

## CHAPTER-3

### SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS AS REPRESENTED IN RITA BORO'S NOVELS

The social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and historical dimensions represented in Rita Boro's novels are pivotal to understanding the depth of her creative works. This chapter aims to analyze these aspects critically, highlighting how each of these themes emerges distinctly within her novels.

#### **3.1 Social Aspects in Novel:**

A social novel, also known as a social problem novel, is a form of fictional literature that expresses and critiques social issues through the characters and events in the story. The primary goal of such novels is to raise awareness, spark discussion, and influence public opinion regarding specific social concerns. By doing so, this form of literature encourages critical interpretation and engagement with these issues, ultimately fostering a more informed and responsive society.

The Britannica defines a *“social problem novel, also problem novel or social novel, as a work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel.”*<sup>1</sup> Social novels explore a diverse range of issues, including socio-cultural dynamics, economic inequalities, political tensions, and traditional norms, interpreting and critiquing these elements of society through storytelling.

Rita Boro has authored five novels that vividly portray the social realities of her characters' lives. The novels— *“Gongse Okhrangni Singao”* (Beneath the Sky), *“Thwisam”* (Blood Cot), *“Shaikhong”* (Shadow), *“Bachiram Jwhwlao”* (Bachiram Hero), and *“Swmaosarnaini Organg”* (Revolution of Volcano)—are imbued with profound social elements. In each of these works, society occupies a central position, with the narratives shedding light on the social conditions of Bodo society. As Sidney

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com>>

Endle noted, ‘*among them are to be found many simple virtues of great price, i.e., honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness and a general trustworthiness deserving of all honor.*’<sup>2</sup> These virtues are subtly interwoven into the novels, which root themselves deeply in the lived realities of social life, reflecting and emphasizing the situations and conditions of society.

### **3.1.1 Social Aspects in Gongse Okhrangni Singao:**

“*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*” is recognized as a social novel. The narrative construction delves into various social issues and challenges within Bodo society, as skillfully portrayed by the author. The primary focus of this research analysis includes family conflicts such as familial discrimination, marital discord, and the tragic death of the protagonist.

The story unfolds as a poignant portrayal of tragedy, centering on the character of Fwisali. Through her experiences and the role, she plays, the novel encapsulates the essence of societal struggles, reflecting broader social realities and their impact on individuals and families.

#### **3.1.1.1 Child Adaption:**

The practice of child adoption in Bodo society is a recurring theme explored in the story. This system is deeply rooted in the cultural traditions of the Bodo community. Kameswar Brahma defined “*The system of adaption is prevalent among the Bodos. If the couple is childless and has no hope of having the child in the predictable future, the question of the adaptation comes, children who are orphans or whose parents are not able to maintain them are generally adopted either by some related persons or even absolute strangers.*”<sup>3</sup> This concept is reflected in the story through the character of Nagendra. As a compassionate individual, Nagendra takes the initiative to adopt a girl named Fwisali, who becomes the central protagonist of the narrative. The act of adoption is further emphasized through a dialogue delivered by Nagendra, which is presented below:

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Sidney, E. op. cit., pp.2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Cereminies of the Bodos.*1992, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta 10. 1992. Pp. 70-71.

**Bodo version:**

“थबगां, दिनैनिफ्राय आं फैसालीखौ गेदेर गोलाव खालामनायनि बिबानखौ लाबाय। बियो आंनि न्व’आवनो थागोन लेखा सोलोगोन .... ।”<sup>4</sup>

**English rendering**

*"Thobgang, from today, I have taken the responsibility of Fwisali to help her grow and nurture her. She will stay in my house and continue her studies."*

The speech above reflects Nagendra’s initiative in taking on the role of adopting Fwisali, which plays a significant part in the story. In Bodo society, the adoption system is accepted as a social norm, particularly for children who are orphaned or parentless. Nagendra’s actions highlight this cultural practice, with his character demonstrating a strong, compassionate role. His involvement in the adoption process becomes an important and compelling scene within the narrative.

**3.1.1.2 Family Disappointment in Marriage:**

Families often experience disappointment when there is a delay in marriage, particularly when the issue involves the order of sibling marriages. *Physical beauty is also an important consideration in the matter of selection of a bride*<sup>5</sup>. In Bodo society, there are flexible cultural norms regarding sibling marriage preferences. Typically, there is an expectation that the elder sibling should marry first. If the younger sister marries before the elder, it may lead to disappointment or concern from parents, extended family, or community members. This sense of disappointment can intensify if there is a perceived urgency or "race" to marry, especially since marriage is often viewed as a significant milestone within the family. The following statement reflects this sentiment:

**Bodo version:**

“नंगौ, जगदिसा मिथिगौ गाबोननो बियो रिसिबालानि गथ’नि बिमायं जानोसै। समाजाबो मिथिगौ बे खोथाखौ नाथाय साबैसोआ मिथियो निसिबालानि बैसोआबा बेसेबां जादों? सोर मिथिगौ बियोदि देग्लायसो जिडाइन बोसोराव आगान होदों आरो रिसिबालायादि जिस्नि

<sup>4</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. p. 20

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 80

बोसोरावनो हाबा जादों होनन्ना सोर फोथायनो। बिसोरनि लाव लाव देरनाय सेहेराआनो बिसोरनि सुथुर। गामिनि लेखा रोडै बिफा-बिमाफोरा गावसोरनि फिसाफोरखौ सेहेराजोंसो बैसो सुयो। बेखायनो जगदिसा फिसाजो सानैखौ लाना गोबां जालायाव गोग्लैदों।”<sup>6</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"Jogodesh is aware of the situation regarding Nichibala, who is soon to become a cousin's mother after the birth of Richibala's child. This news has spread through society, but there is confusion over Nichibala's true age. It raises questions, especially considering that the youngest sister married at 17 age, while the older sister, at 18 age, has yet to be given the opportunity. The cause of this disparity seems to be the societal pressures surrounding physical maturity. In the village, illiterate parents often judge their children's readiness for marriage based on sign of physical growth. As a result, Jagadish is troubled by the challenges he faces with his two daughters."*

In Bodo society, judgments regarding marriage can create discomfort, especially when there are two girls of similar age within a close age gap. In such cases, the community may feel pressure to make a decision about which sister should marry first. Social expectations often prioritize physical beauty when selecting a bride for the groom. For example, the elder sister, Nichibala, was not married before her younger sister, Richibala, and this was primarily due to the societal preference for beauty. Richibala was considered more beautiful than Nichibala, based on societal standards.

This situation in the story teaches the audience about the societal norms, where it is typically expected that the elder sister should marry before the younger sister. This is viewed as the proper order in the community. However, the narrative in the novel highlights an alternative perspective, suggesting that there are flexible conditions regarding the timing of sibling marriages in the Bodo community. This flexibility is implied, offering a nuanced view of how the community adapts to such situations.

### **3.1.1.3. Natural Base Society:**

Sometimes, society and nature share a close relationship, where natural elements carry unexpected meanings that influence human desires. There is often an ambiguous connection between human motives and the natural world. Rousseau wrote: *"We do not*

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<sup>6</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. p. 10

know what our nature permits us to be.”<sup>7</sup> The novel “*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*” reflects this idea, as it portrays a similar relationship between human characters and the natural environment, where the forces of nature shape and influence the actions and desires of the individuals in the story.

**Bodo version:**

“बिमा नौनाइआ दिनेँ खुरखलाब खुरसि बेसेबा गोजान सस्त्रपारा गामि मोनहै लायनोसै नाथाय सिउमुनि दैमाया दिनेँबो निजोम दद्र अनसुलि। बेनिखायनो फैसालीया सिउमुनि दैमाखौ जोबोत मोजां मोनो, बियो जोनोमगिरि बिमा बायदि मान होयो। सोरांब्लानो गोरोबो फैसालीनि आरो सिउमुनि दैमानि गोरबो बिखाया..।”<sup>8</sup>

**English rendering;**

*“The mother, Naunai (the name of the river) has nearly reached Sastrapara village, mercilessly eroding the land. In contrast, the mother Siumu (the name of another river) is gentle and calm, at peace with her surroundings. Fwisali, in her affection, falls in love with the river Siumu and honours it as her mother. As the sun rises, the hearts of Fwisali and Siumu meet in a moment of profound connection”*

The above passage illustrates a symbolic relationship between Fwisali and the Siumu river, where the river seems to understand Fwisali’s emotions during her challenging times, fostering a deep connection and love within her. This bond is depicted as a meaningful exchange, where Fwisali finds solace and understanding in the river. In a metaphorical sense, it suggests that natural elements can empathize with human emotions, offering comfort in moments of struggle.

Additionally, the natural environment introduces an enigmatic perspective, influencing Fwisali’s experiences and emotions. This enigma reflects how nature plays a significant role in teaching societal values and beliefs, shaping the behaviors and lives of individuals. The acceptance of natural forces and their integration into daily life implies a harmonious relationship between human existence and the natural world, where nature’s influence guides societal functioning and personal growth.

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<sup>7</sup> Saunders, Jason Lewis. 1995. "Western Philosophical Schools and Doctrines: Ancient and Medieval Schools: Sophists: Particular Doctrines: Theoretical issues." Encyclopædia Britannica. Archived from the original on 27 May 2011. Retrieved 7 February 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla. 2002. p. 3

### 3.1.2 Social Aspects in Thwisam:

The novelist “*Thwisam*,” portrays various social aspects that resonate deeply with the lives of the Bodo family members. For instance, some members of the Bodo family engage in labor-intensive<sup>9</sup> work related to road construction under the NREGA scheme, which is aimed at providing employment and supporting families. This depiction reflects the reality where individuals take up such labor to sustain their households. The novelist also delves into broader societal issues and utilization patterns within the community. It presents a realistic portrayal of how these elements shape everyday life and interactions among its characters. The protagonist, Thelab, emerges as a pivotal figure, embodying women empowerment through her actions and decisions. Her journey as a weaver showcases empowerment and resilience, especially in the context of assuming responsibilities typically associated with male guardianship in Bodo society. Thelab’s determination to support her son Ansai’s education by leveraging her weaving skills underscores themes of perseverance and empowerment. Her profession not only sustains the family economically but also symbolizes women's capabilities and contributions to society. Overall, “*Thwisam*” provides a poignant portrayal of modern societal dynamics, offering lessons on resilience, empowerment, and the significant roles individuals play within their communities.

#### 3.1.2.1. Village life condition:

The condition of village life is another key aspect in “*Thwisam*”. The novel focuses on the living conditions in the Tongla areas and its neighboring villages. The people are engaged in road construction work under contractors, struggling to make ends meet and fulfill their basic needs. This reflects the significant challenge of human development. S. Endle defined “*In this way, the average Bodo peasant is a very well-to-do person in worldly things, the more so because the Kachari labourer is in great demand as a factory worker*”<sup>10</sup>

#### **Bodo version:**

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<sup>9</sup> For their settlement, a highland, a vast grazing field, availability of rivers, ponds or lakes nearby, jungles and forests for hunting the animals for meat and collecting firewood without scarcity, are regarded essential. Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Cereminies of the Bodos*. Punthi Pustak, Calcutta 10. 1992. p.14

<sup>10</sup> Endle, Sidney. *The Kacharis*. Bina Library Guwahati. 1911. p.14

“बिसि बिसिफोरा एनरेगायाव, माब्लाबा लामा बानायनायफोराव खामानि मावओ। फानलु संख्रिनिफ्राइ ना- बेदर गासैबो मोन्नो हायो बे सौकायाव। आइजोफोरा फान्नाय ताजा ताजा मैगं थाइगंफोराथ’ थोस्लाब लाया । आरो बे सौकानि अमा बेदरा? टंला ओनसोल नाडैन्नो मुं दड। बै सौकानि बेफारिफोरा अमा बेदरखौ सावनानै गोदाना फानोखाय बयबो मेल मिटिं पार्टिफोराव लांफैयो।”<sup>11</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Wife and siblings work some time on the construction of road in NREGA. Chilly and salt fish and meat are available in this market. Fresh vegetables sell by the woman vendor become shortage. And pork of this market is famous in the Tangla area. Everyone came to buy pork for meetings and parties because the vendors are selling it before toasting it”*

The passage highlights the significance of the NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) scheme in the context of rural development, particularly in road construction. NREGA is a pivotal government initiative aimed at providing employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, through infrastructure projects like road construction. In the fictional narrative, rural individuals are depicted as actively participating in road construction projects under the NREGA scheme. This involvement serves as a crucial income source for both men and women within these communities, enabling them to support their families financially. The income earned from such work often sustains their livelihoods and allows them to procure essential items like fish, meat, and fresh vegetables from local markets such as Tongla town, with Tangla being notable for its diverse offerings. The availability of these provisions in local markets underscores the economic activities and consumer behaviour prevalent among rural populations. It reflects how rural residents prioritize their needs and engage in various forms of labor to improve their standard of living. The passage suggests that such governmental schemes not only provide employment but also contribute to the economic empowerment and development of rural communities by generating income opportunities.

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<sup>11</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p. 32

### 3.1.2. 2 Agriculture Life:

Agriculture is the primary income resource of the Bodo community. So, many families are engaged in the crop production in the paddy field, is reflected in the stories. *“Their livelihood pattern is characterized by preponderance of agricultural occupation.”*<sup>12</sup> The related version is mentioned below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“टंला सोहोरनिफ्राय सानजाथिं दावगालांनाय आलि। टाउननिफ्राय बाथाखुसि गामिया 6 किलमिटरफोर गोजान। थिं थिं सानदुडाव दुब्लियाव माइ गाइदों आइजोफोरा। थुलुनसिया बे सावगारिखौ नुनानै गोसोआव रंजाखांनाय फैनायसै। थुलुनसियाबो बागसा जिलानि सिडाव थानाय थायगिर गुरि गामियाव बिमायं मोननियाव थांब्ला दुब्लियाव माइ गाइनो थाडो”<sup>13</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The road heading east from Tangla Town leads to Batakuchi, located 6 kilometers away. On a hot, sunny day, women can be seen planting paddy in the fields. Even Thulunchi joins in the planting when she visits her uncle’s place in Thairguri, situated in Baksa District.”*

The passage explores the character of Thulunchi in the novel *“Thwisam,”* presenting her as a symbol of rural life and the challenges faced by villagers, particularly emphasizing the resilience and capabilities of Bodo women. Despite holding an MBBS degree, Thulunchi is depicted working in paddy fields near her grandfather’s house. This contrast challenges societal perceptions that highly educated individuals should refrain from manual labor such as agriculture due to concerns about social status. The narrative critiques such judgments, asserting that a person’s profession should not diminish their capabilities or accomplishments. Additionally, the passage offers a broader reflection on societal norms and gender roles within the Bodo community, highlighting the active contributions of Bodo women. Despite familial challenges, their perseverance and dedication to service are portrayed as fundamental aspects of their cultural identity and spirit.

<sup>12</sup> Bordolpoi B.N., Thakuria G.C Sharmah, Saikia M.C. *Tribes of Assam Part-I*. Tribal research Institute, Assam, Guwahati-28. 1987. p. 4

<sup>13</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam, 2014. p. 57

### 3.1.2.3 Women Empowerment:

In today's modern era, the concept of women's empowerment has become a crucial subject of study across various literary works. In the novel "*Thwisam*," the character of Thelabs plays a significant role in conveying the theme of women's empowerment within the narrative landscape. "*Women's empowerment is key to economic and social outcomes. Benefits from projects that empower women are higher than those that just mainstream gender.*"<sup>14</sup> The stories in *Thwisam* illustrate how Thelab's role in society reflects a positive attitude toward active involvement. The relevant version is mentioned below

#### **Bodo version:**

“जायखिजायानो जाया मानो थेलेबा दिनै 10 बोसोर जाबाय बे इन्दाष्ट्रिआव हि दानानै जानाया। बिनि सिगां बियो गावनो न'आव गांफा गांनै दाना फानोमोन। नाथाय खुन्दुं बायनो हायैनि थाखाय गेजेर गेजेर जनानै थानो गोनां जायोमोन।”<sup>15</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“It has been a decade since Thelab has been making a living by weaving clothes in the industry. Before joining the industry, she used to weave clothes at home and sell one or two pieces. However, there were times when she had to sit idle as she couldn't afford to buy threads or yarn.”*

The above statement reflects the typical life of Thelab, who works as a weaver in the textile industry. Her involvement in the weaving profession highlights the role of women in generating employment within Bodo society while also showcasing the cultural traits that are evolving with modern trends.

### 3.1.2.4 Peer Pressure:

In Bodo society, there are times when individuals within a group offer supportive advice to one another when any member faces challenges. At times, peer pressure emerges due to the strong social bonds among them. This kind of pressure and influence is reflected in the following opinion.

#### **Bodo version:**

<sup>14</sup> The status of women in agri food systems - Overview. Rome: FAO. 2023. doi:10.4060/cc5060en. S2CID 258145984.

<sup>15</sup>Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D, Assam. 2014. p. 6

“बेखायनोथ’ बुडो आं बिहामजो लाबोदो साख्रि मावनाय नाइनानै आरो आजिरा लानानै न’आव जिरायना थादो।” लिपिया इसे एदावनानै बंहरो।”

“संसारनि जेबो गुदि खिथा मिथिफेरै दिपालिया बिबदि गेजेर गेजेर जंखायबाय थायो थेलेबखौ। मानोना थेलेबा बिहामजो लाबोनायनि सिमांखौ नुज्रिदबो जायखै। आरो बिनि फिसाज्लाया फरायदों बा मा? जाहोगोन बिबा माखौ ? बेखायनो फिसाज्लाया आथिंडाव गसंनो हानायसिम गाव खष्ट खालामना जागोन, फिसाज्लाखौबो फरायहोगोन। नडाबा ?नडाब्लाथ’ बियो दायनिगिरि जागोन बिमा जानायनि।”<sup>16</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“So, often Dipali suggests to Thelab that you should be searched, a service-holder daughter-in-law for a son to marry and settle into retirement. Although she doesn’t fully grasp the intricacies of married life, she sometimes lightens the mood with jokes about it. Because Thelab did not want to arrange her son’s marriage. Meanwhile, she constantly wonders: What is her son studying? What path will he choose in life? So, to the point where the son can stand on his feet, he will work hard to make the son study too. Or else, she will be guilty of being a mother.”*

The above passage presents the interaction between Thelab and Dipali, highlighting the societal pressures influencing decision-making, such as the scheduled timing for Ansai’s wedding, who is Thelab’s son. At times, societal consent becomes necessary for marriage preparations. It suggests that Thelab is navigating complex social expectations, including the timing and need to arrange Ansai’s marriage, which is seen as a possible solution to ease various challenges and tensions in Thelab’s life. This perspective reflects broader societal norms and expectations within the Bodo community, where such decisions are considered integral to social reformation or adjustments within their societal structure. It underscores how cultural and social dynamics shape individual lives and choices, emphasizing themes of tradition, responsibility, and familial obligations.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.p. 7-8

### 3.1.2.5 Quarrel Between a Native Husband and Wife:

Often in a family, there have arisen quarrels among the spouses over drinking habits; it happened in the Nafathi family. Nafathi's husband is a drunkard and has treated her misbehaving and tortured her. It is an unbearable moment to have come into Nafathi's life. Yet Nafathi was smoothly running her life. It is one of the mentionable factors of social hazards in the Bodo communities. That should be conveyed as a reasonable method to abolish the alcoholic habit. The quarrel version is mentioned below.

In many families, quarrels arise between spouses due to drinking habits, which is called *jou* or *jumai*,<sup>17</sup> meaning rice beer, as seen in the Nafathi's family. Nafathi's husband, a drunkard, mistreated and tortured her, creating unbearable moments in her life. Despite this, Nafathi managed to carry on with her life. This situation highlights one of the significant social hazards within Bodo communities, and it should be addressed as part of efforts to eliminate the alcoholic habit. The version of the quarrel is mentioned below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“दावरावा बिसोरनि न'सेरनि साहाथिंजाय नाफाथिमोननिफ्राय फैदों। नाफाथि फिसाइ गब्लाया हिनजावखौ रायदों आरो बुदों, बियो रोखा जानायसै।”

“थेलेबा इसेबो गोबाव खालामाब्लानो आखायाव लेनथनखौ लानानै गोख्रैनो बिसोरनि सिथलायाव ओंखार हैनायसै। हाय सर्बनास ! नाफाथिखौ दखना खुनानै गब्लाया औवा सिंकनि गंसे लानानै बुगासिनो दड। थेलेबा नाफाथिमोननि सिलयाव गसं हैनायनि उनावनो खाथिनि अनला माहाजोनाबो दाहोना गल' आरो जाब्रांखौ लानानै नाफाथिमोननियाव ओंखारनायसै।”<sup>18</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“The sound of a crowd rises from the northern side of their home. Soon, it becomes clear—Nafathi's husband is beating her. Without hesitation, Thelab grabs a lantern and rushes to their courtyard. Alas! A horrifying sight unfolds—Gobla is stripping Nafathi

<sup>17</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro's*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. P. 8

<sup>18</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D, Assam. 2014. p.40

*and beating her with a bamboo pole. Just then, Onla Mahajwn, along with the servants Golo and Jabrang, arrive at Nafathi's home.”*

Nafathi's life has been deeply affected by her husband's addiction to alcohol. His drinking not only disrupts the peace of their household but also subjects her to regular mistreatment and emotional abuse, creating an atmosphere of fear and distress. Despite this, Nafathi endures, trying her best to manage the situation. However, the constant strain and tension have made it impossible for her to experience a fulfilling or peaceful life.

In many communities, including the Bodo community, alcohol consumption is intertwined with cultural traditions. However, when it turns into habitual abuse, it becomes a serious social problem. Excessive drinking can damage relationships, break families, and hinder personal growth. While alcohol may be socially accepted in some settings, its harmful consequences cannot be overlooked. It often leads to domestic quarrels, violence, financial instability, and emotional suffering, making it a root cause of many family issues.

### **3.1.2.6 Alcoholic Habit:**

Alcohol consumption has long been a tradition in the Bodo community, as they produce their indigenous brews. However, in a broader societal context, this habit can sometimes be seen as unconventional. Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of discipline in their drinking practices.

In literature, the depiction of alcohol consumption as a cultural element is significant. The construction of plots often integrates drinking habits into societal narratives, making it an important aspect of analysis. This cultural characteristic is particularly evident through the dialogues in the text, offering insight into its role and impact within the community.

#### **Bodo version:**

“मा बर’ जानानै जौ लोडै जाखोब्रा नौलाय। लौदोब्रा दिनै खनसेखौ.... ।”

रबेट, नौ आंखौ गाजि दामोन बेखौ आं लानो हानाय नडा।

फेआब्रा फेआ इसे लादो।”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.35

**English rendering:**

*"How come you don't drink alcohol despite being a Bodo? Just for today, why don't you have a drink?"*

*"Robet, I'm really sorry, but I can't take this."*

*"Oh, come on! Just a little."*

The passage describes a birthday celebration at Robet's house, attended by his friend Ansai, where non-vegetarian food and wine in Bodo Jumai or Jau<sup>20</sup> were served. This event is portrayed as somewhat unconventional within the Bodo community due to its perceived expense and deviation from traditional customs. However, such modern celebrations are gradually gaining acceptance in Bodo society.

The inclusion of wine in the festivities raises concerns about its cultural implications. While some consider drinking an inherited cultural practice, others recognize its potential negative impact on societal development. The passage suggests a growing sentiment among certain members of the community that alcohol consumption should be minimized to encourage progress.

Overall, the passage reflects the evolving cultural landscape of the Bodo community, where traditional customs intersect with modern influences. It highlights ongoing debates surrounding cultural identity and societal norms, particularly regarding the acceptance and consequences of alcohol consumption.

**3.1.2.7 The Reflection of rural and Urban lifestyle:**

In Bodo society, there is a common belief that rural life is better than urban life. Traditional laws and customs are more deeply rooted in rural communities compared to urban societies. The following statements illustrate the contrast between rural and urban lifestyles as reflected in the stories.

**Bodo version:**

“नाथाय नयनाया मा मिथिनो? बियो सोहोराव उजिनानै, गामिनि सोमोन्दो, गामिनि आसार-  
खान्थि। बे नोगोर बादि हराव गामियाव जॉथि-माथि लाइत जोडा। नाथाय गामिनि सुबुंनि

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<sup>20</sup> They welcome their guest offering in full cup of jumai or jau and they become very glad if they can entertain their guest with jumai or jau and pork (Oma Bedor). Thus has become their traditional custom. Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro's*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. p. 8

साफ्रोमबोनि सुबुंनि गोसोआव जोडो मोनसे आसार खान्थिनि अर। जाइ बे अरखौ खोमोरगोन बिखौ समाजा राइजोनि काटगरायाव फसंगोन।”<sup>21</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"How does Nayan truly understand about the rituals and kinship of the village, especially even she was born in the town? The village lacks of electricity, not like the town, but in the hearts of its people, the light of tradition continues to shine. Who would dare to dishonor the sacred light that resides in the hearts of the people? The villagers themselves, and they will stand as witnesses in the judgment hall, ready to judge anyone who dares to disrupt their sacred ways."*

This passage seems to reflect on the perceived knowledge and understanding of Noyan, who despite being born in a town, may lack awareness of the intricacies of village life, especially concerning kinship and rituals. The contrast between town and village is highlighted, suggesting that while town life may be associated with more modern conveniences and advancements (“lack of electricity in the village not like the town”), the village holds onto traditions and rituals that are deeply meaningful to its people (“But in the heart of the village people one light of ritual sparks”). The phrase “Who lights down it the people of the village will stand him or her on the witness of the judgement holl” implies that those who disregard or disrespect these rituals or traditions may face scrutiny or judgment from the villagers. This reflects the importance placed on cultural practices and the expectations within close-knit rural communities.

**3.1.2.8 Aspects of an Adamant Attitude in Society:**

Due to a long-standing communication gap, Ansai returned to his native home just before his mother passed away. Before her death, Thelab had used all her capital and wealth to support the village community. The ideas and actions of Thelab are seen as representing outstanding social norms in the society, but her son, Ansai, became a non-property member of the community. This issue arose because of Ansai's actions, which led to the loss of property.

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<sup>21</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p. 91

Although Thulunchi tried to resolve the issue when Ansai worked as a bus contractor, Ansai was unable to return home. The following is the discussion between Ansai and Thulunchi.

**Bodo version:**

“अनसाय नों दाबो न’आव थौफिनदो।

“न’? आंहा बहा न’ दं। आंनि थं, आंनि सिनायथि गासैबो आइआ दुखुजों थफला बोनना लाना थांबाय। नों यदि आंनि मोजां हास्थायोब्ला प्लिज नों बे ओनसोलव आंखौ थांनानै दड होनन्ना रावनोबो दा खिन्था, नडाब्ला आइ आरो आफानि गासैबो इज्जाताव दुसुमाइ नांगोन, प्लिज नों दा खिन्था....।”<sup>22</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Ansai go back to home.*

*I have no home. My address and my wealth, everything was found disconnected from me, my mother, when she was very sad. Do your best, then you could not express my alive condition to the village, then if interpreted to all, then my parent status will become nil.”*

The passage narrates the poignant end of Ansai's story, reflecting on the significant transformations and hardships he and his mother, Thelab, experienced. Initially, Thelab had high hopes for Ansai, envisioning a successful career and a bright future for him in society. However, Ansai's choices and actions did not align with his mother's aspirations. Despite receiving financial aid intended for rehabilitation, Ansai misused the funds by purchasing a luxurious bike, which ultimately led to mental instability and the derailment of his education. After a prolonged absence, Ansai returned home to find his mother in a deteriorating health condition, nearing the end of her life. In a poignant turn, Thelab's final act was to donate all her belongings to the village society, highlighting her selflessness and perhaps a desire to leave a positive legacy despite the challenges she faced. The passage ends with Ansai reflecting on his mistakes and the consequences of his actions. He is depicted as remorseful and regretful, realizing the gravity of his decisions and their impact on his life and his mother's

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.94

dreams. The appearance of Thulunchi, a friend who witnesses Ansai's plight as a bus conductor, signifies a moment of reflection and possibly reconciliation for Ansai.

Overall, the passage portrays themes of familial bonds, personal responsibility, and the consequences of one's choices. It underscores the complexities of life in a rural setting, where aspirations often clash with harsh realities, leading to profound moments of introspection and regret.

### **3.1.3 Social Aspects in Saikhong:**

“*Saikhong*” is a structurally significant social fiction written by the author. The story's structure is influenced by numerous social factors that shape its narrative. From Padma's character, the novel reflects the role of a Bodo woman, presenting her as a positive representative in the story. This role contributes to the dynamic growth of both the language and the literary development of Bodo literature

From the side of Padma's character, proclaimed a good receptor as a Bodo woman reflected in the story. These roles have found a dynamic growth for the language and literary development of the Bodo language. It is defined as “*the social novel emphasizes the influence of the social and economic conditions of the era on shaping characters and determining event; often it also embodies an implicit or explicit thesis recommending political and social reform.*”<sup>23</sup> The Bodo community is portrayed with its various social systems, including customs and laws regarding marriage and divorce, which are frequently reflected in the story.

#### **3.1.3.1 Bad System:**

The Bado system in Bodo society has its roots in ancient traditions. A customary law holds individuals accountable when they violate social norms. In such cases, the customs and laws of the society are applied to offenders. Kameswar Brahma explains, said, “*The Boro term for offences of a social nature is Bad. If some person does offence in the society particularly concerning moral turpitude, he is treated as a guilty person and is obliged to perform penance udrainai with some strict social customs.*”<sup>24</sup> The following customs are reflected in the below statement.

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<sup>23</sup> Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Thomson Wadsworth. Akash Press Delhi. 2007. p.201

<sup>24</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro's*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. p.40

**Bodo version:**

“गावनि बिनानाव सोमोन्दो जानायजोनो गोथांङै गोथां माइहुंगुरिया गाज्जि हालोदाव हमजादोमोन। राइजोआ मेल खुंनानै अमा अग्रन सावदोमोन। सानैखौबो जि-जोम खुनानै गंसे अमा अग्रन लुना सावना होदोमोन। जि गैयै मोदोमजो जाबजो लाजिनानै फारसेथिं बायजोयाव ओंखारना दैयाव बारसोम रोडैयाव अमा अग्रनावनो सिखलाया सावथार जानोसैमोन। गामिनि सेंग्रा आसिनासो थाबनो सिखलाखौ बरनना दैयाव फिनज्राब गारहरनायसै। एदिनखालि बोरला थिरजो गुबार सानजा- सोनाब, सा-खोला आरो अख्रांसायाव गावखोदावनानै आग्लायनानै न’ न’ रान्नाय बेदरखौ पदमायाव मुगैनानै जानोनो हायाखिसै। मानसिफोरनि आखलाबो बेनो, आसार खान्थियाबो बेनो। माबा अगरबादनो।”<sup>25</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“The man was caught in sexual intercourse with his sister's kin. Both male and female persons found guilty of the particular offence are kept together in the naked condition in a thatched house built by the bank of a river with the door closed. Then the house is set on fire in the penance of the villagers. But the guilty female has lost the idea to come out of the house, breaking the temporary fencing and jumping into the river. But the youth of the village escape them from the fire and throw them into the river. On that day, so many arrows shot out in the east-west, and north-south directions and distributed pork could not be eaten by Podma. The characters of the people are like that, and the customs and traditions are also like that. That is called Ogorbad (strict law of social offence)”*

The excerpt provided describes a traditional punishment known as Ogarbad<sup>26</sup> within the Bodo society, specifically addressing sex relationships between boys and girls, which are considered taboo. In the Bodo community, engaging in sexual relationships outside of accepted norms results in a punishment imposed by the village authority.

The offender is taken to a location near the river where a house has been constructed. The offender enters the house, which is then set on fire by the villagers. The

<sup>25</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam.2016. p.134

<sup>26</sup> Ibid p. 41

offender is expected to break out of the burning house and jump into the river. This ritual is believed to purify the offender through water, symbolizing purification and the restoration of normalcy and purity within the community.

### 3.1.3.2 Role of Doudini:

The Kharai worship of the Bodo community is reflected in the story, and in this context, the performance of the Doudini dance plays an essential role. The following version, related to the Doudini, is provided in the story.

#### **Bodo version:**

“बाथौ बिदाबनि इसे खोलाहा थालिर बिफानि खुन्थायाव थुनानै दोननाय खलाब-खिलब जौनाय सिखा इमाफियाव दौदिनि देवबारिया फिनज्राब बारखोनानै खर’ जांखि जांखि खिन्था लांदौ- ‘बे गामियाव सुवा जादौ। गामियाव आफोद बिफोद जागोन। नौसोर आसार खान्थिखौ नेवसिदौ। बोराय बाथुआ नौसोरनि सायाव बोराबदौ। ए-हि-हिव एहि-हि-व-एहिहिव....। दौदिनिया खलाब-खिलब जौनाय सिखा इमफिनि सायावनो राखांना लांगाब गोग्लैनो नागिरो।”<sup>27</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The name of Doudini (doudini is a dancer as well as giving instruction, thinking of the Almighty) is Deobari. In the south side of the Bathou temple, the line of ritualistic posts of banana tree is decorated and lit. Here Deobari (doudini) jumped on the serve, shrewdly had been vibrating her head, and instructed the village man about the unlawful ritual to maintain the origin traditional. She said 'This village is sick. There will be a disaster in the village. You are ignoring the social custom system. The old man is barking at you. E-hi-hiv eh-hi-w-ehihaw Doudini begins to fall prey to the burning knife of the club.’”*

The Kharai Puja is an important religious festival for the Bodo community, closely tied to agriculture. It is celebrated at the start of the summer season. The celebration symbolizes the cleansing of all members of society from various curses, marking the observance of the Kharai Puja.

A key aspect of the festival is the performance of the Kharai dance, dedicated to Bwrai Bathou, the god worshipped during the puja. Another form of the Kharai dance,

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<sup>27</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p. 99

called the *Dudini* dance, is also performed as part of the same program. *The Doudini plays an important role in the Kherai worship*<sup>28</sup>. The Doudini dance is considered a magical dance, believed to embody the supernatural power of the almighty and the universe. It is a traditional dance performed on a sharp sword, highlighting its mystical and powerful nature.

The decorum of the Kharai Puja is regarded as one of the most outstanding traditional festivals of the Bodo community. The authors, in creating these representations, use a systematic arrangement of steps in their compositions. All these elements are collectively appraised through artistic expression by the authors.

### 3.1.3.3 Boycott System:

The term Boycott refers to the practice of banishing or expelling someone from society. This system existed in Bodo society and is referred to as the Boycott. It is reflected in the stories, particularly in the case of Michael, who converted from Bathouism to Christianity. As a result of his conversion, the boycott was enforced against him. The following statement illustrates this practice.

#### Bodo version:

“मायकेल आरो लरेन्सा बे मिसननि जोबोद फोथायजाथाव सुबुं। फोथाय जाथाव जाया मा जानो, हेसेलमायारखौ सानसे खालि गावसोरनि कसारिपारा गामिनि न’वाव सोनानै दै लॉनो होनायनि थाखाय बिसोरनि थाखाय बिसोरनि नखरखौ बिसार खालामनाय जायो। बिसोरनि उनाव बैसानखालि बिसोरखौ बैकट खालामनाय जायो। बिमा-बिफाया रायजोनियाव खेमा बिनायलाय उनाव बिसोरखौ निमाहा हैना उद्रानानै रायजोनि खेलाव सोना लाफिनो। जिदाइन बोसोर बैसोनि राहुल आरो लान्थाखौ नाथाय सानसे हेसेलमायारजौ बेरायनाय नुबावलायनाय बिसोरखौ रायजोयाव हाबनायखौ बन्द खालामनाय जायो।”<sup>29</sup>

#### English rendering:

*“Michael and Lawrence are the faithful persons of the British mission. Why not faithful? Their family faces a judicial discussion by the village committee about*

<sup>28</sup> Boro, Anil. *Folk Literature of the Bodos*. N. L. Publications, Panbazar Guwahati. 2001. p. 46

<sup>29</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.6

*receiving Heshelmair and giving him a glass of drinking water in their home in Kacharipara village one day. Then, they are boycotted by the villagers. The people of the village withdraw to boycott them when their parents beg for an excuse from a judge. But the society band enters their home when they get to see eighteen-year-old Rahul and Lantha accompanying Heshelmair.”*

The British arrival in Bodo society, particularly in Thijapuri, was driven by their aim to develop the local language, literature, and religion. To the Bodo people, the British were perceived as intellectual and educated. At the time of the British arrival, most of the Bodo people were uneducated, with limited education opportunities.

An incident occurred involving the Michael family, who offered water to the British. This action was initially frowned upon by the village committee. As a result, the Michael family faced social repercussions and was required to undergo a purification process according to traditional Kachari customs to be readmitted into the community.

Bodo society at that time adhered strictly to traditional social customs, including superstitions, which governed social interactions. However, over time, there has been a shift towards modern culture, with a departure from some traditional beliefs. The Bodo people have adapted to modern influences while retaining elements of their traditional culture, resulting in changes to their social structure and beliefs.

### **3.1.3.4 Superstition Believe:**

A scenario from the novel ‘Saikhong’ highlights the impact of superstitions on the Bodo community. In this scene, Sydney Endel and Lowrance meet with Michale and his parents at night. Michale and his parents have been ostracized by the villagers, who believe their habits or practices are responsible for some misconduct. The passage from ‘Saikhong’ addresses how superstitions can lead to social exclusion and prejudice within the Bodo community.

#### **Bodo version:**

“बाबु गामिनि मानसिफोरा जॉखो बुनानै होना हरदो। बिसोर जॉफ्रानि नखौनो सेफाय जोबना होबाय। हखायनो जॉ दिनै हरसेखो बेयावनो थानानै गामोन फुंडावनो महाबा गोजान गामियाव थांगोन सानदो।”

“गामिनि मानसिफोरा मानो बुदो नॉसोरखो ...? सिडनिया सोडो।”

“दाइना बाबु दाइना होनना जों बोराय बुरै आनखि बे दस बोसोरनि हौवासा गथ'खोबो बुबावदो।”<sup>30</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"Babu, the people of the village beat us up. They have destroyed our own house. So, let's stay here tonight and imagine going to a remote village tomorrow morning."*

*"Why do the villagers beat you...? Sydney asked."*

*"My husband, my ten-year-old son, and I were beaten by the people in our village, who accused us of practicing witchcraft."*

The villagers of Bangdhari hold strong beliefs in superstitions that label certain behaviours or practices as malpractice or misconduct. These beliefs lead to Michale and his parents being ostracized and punished by the community. Michale and his parents accept their punishment, which involves social exclusion and possibly other forms of judgment or isolation imposed by the villagers.

**3.1.3.5 Divorce System (Fathwi lai Bisinai):**

One of the traditional divorce systems in the Bodo community is known as Fathwi Lai Bisinai. This practice has existed since time immemorial in Bodo society. Sydney Endle said *"divorce sometime takes place by mutual consent, but cannot be effect without a certain formality."*<sup>31</sup> In the stories, the concept of divorce is explored through the characters Maibongs and Padmas. A discussion of their separation is presented below.

**Bodo version:**

“जेसे हायो माइबडाबो सित्रलेखाखौ बुजायनो नाजानायसै। बियो सित्रलेखानि सिगाडाव बुंनायसै- बियो पदमाजों फाथैलाइ बिसिगोन। फाथैलाइ बिसिबायथाय आरो गिनांगौ गैला। सोमोन्दोआ अरायनि थाखाय जोबलांडो। बियो बे सिथलायाव आरो मालाबाबो आगान होनो हानाय नंलिया। बियो सित्रलेखाखौ गारना जेरावबो थाडा। रावबो अदेबानि गसायबो बिखौ सित्रलेखानिफ्राइ गोजान खालामनो हानाय नडा।”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p.32

<sup>31</sup> Endle Sydney, *The Kacharis*. Bina Library Guwahati. 1911. p.31

<sup>32</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.146

**English rendering:**

*“Maibong tried his best to reassure Chitrlekha. He told her that he would divorce Podma and that there was nothing to fear once the divorce was finalized. Their past relationship would come to an end forever. He assured Chitrlekha that he would never abandon or betray her. Neither anyone nor even God could separate him from her.”*

'Phathwi Lai Bichinai' translates to 'betel leaves turn out' in the context of the traditional divorce system of the Bodo community. It refers to the customary process of divorce, particularly when a man chooses to leave his first wife to marry another woman, often the sister of his first wife. The initiation of 'Phathwi Lai Bichinai' is a communal matter, with society playing a crucial role in determining the procedure, including setting the time and date for the divorce proceedings. This highlights the collective involvement in marital dissolution.

The divorce ceremony is overseen by authorized representatives of the community, who assign specific roles to individuals, both male and female, to formalize the separation. In the context of the novel, this practice becomes significant, particularly when Maibong, who is secretly married to Chitrlekha, is later confronted by Padma. Upon discovering Maibong's existing marriage, Chitrlekha is devastated. In response, Maibong assures her that he will divorce Padma, reflecting the deep-rooted traditional values and societal expectations surrounding marriage and fidelity in the Bodo community.

'Phathwi Lai Bichinai' embodies the structured approach of the Bodo society toward marriage, divorce, and social relationships, ensuring harmony through communal oversight in resolving marital disputes.

**3.1.4 Social Aspects in Bachirsm Jwhwlao:**

The novel *Bachiram Jwhwlao* is set in the kingdom of Kundu, located near Bhutan, also known as Simsa. The king of Kundu, Devthairwn, is depicted as a benevolent ruler deeply concerned with the welfare of his people. The kingdom occasionally faces conflicts with Bhutan, necessitating strong and capable defenders like Bachiram. As a heroic figure, Bachiram plays a crucial role in safeguarding Kundu, his immense strength is believed to be a divine gift from Bwrai Bathou, a deity worshipped

in Bodo society. This aspect of the story underscores the religious beliefs and spiritual traditions that are integral to Bodo culture.

The novel intricately portrays the social structures and customs of the Bodo community through characters such as Devthairwn. It highlights societal roles, traditions, and cultural aspects, including religion, craftsmanship (such as weaving), food, and entertainment. These elements provide valuable insights into the cultural heritage and societal norms of the Bodo people in ancient times.

Beyond being a heroic tale, “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” serves as a vital repository of Bodo history and traditions. It preserves significant aspects of Bodo identity, including their customs, beliefs, and social practices. The novel emphasizes themes of strength, faith, and communal solidarity, reinforcing how cultural narratives play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting collective memories and societal values across generations

### 3.1.4.1 Role Doudini:

In the Bodo community, the traditional dancer who performs during Kherai Puja is known as the Doudini. The presence of the *Doudini* is essential, as the *Kherai* worship cannot be conducted without this ritual dance. Kameswar Brahma states, “*The Doudini is the key dancer during the “Kharai Puja”*”<sup>33</sup> The significance of the Doudini’s performance is also emphasized in the novel “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*,” highlighting its cultural and religious importance.

#### **Bodo version:**

“सानसेखालि राजा दोबधाइरोना राइजो गिदिंनो थांनायाव गावदांनि दौदिनि मोसानायखौ नुहैफलांहेनायसै। आरो बै सानखालिनो गावदांखौ बियो राजन’यनि दौदिनि मासियाव थिसननायसै। दिनें गादांनि जिउनि खावसे बैसाआनो बारलांबाय। हाबा-हुखा, संसारनि गुमुरखौनो बिय मोनाखिसै।”<sup>34</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*One day, during a visit to his kingdom, King Devthairwn witnessed a dance performance by Gaodang, a Doudini dancer from a nearby village. Impressed by her talent, he*

<sup>33</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro’s*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. p.105

<sup>34</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jwhwlao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. p.22

*appointed Gaodang to a position at the palace as a Doudini dancer. Now, half of her life has passed, yet she remains an unmarried woman and has no concerns about married life.*

The Doudini dance is a crucial ritual performed during the “Kharai puja,” which is associated with Bathou worship, a traditional belief system of the Bodo community. Bathou is revered as the supreme deity, and rituals like the Doudini dance are integral to their religious practices. In the story, the Devthairwn king of the Kundu kingdom actively seeks a skilled Doudini dancer. This reflects the importance placed on cultural and religious traditions within the kingdom, where rituals and performances are valued as part of communal and spiritual life. The passage highlights how the Doudini dance serves as a vital cultural and religious expression among the Bodo people, reinforcing their spiritual beliefs and social cohesion through ritual performances and communal celebrations.

#### **4.1.4.2. Jau Biban in Marriage System:**

The marriage system is a crucial aspect of society, and its importance is highlighted in the Bodo community, as revealed in the novel “*Bachiram Jwhwlaao.*” In the story, the ritual of offering rice beer by the groom's family to the bride's family as a symbol of seeking marriage consent is depicted. This traditional practice paints a vivid picture of the cultural customs surrounding marriage in the Bodo community, which is explored in more detail in the following discussion.

##### **Bodo version:**

“जोबोथि, आफाया जौ बिबान लाबोनो नागिरदों...।

जौ बिबान! जोबोथिया आगर एरै एरैनो सौबाय।

“औ।”

सोरनाव?

“फाग्लि, सोरनाव जाबावनो नौस्रानाव।”<sup>35</sup>

##### **English rendering:**

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p.32

*"Our father is preparing to arrive with a pair of ritual rice beers to your home, seeking your consent for the marriage celebration."*

*"Why was prepared ritual rice beer? As Jwbwthi asked Gonai to stop working on the embroidery?"*

*ou*

*to whom?*

*That means to your home"*

*Jau Biban*, (ritual rice beer-bearing beam), plays an important role in the marriage process within the Bodo community. This tradition is observed when the groom's family seeks the bride's consent for marriage. *Jau Biban* is a related part of the first step in the marriage discussion through the traditional process. In ancient times, it held significant importance in the Bodo community, as reflected in the stories passed down. The traditional significance of *Jau Biban* highlights the long-standing connection between the Bodo people and their customs of rice beer consumption. This act of sharing and unity reflects the social harmony and strong bonds within the Bodo community.

### **3.1.5 Social Aspects in Swmaosarnaini Orgeng:**

The passage provides a detailed insight into the social aspects of Bodo society, particularly emphasizing the roles and activities of Bodo women within their community. Bodo women play crucial roles in various aspects of daily life within their villages. This highlights their multifaceted contributions to the family and community. The passage describes how Bodo women start their day early, maintaining cleanliness in their homes and managing various family responsibilities. They are skilled in collecting vegetables and utilizing natural resources for food, showcasing their knowledge of local flora and their role in ensuring food security for their families. Agriculture is noted as the primary source of income for Bodo families, with both men and women actively involved. Men typically engage in ploughing and cultivation, while women assist in planting crops and participate in rice processing using traditional wooden instruments. This cooperative effort underscores the interdependence and communal nature of agricultural practices within Bodo society. Traditional practices such as rice processing and cooking are highlighted as important cultural rituals. These activities not only sustain the community's dietary needs but also reinforce social bonds and preserve

cultural heritage passed down through generations. The passage suggests that the division of labour and cooperation between genders in agricultural and domestic tasks are integral to the social and economic development of Bodo society. It reflects a cohesive community structure where each member's contribution is valued for the collective well-being.

Bodo people are very polite in their religious practices; they are also considered to worship Bathou in their social lives. They are all concerned that, without religion, a society is meaningless. That positive thinking is bringing united peace and prosperity among them, for they obeyed the Bathou worship with heart and soul. It is a mentionable word because religious practice is done by the Saoli. Saoli's character generalizes the significance of religious concentration in the society that is concerned with inhabitation, as shown in the characters of Saoli. In the past, many villagers in the society were unable to send their children to school due to their ethnicity. If a child is going to school, then a child is inhuman in society. That negligence makes a dormant structure in a society, but that seductive function could not be examined in Saoli's mind. She has always been searching for the positive side and taking some initiative for better scope in the future. So Saoli sent her daughter to school to study. It is a good lesson to suggest to society to discard bad thinking and accept positive thinking, which is beneficial for society. In this regard, during the study time of Agli, there was a teacher. With this connection, the same functions have been regularized in the lifestyle of the Bodo society, namely the fishing habit.

### **3.1.5.1 Hathasuni Khurnai as Social Custom:**

Hathasuni Khurnai is a cohabitation ceremonial practice of the Bodo society. It seems to be a custom that marks an important transition for a newly married couple, occurring after their marriage is finalized. It appears that Hathasuni Khurnai<sup>36</sup> involves a ceremonial process where the couple undergoes certain rituals or celebrations in the presence of their village community. The text version is mentioned in below

#### **Bodo version:**

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<sup>36</sup> The earliest and traditional form of marriage is called Hathasuni Khurnai.

Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro's*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. p.77

“बिरेन दासनि फिसाज्ला गेजेरनि मुडा जाबाय मिलन दास। बिनिनो हाथासुनि दिनै। हरखाब खुंब्रबनाय जादों हाथासुनिखौ। मैयानो खारसनना थाहैबाय फुलमुति मोननि रुवाथि सिनायथिया। दिनै खुंडाब्ला गाबोननिफ्रय सैथ्रो दान हाबब्ला जेबो मोजां खामानि मावनायनि दिन बार गैलिया। बिरेन दासा बैसागोआव ग्रोम-ग्रोम खुंगोन होनदोंमोन। नाथाय रायजोफ्रा बेबादि दोनजाबाय थाया होननायखाय खुंनो गोनां जाबाय।”<sup>37</sup>

### **English rendering:**

*“Milan Das, the middle son of Biren Das, was preparing for his Hatha Khurnai ceremony, (Cohabitation celebration). However, due to a timing conflict, the ceremony had to be advanced. Sinaithi, maid of Phulmuthi, unexpectedly arrived, seeking to marry Milan Das immediately. The ceremony was required to take place before the start of the Chaitra month, as any delay beyond that would be deemed unacceptable by societal customs and beliefs. Biren Das reassured everyone that the ceremony would be properly arranged in the Baisag month, which was the next available time. Yet, the village community insisted on holding the ceremony without delay, warning that postponing it would be considered a social offence. As a result, the ceremony had to be expedited and arranged without further hesitation.”*

The emphasis on celebrating with a lunch party at night, featuring a special dish of chicken and rice mixture curry, which is called in Bodo Ondlakhari<sup>38</sup> reflects a communal aspect where the village people come together to bless and celebrate the newly married couple. This kind of tradition not only strengthens social bonds within the community but also signifies the beginning of a new phase in the couple's life, possibly marking their readiness to live together as a married pair. Cultural customs like Hatha Khurnai often carry deep symbolic meaning and serve to preserve community identity and values.

### **3.2 Cultural Aspects in Novels:**

Culture is an integral part of human society. Fiction serves as a medium to reflect human culture, encompassing various aspects such as worship, festivals, food, dance,

<sup>37</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p. 65

<sup>38</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *Aspect of social customs of the Bodos*” Giri Print Service, 91-A, Baithakkhana Road, Calcutta -009. 1989. p.32

attire, faith, beliefs, and superstitions. Culture is a significant branch of human existence and is defined as “*Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. The word ‘culture’ derives from a French term which in turn derives from the Latin ‘colere’ which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture.*”<sup>39</sup> In Bodo literature, various novels explore different cultural components. Among Bodo novelists, Rita Boro’s works exhibit a rich variety of cultural elements. One of the prevailing trends in novels is the continuous exposition of cultural analysis, which remains relevant among contemporary novelists.

Novelists depict cultural contexts within their crafted narratives. In five different novels – “*Gongse Okhrangni Singao,*” “*Thwisam,*” “*Saikhong,*” “*Bachiram Jhwlaolao,*” and “*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*” - various cultural reflections are intricately woven into the stories. Each of these novels effectively conveys cultural elements, providing insight into the social structure of the Bodo community. Through a distinct analytical approach, Rita Boro’s literary techniques emphasize the ethnic framework, revealing the rich cultural and ethnic properties embedded in Bodo literature.

These fictional works depict a range of cultural aspects, including agriculture, religion, worship, attire, weaving, food habits, fishing, dance, faith, and beliefs. These elements serve as essential sources for understanding the deep-rooted cultural traditions within Bodo society.

### **3.2.1 Cultural Aspects of Gongse Okhrangni Singao:**

The “*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*” incorporates various cultural elements. The social life condition is the root of the stories, which is reflected in the cultural elements. The event of cultural outputs in the stories is empathized on the Bodo society in terms of the original texts. There are different characters in the fiction who have displayed movement and action, which is emitted by the authors. Different characters demonstrate in the stories, like Nagendra, Fwsali, Khwrwmdao, Nichibala, Richibala, Jibon, and Jamfri, are the kin characters of the stories and signified different cultural elements that can be evaluated in different categories, respectively, festival, weaving, marriage system, etc., as provided by the author. It exposes the reflection of cultural output as a

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html>

casual assessment in Rita Baros fiction. Basically, there has been a core cultural recognition of Bodo society relating to agricultural movements, and seasonal changes give rise to numerous cultural festivals and fairs in Bodo society.

### 3.2.1.1 Baisagu Festival:

The Baisagu is an important festival for Bodo people, not only in Bodo society but also for any race, tribe, and general people of Assam which observe in the middle of April. It is defined as “*The Bohag Bihu festival of the Bodos of Assam is quite similar to the other indigenous Assamese. The Bohag Bihu is called Baisagu or Baisagu by the Bodos*”<sup>40</sup> The Baisagu festival is celebrated as a national festival by the Bodo peoples, as well as the Assamese people, who celebrate as Bihu. During the Baisagu festival, the surrounding natural, beautiful environment gives enthusiastic pleasure to the human mind, inspiring a new thought for coming next year. The Bodo peoples are celebrated as compulsions for their family welfare as well as society as a whole for the human being. This motto could not have contaminated the Bodo society ever. So the Baisagu festival is observed by the Bodo people every year and is continued as an ancestral tradition. The festival contains the text mentioned below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“नेनायावनो नेनायावनो बैसागोआ सफैमारबाय। बिफां बिफां खिलिबाय बिलाइ गोरलै, दालाइ दालाइ खौओनि देखो रिंखा फैबाय। लाइमोन सिखलाफोरनि सालाव गोजा गोथां आगर एरनाय गामसा आर’नाइ आरोदि मा मा...। गोदान बोसोरखौ बरायनो थाखाय बयबो उसाव बादाव। गोजाम बोसोरनि मोननाय मोनैनि हांमा हांसाखौ बावगारनानै गोदानखौ बरायना सुबुंनि रायजोयाव थांना थानो नाजानायनि’ थार जिउ । बैसागो दाननि रंजालि बार’ गोदानखौ बिखा बुंजासे लानो सोरथो लुबैया?”<sup>41</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“*Once again, after much waiting, the Baisagu festival has arrived. During this new year season, the tree branches are sprouting fresh leaves, and the melodious chirping of birds*

<sup>40</sup> Kalia Chandan. *Journal, Assam College Teachers’ Association*. VI-XL The Bodo Folksong: Articulating their Rice-Culture. 2018. p.191

<sup>41</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla. 2002. p. 12

*fills the air. Young girls craft flowers in vibrant red and green, adorning themselves in their traditional Gamsa and Aronai cloths. The atmosphere is filled with enthusiasm as everyone eagerly welcomes the new year. It is not important time to think the successes and failures of the past and embrace the future with open hearts, striving to live life authentically. Who wouldn't welcome the new year with a full heart?"*

As the Baisagu festival begins in mid-April, the surrounding landscape transforms into a scene of natural beauty, reflecting a fresh and vibrant atmosphere. *"The beginning of a new agri-season is started with the change in nature, with its nature and colure, and people encourage each other to be united with nature and enjoy the new beginning with a fresh spirit,"*<sup>42</sup> During this time, trees sprout fresh green leaves, and birds fill the air with their melodious songs, enhancing the joy of the season.

In preparation for Baisagu, Bodo women and girls engage in weaving traditional cloth and attire, ensuring that everything is ready before the festival begins. These handwoven garments are then presented as gifts to beloved friends and special guests, who are warmly invited to join in the festivities.

The festival also carries a deeper social significance, as reflected in the narrative. *Baisagu* serves as a time for renewal, where people let go of past mistakes, embrace forgiveness, and look forward to a fresh start with new aspirations for the coming year. This moral and philosophical outlook is deeply embedded in the minds of characters like Thelab, Ansai, and Nafathi, whose narratives illustrate the spirit of renewal and unity within Bodo society.

### **3.2.1.2 Weaving Process:**

Weaving is an exceptional skill possessed by Bodo women, playing a significant role in enriching Bodo culture. The traditional weaving techniques of the Bodo people remain unique, standing out even in a global context. Despite modernization, they continue to preserve and practice their indigenous methods, passing them down through generations.

Rita Boro vividly represents the weaving traditions of the Bodo community in her literary works, showcasing how this craftsmanship is deeply intertwined with their cultural identity. Through her creative narratives, she highlights the significance of

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<sup>42</sup> Kalia Chandan. *Journal, Assam College Teachers' Association*. VI-XL The Bodo Folksong: Articulating their Rice-Culture. 2018. p.191

weaving not just as an art form but as an essential aspect of Bodo heritage and everyday life.

**Bodo version:**

“फैसाली, नों आंनो गांसे समायना आर'नाइ दानानै होनायसाय। आं मेथें दावथेंफोराव लानांगौ...।”<sup>43</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Fwisali I want a beautiful Aronai cloth which is weaved by you that I will wear it in the place of the meeting to be held.”*

The Aronai is a traditional piece of clothing worn around the neck in the Bodo community, regarded as a symbol of honour and respect. It is a highly valued garment and plays a central role in Bodo culture. The Aronai has become a sought-after item for Jibon, who has requested Fwisali to weave one for him. Fwisali has consented to fulfil this request, highlighting the importance of this traditional cloth.

This passage signifies the exceptional skill of Bodo women in weaving, showcasing their expertise in this craft. It also underscores the significance of the *Aronai* as a representation of Bodo cultural identity and tradition.

### 3.2.2 Cultural Aspects of Thwisam:

The novel *“Thwisam”* intricately weaves cultural elements as interconnected themes, with culture emerging as a central feature that enriches the narrative. The story explores the cultural fabric of Bodo society, shedding light on various aspects such as religion, agriculture, economics, fishing, cooking, weaving, and other daily activities. These cultural elements are depicted through characters like *Thelab*, who embodies the weaving traditions of the Bodo people.

Through *Thelab*'s character, the novel illustrates how cultural values and traditions are handed down through generations, shaping the actions and decisions of the characters. *Thelab*'s commitment to weaving not only helps support her family economically but also preserves and promotes the Bodo weaving traditions, underscoring the cultural importance of this skill.

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<sup>43</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla. 2002. p. 13

The cultural context in “*Thwisam*” is conveyed through characterization, events, settings, and thematic elements, collectively painting a rich and diverse picture of Bodo culture. These layers reflect the depth of cultural identity, highlighting its ongoing influence on the lives of individuals and the community as a whole.

### 3.2.2.1 Identities of Indigenous Dress:

It highlights the connection between cultural phenomena and national identities, emphasizing the importance of fictional stories in reflecting the real-life experiences and cultural knowledge of a community. Fiction often serves as a lens through which unique cultural experiences are shared, and these stories can play a significant role in preserving and communicating cultural identity.

#### **Bodo version:**

“धनेस पक्षी। अरुनाचलनि दफलाफोरा बे दावनि गुनथुथ्रिजों बानायनाय थफि गानो। बे थफिया बिसोरनि मोनसे माहारियारि नेसोनथि गोनां थफि।” सानजाराडा बुडो।”<sup>44</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*"The Dhanesh bird of Arunachal holds great cultural significance. From the tip of this bird's peak, the Dofla people of Arunachal craft a cap that it wears on their head, and it serves as a powerful symbol of their nation, says Sanjarang.*

In the context of the Dofla community of Arunachal Pradesh, their indigenous dress is mentioned as a symbol of their cultural identity. Traditional clothing often carries deep cultural significance, representing aspects such as social status, historical heritage, and regional practices. For the Dofla, their attire is a tangible expression of their roots, values, and way of life. This cultural practice, along with the stories and traditions tied to it, plays an important role in maintaining the community's connection to its history and distinguishing it from other groups.

### 3.2.2.2 Weaving Process:

Weaving is an essential traditional skill of the Bodo community, passed down through generations. It holds great significance for Bodo women, who have mastered the art of weaving, including intricate designs, colour selection, and embroidery. Their expertise is evident in the weaving process, as highlighted in the following conversation

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<sup>44</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p. 17

**Bodo version:**

“दावराय मोख्रेबनि गोमो गाबनि दखनासो नाइगौमोन।”

“नाइजागोन, नाथाय गांसेल’ दड दखनाया”<sup>45</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“I would like to choose a peacock design for the Dokhona (the traditional dress of Bodo women) in yellow color.”*

*“There is only one piece as it is color in the shopping, you.”*

It serves as a strong example of the role weaving plays in sustaining livelihoods, as seen in the case of *Thelab*. She managed to support herself by working as a weaver in the weaving industry. Customers often visited the market in search of *Dokhonas*, seeking designs superior to those available elsewhere. This highlights the importance of design selection in traditional weaving.

However, the preference for traditional attire has declined over time due to changing fashion trends and shifting priorities. In the present generation, women increasingly favor modern designs for their clothing. This shift is realistically portrayed in Rita Boro’s novel *“Thwisam”* through the characterization of *Thelab*. The novel reflects real-life situations where customers demand specific designs that are out of stock in *Thelab*’s collection. Although she offers alternative designs, the lack of compromise between buyers and sellers creates challenges in purchasing and selling.

One of the most sought-after designs, *Daorai Mwkhrab* (a peacock symbol motif), is a prime example of such demand. Unfortunately, this design is unavailable in *Thelab*’s stock, further illustrating the evolving preferences of customers.

*Dokhona* is the traditional dress of Bodo women and remains one of their most cherished garments. It features a vast array of intricate traditional designs, all meticulously woven by hand. This passage underscores the connection between weaving and technical expertise, highlighting how weaving serves as both an artistic expression and a means of women’s empowerment. The textual analysis reveals that weaving is not merely a craft but a reflection of the deep-seated knowledge and skill possessed by Bodo women.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8

### 3.2.2.3 Fishing Habit:

The technique of catching fish is a distinctive practice that has been followed since ancient times. Bodo women, in particular, actively participate in this tradition, making it an integral part of the community's social customs. Additionally, the preparation of fish as a food item among the Bodo people follows unique culinary methods.

Rita Boro vividly portrays the tradition of fish catching in her novel *“Thwisam,”* offering a compelling depiction of this cultural practice. The following excerpt from the novel highlights this aspect of Bodo life.

#### **Bodo version:**

“हाबाब! माथो थेलेबालाय मेथायखौनो खनाखै। मेथाय खनै खनै ना ह'ब्लासो नाया जेखायाव गाखोयोनो।”<sup>46</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“Hey, Theleb! Why aren't you singing? Don't you know that the fish only enter the Jekhai (a bamboo-made fish trap) when you sing while catching them?”*

The above conversation highlights the food processing traditions of the Bodo people. The discussion between Thelab and Nafathi emphasizes the practice of fish catching, as depicted in the stories. This scene showcases the fishing skills of Bodo women, portraying it as an essential part of their traditional food processing system.

The Bodo food processing methods are deeply connected to their fishing lifestyle, reflecting the community's reliance on natural resources. Their fishing habits are rooted in sustainable practices, making use of renewable resources that align with their way of life.

### 3.2.3 Cultural Aspects of Saikhong:

The novel *“Saikhong”* holds significant cultural value, portraying a wide range of sociocultural, economic, religious, and ritual customs, along with faith and belief systems. These elements collectively contribute to the dynamic and enriched cultural identity of Bodo society in Northeast India.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p.61

The author plays an instrumental role in highlighting the cultural aspects of Bodo society, showcasing how they utilized various tools and practices to fulfill their daily needs, which are integral to their cultural heritage. Additionally, the novel explores the influence of the British when they entered Bodo society. Upon discovering the richness of Bodo culture, the British developed a keen interest in collecting various forms of folklore, oral traditions that had been passed down through generations.

Through the narrative, “*Saikhong*” provides insights into diverse cultural traits, including customs, worship practices, the marriage system, weaving, fishing habits, dance, music, songs, agriculture, and artistic expressions. These elements collectively reflect the deep-rooted traditions of the Bodo community, as vividly depicted by the author.

### **3.2.3,1 Baisagu Festival:**

The celebration of the Baisagu festival is prominently depicted in the novel “*Saikhong*.” The first day of Baisagu, known as Manchini Baisagu, is considered a day for the people, as believed by the Bodo community. On this day, a grand feast featuring pork is arranged at Phuwaram’s home, marking the communal spirit of the festival. This tradition is vividly reflected in “*Saikhong*,” as highlighted in the following excerpt.

#### **Bodo version:**

“गोदान बोथोर। माने बैसागो बोथोर। दिनै मानसि बैसागो। फुवारामनि नखराव खाम जथानि रिसारनाय। गामिनि मानसिफोरा अमा मासे बुथारनानै भज जागोन। भजखौ फुवारामनि न’वाव बोसोरफ्रोमबो जायो। फुवारामानो गामिनि गाहेला।”<sup>47</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“*New year. That means the season of Baisagu. The tune of Kham and Jotha is ringing in the house of Fuwaram. The people of the village celebrate a feast of pork every year in the house of Fuwaram. Fuwaram is the head of the village.*”

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<sup>47</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.21

The Baisagu festival is celebrated by the Bodo people as a New Year occasion, observed annually with great joy and fairness. During this festival, the Bodo people worship Bwrai Bathou, their revered deity. Baisagu is not only a popular festival among the Bodo community but is also recognized on a broader cultural level. Everyone participates in the celebrations, enjoying the rhythmic blend of traditional songs. The Kham<sup>48</sup> (drum), a significant musical instrument, plays an essential role in the performances. As soon as the sound of the Kham resonates through the village, people begin singing and dancing with enthusiasm. Over time, Baisagu songs and dances have become a deeply ingrained part of Bodo tradition. The festival holds immense cultural significance, marking a visible representation of Bodo heritage. Moreover, Baisagu serves as a powerful medium to showcase Bodo culture, perhaps more prominently than any other festival.

### 3.2.3.2 Khati Gasa Festival:

Khati-Gasa-Saonai is another significant seasonal festival of the Bodo community, closely associated with agricultural practices. The term Khati-Gasa-Saonai refers to the lighting of lamps as a symbolic gesture for the growth of crops in the paddy fields. It is defined as: “*This festival is observed by the Bodos very simply, by burning gosa, at the cowshed (Goli) and the granary (Bakri) in the evening of the last day of Ahin (Assamese month).*”<sup>49</sup> From this observation, it is evident that Kati Gasa Saonai holds great cultural importance and is regarded as a significant annual ceremony within the Bodo society.

#### **Bodo version:**

“खाथि दाननि समायना बोथोर। सानथामल’ जादों दुब्लि फोथाराव जोंथि माथि थाइगिर  
बिखडाव आलारि जौनाया। माइ ओंखारजेननायनि बर’फोरा खाथि दाननि से अक्टखालि  
दुब्लियाव मायनावखौ बरायो। दायो सोरगिदिं सोमखोर मिथिंगा बिखा।”<sup>50</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

<sup>48</sup> “Kham is a percussion instrument made primarily of wood, clay, leather and rope.”

Narzary, Yutika. *Traditional Knowledge System of the Bodo*. (ed), Ujjal Borah Pragya Mediahype H.N.2, HC Road Uzanbazar Guwahati-01. p.135

<sup>49</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*. Punthi Pustak Calcutta. 1992. P. 112

<sup>50</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.108

*“The Khati Gasa festival is a time of wonderful celebration. The field has recovered after three days, which has been lit by elephant-apple fruits peel, the Bodo people hold a welcoming ceremony for Maino (the deity of agriculture), in the paddy fields. The ceremony is set against the backdrop of the surrounding natural beauty, adding to the moment's charm.”*

*Kati Gasa Saonai* is recognized as a seasonal festival celebrated by the Bodo people. It involves the lighting of gasa (torches or lamps) in paddy fields to invoke blessings from *Mainao*, the chief agricultural deity. The festival is believed to ensure a successful harvest by seeking divine intervention and protection. Each family within the Bodo community makes individual arrangements to observe this ritual in their own paddy fields. This practice highlights the deep-rooted belief in *Mainao's* role in safeguarding and enhancing agricultural productivity.

Furthermore, *Kati Gasa Saonai* holds significant narrative value in “*Saikhong*” novels, where it serves as a cultural backdrop that enriches storytelling. Its portrayal in these literary works provides insights into Bodo traditions, history, and social customs, reflecting its importance as both a cultural strategy and a means of preserving socio-cultural heritage.

### **3.2.2.3 Marriage System:**

In Bodo society, arranged marriage is a socially recognized one called *Haba gwlaol* (long marriage or arranged marriage). It is defined by Kameswar Brahma on marriage: *“As with all other societies, the marriage ceremony is one of the most important ceremonies in the life-cycle of the Boros. Marriage is called haba by the Boros. In boros, ‘ha’ means soil, and ‘ba’ means to bear something on the back”*<sup>51</sup>.

Arranged marriage follows a systematic process from beginning to end. A significant aspect of the wedding ceremony is the marriage song, which is performed within the family hosting the wedding. The entire village actively participates in the celebration, and during the ceremony, people sing marriage songs, adding to the cultural vibrancy of the event.

#### **Bodo version:**

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<sup>51</sup>Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boro's*. Bahniman Printers, Guwahati-22. 1998. p-55

“दागाबसे आगै बिनानाव  
 सिमसा हौवानो हराखै  
 हारसा हौवानो हराखै  
 बर’ हौवाजोसो राइजो जानोसो हरदो  
 आगै हरदो।।  
 जाहैदो आगै जाहैदो  
 आथिं गाजोब हाथाय अरजोब  
 राइजो फाथालखौ जाहैदो  
 आगै जाहैदो”<sup>52</sup>

**English Rendering:**

*“Do not cry, dear sister, stay strong,  
 We’re not sending you where you don’t belong.  
 Not to Simsa, nor Assamese groom,  
 But to a Bodo groom, just as planned.  
 Hand in hand, you’ll build your nest,  
 A life of love, joy, and rest.  
 So lift your sleeves, stand up tall,  
 Together, you’ll cherish it all.”*

The passage highlights a popular song sung during marriage ceremonies in Bodo society, specifically when the bridegroom prepares to receive the bride from her parents. This song is deeply rooted in Bodo cultural traditions, particularly during significant life events such as weddings. In Bodo society, songs hold an essential place, not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means of expressing emotions, blessings, and cultural values.

Marriage songs, like this one, serve to strengthen social bonds and reinforce the collective identity of the community. They often carry narratives or references that reflect the values and beliefs cherished by the Bodo people, making them an integral part

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<sup>52</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. Pp. 59-60

of both the ceremony and the cultural heritage they seek to preserve. Singing the song accompaniment followed Cerza, Kham and ciphung <sup>53</sup>They may contain narratives or references that reflect the values and beliefs cherished by the Bodo people.

### 3.2.3.4 Weaving Process:

Since ancient times, the Bodo people have traditionally practiced weaving as an integral part of their daily lives. Their traditional attire is known for its vibrant colors and intricate designs, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the community. In the past, Bodo people primarily wore garments that were woven by their own hands.

The significance of the weaving process and its cultural relevance is also reflected in the fiction discussed below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“गोमो गाबनि अग्रं दखनानि फारसे रुबैथिं बियो थाइगिर बिफानि दालायाव बानाय समायना दावरायनि आगर एरदोमोन। आगर बिमानि सायाव थाइगिर बिबार बारसे बारसे एरखोदाव बावदोमोन। गोथां थाइगिर बिलाइ बिफानि गेजेराव दावराया थारैनो जिउ गोनां जाथारदोमोन। दख'नाखौ गावनो बारिनि बामोन मारा बिलाइखौ खाना लाबोना आवा खुंदुंखौ गोरायै बोस्रोतना सदरिनफ्राय लाबोनाय बिजिजौ सुथाबदोमोन।”<sup>54</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The yellow color design is a popular Bodo’s women’s traditional (dokhona) dress designed by a peacock bird and tree embroidery design and Thagir Agor (elephant apple tree flower) design is added together with the mother design. The peacock picture is focused on living as reflected in the middle of the embroideries added between the fresh elephant apple tree leaves. After shorting the set of dokhona it is tied with the Bamwn-Mara (local tree) leaves and pinned up by the needles.”*<sup>55</sup>

The author aims to serve as an intermediary, providing insight into the traditional knowledge of weaving practiced by Bodo women. Historically, the Bodo people have

<sup>53</sup> Boro Anil. *Folk Literature of the Bodos*. N.L. Publications. 2001. p.100

<sup>54</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.56

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.54

maintained a deep connection with nature, relying on natural resources to fulfill various essential needs. As a result, the production of Bodo attire has largely retained its traditional essence.

Bodo women possess extensive expertise in the weaving process, particularly in crafting traditional garments like Dokhona. The designs, colors, and patterns of these garments are inspired by nature, with elements such as birds, tree branches, and hills serving as creative benchmarks. This deep-rooted connection to the environment is reflected in the intricate artistry of Bodo weaving, making it a significant cultural tradition.

### 3.2.3.5 Fishing Habit:

Fishing has been an integral part of Bodo society, serving as both a means of sustenance and a traditional food processing system that dates back to ancient times. It has played a crucial role in the daily lives of the Bodo people, shaping their way of living.

Bodo women, in particular, possess extensive knowledge and skills in various fishing techniques. Their expertise reflects the deeper cultural significance of fishing within the community. This practice is not merely a livelihood but a cultural trait that serves as a visible and enduring testament to the traditions and collective wisdom of the Bodo people.

#### **Bodo version:**

“ना गुरनाय, जि दानाय, संनाय, खुरनाय जेरावबो आखा-फाखा पदमाया। सान्दुं मिथिया, अखा मिथिया बियो मावनाय दांनायावल’ मुखुब। दिनैबो जोबोद सान्दुं गोसायावनो गामिनि खोलाथिंजाइ थानाय फैलाव दुब्लिफोथाराव जानजियाव जेखाय खबाय लानानै ओंखार लाडो।”<sup>56</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“Podma is skilled in fishing, weaving, cooking, and serving food-excelling in every task she undertakes. She pays no heed to the scorching sun or the pouring rain, always*

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p.36

*immersed in her work. Even today, under the blazing sunlight, she sets out for fishing, carrying her Jekhai (Fishing instrument) and Khobai (fish bucket) at her waist, heading toward the southern side of the paddy field.”*

The above sentences use meaningful language that reflects the ongoing realities of Bodo society. It highlights the deeply rooted work culture, where Bodo women have long been engaged in various activities essential to daily life. Since ancient times, they have managed multiple responsibilities independently, earning widespread appreciation for their contributions.

Bodo women have played an active role in fishing, paddy cultivation, cooking, weaving, hosting guests, and ensuring the overall well-being of their families. Their contributions make them an indispensable part of society. Based on this analysis, it is evident that the roles of Bodo women hold great significance. These responsibilities are exemplified by Podma, whose character in fiction embodies the essence of their dedication and resilience.

### **3.2.2.6 Faith and Beliefs:**

The Bodo people have upheld deep-rooted faith and beliefs that have been passed down through generations since ancient times. These traditions continue to shape their society, reflecting a strong cultural and spiritual heritage.

There are numerous beliefs within Bodo society, one of which is associated with the *Baisagu* festival. It is believed that if a person engages in a quarrel during this festival, they will be reborn as a cow in their next life. This faith and belief are also reflected in fiction. As stated: *“Three is a traditional belief among the Bodos that during the Baisagu no quarrel should take place. They believe that those who indulge in quarrels during these days would take birth as cow or dog in the next life.”*<sup>57</sup> A similar sentiment is echoed in the text discussed below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“ऐ गल’, आंखेब हामालै, दिनैनि दिनाव नांलायनो मोनानो। थैना उजिबा मोखौ जायोनो।”<sup>58</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“Hey Golo, not today! Don’t quarrel. They say you’ll be reborn as a cow if you do.”*

<sup>57</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*. Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 136/4B, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata-004. 1992. p. 109

<sup>58</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.77

The author explores various folk beliefs deeply rooted in Bodo society, particularly those associated with the Baisagu festival. Since ancient times, the Bodo people have held diverse faiths and beliefs, considering them significant cultural traditions.

One such belief states that if a person quarrels during *Baisagu*, they will be reborn as a cow. While this may seem improbable, it remains a deeply ingrained cultural notion, passed down through generations.

**Bodo version:**

“खोनाबायना नौसोर, गाबोन बयबो फुंडावनो उठि। पहिला बैसागोआव जाइ गोबावहै उठियो, बे मानसिया बोसोर नाडैनो उन जानानै थायोनो।”,<sup>59</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Listen, everyone! Tomorrow, you must wake up early. Those who wake up late on the first day of the Bwisagu month will be late throughout the year and may fall behind in the future.”*

There are many traditional faiths and beliefs in Bodo society, passed down through generations as cultural practices. These beliefs, deeply rooted in tradition, shape societal habits and values.

The Baisagu festival holds symbolic significance, with several associated customs. In the fiction, the author highlights one such belief - if a person wakes up late on the first morning of Baisagu, they are thought to remain lazy throughout the year. This idea has been traditionally expressed and preserved as a folk belief within Bodo society.

### **3.2.4 Cultural Aspects of Bachiram Jwhwlao:**

*“Bachiram Jwhwlao”* is another significant novel by Rita Boro that portrays various cultural aspects of Bodo society. The novel highlights the traditions and customs practiced by the community, emphasizing their deep-rooted cultural heritage.

In the story, King of Kundu Devthairwn extends a grand invitation to everyone for the Bathou festival, encouraging collective participation in the sacred event. His

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p.78

gesture reflects his noble and courageous character, demonstrating an ideal leadership approach that remains relevant in real life.

### 3.2.4.1 Baisagu Festival:

Baisagu is a significant festival for the Kundu Kingdom, deeply embedded in the livelihood and traditions of the Bodo Kacharis. King Devthairwn celebrated the *Baisagu* festival with great enthusiasm and joy, embracing its cultural essence.

During the festivities, King Devthairwn announced that all people of the kingdom must attend the Kharai festival on the fifth day of the Baisagu month, a celebration that runs parallel to the Baisagu festival. This event is highlighted in the following text.

#### **Bodo version:**

“बैसाग दाननि बा अक्ट। मावनाय-दांनाय दोनथ’नानै राजाया बयखौबो खेराइ फुजायाव थांनो खावलायदों। बेखायनो गामिनि बयबो लैहोर लैहोर फुजि सालियाव थांदों।”<sup>60</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“On the fifth day of the Bwisagu month, the king requests everyone to attend the Kherai worship, setting aside all other work. Thus, all the villagers gather at the worship grounds.”*

Baisagu is a significant festival for everyone, as reflected in the passage above. To ensure its proper observance, King Devthairwn declared a temporary halt to administrative duties, allowing all subjects to fully participate in the celebrations. The king’s initiative highlights the cultural and spiritual importance of Baisagu, demonstrating his deep reverence for traditions and his commitment to preserving them for future generations.

### 3.2.4.2 Weaving Practice as Culture:

Weaving is a remarkable and deeply rooted tradition among Bodo women, showcasing a rich variety of colors and intricate designs. This practice has been an integral part of the Bodo community since ancient times.

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<sup>60</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jwhwlao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. p.22

Bodo women have long mastered their unique weaving techniques, creating traditional attire that symbolizes their cultural heritage. Their craftsmanship, passed down through generations, remains a defining feature of Bodo identity and artistry.

### 3.2.4.3 Fishing Habit:

The fishing habit is another important part of Bodo culture. From the ancient period, the Bodo peoples were involved for fish catching habits in their lifestyle. It is focused in the story. The related citation is mentioned below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आं आनै मोननियाव आलासि जानो थांदोंमोन। दा न’सिम-फैबाय थानायाव नुबाय ना’फोरा नैबे बानदोआव उजान उथिसोगारदों। बेखायनो आं बे ना’फोरखौनो हमगासिनोमोन। नाथाय आदा आंनि दबानि ना’फोरा दैयाव थांजोबाय...।”<sup>61</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“I have gone to Aunty's house as a guest. Still when I stepped forward, I saw much gathering fish at the channel. I have been catching all the fish. But suddenly all fell in the flowing water.”*

Fish catching is a habitual behaviour of the Bodo people. That habitual is meant the fishing culture of the Bodo community. The above version is meant. Fish catching is another extraordinary activity of the Bodo women which is derived from the fourth father era. From the immemorial period, the Bodo community has given importance to traditional foot habits which were applied in their day-to-day lifestyle. The fishing habit is a most related part of the Bodo community.

### 3.2.5 Cultural Aspects of Swmaosarnaini Orgeng:

The novel “*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*” reflects a rich tapestry of cultural elements within Bodo society. Through characters like Mwnbaru, Saoli, Agli, Nafathi, Sarma Master, and Mithinga, the novel highlights various traditions and social customs deeply rooted in Bodo life.

A significant aspect of the novel is its portrayal of agricultural practices. Traditional tools such as nangwl (plough), jungal (bamboo beam), laothi (stick), dwndal

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p.29

(yoke), and hulabari (a long bamboo pole used for carrying crops) are integral to farming and are commonly found in every Bodo household. The presence of these tools in Mwnbaru's family signifies their deep involvement in agriculture.

The novel also illustrates the connection between agriculture and cultural festivals. Baisagu, celebrated in mid-April, marks the Bodo New Year and is closely tied to the agrarian cycle. Khati-Gasa-Saonai, observed in mid-October, involves lighting lamps in paddy fields as a prayer for a good harvest. Magw Domachi, celebrated in mid-January, is another important festival where different varieties of rice cakes are prepared, symbolizing agricultural abundance.

Beyond agriculture, the text encompasses various cultural aspects, including religious practices, traditional weaving, food habits, fishing customs, and deeply held beliefs. These elements collectively highlight the richness of Bodo heritage and its enduring traditions.

### 3.2.5.1 Baisagu Festival:

Baisagu is one of the most significant festivals for the Bodo people, marking the arrival of the new year with joy and cultural expression. The festival's vibrant celebrations are vividly depicted in the novel "*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*," particularly through the character of Anita. Her enthusiasm for Baisagu highlights the deep-rooted cultural importance of the festival within Bodo society. The novel brings forth the essence of the festival by portraying the customs, rituals, and collective spirit of the community, as reflected in the following citation.

#### **Bodo version:**

“बैसागुखौ जाइ जैरै हायो खुंनो नांगौ। मा गामि मा सोहोर जेरावबो गोसार होनांगौ। बेयो मोनसे थांखि जाना फेबाय। बेफोर थांखि बादिहैनो देग्लाय अनितामोनाबो सोहराव गेदेरहैनो रंजालि बैसागुखौ खुंबाय। फरायसा आफाद, आइजो आफाद आरो समष्टिनि बसुमतारि सारआबो थिखोना मोसा थारबाय। बसुमतारि सारआथ'फाव खालामनाय लिरनायावबो आखा-फाखाथार आरोलाय मा नांभावगौ।”<sup>62</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

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<sup>62</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.167

*“Everyone should observe the Baisagu festival. Not only village and town but also everywhere should be spread and that should be implemented as an agenda. This year, Anita and her friends organized the Baisagu festival in the town gorgeously. The members of the students' union, the women's organization, and Basumatary Sir MLA, participated in the program. Basumatary Sir is an expert in drama acting as well as in writing, and he possesses a great deal of talent.”*

Festivals play a crucial role in society as they are deeply intertwined with culture and tradition. *Baisagu*, a significant festival for the Bodo community, marks both the New Year and the farewell to the past year. In *“Swmaosarnaini Orgeng,”* the festival is vividly portrayed through the character of *Anita*, emphasizing its cultural and social importance.

The novel highlights the essence of Baisagu as a grand celebration, bringing people together in joy and tradition. The author's depiction provides a practical insight into the festival's vibrant customs, reinforcing its significance in Bodo society

### **3.2.5.2 Food Habits:**

Food habits are an essential aspect of cultural identity, deeply rooted in tradition and influenced by natural resources. In Bodo society, food practices hold extraordinary significance, as reflected in fictional narratives. The structural form of fiction often highlights these culinary traditions, sometimes conveyed through dialogue.

Bodo food habits are primarily based on traditional systems, with ingredients sourced from nature. *“Food habits refer to why and how an individual eats. Food habits also include various factors such as the preference of foods, people with whom they like to eat. Also, social, cultural, religious, economic, environmental, and political factors play an important role in the food habit of people.”*<sup>63</sup> As the quote suggests, food habits encompass not only what people eat but also the social, cultural, and environmental factors that shape their dietary choices. Through fiction, these elements are preserved and celebrated as part of the community's heritage.

#### **Bodo version:**

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<sup>63</sup> <https://www.vedantu.com › question-answer › call-the-ha...>

“भाद्र दान। बेयावनो दिनै जन्म अष्टमि। बे दिनाव साम’ ओखि जाब्ला मोजांनो। गोदोनिफ्राय बे दोरोडा बे नखराव सोलिबोदो। बे नखारावल’ नडा गामि नाडैनो सोलिबोदो। लोगोसे खांराइ मेलेमजो खला साफ्रि फिथा। बेखायनो सम गैथाराब्लाबो साउलिया साम’खौ सायनो लादो। दानो खिथु दानना दोनोब्लासो दा हराव मोनजागोन। नडाब्ला दानब्रबनाय साम’खौ हा खेब खेब, फिसा जेव जेवनो जानोनो हानाय नडा।”<sup>64</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"It is the Bhadra month, and today is the day of Janmashtami. On this day, eating snail curry is believed to be good luck for everyone. This tradition has been passed down from ancient times and is maintained within the family. Not only this family, but also many other families have tasted the curry. Additionally, there is a tradition of boiling a cake with crow. Saoliy prepares the snail curry whenever she has free time. If it is properly cleaned at the start of the day, it can be eaten with lunch. Otherwise, the snail will become hatching (snail baby) and won't be able to eat."*

The Bodo peoples have various kinds of food habits, and some kinds of food habits are related to faith and beliefs. This story is conveying that the particular day is well for taking a meal like snail curry in the month of Bhadra (last part of August). It is focused on the story. For story formation, the above-mentioned citation is a best idea of the author, it embodies the cultural significance,

**3.2.5.3 The Exhibition as Cultural Reflection:**

Rita Baro is a social artist reflected throughout her creative novel in “*Swmaosarnani Organg*”. Many kinds of cultural significance are going to be focused through different angles, like demonstration of exhibition that is held in the conference of the Bodo women welfare Association, which is held in the premises at the Tangla area. The organization of the conferences has provided an opportunity to say something about the demonstration regarding cultural amusement, which is stated below.

**Bodo version:**

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<sup>64</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.10

“सान्नेसो सिगांसो बे थांला जौमा फरायसालिनि फैलाव फोथाराव मिरु आइजो आफादनि मोनसे बोसोरारि मेल जानानै थाडो। बे मेलाव रोखोम रोखोम हारिमुखौ दिन्थिफुंनाय जायो। ना गुरनाय, हिसान दानाय, माइ गायनाइ, सौनाय, एम्फौ फिसिंनाय, संनाय-खावनाय। अनितामोना बबेनि बबेनिफ्रायदि एम्फौ लाथा, हिसानसालि, दिंखिसालि खनथुमना होफैनाडाखै। बे जुथुमायाव सासे आइजो दैदैनगिरियाव बुंलांदों-बे बर’नि हारिमुया बे दिन्थिफुं सालियावल’ थाब्ला जानाय नडा। बेखौ नौसोर आइजो आफादनि मावखफोराव मावफुंनो नाजा...।”<sup>65</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“A couple of days ago, an annual conference of the women's organization was held on the premises of Tangla Higher Secondary School. In this conference, various aspects of Bodo culture were showcased, including fishing, weaving, paddy planting, paddy husking, silkworm farming, cooking, and toasting. Anita and her friends had to gather insects, weaving looms, and husking tools from anywhere they could find them to make the exhibition successful and showcase their culture. During the conference, a woman leader stated, 'Bodo culture should not be confined to exhibitions alone. Efforts should be made to showcase it in the offices of women's organizations as well.’”*

The above passage explains the social aspects represented in the novel “*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*”. The novelist highlights Anita as the main character, who actively contributes to both character development and the overall narrative. The quoted excerpt emphasizes the representation of Bodo traditional culture in an exhibition held during the annual conference of the students' organization in Tangla.

Anita is portrayed as a volunteer at the conference, where she plays a crucial role in organizing various cultural exhibitions. Traditional fishing instruments such as Jekhai (a fishing tool) and Khobai (a bamboo basket used for storing fish) are provided for display. Weaving instruments, including Isan (a weaving frame), are also arranged for the program. Additionally, agricultural tools like Nangwl (plough), Mwi (a mud-rolling frame), and Laothi (stick) are included as part of the exhibition.

The novel highlights a wide range of traditional instruments, emphasizing their importance in Bodo culture. Through Anita’s initiative, the story conveys a deeper

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid. pp. 198-199

philosophical perspective on cultural preservation. It suggests that Bodo society values its heritage and believes in passing down its knowledge to future generations, ensuring the conservation of culture for the growth and development of the nation.

### **3.3 Economic Aspects in Novels:**

Everyone knows that the economy is one of the basic needs of human life. Without money, no one can do anything. Economics can be defined as. *“a study of the economic system of any area is a study of the combination and three economic structures-production , distribution and consumption”*<sup>66</sup> almost the economic matter is preferable for all the living styles of human life. In Rita Baro’s five numbers of novels like *“Gongse Okhrangni Singao,” “Thwisam,” “Saikhong,” “Bachiram Jwhwlao, and “Swmaosarnaini Orgng.”* Such novels have required different grounds of economic evaluation process throughout the creative stories. In Rita Baro’s novels reflected the economic condition of the village life of their domestic product, profession, agriculture, weaving profession, and using gold are the income sources of the Bodo peoples. Such economic conditions are the speculation for a productive mindset for income sources.

#### **3.3.1 Economic Aspects of Gongse Okhrangni Singao:**

*“Gongse Okhrangni Singao”* is an economically dynamic novel in which the author intricately weaves different characters with diverse economic backgrounds. The novel explores various aspects of economic life in society, emphasizing its significance in shaping human interactions. Economic concerns are central to any society, and this novel raises thought-provoking questions about their impact on the Bodo community.

The portrayal of characters’ highlights how economic status influences personal and social dynamics. The novel suggests that economic matters often take precedence over other aspects of life. Various economic scenarios unfold throughout the narrative, adding depth to the storytelling.

Among the characters, Khwrwmdao and Nichibala represent an economically well-off section of society. Their financial stability instills a sense of pride in them, but it also contributes to social divisions. Individuals belonging to such privileged groups often foster economic disparities, leading to discrimination within the community. The

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<sup>66</sup> Narzary Indramaloti. *Mainao Borainai*. Narzari Publications Guwahati. 2006. p.6

novel vividly reflects these economic realities, which will be further explored in the following discussion.

**Bodo Version:**

“फैसायानो मानषिखौ मा खालामनो हाया? मुलुग संसारखौनो उलथां फालथां, समायना समायना नडै खालामनो हायो बियो। सोरनिबा जिउखौ खालामो बिबायारि, सोरखौबा खालामो जमिदार, सौदागर, मोरखिया, साप्रासि, उकिल, डाक्टर, सिखाव दाखेत, रुवाथि दाहोना आरो दि मा मा...। बुहमाव जा जा मुवा दड गासैबो फैसानि महिमा।”<sup>67</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“What can't money do for human life? Money can shape the development of the world, and it has the power to alleviate or cause discomfort in human life. Money can make people rich or poor, whether they are maids, servants, advocates, priests, or thieves. Money is attractive to everyone in the world.”*

The above sentence is taken from the novel *“Gongse Okhrangni Singao.”* Here, the author’s words reflect the protagonist’s thoughts. In the novel, the protagonist, Fwisali, is constantly alienated by her own kin. She is neither expected to excel nor to fail in any endeavor. This is an economic matter, as the previously mentioned lines must be discussed before analyzing the plot of the story. After all, the theme of the novel serves as the foundation for deeper analysis. The division of its content into chapters should aim for meaningful optimization, enhancing both contemporary relevance and future significance through qualitative exploration.

Khwrwmdao and Nichibala are a married couple in the story. The lines mentioned earlier were spoken by Khwrwmdao to his wife, Nichibala. But why did Khwrwmdao use such language in front of his wife? He aims to provide her with a more comfortable lifestyle, reflecting the internal struggles within their family dynamics. Khwrwmdao has established a well-structured management process in his daily life, ensuring stability.

From this passage, we can learn an important lesson about implementing effective solutions for maintaining social harmony and coexistence. Society serves as a

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<sup>67</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. p.1

vital platform for every family member's growth and development. This collective integration is a valuable asset for future generations, making it a matter of great concern.

In this system, servitude remains one of the traditional means of livelihood in Bodo society. The role of servants and their service continues to be a significant aspect of the economic structure.

### **3.3.1.1 Use of Gold as Economic Aspect:**

Gold holds significant value as an ornament for Bodo women. They not only wear it as jewelry but also preserve it as a financial safeguard for the future. This perspective and practice are reflected in the stories. The statement made by *Jamfri* illustrates this idea and is presented below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आंनि आखायाव सना इसे दं। बेखौनो आं नौनो होलांनो सानदों। आंनि मिजिं बे सनाया नौखो इसेब्लाबो सहाय खालामनो हागोन।”<sup>68</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“I have a little gold in my custody. which I would like to give you. I hope, that at least, this gold will help you in the future.”*

The above statement reflects the financial wisdom commonly found among Bodo women, especially the elderly. These women possess a remarkable ability to safeguard their gold in secrecy. This trait is evident in *Jamfri*, particularly with *Fwisali*.

When *Jamfri*'s health deteriorated and she fell seriously ill, she sensed that her life was nearing its end. Before her passing, she entrusted all her gold, along with her land and property, to *Fwisali*. This act speaks volumes about *Jamfri*'s deep love and care for *Fwisali*—something that cannot be fully expressed in mere words. Her words hold profound meaning, offering a valuable moral lesson to society. If individuals like *Jamfri* exist in this world, they deserve to be recognized and appreciated.

### **3.3.1.2 Land as an Economic Condition:**

Land ownership plays a crucial role in the economic stability of individuals. In the novel “*Gongse Okrangni Singao*,” land holds significant importance for both

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p.48

Khwrwmdao and Nagesh, as it serves as the foundation for their industrial ventures. The story highlights this aspect, emphasizing the value of land in economic development.

**Bodo version:**

“बेयो मादै जाफ्रिनि हानि पता बिलाय। मादै जाफ्रिया गावनि हाखौ आंनि मुंडाव लिरना होलांबाय। दा बे हायावनो बिरखोदाव आरो नागेसआ इथानि खुलि फंसनो नागिरदौ। नाथाय बिसोरनि बे मिजिंखौ जेब्लाबो मौंखथांडाव जांफुंनो होनाय नडा आं आयं।”<sup>69</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"This is the land documents of aunty Jafri's. Aunt Jafri has offered me her land in my name. Now the land is being blown away and the Nagesh are about to be trapped in the brick kiln. But I will not allow them to ever live up to this hope."*

The above account explains how Fwisali inherited the land property after Jamfri's death. This land became a point of interest for her husband, Nagesh, and Khwrwmdao. Nagesh proposed utilizing the land for industrial purposes, believing that if it came under their control, they could establish a factory on it. However, Fwisali refused to transfer ownership to anyone else.

As a result, *Nagesh* resorted to coercion, pressuring Fwisali to hand over the land documents. Ultimately, Fwisali was murdered by Nagesh over the dispute. This tragic event serves as evidence of how financial matters, particularly land ownership, played a critical role in Fwisali's fate.

### **3.3.2 Economic Aspects of Thwisam:**

In the novel "*Thwisam*," the character *Thelab* represents economic struggles and aspirations. Women in the Bodo community often work in the weaving industries as professionals, showcasing their economic potential. *Thelab's* involvement serves as an example of how individuals strive for financial stability.

Similarly, *Thulunchi*, another character in the novel, pursues a career as a doctor to achieve economic independence. *Nafathi*, a neighbor of *Thelab*, initially chose to sell rice beer as her business. This trade has long been a part of the Bodo women's ancestral business practices. However, *Thelab* advised *Nafathi* to leave the rice beer trade and suggested vegetable selling as a better alternative. Following *Thelab's* advice, *Nafathi*

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. pp. 81-82

shifted to the vegetable business, demonstrating the economic awareness and adaptability of Bodo women.

Towards the end of the novel, Ansai becomes an isolated figure in society. The villagers assume he has disappeared, but in reality, he unknowingly establishes himself as a bus contractor, choosing it as his profession.

Overall, the novel reflects the economic consciousness of Bodo society, with the author portraying financial struggles and aspirations through dynamic storytelling in Bodo literature.

### 3.3.2.1 The Government Compensation as Economic Aspects:

In the novel “*Thwisam*,” the character Thelab receives government compensation following the death of her husband. While this financial grant provides temporary relief, she soon faces uncertainty about how to use it effectively for her son’s future. The story highlights the complexities involved in acquiring and utilizing such compensation, as detailed in the following section.

#### **Bodo version:**

‘अब’ नौहा बाजि रोजा रां अनसुंथायखौ मोनबाय?

चेकखौथ’ मोनबाय दिपालि नाथाय रांखौ मोनाखै। बैंकाव जमा होदों। बे सान्नेसोआवनो मोनगोन होनना बुंदों।

माथो खालामगोन आब’यालाय बे रांखौलाय ?”<sup>70</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“*Have you got fifty thousand compensations, sister?*

*Yes Dipali, I have got my compensation cheque but not in cash in hand. The cheque is deposit in Bamk. Within a short period, it may be drawn.*”

Financial stability plays a crucial role in the overall development of every family in society. Each individual has their own approach to earning a livelihood, and it is important to examine how the government distributes financial assistance to the public. This aspect is portrayed in the novel as an accepted reality.

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<sup>70</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p. 38

The conversation between Thelab and Dipali regarding the sanctioned fund under Thelab's name raises questions about whether the funds were disbursed on time. This issue is emphasized through their dialogue, reflecting the challenges associated with financial aid. Additionally, the novel highlights the undeniable importance of money as a fundamental necessity in human life.

### 3.3.2.2 Driving Professional:

In modern Bodo society, car driving has emerged as a viable profession. This occupation is reflected in the stories, highlighting its role in shaping the economic conditions of the Bodo community. The following section explores this aspect in detail.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आब जौंहा गाबसुसिया हाबा थिक जाबाय नडा ना।

ऐ दे हामबाय दे, सोरजों ?

थुरिबारिनि मोब्लावजों।

मोजां बाथा, माबाफोर मावओ सेंग्राया ?

मावनायालाइ सरकारि बाकरि जेबो मावआ, गावहानो मारुति कार गंसे दड बेखौनो भारा बुना जायो।”<sup>71</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“Dear sister, the marriage day of Gabsul's is confirmed*

*Oh! it is ok with whom*

*With Mabla's of Thuribari village.*

*Good news what is his occupation*

*No, he is not working a government service”*

Gobla is not a government employee, yet he owns a Maruti car and earns a livelihood by driving it for hire. The passage highlights an economic aspect, illustrating the character's determination to generate income through hard work and self-reliance.

The story portrays Mwblao as a character with the ability to perform exceptional and efficient labour, demonstrating financial independence. This capability is a central

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p.38

theme in the fictional narrative. Additionally, the story introduces a female character, *Gabsuli*, who is set to marry Mwblao.

### **3.3.3 Economic Aspects of Saikhong:**

As a social novel, “*Saikhong*” presents a dynamic exploration of various situations, many of which are deeply connected to economic conditions. The author skilfully portrays the struggles faced by individuals due to financial constraints, emphasizing how economic issues influence human lifestyles. The novel highlights the undeniable truth that money plays a crucial role in solving life’s problems—without it, people may find themselves facing significant hardships.

One example of this economic influence is seen in the character of *Mouzadar*, who assigns his son, Maibong, to another duar (administrative zone) as a revenue collector. Following his father’s instructions, Maibong takes up his duties. However, during his service, his life takes an unexpected turn—he falls in love with another woman and ultimately marries her. This turn of events proves unfortunate for Padma, a gentle and respectable woman, who then faces numerous difficulties in life.

#### **3.3.3.1 Tree Plantation:**

In the context of the Bodo society, village life is closely tied to the natural environment, with a strong focus on land ownership and the surrounding area. It is common for households with land property to engage in tree plantation within their domestic areas. This practice reflects a deeper connection to the land and the environment, emphasizing sustainability and harmony with nature. The concept of tree planting symbolizes not only economic gain but also a respect for nature's role in sustaining life.

Dayaram’s character in the “*Saikhong*” stories serve as a representative figure of these values in Bodo society. His actions, especially in terms of his interaction with the land and the environment, highlight the importance of sustainable practices such as tree plantation. In these stories, Dayaram’s initiatives can be seen as symbolic of the community's collective efforts to maintain their livelihood through responsible use of their natural surroundings.

#### **Bodo version:**

“संसारव दासान्दि बिसोर मोजाडैनो दड। बारियाव गय खान्थाल ग्रोम-ग्रोम दाव अमा, माइ दै जेनिबो आंखाल गैया। बेफोर गासैबो मौजादार दयाराम पाटगिरि आरो बिनि बिहामजो पदमानि थाखायनो। जाइ मौजादारा मालाइनि जिवाव सोरानि बनजार फोजौना होबोदों बे मौजादारनि जिवाव बेबादि खोमसि अमाबैसा साग्लोबनायखौ नुनानै बे हादांगि, राखेब मोना जोबोद दुखु मोनदों। गसाया मानो अराय मोजां मावग्राखौसो गले गले आनजाद लायो। बिसोरनि राव।”<sup>72</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"The Muzadar and Padma are living well in the world right now. There is no shortage of poultry, pigs, rice, or water in thier garden. All of this progress comes from Mauzadar Dayaram Patagiri and his daughter-in-law, Padma. It is heartening to see such a dark cloud enter the soul of the Mouzadar, who lit the lamp of hope in the lives of the other people, so, Hadangi and Rakhab feel sad. Why does God often test a good person?"*

The novel “*Saikhong*” portrays natural wealth, such as mango and betel nut trees, as personal property. This depiction reflects how the Bodo people cultivate betel nut trees on their own land, integrating them into their daily lives and using them as a source of income.

The cultivation of betel nut trees as an economic activity symbolizes the deep connection between the Bodo people and their land, highlighting the significance of natural wealth in sustaining their way of life. This representation emphasizes themes of self-sufficiency, cultural identity, and the interdependence between nature and human society.

Such narratives in literature often explore the tension between tradition and modernity, the value of land and natural resources, and the ways in which communities sustain themselves while preserving cultural practices and economic independence.

### **3.3.4 Economic Aspects of Bachiram Jwhwlao:**

“*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” is a tele story that, despite its mythological and historical elements, provides insight into economic conditions and human development. The

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<sup>72</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.184

narrative offers a glimpse into the economic realities of the time, particularly during the reign of Devthairwn, the king of the Kundu kingdom.

Although “*Bachiram Jhwlaolao*” is an ancient folk tale, it sheds light on the economic conditions of the Bodos during the rule of their early kings. The political situation of the time cannot be examined without acknowledging the agricultural foundation of Bodo society. Many scholars consider the Bodos an agrarian community, with rice being their primary means of livelihood. As a result, agriculture stands as the main source of income for the Bodo people.

Beyond rice cultivation, economic stability is also achieved through the farming of various vegetables, mountain plantations, fishing, and even poaching. The novel highlights how both men and women actively contribute to economic activities through physical labour. Overall, “*Bachiram Jhwlaolao*” presents a clear depiction of the Bodo community’s economic structure and survival strategies in ancient times.

### 3.3.4.1 Use of Gold as Economic Aspects:

The The preservation of gold as a form of family wealth is a key economic aspect in “*Bachiram Jhwlaolao*,” particularly in the context of Queen Aidevithi of the Kundu Kingdom, wife of King Devthairwn. This concept highlights gold as a symbol of wealth and prosperity, safeguarded for the benefit of the family and its future generations.

In both historical and fictional settings, the accumulation and preservation of gold serve not only as a means of securing material wealth but also as a way to maintain financial stability, social status, and family legacy. This theme is evident in the novel, where gold plays a significant role in ensuring economic security.

#### **Bodo version:**

“रानि आइदेबिथिया गावनि सन्दुकनि सनाखौ खेवनानै नायदों। गोबां सान जाबाय बे सुन्दुकखौ बियो खेवना नायेया। फिसाज्ला सान्दोनि जोनोमनि उनावनो सानसे राजा देबथायरोना बे मैदेर हाथाइनि सन्दुकखौ बिनो होफेदोंमोन। बुंदोंमोन- मोजांडै थिनानै दोन, थैजासिम।”<sup>73</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

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<sup>73</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jhwlaolao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. p. 58

*“The queen Aidevithi looks at the gold of her ark open. She did not open the lid for several days. It was in the boat of his son Sandw's birth that the king gave him the elephant pot. He said, "Preserve it well until you die.”*

The passage describes Aidevithi as the wife of King Devthairwn. Following her mother's advice, Aidevithi carefully preserved gold in a secret place, ensuring its value for the future. The idea was to utilize the gold in times of economic hardship within the kingdom.

From an analytical perspective, this act highlights the importance of financial foresight and economic stability. The preservation of gold not only serves as a safeguard against economic crises but also reflects a strategic approach to wealth management in the state.

### **3.3.5 Economic Aspects of Swmaosarnaini Orgeng;**

Wherever human society exists, economic matters inevitably play a role in shaping people's lives. Without financial resources, progress and development become difficult. The novel *“Swmaosarnaini Orgeng”* explores various economic aspects, providing insight into the financial conditions of rural Bodo communities.

Through the textual narrative, readers gain an understanding of the economic landscape in Bodo villages, where people engage in agriculture, sericulture, and animal husbandry as primary sources of income. These activities serve as vital means of sustenance, capital generation, and economic transactions.

The novel also presents thought-provoking challenges faced by its characters, addressing themes of family management, educational aspirations, and the struggle for financial stability through jobs and professions. These elements highlight the economic realities and resilience of the Bodo people in their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood.

#### **Bodo version:**

‘आथिखाल मुं थिसननो थाखाय बे फरायसालियावबो फर्म लानांगोननो। बै खथायाव होगसिनो दड आरो फर्मनि थाखाय फैसाबो थाइसे थाइसे लादों।

‘फैसा?’

‘बेयावथ फैसा नाडा होनदोमोन। दालाइ मानो फैसा नांगौ जाखो? आंनि आखायावथ गरसेबो फैसा गैया।’

‘थाइसे फैसायानो गैया नोहा?’

‘ओहो, आंनि आखायाव थाइसेबो फैसा गैया।’

“अबालाय नोनिया मुं थिसननायानो जानाय नंलिया।”<sup>74</sup>

### **English rendering:**

*"At present, I have to take a form in this school to get admitted. It's paying in that room and you've got a penny for the form."*

*'Money'*

*"I mean there is non fee admission has provided. Till now why necessary to pay fee? I don't have a single penny in my hand."*

*'Don't you have any money?'*

*"Oh, I don't have a penny."*

*"You won't be able to get enrolled anyway."*

The passage highlights economic struggles as a central theme. The fictional narrative vividly portrays the financial hardships faced by Agli, whose background was rooted in poverty. At times, Agli encountered financial difficulties, particularly when it came to paying for her education. Despite these challenges, she persevered and eventually completed her degree.

Throughout the story, Agli's struggles reflect not only her economic condition but also the broader financial difficulties faced by the Bodo community. The narrative emphasizes that agriculture remains the primary source of income, with limited financial resources available for education. Agli's character serves as a representation of this reality, illustrating the economic constraints that hinder access to higher education in rural Bodo society.

### **3.4 Political Aspects in the Novel:**

Rita Baro's novels "*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*," "*Thwisam*," "*Saikhong*," "*Bachiram Jwhwlao*," and "*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*"—explore various political themes.

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<sup>74</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.68

These works highlight social issues that have been politicized for implementation, reflecting how politics influences different aspects of life. A political novel is defined as “*A political novel is one in which political ideas have played a dominant role or in which the political milieu is the dominant setting*”<sup>75</sup> In Baro’s novels, political ideas are woven into the narratives, shaping the development of the stories and characters. Below is an analysis of the political themes in each novel:

In this novel, the character Jamfri, who is Fwisali’s cousin mother, is a key figure in representing political neglect. Jamfri was deprived of government financial assistance, as her name was not included in the sanctioned funding. This situation reflects political biases in resource distribution, particularly affecting marginalized and impoverished sections of society.

Political matters also surface in “*Thwisam*”. The novel presents a more positive outlook on government policies, showcasing liberal distribution of financial aid. The protagonist, Thelabs, serves as an example of political accessibility. Without needing any mortgage or collateral, she successfully receives 50,000 as government compensation following her husband’s death. This highlights the role of political frameworks in providing financial support to the needy.

While “*Saikhong*” primarily explores socio-economic, cultural, religious, and linguistic issues, it also delves into the impact of British colonialism on the Bodo people. The British took control over key aspects of socio-economic life, including land revenue systems, exerting their dominance over local governance. The novel portrays how colonial rule disrupted traditional structures and imposed a foreign political system on the Bodo community.

Although “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” is a legendary novel, it contains political undertones. The protagonist, *Bachiram*, serves as the chief infantry commander of King Devthairwn in the Kundu kingdom. The novel depicts how King Devthairwn strategically employed political tactics to ensure the smooth functioning of his kingdom, emphasizing leadership and governance.

This novel presents a strong socio-political narrative, particularly focusing on the Bodo community’s democratic struggle for a separate state. The mass movement ultimately led to the creation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the Sixth

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<sup>75</sup> Howe, Irving, *Politics and the Novel*. p.17

Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The author highlights how political activism and negotiations played a crucial role in securing administrative autonomy for the Bodo people.

Each of these novels incorporates political themes that shape the lives of the characters and communities. Through these narratives, the author highlights how political power influences societal opportunities, governance, and resource allocation. These stories serve as a reflection of real-life political events and struggles, demonstrating the inescapable role of politics in human life.

### 3.4.1 Political Aspects of Gongse Okhrangni Singao:

In a democratic system, politics holds supreme authority, guiding governance and decision-making. Such kind of novel their theme and story being a social information have not less part of the political matter. *A novel, to be become a political one, must have either a political background or political ideas should play a significant role in it.*<sup>76</sup> Society remains linked to politics as people seek to fulfill their needs through political means.

In “*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*,” Jamfri, the cousin mother of Fwisali, was deprived of political assistance. Despite government financial aid programs, her name was not included in the sanctioned fund. This reflects how political influence affects resource distribution, especially among the poor.

#### **Bodo version:**

“औ। बिनो मैया आंनिआव फैना बुंफैदों—गाव पनसायटनिफ्राय लायनो रान्दिफोरनो न’ गंफा गंफा होदों। मैया आंनि मुंखौ लानो फैनायाव आं नॉनि खोथाखौ गोसो खाना नॉनि मुंखौबो हरफादोडो। दा जोडो फ’ट’ गंफा गंफा फरम बिलाइजों अदालगुरि ब्लकआव हैब्लानो जासिगोननो।”

“बेखिनियावनो जानाय मोनब्लाथ’ मोजांनि खोथामोन आब’। नाथाय जायैआसो जॉनि थाखाय दुखुनि खोथा.”

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid p.7

“नागेस आयंआ मावना होगोन होन्ना खोथा होदों जेला जानोबो हायोलाय । जायोब्ला जॉनि थाखायनो हामथारगोन।”<sup>77</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Yes, yesterday Nagesh informed me to contact the relevant authorities regarding the distribution of houses to widows at the Gaon Panchayat level. When he visited my house yesterday, I remembered your name about this initiative, so I mentioned your name. As of now, we need to submit the completed form along with a passport-sized photo to the Udalguri Block.”*

*“If the details meet the requirements as per the instructions, then everything should be fine. However, it seems somewhat unbelievable that our names may not be selected”.*

*“My cousin's son, Nagesh, assured me the selection could still be possible, so I am hopeful. If select us, then it's okay for us.”*

The passage reflects a political issue where Jamfri, a character in “*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*,” seeks government assistance under a beneficiary scheme for house construction. However, due to misallocation, she does not receive the aid, highlighting discrepancies in the distribution process. This situation reveals biases or favouritism in government schemes, turning the issue into a politically charged matter. Such instances of mismanagement create dissatisfaction among the underprivileged, demonstrating how political influence affects access to resources meant for public welfare.

**3.4.2 Political Aspects of Thwisam:**

In “*Thwisam*,” political elements are subtly woven into the story. While not a fully political novel, it highlights political involvement in social matters. The protagonist, Thelabs, becomes entangled in political influence when a government compensation of fifty thousand rupees is sanctioned. Political party members engage with Thelabs regarding the funds, showing how political connections play a role in accessing government aid. Though the novel primarily focuses on social themes, it reflects how politics can influence individual opportunities and empowerment.

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<sup>77</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. P.42

### 3.4.2.1 Political Discourse:

Political discourse is occasionally discussed among the Bodo people. In “*Thwisam*,” Rita Baro highlights political themes, particularly the historical perspective that the Bodos once had their kingdom. This idea is conveyed through dialogues in the novel, reflecting the collective opinion of the characters. The narrative subtly incorporates these discussions, emphasizing the political consciousness within the community.

#### **Bodo version:**

“दोन दोन बर'फोरालाय बबेयावथ' राइजो खुंडाखै। कामाख्या नाइनो थां बेयावबो बुंगोन बर'आ रायजो खुंदोमोन, दिमापुराव थां बेयावबो, कस बिहार, नेपाल, बिहार जेरावबो बर'फोरा राइजो खुंदोमोन होनगोन । नाथाय एथबां राइजोआनो दडमोब्ला मानोथ' न' गैजायै जाखो?” अनसाया बुडो।”<sup>78</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*"Let them go. It has been heard that the Bodo people once had a state and ruled in various places. If you go to Kamakhya, Dimapur, Cooch Behar, Nepal, and Bihar, you will hear that the Bodo people ruled in those areas. If they once had a state, then why have they become stateless?"*

At times, the Bodo people assert that they once had a kingdom, with renowned places in the world having historical connections to the Bodo race. Locations like Dimapur are considered significant to their ancient livelihood. This notion carries political significance; analytical studies suggest that such historical claims are important for the Bodo community's political identity.

Another political discourse identified in this study relates to Thelab's life and the compensation amount she received, which was politically sanctioned. This idea emerges clearly in the story outlined below.

#### **Bodo Version:**

“थांनायालाय आं पार्टि अफिसाव थांदोमोन आरो बेयावनो नौनि खामानियाबो जाना फेबायनालाय, खौरांखौ इसे होलांनाया मोजां जागोन होनना हाबलांनाय जादो.”

<sup>78</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p.15

“मानिबा खौरा आगै।

“माने, नोनि मुझव बि.टि.सि. सरकारनिफ्राय बाजि रोजा रां चेंसन जादों, माने भिकटिमाइज फेमेलिफोरनो होनाय जादों। आदायाबो बड’लेण्ड सोमावसारनाय समाव गावथार जायाखैमोन होमबा?”<sup>79</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“I went to the party office, and there I heard that your sanctioned scheme has been allocated to you. I came to meet you to share this good news.”*

*What kind of news, brother-in-law?*

*“The B.T.C. government has sanctioned fifty thousand rupees in your name as compensation for a victimized family. Your husband was murdered by unknown assailants during the Bodoland movement while he was a member of the revolutionary group.”*

The passage highlights the political elements present in the novel. In a democratic system, politics holds the highest authority, shaping governance and implementing various development policies and schemes. In *“Thwisam,”* political aspects are reflected through Thelab’s situation. She is a poor woman with a son, Asai, and her husband was murdered by an unknown enemy during the Bodoland movement due to his involvement in a revolutionary group. As a result, she receives 50,000 as rehabilitation aid from the BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council). Laheram, a political party member, informs Thelab about the sanctioned amount and helps her navigate the official process to claim it. She accepts Laheram’s assistance, which enables her to access the compensation. This situation underscores the role of political influence in facilitating social welfare and development projects within society.

### **3.4.3 Political Aspects of Saikhong:**

*“Saikhong”* is not primarily a political novel, but it does incorporate political elements. The novel critically examines the complex relationship between the British and the Bodo people, where certain interactions can be seen as political maneuvers and opportunities. While the British ruled over the Bodos, their governance was not entirely

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p.24

devoid of political intentions. Despite their control, the British contributed to the development of Bodo language and literature, using their knowledge and influence to foster progress rather than hinder it. Their efforts reflect a strategic approach to governance, ensuring that developmental initiatives were not obstructed.

### 3.4.4 Political Aspects of Bachiram Jwhwlao:

Rita Baro's "*Bachiram Jwhwlao*" carries political significance. During the reign of King Devthairwn in the Kundu Kingdom, multiple conflicts arose between the Bhutanese royal army and the Kundu Kingdom. The Bhutanese forces frequently launched sudden attacks. However, with Bachiram serving as the chief of infantry, the Bhutanese aggression was effectively countered, preventing further assaults on the Kachari Kingdom. This turning point influenced the political dynamics of the Bhutanese government, reshaping the power balance in the region.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आं बुडो बे बारनि सान्थि गाहाइ बासिरामा एला-खेला मानसि नडा। नोंथांमोना हायेनाव जानला-मोनला दाथां, इसे सामोलहै थां।” जाइलाया बुंबाय।

“जोंबो खोनादों। नाथाय अब्लाबो बिखौ फेजेननायनि राहाखौ जों नोंनि आखाइयावनो मोनगोन होनना आसा खालामदों।” दुनदुपा बुंबाय।”

“नोंसोरखौ आं जेसे हायो इसेनो मदद खालामगोन। राजानि सायाव आंहाबो खिथेर होखारनांगो दड। नाथाय नोंसोर आंनि फिसाजोखौ आलाय आथानि दाखालाम। बियो आंनि बिखानि खावसे।”<sup>80</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*"I want to say that Chief Infantry Bachiram of the Bodo people is not a weak man. Don't go recklessly into the valley; just be cautious. Jaila comment this."*

*"Also, we have heard, but still, we hope that you will find a way to defeat him. said Dogdukpa."*

*"I will help you as much as I can. I also have to take revenge on the king. But you don't take my daughter away. that's half of my heart "*

<sup>80</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jwhwlao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. p. 45

The passage presents a political discussion within the Bhutanese royal government, involving their king and military officers. The main concern was finding a way to defeat “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” in battle, which posed a significant challenge to Bhutanese strategy. When Bachiram was appointed as the chief infantry officer of the Kachari Kingdom, the news spread among the Bhutanese public, creating tension. Defeating him in war proved to be an immense challenge, becoming a major concern for the Bhutanese government. Despite the difficulties, they remained determined to take decisive action.

### 3.4.5 Political Aspects of *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*:

The presence of revolution often signifies a political shift, particularly in societal development. After a long period, when global trends and cultures dominated, the Bodo people began their struggle for their rightful freedom. Despite having a distinct cultural, linguistic, and literary identity, their efforts to elevate their social status had remained dormant.

Over time, they recognized the need to reclaim and establish their identity. The artistic insight of the author portrays this struggle through fiction. “*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*,” while a work of fiction, incorporates revolutionary themes and political undertones. The story's progression reflects the democratic movement for a separate Bodoland, highlighting the political aspirations of the Bodo people.

#### **Bodo version:**

“मा खालामनो दिनै, समा फिन बबे सैथो बबे नंखाय सिनायनो हाया जालांबाय। आं आथिखालनि राजखान्थिनि नांलाय खोमलाइ गावसा लायनायनि थासारिखौ नुनानै आफादनि खामानि दामानि मावनोनो बानायमोनबाय। बर'फोरा गोदोबो बिदिनो राइजो जोबसांदोंमोन दाबो बेनो जाबाय। जाय बेबस्थाया जौनि खावसेनि खावसेखौनो सुफुंनो हाया बेखौनो लानानै बेसेबा गुलुं गुजुं। साफ्रोमबो गावबा गावनि आइद'लजिजौ जुजिलायोब्ला बे हारिया थानाय नडा। बेफोर गासिबो सोरखारनि डिभाइड एण्ड रुल, मिथिबाय अनिता। इंग्राजखौ होखारबाय नाथाय बे हादोरनि बैंगिरिफोरा बे पलिसिखौ उनजौ बजबना लाबाय।”<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.17

**English rendering:**

*“What to do at present, the time has come to identify what is true and what is wrong. I was drawn to work for the organization given the current state of political turmoil. The Boros had lost state in the past, and this is what has happened now. It’s a bit of a problem with a system that can’t satisfy half of it. If each one struggles with his or her own ideology, the community will not exist. Do you understand Anita? It is a divide and rules of the government. The British were ousted but the government of this country adopted the policy.”*

During the struggle, the Bodo people strongly believed that it was the right time to push for a separate state. The idea weighed heavily on everyone's mind. While the organizational agenda was justified, a lack of unity among the Bodo people led to divisions in political ideology. These differences often caused misunderstandings within the movement. Anitas, who had long sacrificed for the Bodoland movement, deeply reflected on these challenges and the need for a unified approach.

**3.5 Religious Aspects as Represented in Novel:**

Religious aspects encompass beliefs, myths, rituals, experiences, ethics, and morality. The religious mindset of a novelist often influences the representation of these elements in literary works. *“Religion is a system that consists of beliefs and practices. Anthropologists have always agreed on the importance of practices, but their treatment of the beliefs has been very different at different times.”*<sup>82</sup> Rita Boro’s novels reflect religious worship as a key element, shaping the themes and narratives. In each of her works, religion serves as a foundational component, skillfully woven into the storytelling. The writing technique effectively conveys these aspects, resonating with the beliefs and traditions of the followers.

**3.5.1 Religious Aspects in Gongse Okhrangni Singao:**

The writer incorporates various cultural elements, highlighting religion as an essential part of society. The portrayal of religious worship in the Bodo community suggests the presence of a distinct religious tradition. Many of Rita Boro’s novels depict the traditional practice of worshipping Bwrai Bathou, which holds significant importance in Bodo culture.

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<sup>82</sup> Lucy, Mair. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Oxford University Press, Delhi. 1972. P. 211

The Bathou religious practices are particularly emphasized in the fiction, illustrating the community's deep-rooted faith. As defined by Anil Boro and Pranabjyoti Narzari, "*The traditional religion of the Bodo community is known as Bathou.*"<sup>83</sup> This perspective is reflected in the novel, showcasing the integral role of religious beliefs in Bodo society.

### 3.5.1.1 Bathou Worship:

Bathou worship is the core religious practice of the Bodo community, deeply rooted in their cultural and spiritual beliefs. The term Bathou signifies the worship of Bwrai Bathou, regarded as the supreme deity and the creator of the universe. According to Kameswar Brahma "*he is the god-in-chief of the Bodos.*"<sup>84</sup> This religious tradition revolves around nature worship, symbolizing harmony between humans and the natural world.

Bodo people conduct religious rituals and prayers at a designated sacred space known as Bathou Than or Bathou Thansali. These holy places serve as centers for spiritual gatherings and community worship. The practice of Bathou worship reflects the Bodo people's devotion and connection to their ancestral beliefs, which are passed down through generations.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आं बाथौ थानसालियाव गोदान बोसोरनि फुजा होनायाव थार्दोमोन।”

“नोंसोरनि बे जालुकबारोयाव बाथौ थानसालि लुबाय? लेखाया जिबनखौ नायना सोडो।”

“औ बाजै जालुकबारीनि बर'फोरा खौसे जाना गोदानसो गायसनर्दो। नोंसोर जिरायथ आं आथिं सुना फैनि।”<sup>85</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“I went to the Bathou Thansali (holy place) on the occasion of new year for worship. You are all constructed Bathou Thansali in Jalukbari? Lekha asks Jibon by looking at him.*

<sup>83</sup> Boro Anil and Narzary Pranabjyoti. Religion and Art Forms of the Bodos. *Mugani SaKhi*. Mout piece of All Bodo Student Union 19 Issue. 2015.

<sup>84</sup> Brahma Kameswar. *A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*. 1992. p. 176

<sup>85</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. p.17

*Of course, sister-in-law, the Bodo peoples have unitedly constructed the Bathou temple there.*

The referenced passage presents an interrogation between the protagonist and other characters, revealing their expressions and perspectives on religious practices. The discussion revolves around the significance of faith in their community.

A key moment in the narrative occurs when the hero witnesses a village pilgrim laying out the Sejou<sup>86</sup> tree (Euphorbia), a sacred plant symbolizing the almighty Bwrai Bathou. This act highlights the deep-rooted belief and respect the Bodo people have for their gods. The villagers, unified in their devotion, find a sense of security and purpose in their religious traditions.

Furthermore, the recurring theme of faith reflects their strong nationalist spirit. Religion, in this context, functions as an institution for sharing knowledge, shaping behavior, and exchanging ideologies, reinforcing social harmony and cultural identity.

### **3.5.2 Religious Aspects in Thwisam:**

“*Thwisam*” is one of Rita Boro's most acclaimed novels, earning her the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017. From an analytical perspective, religious significance can be traced within the novel, as it offers a rich portrayal of various social aspects, including religion, culture, economy, politics, and education.

Religion plays a crucial role in shaping the Bodo national spirit, fostering a sense of unity and cultural identity. The novel reflects the prominence of Bathou worship, the traditional religion of the Bodo people. This religious practice is evident through the character of Thalab, who embodies the faith and devotion prevalent in Bodo society. Through her, the novel highlights how religion continues to influence the everyday lives and beliefs of the Bodo community.

#### **Bodo version:**

ओं हिं खिलं फोत से

ओं हिं खिलं फोत से

ओं हिं खिलं फोत से

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<sup>86</sup> Brahma, Kameswar. *Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos*. Giri Print Service, 91-A. Baithakkhana Road, Calcutta-09. 1989. p.41

नै आनान गलाइ बोराय बाथौ  
 खुलुम हरदों जों नोंखौ  
 दहाय आफा दहाय।  
 हे नुवाथारि आनान गसाइ  
 नोंनो जाबाय जोनोमगिरि  
 नोंनो जाबाय फोथैगिरि  
 नोंनो जाबाय राहानिगिरि  
 नोंनो जाबाय निमाहानिगिरि  
 नोंनो जाबाय दायनिगिरि।  
 सोरगोआव दड सोरगोआव खोनासं।  
 पातालाव दड पातालाव खोनासं।  
 आं निखावरि आनला सुबंनि।  
 हांखायहरनायखौ नों खोनासं।।  
 बोखार फैदो नों आफा।  
 आंनि जिउनि खैफोद आफोद।।  
 अराय होफैदो सोरां।  
 दहाय आफा दहाय  
 बौराइ बाथौ।”<sup>87</sup>

**English rendering:**

Om hring rkring phwt se  
 Om hring rkring phwt se  
 Om hring rkring phwt se  
 Om hring rkring phwt se

<sup>87</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p.34

Oh god almighty  
 Prayed to you  
 Loved us loved  
 You're the unseen  
 You are the creator  
 You are the destroyer  
 The senator  
 You are the provider  
 You are staying in the sky, listen there  
 You are.....  
 I am a poor human being  
 Request you to listen to our problem  
 You will have removed our curse  
 Remove our difficulties life  
 Ever made free from problems  
 Please love oh my god Bwrai Bathou.

The above charms were invoked at the commencement of Bathou Puja as a means of fostering social bonding, deeply rooted in the customs of Bodo society. This charm represents an emotional and spiritual instinct ingrained in the people's minds. During this sacred ritual, every member of the community is encouraged to participate, reinforcing unity and collective devotion.

Following the worship, the preacher offers prayers, seeking blessings for a prosperous future and a successful life for all. Multiple times, prayers are performed, appealing to the divine for the well-being and overall development of society.

### **3.5.3 Religious Aspects in Saikhong:**

Religion plays a significant role in "*Saikhong*," which portrays village life in Bodo society and its interaction with the British. The novel highlights the presence of diverse religious practices, primarily Bathou worship among the Bodo people and the growing influence of Christianity.

A key aspect of the novel is the impact of colonial rule on Bodo culture, language, and literature. The British administration played a role in shaping these

aspects, with figures like Sydney Endle emerging as pioneers in the development of the Bodo language. Additionally, the novel acknowledges the British interest in religious matters, subtly reflecting the changes colonialism brought to Bodo society.

### 3.5.3.1 Bathou Worship:

In “*Saikhong*,” Bathou worship is depicted as an integral religious practice of the Bodo community. The novel highlights various characters, including Hathang, a servant of Dayananda Patgiri. One significant moment in the story portrays Hathang performing Bathou worship at night, emphasizing the deep-rooted spiritual traditions of the Bodo people. This scene reflects the cultural and religious devotion present in their daily lives.

#### **Bodo version:**

“हाथाडा रुवाथि हादांगि, खदालि आरो सोमस्रिखौ हरनि ओंखाम संनो बाथायनानै बाथौ गुदियाव आवाथि सावनो लाहार-फाहार खालाम हैनायसै। पदमायाबो बिखुनजोआ थिनाब्लाबो इसिं नवाव खदालि, सोमस्रिजों हाबफानानै संनाय-खावनायाव आखाय फोलाव फानासै।”<sup>88</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“*Hathang was preparing the lamp for the Bathou worship before she instructed her maidservants Hadangi, Khodali, and Swmsri to prepare dinner. Despite her mother-in-law’s request, Padma remained in the kitchen with Khodali, busy with garlic and cooking.*”

The Bodo women diligently followed a structured routine in their daily activities, ensuring that household chores were completed regularly. Traditional cooking, which involved unique techniques for preparing their food, was an essential part of their cultural identity and was highly valued by Bodo women. Meanwhile, Hathang instructed his servants, Hadangi and Khadali, to prepare meals while he engaged in worship at the Bathou holy place, paying homage to Bwrai Bathou. Simultaneously, Patma busied herself in the kitchen, focusing on cooking. Through these interactions and dialogues, the novel effectively portrays the cultural and religious essence of Bodo society.

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<sup>88</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.60

### 3.5.3.2 Religious Convert:

When colonialism arrived in Bodo society, a shift in religious beliefs gradually took place. During this period, some Bodo people converted from *Bathouism* to Christianity, though such instances were rare. This transformation was influenced by the socio-political changes brought by colonial rule. The novel reflects this historical reality, portraying the complexities and consequences of religious conversion within Bodo society. The relevant excerpt is mentioned below.

#### **Bodo version:**

“कुलिफोरा बेहाय फैनानैखि खुष्टान धोरोमाव हाबदों। बिसोरनि गेजेराव बायबेलनि बानि आरो धोरोमनि रिट्चुयेलफोरखौ दैदेन लानो थाखायनो सिडनीखौ सान्नेसोनि थाखाय बे सिम लेंहरनाय जादों।”<sup>89</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The laborers come here and accept Christianity. Sydney is called to preach to them about the teachings of the Bible and its rituals.”*

The above passage highlights that the Bodo people originally worshipped Bathou religion. However, with the arrival of the British in Bodo society, some laborers gradually accepted Christianity. As a result, both *Christian* and *Bathou* religious factions coexisted within the Kachari landscape. This transition brought emotional and cultural challenges to society, as the British presence influenced religious practices.

Despite the conversions, many Bodo people held firmly to their traditional faith, seeking to preserve their religious identity. The novel reflects this historical reality through its storytelling, depicting the religious transformations that took place. When the British came to Assam, they not only governed the Bodo people but also initiated religious mobilization. There is clear evidence in the novel that some tea laborers converted to Christianity under the influence of Sydney Endle.

This aspect of the story sheds light on the post-colonial development of Bodo society, capturing the social, cultural, and religious transitions that shaped their history. The novel presents these changes in a way that reflects the true essence of the Bodo people's struggle to maintain their traditions amidst external influences.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p.17

**Bodo version:**

“आसलते बै दायना जाथायानो थासारिखौ हरखाब सोलायनाय लाबोयो। बे जाथायनि उनावनो सिमसा माहाजोनाबो साहाबनि धोरोमाव हाबो।”<sup>90</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Actually, this witchcraft incident changes the situation. After that event, the rich-man Simsa also accepted the Christian religion.”*

The religious complexity in Thijapuri village escalated when the British introduced conversion practices, leading to a shift from Bathouism to Christianity among some Bodo people. In Hasailmarie, Michael’s mother was accused of witchcraft, and while the villagers initially planned to kill her, they ultimately chose to exile her along with Michael.

Forced to leave their village, they encountered Sydney Endle, who took them in after listening to their ordeal. Understanding their suffering, Endle provided them refuge, eventually leading Michael to embrace Christianity. This incident reflects the impact of colonial influence on religious conversions in Bodo society, where social conflicts and fear played a crucial role in shifting religious identities.

**3.5.3.3 Worship of Biso-Horii Puja:**

In the context of the novel, it is noted that Bishohari Puja is often performed by individuals or families, including the practice among the Thekhlobudang, a prominent figure in this tradition and the father of Padma. The Bodo people, who originally followed animistic beliefs, have increasingly incorporated Hindu deities into their religious practices. This shift appears to have been influenced by cultural exchanges and social reforms, which led to the integration of Hindu gods and goddesses into their worship, promoting social welfare and unity.

**Bodo version:**

“बिनि थाखाय होनांदोंमोन बिमा बिसरिनि फुजा। बांधारि गामिनि साहा ब्रै माइलसो गोजानाव थानाय अम्बर राइजोनि बाथाखौ बे ओनसोलनि मानसिफोरा मोजांङै मिथिगौ। सासे राजाया गावनि फिसाजो बेउलानि हाबाखौ जोबोद गाजा गोमजायै खुंदोंमोन। हाबायाव खोनाय गोजौ

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p.30.

बिथा आरो हाबायाव सावनाय अरनि हांगारफोरनि सलखौ, स्नि दिंखिजौ स्नि सान माइ सौनायनि सल'खौ बयबो मिथिगौ।”<sup>91</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Therefore, the king worshipped the Bisohari Puja. The people of this area are familiar with the Ombor kingdom, located about four kilometers north of Bangdhari village. A king had celebrated his daughter Beula’s wedding grandly and gorgeously. It is said that the king built a high boundary and set up a wood fire, and there were seven wood mills used for rice production, all of which were well-known at the story.”*

Bisohari Puja, associated with the Hindu deity, plays a significant role in this story about a king and his daughter, Biula. When Biula’s wedding was proposed, the king prepared for a grand ceremony, organizing a lavish feast for the public. To meet the enormous rice requirement for the event, he set up traditional wooden rice mills known as Dinkhi, which operated continuously for seven days.

The relentless effort to produce sufficient rice within a limited time added an element of surprise and emotional intensity to the story. The dedication of the characters and the extraordinary labor involved in preparing for the wedding highlight both the cultural traditions and the deep sense of duty within the royal household.

**3.5.3.4 Kharai Worship:**

The Kharai Puja is one of the most significant religious festivals of the Bodo community. It is performed at different times throughout the year, with the most important celebration taking place during the Baisagu month. This ritual is dedicated to seeking social harmony, welfare, peace, and protection from hardships.

In the novel, Kharai Puja is observed by Dayananda Patgiri during the Baisagu month, reflecting its deep-rooted significance in Bodo traditions. The portrayal of this worship in the story highlights the spiritual devotion of the community and their belief in divine intervention for societal well-being.

**Bodo version:**

“बैसाग दानाव बे ओनसोलनि मानसिफोरा गामिनि थानाव दाव-फारौ बोलि होनानै दौदिनिजौ खेरायनानै फुजियो। मौजादार दयाराम पाटगिरियाबो बैसाग दानाव बे फुजाखौ होयो। सिगां

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p.35.

नाथाय दयारामनि बिबै बिबौ मोना दाव फारौ बोलि होना बोराय बाथौखौ फुजियामोन। सिजौ बिफां गुदियाव आवाथि सावनानैल' फुजियोमोन।”<sup>92</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"During the month of Baisakh, the villagers sacrificed birds, and doves were worshiped through nilling with Doudini. Mauzadar Dayaram Patagiri also performs the Kherai Puja in Baisakh. In the past, however, Dayaram's grandmother would worship by sacrificing birds and doves, a ritual that involved lighting a bonfire beneath the euphorbia tree."*

Kherai Puja is a deeply significant religious and cultural festival within the Bodo community, observed with great reverence and elaborate rituals. While it is performed multiple times throughout the year, its most important and widely celebrated occasion falls during the *Baisagu* month, typically in April. This period is considered highly auspicious, marking a time of spiritual renewal and communal harmony.

The primary purpose of Kherai Puja is to seek blessings for social prosperity, welfare, peace, and protection from misfortunes such as natural calamities or societal discord. It serves as a unifying force, reinforcing cultural values and the collective faith of the community.

In the novel, the worship during Baisagu is particularly noteworthy as it is led by Dayananda Patgiri, a respected figure in the village. His role in the ritual adds a sense of sanctity and importance to the ceremony. The puja consists of various sacred rites, including offerings, prayers, and the chanting of hymns, all performed to invoke divine protection and ensure harmony within the community.

### **3.5.4 Religious Aspects in Bachiram Jhwlaolao:**

The novel portrays the traditional Bathou worship of the Bodo people, centered on Bwrai Bathou, their supreme deity. As the creator, sustainer, and destroyer, Bwrai Bathou is deeply revered in Bodo culture. The story reflects this enduring faith, emphasizing its significance in their spiritual and social life.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p.61.

### 3.5.3.1 Bathou Worship:

Bathou worship is a fundamental religious practice of the Bodo community, rooted in nature and ancestral reverence. Centered on the supreme deity Bwrai Bathou, it upholds the worship of five natural elements, symbolizing harmony between humans and nature. This long-standing tradition reflects the deep spiritual and cultural ethos of the Bodo people.

#### **Bodo version:**

“अब्ला बिमाइ खादाया गामिनि थबगां अजानियाव गोदान नायखां हैदोमोन। थबगाडा खावरी नायखानानै बुंदोमोन- ‘बोराइ बाथोवा बिखौ आजावदो। थाबैनो नोसोर बोराइ बाथोनि फुजा हो। नडाब्ला नोसोर मानसिखौ मोननाय नडा।”<sup>93</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“His uncle Khada went to meet Thobgang, a traditional healer, in search of a traditional treatment. Thobgang examined the Khaori, (snail divination), and concluded that Bwrai Bathou (God) was demanding something. He advised Khada to worship Bwrai Bathou as soon as possible, warning that otherwise, they might not be able to save the man.”*

One day, a village girl named Khusri had a dream in which the almighty Bwrai Bathou appeared to her and taught her the Kharai dance. This divine vision emphasized the spiritual and cultural significance of the dance in Bodo tradition. The narrative above highlights the aspects of Khusri's dreams for Bwrai Bathou, which inspire a greater sense of purpose for the nation. The character reflects the deep-rooted perceptions that symbolize the *Bathou* religious worship within the Bodo community.

The past narratives reveal that a key principle of the Bathou religion is the compassionate and responsive nature of the Almighty. For instance, the charms mentioned below illustrate this belief.

#### **Bodo version:**

“नै साननि गिरि सान राजा

न'नि गिरि बांनिगिरि

<sup>93</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jwhwlao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. Pp. 21-22.

साहानि हुमाय साहा नारथे  
 खोलाहानि हुमाय खोलाहा नारथे  
 सोनाबनि हुमाय सोनाबहा नारथे  
 सानजानि हुमाय सानजाहा नारथे  
 अनागारि जाब्ला सैमा हेंगालि लागायगोन । ।  
 आइ थैदों आइखौ गारदों  
 आफा थैदों आफाखौ गारदों  
 गारखै जों सिबिनो  
 खुलुमदों जों नै दिनैबो  
 राइजोनि राजा फोरजाफिसा  
 बोर सास्रिदो आफा  
 दहाइ आफा बोराइ बाथौ”<sup>94</sup>

**English rendering:**

*The owner of the sun is the east*

*The Creator owns the home.*

*protect in the north the bows of the north*

*protect in the south the bows of the south*

*protect in the west the bows of the west*

*protect in the east the best of the east*

*If you are harassed like a neck weighed down by the hang of the dong,*

*My mother is dead, left her love behind,*

*Father is dead, left her love behind,*

*We will never forget*

*To worship god*

*Today, we pray once again.*

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

*The King and all the assistants of the State*

*Bless my father*

*Love father, love old father*

The above lines are charms, which are set as rhymes that have been continuously used from old age and handed down from generation to generation. That is a usable charm in Bodo society; it is vital for any kind of religious or festival purpose, and it is led by a priest. *Kharai* is one of the most popular festivals in the Bodo community. That charm is used before the commencement of *Kharai puja*. It is a very devotional one. Every word of the charms is related to the religion and culture. The Bodo people believe that by using these charms, a person can be saved from a variety of complex city situations. Here positive attitudes are encouraged by the Bodo people to unite well wishes for the society. Charms have also been identified as having different cultural significance. It has been explained that if the Bodo people are not giving self-defense about their culture and identities, they will become dormant. Sometimes Bodo people were converted to another religion.

### **3.5.3.2 Kharai Worship:**

Kharai Puja is the most significant festival of the Bodos, symbolizing hope and desire. Rita Boro's novel "*Bachiram Jwhlwao*" incorporates this festival as an integral part of its narrative, reflecting religious practices deeply rooted in Bodo's socio-cultural traditions. Through the novel, these customs are vividly portrayed, highlighting their significance in the community's way of life. The following section delves into the essential aspects of this revered tradition as depicted in the text.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आग्रा अजाया बुंनाय बायदि बैसागु दानावनो मिरु आरो जात्रि मोदाइनि मुडाव खेराइ होनो थाखाय लाहार फाहार खालामबाय दोबधाइरोन राजाया। रायजोआव हालमाजिया दल दामनानै खौरांखौ फोसावनाय जाबाय। राजानि बे खौरांखौ मोननानै खेराइ फुजानि थाखाय फोरजाफिसाफोरा बयबो साखाफारा जाबाय।”<sup>95</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.21.

*“In the month of Baisakhi, as mentioned by Agra Oza (a local practitioner), King Devdhirona made arrangements for the Kharai Puja in honor of the Jabri deity. The news of this event was spread by the announcement of the Halmazia (village messenger) throughout the state. Upon hearing this, the people gathered to participate in the Kheri Puja.”*

The narrative of the novel revolves around the family condition of Devthairwn, the king of the Kundu kingdom. It provides an insightful depiction of the traditional festival of the Bodo community, a practice that has been observed for generations. The Kherai festival, an integral part of Bodo culture, was dutifully followed by King Devthairwn. The festival typically takes place during the Baisagu month, which corresponds to April and May in the English calendar.

King Devthairwn meticulously organized the festival, ensuring it was celebrated with grandeur. Before the festival, a messenger was sent door to door across the region, informing families about the upcoming event. This practice reflected the king’s deep sense of responsibility and the collective enthusiasm of his fellow dignitaries. Upon hearing the announcement, the public eagerly prepared to participate in the celebrations.

The Kherai festival is intrinsically tied to religious traditions, particularly the *Bathou* religion. The king’s meticulous arrangements symbolized the Bodo community’s deep reverence for Kherai Puja. The festival is believed to purify society by eradicating negativity and bringing peace and prosperity. This belief inspires unity and fosters a sense of civilization among the people. In the king’s vision, the festival was not just a religious event but also a safeguard against misfortune, ensuring that no calamities or epidemics befell the motherland.

### **3.5.5 Religious Aspects in Swmaosarnaini Orgeng:**

The novel *“Swmaosarnaini Organg”* explores religious aspects that hold deep social significance. While it is primarily a social novel, religious themes are intricately woven into the narrative, extending beyond the practical lives of its characters. The plot construction reflects a discourse on religious beliefs, emphasizing their role in shaping societal values.

According to the author, the novel presents religious perspectives through the actions and experiences of its characters. *‘Swmaosarnaini Organg’* maintains a socially

dynamic essence, both within and beyond its fictional environment, as it mirrors the real-life preservation of religious traditions. One of the most significant religious elements depicted in the novel is Bathou worship, which is symbolized through Anita's character. The author portrays her devotion as an essential representation of faith within the story.

**Bodo version:**

“हे आफा बोराइ बाथौ

अख्रांजाव दं अख्रांजाव खोनासं

फाथालाव दं फाथालाव खोनासं

हादामाव दं हदामाव खोनासं

दिनै बर' हारिनि रैखाथिनि थाखाय

नैबे आंनि आरनाइ जि दानाया

मोजांङै मोजां जाफुलांथों

दहाइ-आफा बोराइ बाथौ दहाइ।”<sup>96</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"Hey father Bwrai Bathou, you are the old father.*

*it's in the sky listen to me in the sky*

*listen in beneath the sea*

*what's in the weather listen to the valley*

*for the protection of today's Boro community*

*this is my weaving Aronai cloth*

*let's have a good year*

*Oh god, you are the supreme God”*

The charms mentioned above were recited by Anita, in connection with Bathou religious worship. Anita practiced this ritual before beginning the weaving of the Aronai cloth. The charm is offered to God by the Bodo people to ensure the well-being of the weaving process. Bodo women believe that the Aronai cloth should be completed within

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<sup>96</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.114.

a single night. If the weaving process is finished on time, the wearer or fighter of the Aronai cloth during wartime is believed to be destined for victory. The story of Anita demonstrates her adherence to this tradition, which serves to inspire warriors, such as the hero Bachiram, to fight bravely against their enemies. This tradition reflects the deep religious beliefs of the Bodo community. Additionally, these themes are captured in the novel “*Swmaosarnaini Organg*.” From this perspective, it can be argued that religion plays a vital role in shaping societal values and fostering a positive environment for community commitment.

### 3.6 Historical Aspects in Novels:

The historical novel is a powerful genre that directly engages with historical events and realities. It is defined as “*Another important genre of the novel is the historical novel. The historical novel, on the face of it, seems to be a contradiction in terms. The word novel designates a work of fiction; and facts, we know are the underlying basis of history.*”<sup>97</sup> As remarked, several novels depict time and place through historical events associated with a particular population. The names of places and references to time in these narratives hold significant value, serving as markers of cultural heritage and offering insights for future generations.

#### 3.6.1 Historical Aspects of Gongse Okhrangni Singao:

“*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*” is primarily a social novel, though it is partially interwoven with historical events. The author incorporates historical significance into the narrative through characters who embark on a journey to Agnigarh Hillock in Tezpur, Assam. This location is highlighted in the story as a well-known historical site. *Aniigarh* “*is a hillock located in Tezpur, Assam, India*”<sup>98</sup> as mentioned in the fictional account presented below.

#### **Bodo version:**

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<sup>97</sup> Tilak, Raghukul. *Literary Forms Trends and Movement*. Rama Brothers, Educational Publishers, Bank Street, Karol Bag, New Delhi -05. 1976. p.120

<sup>98</sup> Agnigarh | Sonitpur District | Government of Assam, India. [sonitpur.gov.in](http://sonitpur.gov.in). Archived from the original on 17 August 2022. Retrieved 28 June 2020.

“लिपिया मोनाबिलि समाव जिबनखौ अग्निगर हाजो सायाव बेरायनो लाना थाडो। मोनाबिलिनि खोलो खोलो बारनाय बुर्लुबुथुरनि गोजोन सुदेम बारआ बिसोरनि गोसो गोर्बोखौ बिलिर लांदों। अग्निगर हाजो सायाव थानाय सिब थानसालिनि हजार हजार फारेव दाउफोरा रंजादों मोसादों बिरग्लांदों...।”<sup>99</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“In the evening, Lipi takes Jiban for a wandering on the top of the Agnigar hill. In the evening, the blissful winds of the breeze blew their hearts away. Thousands of birds from the Shiva temple atop the Agnigar hill have enjoyed the dance flying.”*

Presently, Agnigarh Hill in Tezpur, located in Sonitpur district, is a popular tourist destination. The site holds historical significance, as it was once the kingdom of Banraja. In the novel, Jibon and his wife, Lipi, often visit Agnigarh Hill during their trips, a scene vividly depicted in the fiction. The reference to Agnigarh in the story effectively highlights its historical importance, offering valuable insight into its cultural heritage.

**Bodo version:**

“उसा बानराजानि अनजालि फिसाजो, अनिरुध्दनि जिउनि सैनाय उसा। अग्निगर हाजोनि बे सिब थानसालियाव जोबजानानै जिउ खानांदोंमोन। जिउनि रंगिना सिमांखौ बेयवनो मोनफा मोनफा सुजुनायनि अनगा जेबो राहा मोनाखैमोन। थेउबो बियो थांना थानांदोंमोन मोनफ्रोमबो सिमांखौ होसोनानै मोनफ्रोमबो आगानखौ फोलावन्नानै।”<sup>100</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Usha is the torment of Aniruddha, the beloved daughter of Banaraja. Anurudhra was imprisoned in this Shiva temple on the Agnigar hill. He had no choice but to create a single dream of life. However, he had to live by pursuing every dream and taking every step.”*

Usha was the daughter of Banraja, who was known as the king in Hindu mythology in Sonitpur. “Banasura is a character in Hindu mythology. She is the daughter of the asura king Banasura and the wife of Aniruddha, the grandson of

<sup>99</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. Pp.36-37

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* p.37.

*Krishna.*<sup>101</sup> Usha's friend, the blind Chitrlekha, showcased her artistic talent by painting a portrait of Krishna's grandson, Aniruddha. Usha, captivated by the image of the handsome prince, later married Aniruddha. This mythological narrative holds historical significance, adding depth to the novel's thematic exploration.

**Bodo version:**

“एसेबां गोमोहाब हारसिं मा सानखो? अग्निगर हाजो नुवाखैमोन नामा ?”

“नुदों। जारिमिनारिखौसो नुवाखैमोन?”

“मा बुंदों, नुदों? जारिमिनारिखौसो नुवाखैमोन”

“औ, माने बे अग्निगरखौसो नुफैनाय जायाखैमोन”<sup>102</sup>

**English rendering:**

*"What do you think of such a strange loner? Didn't you see the mountains of Agnigar?"*

*"I see. I donot seen its history?"*

*"What are you saying, see? you didn't see the history."*

*"Yes, I mean, it wasn't just Agnigar who was seen."*

The conversation highlights the strong friendship between Ansai and Thulunchi. One day, they visited Agnigarh Hills, a site known for both its popularity and historical significance. Their meeting at Agnigarh was intended for leisure, but it also led them to reflect on its historical background. The narrative focuses on their discussion, emphasizing that while historical sites may seem less relevant to the new generation, they remain essential to the nation's cultural heritage. Preserving such historical knowledge is crucial, as it serves as a foundation for future generations and reinforces the significance of history in shaping society.

**Bodo version:**

“मांखरसालिनि गेजेर ससेयाव पाब्लिक हेल्थनि न' गंनैसो दं। सस्त्रफारा गामिनि राइजो राजानि थाखाय आसाम सरखारा बेवहाय दै जागायनायनि राहाखौ लादोंमोन। नाथाय 1989-90

<sup>101</sup> *Fables and Folk-Tales of Assam*, Firma. KLM. 1998. ISBN 9788171020751

<sup>102</sup> Baro, Rita. *Gongse Okhrangni Singao*. Sree Sankar Press, Tongla, 2002. Pp. 37-38.

माइथाइनि फरायसा आफादनि दुं दुं सोमावसरनायाव बे न'आ बायखलाब सिखलाब महर मोनो।”<sup>103</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“There are two public health buildings in the heart of the tomb. The Assam government has taken the initiative to introduce water to the people of Satraphara village. However, the house was reduced to a trickle during the 1989-90 students' union protests.”*

Satrapara village holds historical significance, as it is intertwined with the Bodoland separate state movement. Its inclusion in the novel raises a sense of curiosity, making it an intriguing aspect of the narrative. This thematic focus carries equal importance to the main plot, despite being addressed in just a few lines. A notable event in the story is the construction of a public health building, funded by the Assam State Government, which adds depth to the plot's development.

**3.6.2 Historical Aspects of Thwisam:**

*“Thwisam”* is another significant novel that explores various aspects of its characters. Ansai, Aron, and Thulunchi are portrayed as educated youths of society. The novel presents discussions among young individuals, reflecting on the historical background of the Bodo race. These discussions also touch upon political concerns. Through these exchanges, the novel emphasizes that, since its inception, the Bodo people have been recognized as a prominent race in Northeast India, once ruled by their own kings and kingdoms.

**3.6.2.1 History of Kundu Kingdom:**

The Bodo community was once known as the Kachari, a name frequently used by authors in creative literature. In the novel, the term Kachari refers to the people residing in the Kundu Valley, which was ruled by a Kachari king. The novel vividly portrays the kingdom's natural beauty and its surroundings, as depicted in Rita Boro's creative fiction, which is analyzed in the following section.

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<sup>103</sup> Op.cit. p.39

**Bodo version:**

“अनसाय नों मिथिगौना मिथिया बे ओनसोलाव रामायन महाभारत रनसायनायनि गोबां बोसोरनि कुन्दु बंसनि सिगां कसारी राजा माने जॉनि फोलेरनि राजाया राइजो खुंदोमोन। बिसोरनि सिगां सदियानि गोदोनि कुन्दुल नोगोराव राइजो खुदोमोन। बे बर’ कसारि राजा फोलेरनि मुंडानो कन्दु फोलेर।”<sup>104</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Ansai do you know; many years before the creation of the Ramayana Mahabharata. that the kundu region was ruled by kachari king which was known as Kundu dynasty. Before them, the ancient Kundal city later name Sadia was the palace of the king. The name of the Bodo Kachari dynasty is Kandu Phwlar (clan).”*

The Kundu Kingdom, now known as Bhairabkunda, was once ruled by a king of the Kachari race, as reflected in the novel’s narrative. In ancient times, the Kachari rulers reigned over the Kundu Valley, which holds historical significance in the story. Today, Bhairabkunda has become a well-known picnic destination, blending its historical past with modern-day recognition.

**3.6.2.2 Foundation of Power Project:**

The foundation of the power project in the “*Thwisam*” novel may deal with historical events and the development of infrastructure. There is the proper location available to establish power projects near the Arunachal border is settled down which is reflected in the story.

**Bodo version:**

“भुताननिफ्राय बोहै बोनाय जाम पानि देंमा आरो अरुनाचलनिफ्राय बोहैबोनाय धनचिरि दैमानि गोरोबलायनाय थावनियाव 1975 माइथायाव ‘धनश्री जलबिघट्टुट प्रकल्प’ मुंनि मोनसे बिखान्थि लानाय जादों। बे बिखान्थिनि थाखाय बानायनाय दालां साजों थुलुनसि, मिना, सानजारां बिसोर

<sup>104</sup> Baro, Rita. *Thwisam*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2014. p.5

साथामबो अरुनाचलनि समायना मिथिंगानि बिखायाव गाखो हैनायसै। अनसाया बिसोरजो थाडाब्लानो गुबुन दाबसेजो थांनायसै।”<sup>105</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“The Dhanashree Power Project was implemented in 1975 at the junction of the Jampani river flowing from Bhutan and the Dhansiri river flowing from Arunachal. Not inspired by the bridge built for the process, the trio climbed into the heart of Arunachal’s beauty. If Ansai did not go with them, he went with someone else.”*

The novel depicts the historical background of the power project established in 1975 on the Dhansiri river, which currently flows from Arunachal Pradesh. This project was of great significance, and alongside it, a bridge was constructed. Today, the site has become a popular picnic spot, where visitors explore the area. The novel highlights this location, blending historical relevance with present-day recognition.

**3.6.3 Historical Aspects of Saikhong:**

“*Saikhong*” is primarily a social novel, yet it is also recognized for its historical significance. During the period of British rule in India, the British made their way into the Bodo community, playing a crucial role in the development of the Bodo language and literature. In this regard, Sydney Endle and G.A. Grierson made invaluable contributions to its growth.

Sydney Endle conducted extensive research on the language, literature, and culture of Bodo society. Endle works and publications earned him great recognition among the Bodo people, who honored him with the title Boro Bwrai (Old Man), a mark of deep respect. This historical connection is vividly portrayed in Rita Boro’s novel “*Saikhong*”, highlighting the lasting impact of Endle’s contributions on Bodo literature. The novel effectively reflects how these historical developments shaped the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Bodo community.

**3.6.3.1 Arrival History of Sydney Endle:**

Sydney Endle’s arrival marked a significant moment in the history of the Bodo community. After reaching the Bodo-inhabited region, he dedicated himself to constructive efforts aimed at studying and preserving their language, literature, and

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. pp. 16-17.

culture. His contributions played a crucial role in the development of Bodo society, leaving a lasting impact on its historical and linguistic heritage.

**Bodo version:**

“कलिकातानि पदमा दैमानि बिखायाव गाखोनानै सान हर जिरायनाय गैया, थाद'नाय गैया, सानब्रैनि उनाव आसामनि बुरलुंबुथुर दैमानि बिखाजों दावबाय बोनानै बानराजानि हादोरनि गनेज गाथोनाव कुइन इलिजाबेत जाहाजा दोम थाद' फैयो। दैमानि बिखाजों बेसेबांदि गिलु बालु बारहुंखा मोनबोर्दों। नाथाय बार हुंखा, सारअनथाय बेफोर गासैबो बिनि थाखाय मोनफा-मोनफा जिउनि लोगो एबा फोरोंगिरिसो।”<sup>106</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Four days later, the Queen Elizabeth ship arrived at the port of Gonesh in Banaraja, after navigating through the heart of the mighty river in Assam and ascending the Padma River in Kolkata. Along the way, many fierce storms arose from the depths of the river. Yet, to him, these storms and showers were not adversaries but rather lifelong friends and teachers.”*

The above statement is taken from the novel “*Saikhong*” (Shadow) and highlights the life history of Sydney Endle, who arrived in Assam among the Bodo community. Sydney Endle began his journey from Kolkata to Assam for research and investigation. He traveled abroad a ship named Queen Elizabeth without rest or hesitation. After four days on the Brahmaputra River, the Queen Elizabeth finally docked at Gonesh Ghat in the Kingdom of Banaraja, whose natural beauty left a deep impression on Endle’s mind. Throughout the journey, Endle remained undeterred by various disturbances, storms, and other challenges. From the very beginning, his determination and resilience stood out as defining traits- powerful dignity and a keen sense of purpose. For instance, Sydney Endle continued to seize opportunities, adapting to different situations and integrating himself with the community and its natural surroundings.

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<sup>106</sup> Baro, Rita. *Saikhong*. Onsumoi Library, Kokrajhar B.T.A.D., Assam. 2016. p.1.

### 3.6.3.2 The Division of the Duar Area During British Rule:

During British rule, the division of the Duar area in Assam was influenced by historical events from the missionaries' period. This involved categorizing the region into different zones, specifically the Duar areas, as illustrated in the novel "Saikhong."

#### **Bodo version:**

“आसामनि बृटिस खुंथाया सासननि सुबिधानि थाखाय आरो खाजोना खानायनि सुबिधा जानायनि थाखाय दरं जिलाखौ गासै दाइन बाहागोआव रानदों। सरासनसायै बेफोरखौ महल होन्ना मखनाय जायो। बे दाइन महलफोरा जाबाय – महल देस दरं, महल सातगरि, महल सुतिया, महल सारिदुवार, महल न' दुवार, महल करियापारा, महल बुरिगुमा, आरो मबल खिलिं। बांधारि गामिया महल बुरिगुमानि सिडाव गोग्लैयो, मौजा हिसाबै सनारि मौजायाव आरो बे मौजानि मौजादारनि मुडानो जाबाय दयाराम पटगिरि। सनारि मौजानि सुबुं सानखोआ जाबाय नै रोजा थामजि द'। झारगाव आरो हार्सापारानि अनगायै गासैबो बर' गामि । सिडनिया गावनि आखायाव लाबोफानाय कालेक्टर जि. एफ एफ भुनसेन्ट साहाबनि लेखा बिलिइखौ फारसेनिफ्रिइ गोसो होना नायलांनायसै।”<sup>107</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

“The British administration in Assam divided the Darrang district into eight divisions of Duar zone for governance and tax collection purposes. In general, these are referred to as palaces. The eight constituent area are as Desh Darrang Mahal, Mahal Satgari, Chatia Mahal, Sariduwar Mahal, Nan Duar Mahal, Koriyapara Mahal, Buriguma Mahal, and Mubal Khiling. The name of the Mauzadar of the Sanari Mouza is known as Dayaram Patagiri. There are two thousand thirty-six populations in the Sanari Mauza. The number of villages is sixteen. All but Jhargaon and Harsapara are Boro villages. The insider looked intently at the papers of the collector G.F.F. Bhunsant Sahab, who had brought them in his hand.”

Although the dialogue takes on a storytelling form, the author presents it as a historical record, highlighting the resources and developments found during British rule. The focus is on the contributions of the British in relation to the growth of the Bodo

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p.20

language and literature. At one point in history, the Bodo language held a dominant position, drawing the interest of British scholars and administrators. During that time, the Bodo people primarily communicated among themselves, and their language was sufficient to express their cultural norms and traditions. This deeply intrigued figures like Endle and A.G. Grierson, who were struck by the richness of the Bodo community- its language, culture, and society. However, they believed there was a need for structured efforts to further establish and strengthen Bodo identity.

### 3.6.3.3 Role of Sydney Endles on Bodo Language Development:

The contribution of Sydney Endle to Bodo language and literature is the root idea, and philosophy is remarked as a historical event in the story that has been highlighted in the “*Saikhong*” novel. It is an important outcome for the Bodo society that the Britishers the initial position can have different awareness among the human society that is identified by Endles.

#### **Bodo version:**

“आंदि बर’फोरनि सल’ बाथाफोरखौ बुथुमदोंसोन, दा बेयो खिताब अखारबाय, पटगिरि।”

“अमफा जबद गाहाम खुरां। नौखौ बराय बाथुवा बर होगोन साहाब, बर होनगोन”

खिताबनि नामा जादों ‘ए कालेकसन अब कसारी फक टेलस एण्ड राइमस’। बे खिताबाव आं नौसोरनि गोदो गोदा.निफ्राइ खुगा खुगा सोलिबोनाय सल’खौसो लिरदों।”<sup>108</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*"I have collected the stories of the Boros, and it is now published as a book."*

*"That's wonderful news, Father! May the Bwrai Bathou (God) bless you."*

*"What is the title of the book? Have you given on us?"*

*"The title is 'A Collection of Folk Tales and Rhymes.' In this book, I have written a story about you from the past of folk tales."*

After Sydney Endle, another distinguished figure was J.D. Anderson, a British scholar who made a significant contribution to the Bodo community. During the colonial period, Anderson published the book ‘A Collection of Bodo Folk Tales and Rhymes.’ Although the circumstances at the time were far from favorable, and the process was

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p.166.

fraught with challenges, he successfully completed his research. Ultimately, Anderson's work became a remarkable achievement for the Bodo people, preserving historical events and enriching Bodo literature.

### 3.6.4 Historical Aspects of Bachiram Jwhwlao:

“*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” is a legendary novel, yet it carries historical significance related to the Bodo kingdom of Kundu. The kingdom was ruled by King Devthairwn, and *Bachiram* served as the chief infantryman of the royal army. He was an exceptionally strong young man, undefeated in wrestling competitions.

During that time, Bhutanese soldiers frequently attacked the Bodo people in an attempt to capture the Kundu kingdom. To protect his land from these invasions, King Devthairwn needed a formidable warrior. It was then that Bachiram’s reputation spread across the kingdom. Upon hearing of his strength and valour, the king summoned Bachiram to his court. Accepting the royal invitation, *Bachiram* joined the army as its chief warrior.

From this position, “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” dedicated himself wholeheartedly to defending the kingdom and its people. Though “*Bachiram Jwhwlao*” is a tale, it holds historical value, serving as a reminder of bravery and sacrifice that continues to inspire the Bodo people.

#### **Bodo version:**

“भुतान सेरफांडाव थानाय दखरसे हा। जेरैबो समायना। बिफां- लाइफांजों बुंफबनाय। साहाजों हाजोनि समायना लानि। बे समायना हा ओनसोलनि रायजोनि मुंडानो जाबाय कुन्दु राइजो। कम्पक नोगोरा बे रायजोनि राजथावनि। राजानि मुंडा दोबधाइरोन। कुन्दु फोलेरनि राजा। कसारि राजा। बिनि बिबौवा सदियानि कुन्दिल नोगोरनिफ्राय फैनानै बेयाव राजथावनि गायसनफैदों। बिसोरनि फोलेरा आहमफोरनि गाग्लोबनायाव सोरगिदिं सेरखाय बेरखाय जानानै दड।”<sup>109</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

<sup>109</sup> Baro, Rita. *Bachiram Jwhwlao*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama, Baksa, B.T.R. 781346. 2017. p.13.

*“A small land area located near the Bhutan Valley. Offering breathtaking scenery all around. The surroundings are rich with greenery, including plants and trees on every side. To the north, beautiful hills border the valley, and the area is known as the Kundu Kingdom. The capital of the state is Kambuk, and the ruling king was Devthairwn, a monarch from the Kundu clan. His grandfather migrated from the city of Sdiya Kundul and established the capital of the Kundu Kingdom there. Unfortunately, the clan's members were devastated by attacks from the Ahoms.”*

The above narrative carries historical significance, depicting the rule of Kachari King Devthairwn over the Kundu Kingdom. Located near Bhutan, the Kundu Kingdom was a naturally beautiful region, surrounded by hills, mountains, rivers, and dense forests. These natural resources were essential for sustaining the livelihood of its people.

The passage provides a clear historical record, shedding light on the origins and geography of the Kundu Kingdom. The gateway to the Kachari Kingdom led to the capital, Kumbak. Initially, Devthairwn's grandfather resided in Kundil town, which was situated in Sadiya. However, a sudden attack by the Ahoms forced the Kachari people to scatter across different parts of Assam.

**Bodo version:**

“भुतान आरो कुन्दु रायजोनि सिमना। जिरि जिरि बोहैबोनाय जामफा दैमाया बे सिमनानिफ्रयनो जावखि मुं लानानै बोहैलांदों हायेनाव। जामफा आरो जावखिनि गेजेराव थानाय हाजो खरडावनो गेजेर गेजेर सिमसाफोरनि संगालि आरो हायेननि संगालिफोरा सम सम लोगो हमजलायो। गोनं खौरां थाब्ला बेयावनो लायजाम लिरनानै गालाडो।”<sup>110</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“The Jampha River, which flows through the borders of Bhutan and Kundu states, flows through that border under the name Jaokhi. The Jampha River flows from that border into the valley under the name Jakhi. Occasionally, Simsa sleuths and valley sleuths meet on the hill forts between Jampha and Jawkhi. If you have important information, leave a letter to it.”*

The Jampha River, which flows across the Kundu Kingdom, serves as a significant geographical boundary of the kingdom and represents an important historical

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p.45.

fact for the Bodo nation. The river holds deep geographical and historical significance. At times, both the Kundu infantry and the Bhutanese infantry would meet along its banks under peaceful circumstances to discuss various matters.

### **3.6.5 Historical Aspect of Swmaosarnaini Orgeng:**

“*Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*” is a social novel, yet it primarily reflects the historical events surrounding the Bodoland movement in Assam. Through a fictional structure, the author conveys ideas about the demand for a separate Bodoland state, highlighting the ethno-political struggle between the Bodo organizations and the government.

The novel presents a detailed portrayal of the movement through the character of Anita, originally named Angli during her school years. The Bodo political movement, led by various organizations, created waves of struggle, sometimes facing unforeseen challenges. Many lives were lost during the movement, and numerous innocent people were arrested under stringent laws such as the *TADA Act*, which resulted in their prolonged imprisonment.

The Bodoland movement, which began in 1986 under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma, president of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), holds great historical significance. Eventually, serious negotiations took place between the Bodo organizations and the Government of India. This culminated in the signing of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) agreement in 1993, under constitutional provisions, marking an important milestone in the movement.

But why did the Bodoland movement emerge? Several factors contributed to its rise, primarily the differing approaches to addressing the concerns of the Bodo people. As the aboriginal race of Assam, the Bodos sought recognition and self-determination, believing that a separate Bodoland state was essential for their identity and progress. As the movement spread across Bodo-majority areas in Assam, it significantly impacted daily life.

Bodo civilians faced immense hardships, and the situation in the region deteriorated. Entire villages suffered as people endured sleepless nights, living in constant fear. Social life came to a standstill, creating a deeply distressing situation. The uncertainty and instability affected people’s hopes and aspirations, while economic activities, including trade and commerce, collapsed. Schools and colleges were severely

disrupted and even government and non-government institutions struggled to function properly. The movement left an unforgettable mark on the Bodo people, shaping their collective history and struggle for self-governance.

### 3.6.5.1 Beginning of Bodoland Movement:

The Bodoland movement began in 1986 under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma, who was then the president of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU). This period was marked by intense struggles and unrest, leading to the region being classified as a disturbed area. Due to the ongoing movement, the Baisagu festival could not be celebrated, highlighting the impact of the agitation on social and cultural life. This historical event is vividly portrayed in the novel as a significant moment in the Bodo people's struggle.

#### **Bodo version:**

“गोबां रंजानाय बाजानायनि गेजेरजों बैसागु बोथोरा थांबाय। 1986 माइथायनिफ्राय जानांगौ बर'फोरा गाजा-गोमजायै बैसागु खुंबो हायाखै। बडलेण्ड सोमावसारनायनि दुं दुं बाराव बेसेबांबा बोसोर पुलिस मेलेटारिनि उदखार, अनागारिफोरनि गाग्लोबनाय बायदिनि थाखाय बर'नि आमाइ थखल बैसागुआ सिरि जाहाद थाबो नांबाय। गोदो अनितामोननि मोसानाय मुसुरनायजों मिनिबाला, रंजालि सिखलानि गाब गानाय बैसागुआ मोखां सोम सोम गिलुं गिलुं मिरौ जिरौयै हान्थि बोनांबाय।”<sup>111</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The Baisagu festival has ended with celebration and joy. Since 1986, the Bodos have not been able to celebrate the festivities with much fanfare. For many years, during the Bodoland Movement, the Bodo community has endured police brutality and attacks by miscreants. Reflecting on the past, we remember Anita's joyful dance moves, as well as the tradition of a buffalo dressed as a cheerful girl, gracefully walking around with a dark brown face.”*

When the Bodoland movement began in 1986, the situation became extremely critical. As a result, the Baisagu festival was completely halted due to the ongoing

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<sup>111</sup> Baro, Rita. *Swmaosarnaini Orgeng*. Nilima Prakashani, Barama. 2020. p.167

unrest. Traditionally, both men and women eagerly participated in the celebrations, but during the struggle, the Bodo people were unable to observe the festival as they had in the past.

### 3.6.5.2 Arm Force Implementation Act:

The Armed Forces Act is implemented by the government to control harsh situations. It was a very critical situation during the Bodoland movement, also remarked as a disturbed area. For this reason, the government handled down law and order policy to control any devastating situation in the Bodoland area.

#### **Bodo version:**

“बरफोरनि बडलेण्ड सोमावसारनाया दिल्लियाव दासिम सावराय जादोब्लाबो आसाम सोरखारा बर'फोरखौ जेरै मेरै गावथारनाय, जिनाहारि खालामनायफोरखौ नागारखै। Assam Disturbed Area Act खौ होनानै बेसेदि बर'फिसाफोरखौ गावथारबाय, न बां सावबाय बिसोर। दिनै गहपुर, मोदैबारि, खैराबारि कक्राझारनि रोजा रोजा बर'फिसाफोरा रिफिउजि जाना जिउ खांना दं। फरायसा आफादनि एमब्रा एमब्रा दाबि दैखांनायाव, खावलायनायाव थांनाय नै सेप्टेम्बर, 1989 खालि Assam Disturb Area Act खौ कक्राझारनिफ्राय बोखांना लानाय जायो। नाथाय दाबो TADA आरो Armed Force (Special Power) Act खौ बर'फोरनियाव जाबसिनना होगासेनो। गोबां दाइ गैयै मानसिखौ हमना लांनानै TADA केसाव होगासेनो। न'खर न'खर हौवा मानसिफोर गैया जालांदो। थेवब्लाबो हाग्रा बंग्रायाव सान हर एरसोना थानो गोनां जादो।”<sup>112</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

*“The central government is negotiating with Bodo leaders regarding the Bodoland movement, but the Assam state government violated the ground rules till date and arrested suspected revolutionists at that time. The notification of the Assam Disturbed Area Act was implemented on the Bodo movement to control the worsening situation, but unfortunately, some innocent people are arrested as unlawful activities without judgment from the government. The power act has been withdrawn for a long time, the defence discards modes of ABSU. But the DATA act was not withdrawn from the*

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p.111.

*Kakrajhar, it is implemented only for controlling the Bodoland movement. The government was not following a normal situation, instead, that government action was recorded for a case file as the DATA category against that particular arrest person.”*

Through the lens of fiction, the historical aspects of the Bodoland movement are vividly portrayed. The movement emerged as a major challenge for the government, demanding urgent resolution. Led by Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) spearheaded the struggle for a separate Bodoland state.

During this period, numerous unexpected events unfolded, leading to the loss of many lives. The situation became increasingly dire as the movement gained momentum. In response, the government enacted various laws, including the Special Powers Act, to suppress the protests. Under this act, stringent measures were imposed, and law enforcement agencies took action against demonstrators, further intensifying the struggle.

### **3.6.5.3 BTC Accord Day:**

The BTC Accord Day holds profound significance for the Bodo people, symbolizing a pivotal moment of resolution after enduring a prolonged period of challenges. In this spirit of reconciliation, the government extended an invitation to BLT leaders and allied organizations to collaboratively tackle the pressing issues facing Bodoland. An accord was forged with the BTC council, established under the protective framework of the six schedule provisions of the Indian Constitution, heralding a new era focused on meaningful development and progress for the community.

#### **Bodo version:**

“दिने 2003 मायथाइ 10 फेब्रवारि। दिल्लियाव बि. एल. टि. आ भारत सोरखारजों मोनसे गोरोबथा खालामो। बे गोरोबथाखौ बुंनाय जादों बडलेण्ड तेरितरियेल कउनसिल। दा बर’फोरा बडलेण्ड अटनमास कउनसिलनि उनाव बडलेण्ड तेरितरियेल कउनसिलखौ मोननो हाबाय। बिनि थाखायनो दिने बर’फोरनि गेजेराव बमा बेरदों। जेरावबो सोहोर नोगोर गामि गफा।”<sup>113</sup>

#### **English rendering:**

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p.217

*“Today 10 February of 2003. An agreement between BLT and the government of India in New Delhi settles down and creates the BTC. Now Bodo people have obtained BTC after the BAC. For this cause, Bodo peoples are joyful and making fire raging in anywhere of Bodo village and town.”*

The formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was the result of a historic agreement between the central government of India and the Bodo alliance organizations. This agreement marked a significant achievement for the Bodo community, as negotiations had been ongoing for a long time. The prolonged delay in resolving the issue had led to frustration and unrest due to the government's political inaction.

However, on February 10, 2003, the government finally addressed the longstanding demand, reaching a formal agreement to establish BTC. This day stands as a historical milestone for the Bodo people, granting them dignity, autonomy, and the power to govern their own affairs.

**Bodo version:**

“दिनै सेप्टम्बर दाननि 28 अक्ट। गाबोन 29 सेप्टम्बर खालि दिन्थिफुंसालि दिन्थिफुंनया थुंगेगोन। दाखालै 26 सेप्टम्बर अक्टनिफ्राय उदालगुरिनि बरनगाव फोथाराव मोगथां गंसे दिमापुर नोगोर गायसननाय जादों।”<sup>114</sup>

**English rendering:**

*“Today, September 28th, marks a significant moment for the Bodo people. The drama show will conclude tomorrow, September 29th. Starting from September 26th, a replica of the historical Bodo kingdom has been set up in the Barnagaon area of Udalguri.”*

The passage highlights a significant day for the Bodo community, deeply rooted in history. On September 28, 1974, the Bodo people gathered in large numbers for the script movement,<sup>115</sup> during which many lives were lost. Since then, Bodo organizations and the community have observed September 28 as Script Movement Day. This historical event, reflected in fiction, should be recognized as a matter of national importance in the future. Acknowledging it would help eliminate hesitation and fear

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p.141

<sup>115</sup> Narjinari. *Reassertiveness of The Great Bodos*. p.27

from society. Ultimately, this recognition would contribute to national integration, a sentiment that is also contemporaneously reflected in Bodo literature.

### **3.7 Findings:**

This chapter serves as the core subject matter of this study. Various analytical perspectives have been explored based on a fictional background. The key viewpoints derived from the analysis are outlined below:

#### **1. Social Life Condition**

Rita Boro's novels vividly reflect the social realities of the Bodo community. From an analytical perspective, her stories provide an insightful background for research on Bodo society. Elements such as village life, marriage customs, and the divorce system are prominently depicted.

#### **2. Cultural Aspects**

Cultural elements play a significant role in Rita Boro's creative fiction, forming an essential component of each novel. This study examines Bodo festivals, marriage traditions, weaning practices, fishing habits, and the role of the Doudini (traditional healer or priestess)

#### **3. Economic Conditions**

Rita Boro's fiction also highlights the economic challenges faced by the Bodo community. The study identifies agricultural production as the primary source of income in rural life. Domestic industries, professional engagements, and other economic activities are also examined as integral aspects of the community's livelihood.

#### **4. Political Scenario**

Politics plays a crucial role in shaping the narratives of Rita Boro's fiction. This study explores how political dynamics influence the development of her stories and the broader implications for the Bodo community.

#### **5. Religious Significance**

Religion holds vital importance in human life, a theme that Rita Boro incorporates into her creative works. The study particularly highlights Bathou worship, the traditional religion of the Bodo community, and its role in shaping cultural and spiritual identity.

## **6. Historical Aspects**

Historical themes are a strong undercurrent in Rita Boro's fiction, shedding light on the Bodo race's past. This study explores the historical significance of Angnigarh, the impact of colonialism on the development of the Bodo language and literature, and the Bodoland movement. These elements serve as critical historical references in her works.