

A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF GOALPARA JILA BORO BARODAL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE BODOLAND UNIVERSITY,
KOKRAJHAR FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BODO
UNDER THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGES



SUBMITTED BY

PURNA CHANDRA KHAKHALARY

ENROLLMENT NO: PHDBDO19001

PH.D. REGISTRATION NO: BOD00319 OF 2019 – 2020

GUIDED BY

PROF. INDIRA BORO

DEPARTMENT OF BODO

BODOLAND UNIVERSITY, KOKRAJHAR

2026

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary and Conclusion:

The topic '*A Study on the Role of Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' is a study on the contribution of the particular organization in the development of entire Bodo society of Goalpara district. This chapter is summarized on all the previous chapters. The findings through the assumption are also described. The Bodo community of Goalpara district occupies a unique socio-cultural position in Western Assam. Situated on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra river, it reflects the distinct histories and identities of the region's indigenous populations. The Bodo people is a Tibeto-Burman ethnolinguistic tribe native to Assam constitute an important segment of Goalpara's demographic profile, notable for their customs and tradition, cultural festivals, and agrarian lifestyle. Bodos in the Goalpara district are embedded within broader patterns of socio-economic change but have also maintained their indigenous structures of association and cultural expression.

The study on the role of *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* examines the social, cultural, historical, and developmental impact of this entity within the Goalpara district of Assam. *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*, translated in local usage as a significant Bodo community institution or group, represents the collective identity and cultural agency of the Bodo (also spelled Boro) people in this region. This work provides an integrated analysis of how the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* functions not simply as a localized association but as a medium of cultural preservation, social cohesion, political engagement, and community development among the Bodo in Goalpara.

The first chapter is dealt with the introduction, nomenclature, population, religion, location, review of related literature, problem statement, aim and objectives of the study, significance, area of the study, method of data collection, hypothesis, and methodology. In this chapter the basic pattern of the study is described. The constituent of organizations formed by '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' is described. Family is a social institution and the basis of human society. The village in the Bodo community

of Goalpara district constituted by families and some number of families situated in surroundings that is empty of other housing. Bodo villages are small settlements, they are economically very important for their subsistence. They follow different norms and values of their society within the village which is allowed by the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*'. According to guideline of '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*', to constitute a village there must be at least five families in number. In everyday life, to run the village through the society every Bodo village must possess a village council. This village council is constituted by the following executive body, such as *Hadwngra* means Village headman, *Nehathary* means Secretary, *Gwthari* means Purifier, and *Khara* or *Halmaji* means a person who is appointed by the villagers to inform for meeting. Family is legalized by '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' through the customary law book '*Asar Bikhanthi*'. Among the Bodos family which is based on monogamous marriage. In recent past, joint family was not seen but now-a-days monogamous as well as primary families are seen. The villagers solve any kind of problems unanimously by the decision of the village council. Tenure of the village council is three years.

'*Med Afad*' is one of the most important council of the organization, i.e. the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* in the Bodo dominated area of Goalpara district. Five and more than five villages are needed to form the Med Council. The portfolio members of the executive body of the Med Council are: *Khwlgwra* means President, *Logo Khugura* means Vice-President, *Nehathary* means Secretary, *Logo Nehathari* means Vice-Secretary, *Ranggiri* means Treasurer, *Gutharari* means Purifier, and *Halmaji* means Information bearer. The tenure of the Med Council is three years. The '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' is the parent body and as a social organization of the *Dwikhong Khula* Bodos every 'Med' is included in the body. At present there are eighteen 'Med' under the jurisdiction of the '*Goalpara District Boro Barodal*'. Along with these 'Med' it has three more committees in the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*'. These are Cultural Committee, Women Committee, and Religious Committee. The '*Goalpara District Boro Barodal*' governs all the committees.

The second chapter has been described about the social ceremony celebrated by the Bodo community of the Goalpara district by the suggestion of '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*'. Social ceremonies are performed by the Bodo community for fostering a sense of shared experience and identity. It is frequently marked the transitions in the

life of a person, such as birth, marriage, and death and these are linked to the events as well as seasonal changes in the necessity of community. These social ceremonies help to strengthen and transmit religious values, cultural norms, and traditional beliefs within the Bodo society. It provides convenience, inspiration, and support to individuals and communities during the times of change and loss. After the marriage when menstruation discontinues then the wife discloses the real condition before husband and then next to other member of the family, especially before mother-in-law. The expectant grandmother become happy when they come to know about the pregnancy of their daughter-in-law, which is completely of psychological in the Bodo society. Restriction and Precaution amongst the Bodos of Goalpara district, it is prevalent that after pregnancy, a pregnant woman has to follow some folk practices as a means of restriction and precaution. The pregnant woman is not allowed to visit or touch any death body or cremation ground because of their traditional belief that it will be negative effect on concept baby. It is believed in the Goalpara district by the Bodo people that the available evil spirits will harm the unborn child. Just after the born of new baby, restriction of food, some precaution measures should be adopted by mother. It is believed that in the Bodo dominated areas of Goalpara district some foods and curry are not allowed to take by the mother. Usually, '*Narzi Ingkhri*' which means bitter dry jute curry, '*Mwitha*' which means sour jute curry, '*Jwgwnar*' which means sweet gourd, are not allowed to the mother to eat. Pork is also not allowed to eat. The mother is allowed to eat dry food, i.e. fried rice powder with pepper (dhwngra) finely cut ginger, fried salt and roasted garlic. She is allowed to eat normal as well as usual food after few days when health becomes normal.

The cutting and fastening umbilical cord after being the born of new baby, the umbilical cord is to tied up with '*Gwthar Aoa Khwndwng*' which means white cotton thread keeping a space of one inch, rounding three or five times. The umbilical cord is to cut off by means of sharp-edged slip of green bamboo skin which is called '*Themal or Khatmola*' in Bodo. In number, the bamboo skin slip must be five in case of male baby and six in case of female baby. The importance attached to it is of completely philosophical which relates their action organs. Because the Bodos consider one or more genital organ belong to female. Fastening and cutting umbilical activities are performed by the women folk. Sometimes if the females are unable to do the activity

then male members help the females. No widow or widower is allowed to perform the activity. Because it is believed that life longevity becomes very short. Birth purification is different on the basis of sex. Male baby purification is to perform on the day of fifth and female baby purification is to perform on the day of sixth. On the day of occasion all the residential houses are to smeared by the mixture of earth and cow dung, which is called in Bodo as '*No Lirnai*'. After that the appointed purifier performs the act of purification. The '*Gwthari*' which means Purifier, has to perform his duty by fetching the holy water from the neighbour. During the purification some materials are needed. These are '*Belbilai*' which means leaf of wood apple, '*Thwlunsi Bilai*' which means holy basil leaf, and '*Asitham*' which means ring finger, of the appointed purifier. These materials are inwarded in holy water there after holi water is sprinkled around the houses, well, cowshed, and chicken shoop. After the realization of this act, the owner is assumed as purified one. The purifier has to cut off slight hair of the male baby by means of sickle. It does not good to hold in case of female baby. Hair cutting and purification in Bodos generally believe life cycle of rebirth. That is why. Just after the new baby born they sprinkle holly water by means of holding basil leaves by singing a song. But, the Bodos of Goalpara district who are under the jurisdiction of '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' believe different way. To achieve human life the new born baby has to pass away through different stages of life span which are in the form of different creatures and insects. According to them the human live is the best among all of these. So, purification and hair cutting ceremony is to perform. Child adoption ceremony is based on the adoption of orphan or the babies of the couple who are unable to maintain the cost of maintaining. The families who adopt a child have to inform the villagers and have to perform certain rites and rituals which are executed by the appointed purifier means Gwtharari. After adoption the adopted child becomes a inheritor of the family of his or her foster parents.

The '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' has recognized total nine types of marriages. These are: (i) *SwngnanwiLainai Haba* means Marriage by negotiation/ standard practices, (ii) *Swngnanwi Lainai Bibar Loo Haba* means Offering garland negotiation marriage, (iii) *Kharsonnai Haba* means Intrusion marriage, (iv) *Gorjiya Lakhinai Haba* means Adopted husband marriage, (v) *Randi Arw Balonda Haba* means Widow and Widower marriage, (vi) *Dhongkha Habnai Haba* means Husband adopted widow

marriage, (vii) *Registeri Haba* means Registration marriage, (viii) *Bwnanwi Labwnai Haba* means Marriage by capture, and (ix) *DwnkharLangnai Haba* means Elopement marriage. The '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' recognizes some customs to solemnize the marriages. According to the organization, the minimum age limit of bridegroom is twenty one years of age and bride is eighteen years of age. For the marriage purpose, the *Bathou* altar should be placed on the east of the courtyard. Four poles of banana trees are required for the establishment of *Bathou* altar. All the posts should be posted at the corner of two sides. These four pole posts should be fastened from three sides ignoring in west side. This fastening should be five in number. It represents five elements of Bathowism means the Sun, Air, Earth, Water, and Sky. The '*Mainao*' means Goddess Lakshmi should be established in the form of alter of small earthen jar. These earthen jars should be full of water fastening with mango leaves, wood apple leaves and holy basil leaves. One-handfull rice should be in warded into the water of jar. Milks, fruits, sugarcane flowers are needed for the propitiation of the lord Sibraï' means Supreme God of the Bodo.

The third chapter has been dealt with the role done by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* on the basis of the essential space in the social, cultural, and spiritual life of the Bodo community in Goalpara district, Assam. As one of the oldest and most culturally rich indigenous groups in the region, the Bodos maintain a distinct identity rooted in language, tradition, religion, and community values. The Bodos have historically organized themselves through various community institutions to preserve their way of life and unite members around shared goals and collective progress. In this tapestry of community action, three institutions, such as the Religious Committee, the Cultural Committee, and the Women Council play vital, interlocking roles in strengthening the fabric of Bodo society at the district level.

The religious dimensions of Bodo life are deep, symbolic, and woven into everyday practice. Many Bodos follow Bathouism, the indigenous religion that celebrates the five principles of creation, such as earth, water, air, fire, and sky, and recognize Bathoubwrai as the supreme deity. Additionally, several Bodos practice Hinduism and Christianity alongside traditional beliefs, creating a rich mosaic of religious expression. Within this context, the Religious Committee fulfills several core functions. This Religious committee preserves and fosters Bathouism and other Bodo

spiritual practices. It organizes and coordinates religious festivals such as *Bwisagu*, i.e. the Bodo New Year, *Bathou Puja*, and seasonal rites. These ceremonies, rooted in agrarian rhythms and spiritual devotion, embody the community's bond with nature, ancestry, and divine forces. Through careful planning and guidance, the Religious committee ensures that rituals remain authentic and meaningful, even as the community navigates modern pressures. Religious teachings in the Bodo context are not purely ceremonial, but they guide social values like honesty, respect for nature, and communal harmony. The committee reinforces ethical norms that support peaceful coexistence within the Bodo community and with neighboring groups in Goalpara. Its work nurtures moral accountability, encourages compassionate conduct, and sustains trust among members, strengthening societal cohesion in times of change.

The *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* has been in a position to establish the Bodo music, dance, art, and communal ceremonies. Bodo culture reflects centuries of indigenous knowledge, agrarian life, and artistic expression expressed in *Bagurumba* dance, folk music, traditional attire, and rich festival customs. The Cultural Committee serves as the steward of this vibrant cultural landscape. One of the committee's primary tasks is organizing cultural festivals and events that highlight Bodo traditions. These events provide forums for showcasing folk performances, storytelling, and artistic forms that strengthen community pride. Ritual festivals like *Bwisagu* also serve cultural functions beyond their religious meaning they are times of reunion, remembrance, and renewal. Culture that is not documented risks being forgotten or distorted. This committee often engages in recording songs, dances, oral histories, and traditional wisdom. The Cultural Committee curates workshops, exhibitions, and school programs that introduce young Bodos to their heritage. By doing so, it fosters continuity and supports educational curricula that incorporate indigenous knowledge alongside formal schooling. Representation of culture, cross-cultural collaboration, and cultural identity thrive when shared. The Cultural committee often participates in inter-community festivals, showcasing Bodo traditions to wider audiences. These interactions promote respect, reduce prejudices, and position the Bodo cultural legacy within broader multi-ethnic narratives of Assam and India. In essence, the Cultural Committee ensures that Bodo cultural life from music and dance to language and social customs remains a vibrant, evolving, and respected part of community life.

Women's roles in Bodo society as mothers, educators, custodians of domestic and ritual knowledge, and agents of social change are substantial. Yet, traditional structures sometimes limit opportunities for women's voices to be heard in public decision-making. The Women Council of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* addresses this gap directly. The Women council provides a formal platform for women to engage in governance, articulate needs, and influence key decisions related to family welfare, education, and community development. It ensures that women's perspectives are factored into planning, resource allocation, and community policies. Women are often at the frontline of social welfare addressing issues like healthcare, child education, nutrition, and social support for vulnerable groups, such as children, elderly, and single parents. The Women council leads initiatives on these fronts, mobilizing volunteers and coordinating with other committees to channel support where it is most needed. By offering training, leadership workshops, and exposure to broader social movements, the Women Council builds capacity among Bodo women. Empowered women leaders, in turn, inspire wider participation in community life, creating pathways for gender equality and socioeconomic development.

Women play essential roles in preserving and transmitting cultural and moral values. Through the council, they organize events that teach traditional arts, crafts, and etiquette to younger girls and families. Additionally, they serve as mediators in community disputes and guardians of ethical conduct in social affairs. The Women Council advocates for women's rights, safety, and justice within the community. It acts as a support network for survivors of abuse or discrimination, helps to navigate legal systems, and fosters awareness of rights guaranteed by law. This protective function strengthens social justice and community cohesion. Thus, the Women Council is not only a support structure but an engine for progressive change, shaping not just the lives of women but the future of the entire community.

Individually, each body serves a distinct purpose, such as spiritual guidance by Religious Committee, cultural preservation and celebration by Cultural Committee, and gender empowerment and welfare by Women Council. However, their greatest impact emerges through interdependence. The Religious Committee and Cultural Committee often coordinate festivals that blend spiritual meaning with cultural expression, reinforcing identity in ways that are both heartfelt and public. The Women Council

enhances the reach of both bodies by ensuring that festivals and religious rites are inclusive, safe, and empowering for women and children. All three bodies work together in community outreach strengthening social bonds, educating youth, and presenting a unified face of the Bodo community in Goalpara's multiethnic context. Through coordinated efforts, these institutions sustain a holistic model of community development and one that embraces tradition while pushing for progressive transformation.

The *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* and its committees do not operate in a vacuum. They face challenges including globalization, migration pressures, loss of language usage among youth, and social transformations that sometimes dilute traditional practices. But strengthened by organized leadership and community engagement, the committees adapt by fostering collaborations with educational institutions and cultural organizations beyond their immediate community to broaden influence and learning opportunities. Ultimately, the Religious Committee, Cultural Committee, and Women Council of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* represent more than administrative structures. They are living expressions of a people's commitment to preserve their heritage, maintain moral and social unity, and adapt with resilience to a changing world. Their efforts uphold the dignity, diversity, and continuity of Bodo life nurturing identity not as something frozen in time but as a vibrant, evolving tradition that sustains community solidarity and pride in Goalpara and beyond.

Cultural identity for the Bodo in Assam including in Goalpara is deeply grounded in language, traditional beliefs such as Bathouism, folk arts, and social institutions. Bathouism, the traditional folk religion of the Bodo people, reflects their cosmology and ecological worldview centered around five elemental principles. Moreover, community organizations like *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* have historically played a pivotal role in language development and literary preservation, through headquartered elsewhere, they shed light on the importance of structured Bodo associations in the region. Within this context, a body such as the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* likely functions as a district-level network, a community council or association that strengthens Bodo cultural heritage at the grassroots, encouraging participation in festivals, safeguarding oral traditions, and facilitating inter-village cooperation. While the term *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* itself colloquially denotes a major grouping or

council within the community, i.e. common in folk traditions and social structures, its interpretation in Goalpara is best understood in its cultural resonance, an embodiment of collective responsibility, heritage preservation, and intercultural dialogue in a multi-ethnic district.

In an ethnically diverse district like Goalpara, where multiple communities co-exist and linguistic minorities navigate sociopolitical landscapes, institutions like the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* play an integrative social role. They serve as platforms for Community representation, allowing the Bodo people to articulate collective concerns in local governance and rural councils. Cultural transmission, organizing events, festivals, and rituals that sustain Bodo traditions among younger generations. Conflict mediation, promoting harmony not just intra-community but also across ethnic lines in a region characterized by linguistic plurality. Educational advocacy, encouraging literacy and cultural education in the Bodo language while supporting broader civic participation. This organizational function strengthens community identity and resilience, particularly in rural parts of Goalpara where ethnic identities remain central to social life. Cultural festivals often mediated by community groups are core to sustaining identity. *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* typically coordinates events where traditional dances, music, rites, and languages are revived and celebrated. These gatherings reinforce intra-community ties, promote mutual support, and reaffirm the sociocultural framework that has historically bound the Bodo community in Assam. This organizational function strengthens community identity and resilience, particularly in rural parts of Goalpara where ethnic identities remain central to social life.

In chapter-4, the social control system is followed by the Bodo community of Goalpara district based on the rules formed by the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*' is studied. Customary law is rooted in tradition, which can play a significant role in societal reformation by facilitating adaptation to changing circumstances and addressing issues that statutory law may not adequately address. Customary law can be used to promote social justice and equity by addressing discriminatory practices or ensuring fair access to resources. Some customary law may be discriminatory or harmful, and require reform to ensure equality and justice. The indigenous Bodo people of Goalpara district, who worship the Bathouism, and the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal*

jointly established the customary laws based on the reformation of the society through the rituals, customs, and traditions. According to the customary law of Bodo society if someone violates the customary laws, then that person is victimized as badua or social offence. These types of offences are recognized as the anti-social person in the society. This kind of deeds means as the sin deed to God. Because, It creates distress in the life of human being when the person does anti social deeds , God never excuses this type of person indeed. But, people convict to evil deeds without knowing the reason. If a person is recognized as morally guilty, if he is involved in illicit sexual relationship with female relatives, such as mother, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, younger sister, elder sister, niece, wife of the younger brother or any other close female relative, if he touches the body of the wife of younger brother or of the elder sister of his wife, if he is engaged in bestiality and has sex relationship with a bitch, a female cow or a pig. If a man eats remainder food, such as food left half eaten by his wife, he is considered as guilty. If a man indulges in false accusation with the evil motive, it is also considered as social offence. In Goalpara district, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* is traditionally divided the offences into five categories. These are: (i) *Fongsloth Bad* or *Laokhar Bad* means Purification small, (ii) *Daokhi Bad* means Purification middle, (iii) *Khawali Bad* means Purification big, (iv) *Majkhila Bad* means Recovery small, and (v) *Agor Bad* means Recovery big. In this context, *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* executes purification process to purify the person by sprinkling pure water by the basil leaves, and this is called purification of the person in the society. In the purification process, a purifier is employed to complete the process of the customs and rituals, the purifier is called ‘*Gwthari*’ means Purifier in Bodo language. The Bodo society of Goalpara district follows specific kinds of purification rituals and customs for five types of *Bad*. In sociological perspective, ostracism is the act of excluding or ignoring an individual or group, leading to a social isolation and a sense of rejection. The Bodo community of Goalpara district has been following the ostracism.

In chapter-5, summary and conclusion is done on the basis of the hypotheses taken, and the findings of the objectives. In this chapter description of all the core chapters on the basis of findings are summarized. The role of a group such as the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* even if not extensively documented in academic literature can be conceptualized as a multidimensional community institution. It encompasses

cultural preservation, social cohesion, community leadership, and representational advocacy. As Goalpara navigates the challenges of modernization, demographic shifts, and governance complexities, the Barodal represents an essential interface through which the Boro people negotiate their place within the district's socio-political fabric. The study thus foregrounds the importance of indigenous associations in sustaining minority cultures and ensuring participatory community development in multi-ethnic regions of northeast India.

5.2 Further Scope of the Study:

In this research work the role of *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* has been studied on the basis of formation of the parent organization, different Med councils, different committees, social ceremonies, and social control system in the entire Bodo dominated areas of the Goalpara district. It has further scope of study as the activities will be done by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* in the coming days. The importance of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal* in the Bodo society as a whole from the sociological point of view so further scope of study.