwo bwkarpwi.

Free English Translation:

Come mother, come father come,

Remove the load from head

A *Sijou* has five ribs

Bathou has five grips

A *dellenis indica* has five rinds

Mwnsing-sing Bwrai's

Has five social customs to deeds.

We have given up our died mother

We have given up our died father

Yet we can never give up

Worshipping Lord *Bwrai Bathou*.

Ladder will poke arranging

Boundary of pale white grain

Makhwna flower is my mother's nose ring

Mainao Kamakhya is beautiful, *Barunsa* is handsome

Bwrlı Buri mother is

Blesser of god.

Concrete stone of blesser centre

Taking from Ocean

Collective water in full.

Taking the holy soil from Hill

The holy water from river

We worshiped you.

Placing the *Laijwo* by arranging

Lighting *Alari* lamp on white pale grain

He father, Lord *Bwrai Bathou!*

He mothers, fathers!!

Ailing, Kaji, Abla Kungur

Rajputur, Manasw, Bwrlı Buri,

Rajkandra, Songraja-Songrani,

Alai Kungri, Bilai Kungri,

Bandari, Kumara, Basmati, Swodri,

Mothers, fathers

Lakshmi Maitansi.

You also come along with Lord *Bwrai Bathou*

Eat all together

Take part in *Puja*

Remove our load from head.

The ceremony of *Gwthwi Gwthang Baonai* is observed to purify the house from *Sua-Suti* (impure) and give farewell to departed souls of the family. It is also believed that this ceremony is done to expel the evil spirit for not to interfere for the construction of *Bathou* altar.¹⁰ *Or* (fire) is regarded as the witness of entire process of *Gwthwi Gwthang Baonai* ceremony and its presence is made by lighting a pair of *Dhub*. After this ceremony, construction of *Bathou* altar is begun.

The fencing of the *Bathou* altar is prepared by a mature bamboo which is known as *Awoa Gubwi*¹¹ (a kind of bamboo generally used by the Bodos in their religious as well as social functions.) in Bodo. It is prohibited to cross the bamboo which is cut down for the purpose of fencing of the *Bathou* altar by any living being. The bamboos like *Mwnda Owa*, *Owa Burka*, *Owa Tere* (a kind of tiny or small bamboo) etc. are not allowed to use for construction of fencing of the *Bathou* altar.¹² The construction of the fencing of *Bathou* altar is to be completed within a day after cutting the bamboo called *Owa Gubwi*. If the fencing is not completed in a day, a new bamboo is again to be cut for the purpose of fencing because the previous bamboo is prohibited to re-use for the construction which testified that only a fresh bamboo is employed for the fencing of *Bathou* altar and fencing should be completed on the same day of the cutting of the bamboo.¹³ There are sixteen posts and five rings of the fencing of *Bathou* altar. Each ring of fencing consists of three round of slit bamboo. A long bamboo is cut into three pieces for this purpose.¹⁴ In the circle way, each post represents the following gods and goddesses:¹⁵

(a) *Ailung*

- (b) *Agrang*
- (c) *Kwila*
- (d) *Kaji*
- (e) *Abla Kungur*
- (f) *Rai Kandra*
- (g) *Raj Putra*
- (h) *Bura Ali (Bwrai Ali)*
- (i) *Sanja Bwrai Ali*
- (j) *Sari Jumun*
- (k) *Bima Dibaoli*
- (l) *Bwisumuti Mainao*
- (m) *Bwrai Sik Raja*
- (n) *Mwsa Raja (Bag Raja)*
- (o) *Basumuri and*
- (p) *Chouduri.*

The first fencing ring of the *Bathou* altar starts from the bottom of the post of *Mwsa Raja* (Bag Raja), a little above from the ground. The second ring of the fencing starts from *Basumuri* post. The first fencing ring should go in anticlockwise direction three times. The second ring also should be done in same way as the first. The third one should start moving from *Agrang* to *Chwoudury* in anticlockwise direction then from *Chwoudury* to *Agrang* in clockwise direction and lastly *Agrang* to *Chwinichiri* in anticlockwise direction. In the same way of third one, remaining fourth and fifth fencing rings are also prepared. All the fencing rings are made with fresh bamboo slits. If any one of the bamboo slit falls short to make three times round of fencing ring then the whole process for the construction should restart with a new bamboo. *Ailung* is split into a number from its top to the level of second fencing ring and made the door of altar in rhombus design which is called *Dautu Bika*.¹⁶

Later on, an *Oja* or *Dwori* examine the fencing of the *Bathou* altar. If anything is found wrong in the process of the fencing, it should be restarted with a new bamboo

from the beginning. The construction of the fencing of the *Bathou* altar can be done in any month except *Badra*, *Phus* and *Chaitra* month of the Bangla Calendar.¹⁷

When the construction of fencing is over, the area is plastered with water and a banana leaf is placed over there to offer the items like areca nuts, betel leaves, and incense stick, holy water, etc. After offering, an *Uwal* is also kept on the plastered area to pound rice which is called *On Denai*.¹⁸ It is performed mainly by the wife of the head of the family. When *On Denai* is accomplished, the area is re-plastered with water by any one of the family member for purification with the help of *Dwori* or *Oja*.¹⁹ Then, *Dwori* or *Oja* takes the holy water in the *Thalir Bikhong Thona*²⁰ (a kind of polded pot made from banana peels for containing holy water during religious ceremony) and sprinkles on *Bathou* altar, the newly constructed fencing and the family members as a mark of purification.²¹ After this purification, offering is made to *Bathou Bwrai* with the following items:

- (a) *Thulsi Bilai* (basil leaf)
- (b) *Thalir* (banana)
- (c) *Alari Bathi* (an earthen pot for illumination)
- (d) *Mairong* (uncooked rice)
- (e) *Gaiker* (milk)
- (f) *On* (grain rice)
- (g) *Goi* (areca nuts)
- (h) *Phathwi* (betel leaves)

In the ceremony, a *Daola Gwja* (red cock) is sacrificed for the *Bathou Bwrai*. This sacrifice is signified the end of the construction of fencing of the *Bathou* altar.²²

2. Worship of *Bathou*:

Bathou is worshiped in two ways, i.e. household and village worship. In household worship, *Bathou Bwrai* and other deities are worshipped by the concerned family every day either in the morning and evening but evening worship is very common.²³ Generally, prayer is offered by both husband and wife of the family or any

member of the family. All the members of the family are also take part in the household prayer. However, *Pujas* like *Udrainai*, *Mainao Bwkangnai*, *Mainao Thisonnai* etc. are performed by the concern family with the help of *Oja* or *Dwori*.²⁴

Community or village level worship is conducted in the same way of household worship but community worship is done at the selected common place by involving all the villagers. It is performed once or twice in a year with the selection of a suitable common place by making temporary *Bathou* altar. Attendance of *Oja* or *Dwori* is compulsory in the community or village level worship.²⁵

2.1 Udrainai:

The Bodo word *Udrainai* means purification. It is performed before conducting any religious ceremony by the Bodos. For the performance of successful religious rites, purification is mandatory to each and every persons of the village. *Udrainai* is of two types. They are *Noaoni Udrainai* (family penance) and *Gamini Udrainai* (community penance).²⁶ Both *Udrainai* are performed at the road of village. *Noaoni Udrainai* is conducted at the nearest road of household. Sometimes, it is performed on the river bank. For the purpose of *Udrainai*, selected place is cleaned and plastered with mud and water properly. Offering is made on the direction of north-south on the plastered place. The items required in *Udrainai* ceremony are given below:

- (a) *Thalir* (banana)
- (b) *Mairong* (uncooked rice)
- (c) *Goi* (areca nuts)
- (d) *Pathwi* (betel leaves)
- (e) *Dhub* (incense stick)
- (f) *Pharwo* (pigeon)
- (g) *Daoma-daosa* (fowl)
- (h) *Thalir Bikhong Tana* (banana peel)
- (i) *Thalir Bilai* (banana leaf)

When offering is completed, a pair of pigeon or fowl is sacrificed by *Dwori* or *Oja* reciting the following mantra:²⁷

Aham Mohadeo Moha Prabhu arw swr dongbaoyw;

Ailung, Khoila, Khaji, Rajphutur, Rajkhandra,

Song Raja, Song Rani, Burli Buri, Ai Manasu, Ai Dibowli;

Ishingao dong Ai Mainao, Maothanari Dongbaoyw;

Kwnasong Aipwr-Apapwr

Nwngtang mwnha danilo mwdai nonga,

Orai dinni mwdai.

Amwkani nokora dai nangdwngmwn,

Dinwi bininw udrainai jabai.

Jerwi dai kalamdwngmwn, bidinw sasti hwnai jabai,

Daini giria dai kalambai Apha,

Nimahani Giria Nwngswr,

Mwidera gabw odla gudiao,

Mansia gabw Mohadeo Mohaprabhuni katiao.

Nimaha hwdw Aipwr Aphapwr,

Dinwiniprai dai dospwr dahomswi;

Naha-mwiha tangbla daidongo hwnnanwi

Nana rwkwm maya jananwi sigi-sogo dakalamswi,

Dohaide Aipwr-Aphapwr;

Manni Debota manao tanangwo.

Gole-gole khulumw jwng.

Free English Translation:

Aham Mohadeo, who else are there?

Ailung, Khoila, Khaji, Rajphutur, Rajkhandra,

Song Raja, song Rani, Burli Buri, Ai manasu, Ai dibowli is there;

There is mother Mother goddess Lakshmi in *Ishing*;

Please listen, oh, mother and father

You are not the gods of today only,

You are the gods of all time.

The man are found guilty,

For their offence penance is performed.

Punished has been done according to penance

The wrong doer does the wrong

The authority of mercy should give mercy

The elephant cries at the foot of *Odlā* tree,

The human being cries before *Mohadeo*.

Forgive, please mother and father,

Do not regard them as guilty

If they go for fishing-hunting

Do not threaten them in disguise,

Please, mother and father;

The gods of honour should remain in honour.

We pray before you again and again.

This ceremony is made to offer only to *Bathou Bwrai*. Holy water is placed in a *Thalir Bikhong Thona* near the *Bathou Bwrai*. Later on, purification is done with the help of *Dwori* or *Oja* by sprinkling holy water to each and every houses and the every member of the village.

2.2. *Sijou Gaipinnai*:

The Bodo word *Sijou Gaipinnai* means re-plantation of *Sijou* tree. It is the traditional of the Bodos, when the *Sijou* tree reached its height above the *Noma No*, it is removed and the new *Sijou* tree is being planted. In such case, a ceremony is organized by the head of the family for informing to *Bathou Bwrai* for cutting the *Sijou* tree as its height reached above the *Noma No*.²⁸ *Thulsi Bilai* (basal leaf), *Thalir Bilai* (banana leaf), *Alari Bathi* (an earthen pot for illumination), *Goi* (areca nuts), *Phathwi* (betel leaf), *Mairong* (uncooked rice), *Gaiker* (milk), *Dwi Gwthar* (holy water), *Daosa* (chicken), etc. are the articles for the ceremony. With the articles the head of the family offer prayer with the help of *Oja* to *Bathou Bwrai* for seeking permission of cutting old *Sijou* tree and re-plantation of new one. The *Oja* then recites the following mantras.²⁹

Swrgwao dong, Swrgw Deo Gosai

Patalao dong Sijou Deo Gosai

Biniprai raobw gwiya, raokwobw mitia.

Sanni giri sanja

Mwdaini giri Mohaprabhu

Bwrai Bathou Moharaja.

Bathouni bandwa bandwba

Sijouni siriya siriba,

Boro Bwraini asarabw pongba.

Gupur jwngti orjwng dansrang kalambai.

Dhup-dhuna saonanwi mwdwmpuru mwdwm hwbai,

Ram Tulsi, sonani astamjwng

Lahai-luhai kalambai.

Switwni Mwdaiya wwitwyao tanangwo

Manni Mwdaiya manao tanangwo

Nwngtangmwnha danilo Mwdai nonga

Orai dinni Mwdai.

Dao jagranw dao hwbai

Sreng-sreng laijwoyao

Goi, phatwi, gaiker, talir hwbai

Arw gangnai ukwinai, nwi hwbaonswi jwng.

He Apha, Bwrai Bathou Moharaja.

Jwngni koroni jangsikwo bwkarlangdw.

Pisa-pisa jib-jirad onnanwi lakidw.

Dwrwmni Mwdaiya dwrwmao tanangwo,

Switwni Mwdaiya switwyao tanangwo.

He Iswr! Bathou Bwrai Moharaja,

Moha Prabhu nwnkwwo kulumw.

Free English Translation:

There is the *Anan Gosai* in heaven

Tulsi Gosai is in the nether world

We know nothing except them.

The Lord of East is the sun

Lord of gods is *Mohaprabhu*

Bwrai Bathou Moharaja.

The *Bathou* is of five knots

Sijou tree is of five ridges,

The Bodo *Bwrai* has five moral words or preaching;

We have brightened the place with *Alari Bathi*.

We have performed *Puja* with burning insane sticks,

With Ram *Tulsi* and gold ring

We have sprinkled.

The gods of truth should stay in truth

The honour gods should stay in honour

You are the gods for not only present day

You are for permanent periods.

We have sacrificed chicken to you,

In equal position of *Laijwo*,

We have also offered areca nuts, milk, banana etc.

And will offer necessary items.

He! Father *Bwrai Bathou, Moharaja*.

Remove the trouble from our head

Keep our children well

The gods of truth should stay in truth,

The honour gods should stay in honour.

He! Father *Bwrai Bathou, Moharaja*,

We salute you.

Then, a branch of old *Sijou* tree is cut off by the head of the family for re-plantation. In course of uprooting old *Sijou* tree, the head of the family is helped by other members of the family as well as neighbours. Along with *Sijou*, *Thulsi* and *Jathrasi* are also removed and newly *Sijou*, *Thulsi* and *Jathrasi* are planted.

The Bodos reserved the places of the sixteen posts of the fencing of *Bathou* altar which represents sixteen gods and goddesses of the Bodos outside the *Bathou* altar. Inside the *Bathou* altar only *Bathou Bwrai* and *Bathou Buri* (wife of *Bathou Bwrai*) are worshiped. The places of worship of *Bathou Bwrai* and *Bathou Buri* as well as sixteen (16) gods and goddesses are known as *Pathali*. Among *Pathalis*, *Ailung* goddess occupied first place in the extreme north of *Bathou* altar. *Pathalis* of other gods and goddesses like *Agrang*, *Kwila*, *Kaji*, *Abla Kungur*, *Raj Kandra*, *Raj Putra*, *Bwrai Ali*, *Sanja Bwrai Ali*, *Sari Jumun*, *Bima Dibaoli*, *Bwisumuti Mainao*, *Bwrai Sik Raja* and *Mwsa Raja* (Bag Raja) are located to the south of *Ailung Pathali*. Beside, *Basumuri* and *Chowdury*, there are fourteen *Pathalis* in serial. The *Pathalis* of *Basumuri* and *Chowdury* are situated to the west of the *Ailung Pathali*. Five *Pathalis* are reserved for *Bathou Bwrai* and *Bathou Buri* including the two *Pathalis* which is inside the *Ishing* (inside *Noma No*) room of *Noma No*, the total number of *Pathali* is nineteen. The two *Pathalis* of *Ishing* are known as *Mainao* and *Songraja*. Sometimes, they are also called *Duwari*

Buri and *Duwari Bwrai* and their place of worship is in the north east corner of *Ishing*. *Mainao* is placed in the extreme corner of *Ishing* room and *Songraja* occupy the place near *Mainao* in western side.³⁰

3. Principles of *Bathou*:

The five principles of *Bathou* have deep philosophical consequence. It is also stated that the creator and custodian of these five basic elements is *Bathou Bwrai*, the Supreme God of the Bodos.³¹ The main basis of *Bathouism* and its philosophy is to adopt the social fabrics, customs, economic institution, beliefs and practices, rites, rituals and ceremonies of the Bodos.³² The five elements of *Bathou* are *Ha* (earth or soil), *Bar* (air or wind), *Dwi* (water), *Or* (fire) and *Okrang* (sky).³³

The five elements of *Bathou* have been identified with gods and goddesses of the Bodos as *Ailung* goddess is identified with earth or soil, *Agrang* is with water, *Khoila* is with air, *Sanja Bwrai* is with sun or fire and *Raj Khandra* or *Rajkumbre* or *Rajkhungri* with sky.³⁴

The five principles of *Bathou* are given below:³⁵

- (a) Procreation by bestowing and obtaining birth.
- (b) To obtain offspring by way of marriage.
- (c) Rejoicing.
- (d) The fourth principle is based on patience, worship and performance of *Kherai Hwnai*.
- (e) Fifth principle is on none attachment and devotion to God which is called *Udang Janai* or salvation.

It is clearly indicated in five principles that the life of man is essential to reproduce progeny by entering into marital life. It is also pointed out that life is full of discontent and contentment. God prescribed that rejoices of a man should be within the limit. The principles of happiness are devised by *Gurus* of the Bodos. It is advocated in *Bathouism* that man should remain quietly to find the goal and should follow tolerance.

When a man lies, he should remember the god and worship by performing *Kherai Hwnai*, *Garja Hwnai*, etc. It is stated that everybody become old and has to die one day as it is inevitable. According to the will of god, after birth, man will become old and will die sooner or later. He comes alone and will go alone without accompanying anyone or anything like land, money, property, sons, daughters or relatives etc. Devotion to god is the primary duty of each and every individual.³⁶

The five basic teachings of *Bathou* are as follows:³⁷

- (a) Understanding of *Sijou* as Supreme God.
- (b) To realize the connection of *Jiuma* (human soul) with the *Sijou*
- (c) To realize *Mainao* or *Bathou Buri*.
- (d) To realize of five elements of *Bathouism* i.e. Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky and their connection with five gods i.e. *Aileng*, *Agrang*, *Khoila*, *Sanjabwrlee*, *Rajklmbree*.
- (e) To realize the importance of the worldly affairs.

The following are the five preaching of *Bathou*:

- (a) To observe prayer and meditation for god.
- (b) Extending service to others and religious discourse to attain the knowledge of Supreme God, the *Bathou Bwrai*.
- (c) Extending help and charity to the persons who are in need and poor.
- (d) Not to harm to any living being and pay respect to them.
- (e) To live and to work together to short out any problems.

Following are the five-fold principles of love of the *Bathou*:³⁸

- (a) Adore for everlasting Supreme God i.e. *Bwrai Bathou*.
- (b) Adore for fellow beings.
- (c) Adore for husband-wife and children.
- (d) Adore for animals as well as and objects of the nature.
- (e) To be adored the Motherland and the world.

4. Conversion:

Bodo society is a multi-religious society at present. Some Bodos have converted to Hinduism, some to Christianity and some to other religion. The main reason behind the conversion of the Bodos to other religion was to escape from the racial derogation inflicted by the Hindu people. Because the Bodos were regarded as *Asuras*, *Dasas*, *Mlecchas*, untouchable, dirty etc. by the high class people and the process of Sanskritization or Hinduisation was also continued without any disruption throughout the tracts inhabited by the Bodos.³⁹ In true sense of the term, the process of the conversion had greatly impacted in the solidarity of the Bodo community. Sekhar Brahma⁴⁰ and Kameswar Brahma⁴¹ stated that a number of the Bodos also became Muslim by way of conversion into the Islam in the village like Panbari and Alamganj of the present Dhubri district of Assam. The Bodo society hence passed through many stages of conversion from centuries to centuries which resulted in disintegration of the traditional Bodo society.

4.1. Converted into Christianity:

The first Christian missionaries who came to Assam were S. Shisalla and John Subrael for the preaching the message of Christianity in 1626 A.D.⁴² The Roman Catholic missionary that came to Bondashil area in 1790 A.D. had started the propagation of Christianity in that area. Krishna Pal was deputed for the spread of Christianity on the request of the Magistrate of Sylhet and started his missionary activities in Goalpara and Kamrup. A branch of the mission was established at Gauhati in 1829 A.D. by James Rae.⁴³

The American Baptist Mission was opened by Nathun Brown and Rev. Oliver Kuttar in the year 1843 A.D. and in 1845 A.D., Rev. Barker became in-charge of the mission. A boarding school was established in 1846 A.D. in which some Bodo students were enrolled. The renowned scholars like R. N. Mushahary⁴⁴ Sekhar Brahma⁴⁵ and Binoy Kumar Brahma⁴⁶ stated that Apinta Kachari from Jhargaon village of North

Kamrup was the first Bodo who was converted to Christianity. He was baptized in 1849 A.D. at the Gauhati Church.

Mr. Hessel Mayor who belonged to the Anglican Church had established the Society for the Propagation of Gospel (SPG) in Tezpur in 1860 A.D. and the activities for the spread of the gospel had started by this society among the Bodos of Tezpur under the leadership of Rev. Sydney Endle who arrived at Tezpur in 1864 A.D.⁴⁷ Many of the Bodos have started conversion into the Christianity. A church at Bengnabari near Harisinga was also successfully established by Rev. Sydney Endle for the purpose of the spreading of Christianity among the native people. The native people who were converted into Christianity were three in 1851 A.D., seventy in 1861 A.D., one hundred thirty in 1871 A.D. and two hundred ten in 1881 A.D.⁴⁸ Because of the missionary activities, in 1922 A.D. number of the conversions of the Bodos into Christianity had been gradually increased and many centres of the Christian missionaries were set up in Gaurang (near Kokrajhar), Bongaigaon and Parkijuli in Kamrup District.⁴⁹

In 1928 A.D. Fr. Piasieski baptized some of the Bodos of Udalguri on their request. Fr. Alessi and Fr. Ravalico had done missionary work among the Bodos of Darrang district from 1933 A.D. and Beha Basti of Kamrup and some families of Kumarikatha had become Catholic faith.⁵⁰

In 1937 A.D. for the evangelization at Mangaldai of Darrang district of Assam, there was no good preacher. Although Romanus Daimary, a preacher had continuously worked for the evangelization and baptized 250 persons. In the same year, the establishments of the Churches were also increased upto 55 with about 3,880 members. The activities of the missionary gradually increased which lead to the opening of new Churches in the new places and conversion of more and more Bodos into Christianity. In the district of the Goalpara, Minaram Basumatary and his wife who were already converted into Christianity looked after the work of the missionary for conversion into the Christian faith. Goalpara was the centre of Christian mission in 1938 A.D. where Maniram Basumatary and his wife were the workers of that centre. In 1938 A.D., 49 Bodos have accepted Christianity and many more Bodos were also ready for conversion

into Christianity. In the year 1940 A.D., one hundred Bodos had accepted Christian faith. Tukrajhar was the main centre of the missionary activities. It is stated that the activities of Christian missionary became slow because of the desire to perpetuate the Bodo-Kochari customs in 1941 A.D. Only 120 Bodos were converted in 1941 A.D. When there was no pastor in many of the Churches Ajid Romanus Daimary had played a key role as evangelist for the propagation of Christianity.⁵¹ A Parish was established at Tangla in the Darrang district in 1951 A.D. A mission was opened at Udalguri in 1966 A.D. Later on many centres had been established in many areas like Mangaldai, Ambagaon, Rowta, Dimakuchi, Mazbat, etc.⁵² It is also found the establishment of Catholic centers and schools under the Catholic missionaries in the places like Barama, Kumarikata, Doomni, etc. of Baksa. In 1966 A.D., new missions were set up at Bengtol and at Saraibil in 1972 A.D. Gossaigaon, Dotma, Basbari, Bongaigaon, Ballamguri and Kokrajhar were also become the missionary centres.⁵³

Sekhar Brahma⁵⁴ and Sebastian Ayilookunnel⁵⁵ stated that the Scottish Presbyterian Church also extended their service to the Bodos of Duar area and established a centre at Panbari for the purpose of the missionary activities. Number of the Bodos of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal had professed into Christianity. Ranglal Narzari and Rev. Jitnal Narzinari were pioneers among them.

It was the Nangdorbari village of Kokrajhar district where the first Catholic community was set up. Phulsing, a Bodo leader invited Fr. Scunderi. Accordingly, Fr. Scundery came to the Catholic Church. Gendra Champramari of Bengtol was baptized who was sent to Gauhati by Phulsing. After receiving training from Tezpur, Gendra Champamari carried on evangelical work among the Bodos with Fr. Morengo. Digholdong, Ranisundri, Patgaon, Jolaigaon, Dangdupur and in Kamrup, Kalajhar, Bogriguri etc. became the Catholic head villages.⁵⁶

There was slow and steady in the propagation of Christianity among the Bodos. It is to be noted that the Bodos were deeply influenced by Hinduism before the advent of Christianity among them. According to Ajoy Roy, the main reason for facing the problems of Christian missionary to convert the Bodos to their faith was that the Bodo

people were not animist by religion and devoid of all religious and spiritual ideas.⁵⁷ Despite the problems, the Christian missionary continued the missionary activities in the areas where the Bodos were inhabited. However, they were not able to convert the bulk of Bodos into Christianity.

4.2. Impact on Bodo society:

Some significant changes in the field of socio-economic and religious life of the Bodos had been brought by the Christianity. It was because of the activities of Christian missionary, a Bodo Christian society had come up within the traditional society of the Bodo in which some of old beliefs, practices, customs and traditions, rites and rituals had abandoned by the Bodos who were converted into Christianity. The Bodos were ready to send their children to the schools which were run by Christian missionary to learn the English education. The converted Bodos were prohibited to consume liquor or *Jwo* at their home or any religious functions. However, many of the Christian Bodos were not be able easily to give up their old age habits like drinking, gambling, etc. Polygamy and other unhealthy social practices were forbidden in the society of the Christian Bodo society however, there are some evidences of practicing polygamy by the Bodo converts. No doubt, the converted Bodos have been adopted western style but they continue to use their traditional titles in their names as for example- Swmdwn Narzary, John Jubraj Islary, Jmaes Basumatary, Dergwma Brahma, Chitaranjan Bargayary, etc. *Dokhna* which is the traditional dress of the Bodo women is also wearing by the Christian Bodo women.⁵⁸

In respect of the belief and practices, there is no difference between the Christian Bodo and the universal Christian. Bodo Christians also similarly done whatever are done by the Universal Christians in respect of religious beliefs and practices. However, those Bodos who were converted into Christian used their own language also in the prayer service.

The Bodos after conversion into the Christianity have abandoned traditional festivals or religious festivals like *Kherai*, *Gaija*, *Marai*, *Bwisagu*, *Domashi*, *Kathigasa*

Saonai, etc. They do observe all the fairs and festivals of the universal Christians such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, etc. It indicated that the converted Bodos are gradually assimilated into the mainstream of the Christian people of the world in respect to the religious fairs and festivals. However, the Christian converted Bodos are still belief in spirits and witchcraft to some extent.⁵⁹

The converted Bodos into the Christianity had also adopted the marriage system that practiced by the other Christian to a great extent. They performed the marriage ceremony in the *Girja* (church) with the help of Pastor or Bishop.

In the field of education, the Christian missionaries had contributed a lot by establishing new mission schools. They established mission schools not only for imparting education to the converted Bodos but also for preaching the Christian faith. They also opened Sunday school for the converts Bodos to attend the Church, to learn behaviour and manner pertaining to the Universal Christian and prayer. Many Christian dispensary and hospitals were also opened for the poor Bodos of interior or remote villages. The hospitals at Parkijuli in the present Baksa district and mission hospital of Tezpur are the good examples of the service of the Christian missionary in the field of the health care to the converted Bodos.⁶⁰

In the field of the Bodo language and literature, the Christian missionaries also contributed a lot. It was the Bodo language which was once spoken language of the area of Brahmaputra valley, North Bengal and some part of East Bengal but such language was declined due to the heavy pressure of Assamese and Bengali languages. The Bodos who were converted into different sects like Hinduism and Islam had assimilated to the fold of Hindus or Islam by abandoning their own culture, language and tradition. However, during the time of Christian missionary, for the first time the scientific study on the language of the Bodo had undertaken by Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries also had started publication books on the religion, tales, rhymes and songs of the Bodo. During their time there was a development of Bodo language and literature which helped them to covert many of the Bodos into Christianity.

The following are the books which were produced during the days of Christian missionary on the Bodos:

- (a) *An Outline Grammar of Kochari Language* by Rev. Sidney Endle in 1884 A.D.
- (b) *A Short Grammar of the Mech or Bodo Language* by L. O. Skrefsrud in 1889 A.D.
- (c) *An Outline Grammar of the Kachari (Dimasa) Language* by W. C. Dundas in 1880 A.D.
- (d) *The Kacharis* by Rev. Sydney Endle in 1911 A.D.

Rev. Sidney Endle's *An Outline Grammar of Kochari Language*, which had published in 1884 A.D. is one of the important books which base on the dialect of the Bodo of Darrang district. A few folk tales and the folk stories of the Bodos are also contained in his book and this book is regarded as grammar and literature of the Bodo. *A Short Grammar of the Mech or Bodo Language* written by L. O. Skrefsrud which was published in 1889 A.D. through light on the Bodo dialect of several localities and grammatical forms. W. C. Dundas wrote a book entitled *An Outline Grammar of the Kachari (Dimasa) Language* which was published in 1880 A.D. deals with Bodo grammar.⁶¹

Rev. Sidney Endle had contributed another important book *The Kacharis* which discussed on social customs, agricultural practices, religious belief and practices, festivities, foot habits, life cycle rituals, crafts and textiles, etc. of the Bodos. *A Collection of Kachari Folktales and Rhymes* of J. D. Anderson which published in 1895 A.D. deal with the seventeen Bodo folklores in English translation in addition to the original versions in the language of Bodo.⁶²

Some more books on the Bodo language and dialects were published in the later years. They are:⁶³

- (a) *Dimasa Vocabulary* of J. D. Anderson published in 1895 A.D.

- (b) *Grammar and Dictionary of the Kachari Language* of A. Christiansen published in 1904 A.D.
- (c) *A Collection of Kachari Folktales and Rhymes* and *Dimasa Vocabulary* by J. D. Anderson in 1895 A.D.
- (d) *Grammar and Dictionary of the Kachari Language* by A. Christiansen in 1904 A.D.
- (e) *Outline of Tibeto Burman Linguistic Morphology* Wolfenden.
- (f) *Linguistic Survey of India* by G. A. Grierson in 1967 A.D.

Christian missionaries had set up mission schools and churches in different part of the Bodo inhabitant areas through which some section of the Bodos were converted into Christianity and many of the Bodos learned the western education.

4.3. Brahma Dharma:

Brahma Dharma was started among the Bodos in the early 20th century by Kalicharan Mech, who was also known as Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma.⁶⁴ He was born in the Kajigaon village of Porbatjhora area of the present district of Kokrajhar in 1862 A.D. Kaola Ram Mech was his father and his mother was Rindini Mech. By profession Kaola Ram Mech, the father of Kalicharan Brahma was a timber businessman. Kalicharan Mech studied up to the class IV standard. He was proficient to read and write both Hindi and Bengali.⁶⁵ At the age of fifteen he entered into family life and after the death of his father he looked after the timber business of his father as Ejadar. The founder of Brahma Dharma was Siv Narayan Param Hansa Swami of Calcutta. Kalicharan brought the Brahma Dharma into the Bodo community and started preaching in 1906 A.D. and onwards among the Bodos.⁶⁶

A book entitled *Sar Nitya Kriya*, written by Mohini Mohan Chattappadyay was found by him when he went to the camp of Charan Mandal for business purpose. After reading the book, he was very much influenced by the teaching of Param Hansa Siv Narayan the founder of Brahma Dharma who was resided at Calcutta and decided to meet him.⁶⁷

During that period, the Bodo society was ruined by evil, disorder, superstition, backwardness etc. which led the Bodos into degradation and degeneration in their socio-economic life. In the name of religion and festival, the excessive use of liquor and meat had demoralized the common Bodo people.⁶⁸ Sometimes, chaos and confusion took place in the traditional religion. As a result, some of the Bodo converted into Christianity, some were become Saraniya by adopting Ek Saran Nam Dharam of Srimat Sankardaev.

In such a perilous period, Gurudev Kalicharan came out as a hero and realized that the Bodos needed education for the development of entire socio-economic and political condition. He also realized that religion like Islam or Ek Saran Nam Dharam could not protect the identity of the Bodo community for which he decided to preach Brahma Dharma to save the Bodos. Indeed, Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma along with his friends Karan Mandal Mech, Charan Mandal Mech and Janadan Mech went to Calcutta and met Swami Siv Nrayan Param Hansa at Bhabanipur Road in 1905 A.D.⁶⁹

4.4. Preaching:

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma was determined to teach the Bodo people with the teachings of Brahma Dharma. For the first time, in 1906 A.D., Phani Bhusan Chatterjee was brought from Calcutta by Kalicharan Brahma as a *Purahit* and *Hum Yajna* was performed in the Bwinyaguri village with the following Gayatri mantra:⁷⁰

Om ayahi barde divi tyagari brhma badini, gayati chandasam mato brahma joni namahostote.

Free English Translation:

Oh, the mother earth, you come and live at our soul, you are the Brahma, you are the mother of all, you have also formed the universe, always salute you.

It is stated that thousands of the Bodos were participated in the *Yajnahuti* which came to be known as the beginning of Vedic religion among the Bodos. In the same year *Yajnahuti* was performed at Kajigaon with a massive gathering. Another *Yajnahuti* was

also performed at Gombhira Khata in 1907 A.D. and at Bangshijhora in 1908 A.D. respectively. At Burkella, Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma had performed a *Yajnahuti* as a *Purahit* with the attendance of thousands of Bodos in 1908 A.D. He also did *Yajnahuti* as a *Purahit* at Bongshijhora village in 1909 A.D. and at Gambhira Khata village in 1910 A.D. on the occasion of Lakhmi Puja and at Naigaon and Bamankhura on the occasion of Maghi Purnima. In the year 1912 A.D., Kalicharan Brahma had executed another *Yajnahuti* at Jnanada Pukhuri near Tipkai on the occasion of Mahalaya.⁷¹

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma preached the Brahma Dharma not only in Parbatjhora area but also other villages like Adabari, Auabari, Banargaon, Khashibari Roumari, Khagrabari, Bamungaon, Dangaigaon, etc. In later period his preaching covered many Bodo areas of Assam and Bengal.

When preaching the Brahma Dharma among the Bodos, Gurudev Kalicharan found some opposed and obstruction from Rai Saheb Jagat Chandra Mauzadar of fourth division of Sidli, who had the intension to make the Bodos as Saraniya with the help of Ananta Narayan Goswami of Baithamari, etc. However, many of the Bodos became the follower of Brahma Dharma under the leadership of Gurudev Kalicharan.⁷²

4.5. Mahasanmilan of the Bodos:

There were three Boro Mahasanmilans consecutively. The aim of these Maha Sanmilanies was to reform social evil practices which was plagued the Bodo society since long past by spreading Brahma Dharma. The first Boro Mahasanmilan was held in 1921 A.D. at Bhawraguri village of present Gossaigaon sub-division of Kokrajhar district under the chairperson of Jadav Chandra Khakhlary who was belonged to Kachari Pathar village of Dibrugarh district. Rupnath Brahma, Bimarayan Brahma, Jamadar Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Malsing Brahma, Junior Kalicharan Brahma, Bijoy Singh Brahma, etc. were the most important person who had participated in the Sanmilan. In the meeting, they discussed on the agendas like religious, education, political, ignorance, etc. After a prolonged discussion, the following resolutions were taken:⁷³

- (a) To conduct the Boro Mahasanmilan once in a year.
- (b) To form an executive committee during the time of organizing the Mahasanmilan.
- (c) To take the action plans for Bodo women.
- (d) To publish of magazine.
- (e) To establish of primary and middle schools in the Bodo dominated areas.
- (f) To ban consuming of liquor in marriage and other social ceremonies.
- (g) To fix the marriage fee at Rs. 51.00 for a daughter.

In 1925 A.D., the second Boro Mahasanmilan was organized at Rangia of the present Kamrup district after the gap of four years under the president chief of Jadunath Khakhlary. Sobharam Brahma, Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, Rabichandra Kachari, Jogendra Kachari, Shambhu Uzir, Gopal Uzir, Durga Mouzadar, etc. were the important person of the conference. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma took a significant role to discuss the various issues of problems faced by the Bodos and the resolutions adopted in the first Boro Mahasanmilan were also discussed. In addition to the first Mahasanmilan, the following resolutions were also adopted in the second Boro Mahasanmilan:⁷⁴

- (a) Abolition of pig rearing.
- (b) Education for both boys and girls.
- (c) Embracing the Brahma religion for unity and progress.

Under the president chief of Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, the third Boro Mahasanmilan was conducted at Roumari village near Bongaigaon district in 1929 A.D. The Bodo participants in the Mahasanmilan were Katimal Brahma, Narapati Basumatary, Subedar Belbungram Kachari, Birendra Narayan Mandal, Gopal Ujir, Balichand Karji, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Malsing Brahma Chaudhury, Shyain Charan Brahma, Kalicharan Brahma Jr. Banabasu Kacharim and so on. Some non-Bodos like Ambikagiri Roy Choudhuri, Nilmoni Phukan, Mahadev Sanna, etc. were also participated in the conference. Besides, some Bodos from the West Bengal were also attended in the Mahasanmilan.

In the conference, the resolution like total banned of *Jwo* or *Jumai* (liquor) was discussed. A volunteer group called Brahma volunteers took the responsibility for watching of vigilance for the preparation of *Jwo* or *Jumai*. The volunteers were also entrusted to destroy the tools for making the *Jwo* or *Jumai* in each and every Bodo villages. It is also resolved to use of clean dresses in public places. Total banned of animal sacrifice in the name of religion was also adopted in the resolution.⁷⁵

In the Roumari session, Gurudev Kalicharan proposed to ban traditional musical instruments like *Kham* (wooden drum), *Siphung* (bamboo flute), *Sherja* (violin), *Jotha* (cymbal) and the traditional dances of the Bodos during the prayer and religious ceremonies. He commented that the sounds of these musical instruments distract the attention of the devotees rather than concentration to god. However, the proposal was opposed by his adherent Nepal Chandra Brahmachari who is also known as Fwrlang Babaji. His proposal was also opposed by the majority of delegates. Traditional musical instruments were believed to be an integral part of the Bodo culture. The delegates strongly argued that the eliminating of traditional musical instruments from the prayer and religious ceremonies would mislay the identity of the Bodo community and the society would be in degradation. They further argued that without musical instrument the traditional religion *Kherai Hwnai* could not be executed. His proposal on the banned of traditional musical instruments was also refused by many other knowledgeable Bodo person like Rupnath Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary, etc. Therefore, Kalicharan Brahma had to withdraw the proposal after getting heavy opposed by the members present in the conference.⁷⁶ The introduction of Brahma Dharma by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma gained a momentum in the field of social reforms among the Bodos as well as in the development of Bodo society. As a result, a number of educated Bodo youths had increased which lead the Bodo society in a high position.

The following are the six principles of the Brahma Dharma:⁷⁷

- (a) It is the duty of every human being to keep the universe clean.
- (b) To treat all the creatures equally.
- (c) The items offering to *Hom-jagya* should be pure and fragranced.

- (d) *Param Brahma*, the Almighty god, should be called by *Om sat guru*.
- (e) Saluting light (*jyoti*) in morning and evening as *Param Brahma* appears in the light of sun and moon.
- (f) Each and every person should be attached to omnipresent, the *Param Brahma*.

The principles of Brahma Dharma are very simple. Everybody can practice all the principles of Brahma Dharma as they are free from all pomp and superstitions. Brahma Dharma believed in only one Brahma, the Supreme Being of the universe who is also called *Param Brahma*, the formless and ageless. He is the creator, protector, preserver of all the living being. He is regarded as light and knowledge.

The Bodo people were more and more attracted the Brahma Dharma and many of the Bodos became the upholder of Brahma Dharma. The credit for following the Brahma Dharma by the Bodo people goes to Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma who took painstaking effort to preach Brahma Dharma among the Bodos with the aim of eradication of the evil practices that cope among the Bodos before the advent of the Brahma Dharma.

Although, a good number of the Bodos converted into other religions like Christianity, Brahma dharma and other Hindu sects which brought a tremendous change in the traditional Bodo society. And most of the followers of those cults adopted many new customs, traditions, behaviour, rituals, norms, ideas and values, etc. which greatly affected the core of their culture to some extent. The process of conversion of Bodos into different religions and their assimilation to other societies and cultures led to disintegrate the age old social fabric existent of the Bodos. However, those Bodos who converted to the Brahma Dharma or other sect of the Hindu are not discarded totally the traditional beliefs and practices of the Bodos. For example, they also observed ceremonies like birth, marriage, death, etc. in the same way as the traditional followers act upon. But only the converted Christianity are kept away the traditional beliefs and practices of Bodos.

Endnotes

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- ¹ Boro A.K., “*Traditional Religion of the Bodos: From Traditional Practices to Institutionalization*” in *Religion and Society in North East India* edited by Dr. D. Nath, DVS Publishers, Guwahati, 2011, p. 176.
- ² Moshahary R. N., *Social History of the Bodos of Assam: A study of Oral History*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, NEHU, Shillong, 1986, pp. 133-136.
- ³ Mondal Satyendra Nath, *History and Culture of the Bodos*, Edited by Bonny Narzary, Satali Mondal Para, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, 2011, p. 220.
- ⁴ Hajoary Mongol Singh, *Gwjam Mugayao Boro Harimu Sibinaini Bidinti in Rupesri*, Ed. by Padmashri Madaram Brahma, Kokrajhar, 1998, p. 123.
- ⁵ Bargayary Nushar, *Ethno History of the Bodo*, Unpublished PhD Thesis Submitted to Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, 2017, p. 161.
- ⁶ An altar made with soil for worshipping God.
- ⁷ A kind of plant used by the Bodos in their religious ceremonies.
- ⁸ Bargayary Nushar, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
- ⁹ Narzi Bhaben, *Boro-Kocharini Somaj arw Harimu*, Chirang Publication Board, Kajalgaon, 2006, pp. 161-162.
- ¹⁰ Interview with Rabin Boro, Age- 57, Occupation- Farmer, Vill- Choto Adabari, P.O.- Choraikhola, Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 28/11/ 2015.
- ¹¹ A kind of bamboo generally used by the Bodo in their religious as well as social functions.
- ¹² A kind of tiny or small bamboo.
- ¹³ Interview with Santosh Bathou Narzari, Age- 72, Occupation- Oja, Vili.- Shyamtaibari P.O.- Serfanguri, Dist.- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 03/05/2015.

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- ¹⁴ Bargayary Nushar, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Haita Bargayary, Age- 50, Occupation- Oja, Gwjwnpuri P.O.- Jaharbari, Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 08/10/20.
- ¹⁶ Interview with Neripen Boro, Age- 63, Occupation- Oja, Lailong Para. P.O.- Rowta, Dist- Udalguri, BTC, Assam on 10/01/2017.
- ¹⁷ Interview with Ala Narzary, Age- 57, Occupation- Oja, Nighamicola P.O.- Bilaspara, Dist.- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 22/09/2015.
- ¹⁸ Interview with Satiram Wary, Age- 55, Occupation- Oja, Vill- Jalpaiguri, P.O.- Salakati, Dist.- Kolcrajhar, BTC, Assam on 09/10/2015.
- ¹⁹ A kind of polded pot made from banana peels for containing holy water during religious ceremony.
- ²⁰ Interview with Ranmwnda Brahma, Age- 60, Occupation- Priest, Vill- Dotma Chariali, P.O.- Dotma, Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 29/12/2014.
- ²¹ Interview with Baburam Narzary, Age- 59, Occupation- Oja, Birhangaon. P.O.- Salakati, Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 17/09/2015.
- ²² Brahma Binoy Kumar, *Boroni Fwrbw*, N. L. Publication, Kokrajhar, 2011, p. 25.
- ²³ Interview with Dharani Kanta Narzary, Age- 65, Occupation- Priest, Vill- Laokriguri, P.O.- Serfanguri, District- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 22/09/2014.
- ²⁴ Interview with Prajit Narzary, Age- 54, Occupation- Priest, Vill- Nepalpara, P.O.- Serfanguri, Dist- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 15/03/2016.
- ²⁵ Nath D., *Religion and Society in North East India*, DVS Publications, Guwahati, 2011, p. 177.
- ²⁶ Interview with Jatindra Brahma, Age- 59, Occupation- School Teacher, Vill- Ouguri, Dist- Chirang, BTC, Assam on 23/05/2016.
- ²⁷ Hazowary Mongol Singh, *The Traditional Boro Festivals: A Critical Study*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Submitted to Gauhati University, Guwahati, 1997, p. 161.

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- ²⁸ Interview with Ranj Basumatary, Age- 55, Occupation- Priest, Vill- 16 No. Mazabary, P.O.- Haltugaon, District- Kokrajhar, BTC, Assam on 14/02/2015.
- ²⁹ Narzi Bhaben, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-171.
- ³⁰ Interview with Surer Basumatary, Age- 66, Occupation- Oja, Deolguri, P.O.- Harisinga, Dist.- Udalguri, BTC, Assam on 10/01/2017.
- ³¹ Brahma Sekhar, *Religion of the Boros and the Socio-Cultural Transition*, DVS Publication, 2006, p. 16.
- ³² *Ibid.* p. 17.
- ³³ Mondal Satyendra Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
- ³⁴ Moshahary R. N., *op. cit.*, p. 134.
- ³⁵ Basumatary Phukan Ch., "*Bathou as an Ethic Religion: Archetype of Religious Practice and Tradition of the Boros*" in *North East India past and present ethno-History of Tribes and other Communities*, Volume 1, Edited by Dr. Oinam Ranjit Singh, Global Publishing House, India, 2016, p. 69.
- ³⁶ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ³⁷ Nath D., *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Narjinari H. C., Sanskritization and De-sanskritization of the Meches or Bodos, in *Birgwsri Thandwi*, souvenir of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Banggaldoba, Bodoland Autonomous Council, 2009, p. 1.
- ⁴⁰ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- ⁴¹ Brahma Dr. Kameswar, *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1st Ed. 1992, 2nd Ed. 2015, p. 194.
- ⁴² Binoy Kumar Brahma, *The Bodos: A Study on Socio-Cultural Change*, Unpublished PhD Thesis Submitted to Gauhati University, Guwahati, 2007, p. 182.

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- ⁴³ Barpujari H. K., *Assam in the days of the Company (1826-1858)*, Gauhati, 1980, p. 300.
- ⁴⁴ Moshahary R. N., *op. cit.*, p. 133.
- ⁴⁵ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
- ⁴⁶ Brahma Binoy Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 182.
- ⁴⁷ Bhabra Putul, "*Darrang Jilat Bora Kochari Hokolor Majot Khristiya Dhormor Agomon*" Published in 'Hathorkhi, IPIL' Souvenir, Jesus Krista Jayanti, 2000, Jubilee Shabha, p. 56.
- ⁴⁸ The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Papers and discussion of the Jubilee Conference held in Nagaon Dec, 18 to 29, 1886, Guwahati, 1992, p. 219.
- ⁴⁹ Ayilookunell Sabastian, *Christianity among the Bodos*, Published in The Bodos Children of Bhullungbutter, Edited by Thomas Pullopillil and Jacop Aluckal, Guwahati, 1997, p. 45.
- ⁵⁰ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- ⁵¹ Sangma Milton S., *History of American Baptist Mission in North-East India (1836-1950)*, Vol. 1, Delhi, 1987, p. 132.
- ⁵² Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 45.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 44.
- ⁵⁵ Ayilookunell Sebastian, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 46.
- ⁵⁷ Roy Ajay, *The Boro Imbroglia*, Guwahati, 1995, pp. 38-39.
- ⁵⁸ Moshahary R. N., *op. cit.*, p. 139.
- ⁵⁹ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

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- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 54.
- ⁶¹ Boro Anil Kumar, *A History of Bodo Literature*, New Delhi, 2010, p. 19.
- ⁶² *Ibid.* p. 19.
- ⁶³ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
- ⁶⁴ Boro Anil Kumar, Brahma movement and the socio religious reform in Bodo society in the early twentieth century, in *Jwhwlaofurini Thandai*, souvenir of 35th Annual conference of Sadou Brahma Dharma Parichalana Samity, Baksa, 2010, p. 118.
- ⁶⁵ Brahma Dr. Kameswar, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194.
- ⁶⁶ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
- ⁶⁷ Mushahary R. N., *op. cit.*, p. 146.
- ⁶⁸ Basumatary Kumud Ranjan, *Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma and the Bodes in Dodern Times*, in *Mugani Sakhi*, a Mouthpiece of All Bodo Students Union, Baksa, 2005, p. 53.
- ⁶⁹ Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- ⁷⁰ Chattapadhay Mahinimahan, *Sarnitya Kriya*, Calcutta, West Bengal, Srimat Param Hansa Siv Narayan Swami, 1832 (Bengali Calendar) p. 89.
- ⁷¹ Brahma Dr. Kameswar, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
- ⁷² Brahma Sekhar, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- ⁷³ Narzary Bidyasagar, Boro Mahasanmilani and Gurudev, in *The Brahma*, the Religious Mouthpiece of All Brahma Dharma Parichalana Committee, Guwahati, 2008, p. 16.
- ⁷⁴ Boro Anil Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 127.
- ⁷⁶ Narzary Bidyasagar, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- ⁷⁷ Brahma Dr. Kameswar, *op. cit.*, p. 200.