

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

An organization refers to structured social arrangements from formal bodies with clear rules, roles, and hierarchies for achieving specific goals, to the broader concept of social organization, which describes the patterned relationships and institutions like family, village, culture, education, and religion that structured a whole society, coordinating collective action and fulfilling societal needs. Social organization refers to the structure and patterns of relationship within a society or community. A social organization is a pattern of relationship between and among individuals and social groups. 'Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal' has been playing a tremendous role for the reformation and development of entire Bodo community of Goalpara district, under the state of Assam. The aspects of social organization are presented in all social situations where a few or more people are thrown into a set of interrelated activities arising from the operation of social norms. An organization is a mechanism that brings different people together into a network of interaction to perform different functions. It is always a type of collectivity and has its own definite purposes. Each organization has some specific aims or goals. Individuals come together and establish among themselves a definite pattern or system of interaction. Eubank defines organization as, "*An organization deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest which the members of it termed as an association*".¹ In essence, organization is not just as structures, but as dynamic social systems that are fundamental to modern life, influencing daily activities, power distribution, and social order. Maclver and Page write organisation as, "*An association is likely to be formed wherever people recognise a like, complementary, or common interests sufficiently enduring and sufficiently distinct to be capable of more effective promotion through collective action*".² The

¹ Rawat, H.K., *SOCIOLOGY Basic Concepts*. Reprinted. Prem Rawat, Rawat Publication, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi. 2015. p. 69

² Ibid.

Bodos or Boro Kacharies constitute a very important ethnic group in the state of Assam. Anthropologists included them in the race of Mongoloid. Suniti Kumar Chatterji recognizes them as the Bodos. About the Bodos he writes, “*The Bodos appear first to have settled over the entire Brahmaputra valley, and extended west into North Bengal (in Koch Bihar, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts), they may have pushed into North Bihar also*”.³ At present, the Bodos or Boro-Kacharies are not only settling in Assam but outside Assam also. P. C. Bhattacharya divided the Bodo people as Western and Eastern branches. He writes about the Bodos, “*The Boro people including their western and eastern branches had royal glories as we gather from the records of history. The western section of the old Boros (Kacharis) occupied the thrones of Koch-Bihar, Bijni, Darrang and Beltola. An eastern branch in the name of Chutiyas also established a powerful kingdom with its capital near Sadiya*”.⁴

The Bodos came in North Eastern India before Christ through the route of China to Tibet, then through the route of Tibet to Burma, and then through the route of Burma to Assam. Regarding the advent of the Mongoloids or the Kiratas, S.K. Chatterji writes, “*When the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were taking shape, between 500 B.C. to 400 A.D., particularly in the pre-Christian centuries, they had occupied the southern tracts of the Himalayas and the whole of North-eastern India*”.⁵ At present, the Bodos or the Boros have their settlement in some scattered pocket areas throughout the state of Assam. Anil Boro divided the areas of settlement of the Bodos into three tracts, “*Concentration of Boro people in the Northern tract: (a) North and Eastern parts of Dhubri district, the whole of Kokrajhar district and parts of Goalpara and Bongaigaon district. (b) Northern parts of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup districts. (c) Northern parts of Darrang and Sonitpur. (d) Northern parts of North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. Areas of Boro concentration in the Southern tract: (a) Dudhnoi and Dhupdhara areas in the Goalpara district. (b) Boko-Chaygaon and Rani areas and South Guwahati-*

³ Op-cit. Chatterji, Suniti Kumar. *KIRATA JANA KRITI*. Third Reprint. The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata, 2011. p. 46

⁴ Bhattacharya, Pramod Chandra. *A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language*. First Edition, The Registrar, Gauhati University in the Department of Publication, Guwahati. 1977. P. 16

⁵ Chatterji, Suniti Kumar. *KIRATA JANA KRITI*. Third Reprint, The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata, 2011. p. 36

*Sonapur-Khetri areas in the Southern part of Kamrup district. (c) Jagirod-Morigaon areas in the Morigaon district and Rupahi Dhing areas in the Nagaon district. (d) Southern most part of Sibsagar district. (e) Howraghat-Langhin areas of Karbi Anglong district. (f) North Eastern part of Dibrugarh district. Areas of Boro settlement in the neighbouring states: (a) Tikrikilla area of Garo Hills in the state of Meghalaya. (b) Dimapur area in Nagaland. (c) Northern part of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal”.*⁶

During the British regime, national awakening of India emerged out due to the introduction of western education system after 1813, transport and communication like rail transport, road transport, and water transport, religion reforms from Aryan Samaj to Ramkrishna Mission Movement from the year 1828 to 1835, Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. Indian National Congress on the 28th December, 1885 which was fought for nation building and national unity. Indian national awakening wave brought some Bodo intellectuals bound to think of their own Bodo problems. Among them Kamala kanta Kachary, Gongga Charan Kachary, Madhamar Kachary Habilder, Narapati Chandra Kachary are the main pioneer who established a first Bodo social organization namely by ‘*Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni*’ in the year 1912. This organization is the premier Bodo social organization among the Bodos.

Family is a social institution and the basis of human society. Without family society is not formed. Family is a social group, which is consisted by husband, wife, their children, father, mother, brother, sister, and servants. Relationship between the members of the society as husband wife, and their offspring are constituted by the bond of marriage. Family is legalized by ‘*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*’ through the customary law book named ‘*Asar Bikhanthi*’. Basically, the Bodos family of entire Goalpara district 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.

‘*Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni*’ published a customary law book namely ‘*Boroni Ficha O Ayen*’ in 1915 under the editorship of Ganga Charan Kachary. This customary law book was written in bi-lingual, i.e. Bodo and Bangla. This book is the first published book in Bodo literature. This customary law book is a social route map of

⁶ Boro, Anil. *FOLK LITERATURE OF THE BOROS An Introduction*. 1st Edition, Pabitra Sarma, Adhunik Prakashan, Rajgarh Road, Guwahati. 2001., p. 9, 10

their social guidance under the supervision of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*. Premananda Musahary writes, “*Be afada asar-khanthini afad Assembly of Traditional Customs hwnnanwibw bungnw hayw*”.⁷ English rendering: “This organization can be said as assembly of traditional customs”.

In this customary law book, the aim and objectives of the organization are reflected. In the introductory chapter sluggish and idleness nature of the Bodos are evidently mentioned. In chapter-1 origin of the Bodos, in chapter-2 food habit, drinking habit, rites and ritual, in chapter-3 role of business, in chapter- 4 marriage systems, in Chapter-5 role of education, Chapter-6 purification, and social control system are evidently codified in the book.

In 1892, Ganga Charan Patgiri (Kachary) convened a meeting on the guidance of Kamala Kanta Kachary at Kurhiamary with some Bodo intellectuals. In this meeting chairperson was Kamala Kanta Kachary Tahsilder. As a result of reception committee was formed, portfolios are president; Kamala Kanta Kachary Tahsilder of Dighali village, Secretary; Ganga Charan Patgiri Kachary of Kurhiamary village, Assistant Secretary; Madha Ram Kachary Habilder of Chechapani village, and Narapati Chandra Kachary of Khara gram village as a member.

In 1899, first meeting was held at Dighali village, there after no meeting was held up to 1910. In 1911, second meeting was held at the same village Dighali. In 1912 a proposal was passed to recognized the existing committee namely by ‘*Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni*’. In 1913 third meeting was held at Amjonga. In the meeting, a proposal was taken to publish a customary law book in the name of ‘*Boroni Ficha O Ayen*’. In 1915, ‘*Boroni Ficha O Ayen*’ book was published in the opening session of the meeting which was held fourth time in 1915 at Deulguri village. In the third convention meeting one thousand five hundred (1,500) members were presented. After ‘*Boroni Ficha O Ayen*’ the organization successively published some books through some amendments:

- (i) ‘*Dukshin Goalpara Boro Pandulipi Ayen*’ published in the year 1945, Publication Secretary, Milan Chandra Boro.

⁷ Khakhalary, Champabati. *ZOUSE BWSWRNI BORONI FICHA O AYEN*. Centenary Celebration Committee “Boroni Ficha O Ayen”, Dudhnoi College, Goalpara. 2015. p. 32

- (ii) '*Dukshin Goalpara Boro Pandulipi Ayen*' published in the year 1956, Publication Secretary, Satish Chandra Basumatary.
- (iii) '*Boroni Ficha O Ayen Pandulipi*' published in the year 1972, Publication Secretary, Rameswar Boro.
- (iv) '*Boro Bisharni Ayen*' published in the year 1981, Publication Secretary, Bhumeswar Basumatary.
- (v) '*Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi*' published in the year 2019, Publication Secretary, Jatin Khakhalary.

In addition to these manuscripts, in 1904 '*Bathou Dhurum Bijab*' was published, where customary rites and rituals are explained. '*Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi*' published in the year 2019 is invogued for running day to day their social lives. '*Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal*' has sub-committees to promote and preserve their religion, cultural identity, to promote women empowerment, and which have been organizing programmes for social control in the Bodo dominated areas at Goalpara district.

In 1955 first cultural convention was held at Amjonga at the river bank of '*Habri Par*' in the southern part of undivided Goalpara district with the collaboration of '*Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal*' under the chairmanship of Sri Satish Chandra Basumatary, who is the inhabitant of Sherphanguri village. In this connection, '*Kherai Afad*' of the northern part of Goalpara district took part as participant but not as a competitor. First prize was won by the Dumbhitha male party where Amjonga cultural male party was also participated. In this convention a general cultural body was formed by the name of '*Mainao Afad*' with the six female members. Before the formation of '*Mainao Afat*' there was prohibition for female member to perform as dancer. In 1956, second convention was held under the chairmanship of Shri Nabin Chandra Swargiary who was the Instructor of Dudhnoi Basic Training Centre, and appointed speaker was Shri Bundhu Ram Kachary who was the Assstant Inspector of Tribal School of Assam. In this convention, '*Mainao Afad*' took part as a participant. In this second convention an executive cultural committee was formed under the jurisdiction of '*South Goalpara Boro Baro Dal*'. The committee was formed by the following members:

President - Shri Duli Ram Basumatary
 Secretary - Shri Ani Ram Basumatary

Members:

- (i) Shri Mahat Hazowary
- (ii) Shri Narendra Khakhalary
- (iii) Shri Dayachand Basumatary
- (iv) Shri Purna Ch. Boro
- (v) Shri Suchak Daimary
- (vi) Shri Karmeswar Boro
- (vii) Shri Sib Charan Daimary
- (viii) Shri Rajani Kanta Bsumatary
- (ix) Shri Ramjing Patgiri

Later on, this executive cultural committee was turned into sub-committee of the '*South Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal*'. Under the guidance of this sub-committee more sub committees were formed in the village level to bring genuine cultural revival among the Bodos in the area. In the month of January, 1964, an executive committee meeting was held. In this meeting under the fourth proposal was taken to empower the women folk, and a proposal was undertaken unanimously to set up a '*Mahila Samiti*'. As a result in 1965, under the jurisdiction of *South Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal* a '*Mahila Samiti*' was constituted, which is known as by the name of, '*Dakshin Goalpara Boro Baro Da Mahila Samiti*'. First president and secretary were Ramini Khakhalary and Jaymati Basumatary respectively. In 2006, a sub-committee known as '*Dhwrwm Afad*' was formed for the preservation of Bathouism. First president of the committee was Shri Golok Boro and secretary was Shri Janmajay Musahary, and another three sub-committees, such as Cultural Committee, Mahila Samiti, and Religious Committee were thus formed. The '*Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal*' has been playing a vital social role to change and develop the Bodos of the entire Bodo dominated area of the Goalpara district. Indrani Basu Roy

states, “*Social organization is not limited to the ideal pattern of social relations. It also signifies the factors for change i.e. the extent to which the social standard deviate as an influence of different external factors. Therefore, if social structure is conceived as a model of social action, the social organization will be the reality. Social organization accounts the reason of social change*”.⁸ The aim of the researcher is to study about their constituents of the organization, social ceremony, sub-committees and its activities, and social control system.

This research work has been studied on the role of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* for the reformation and development of the Bodo society of Goalpara district from the year 2015 to 2025. In the first chapter the introduction of this study, portfolio members of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*, structure of the constituent organizations, nomenclature, folktale of Asagi and Baisagi, Baro mahari or clans, population, religion, and location are described. The second chapter is discussed on the social ceremonies celebrated by the Bodo society of Goalpara district on the basis of social bonds, cultural norms, and religious values. In the third chapter the role of different committees of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* as Religious Committee, Cultural Committee, and Woman Council are described. The fourth chapter is discussed on the activities done by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol* for the reformation of Bodo society in Goalpara district through Bodo customary laws based on the social control system. The fifth chapter is summarized on the conclusion.

In this long period of one hundred and thirty three years of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*, so many portfolio members have been dedicated though their activities for the reformation and development of the entire Bodo society of Goalpara district. In this context, a list of portfolio members as President and Secretary and annual meeting were held yearly conducted by *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* on the basis of year, event, and venue since 1892 to 2025 is given below:

⁸ Roy, Indrani Basu. *ANTHROPOLOGY THE STUDY OF MAN*. Reprint. S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd., Ram Nagar, New Delhi. 2014. p. 521

Year	Sequence	Venue	Name of President	Name of Secretary
1892	—	Kuriyamary	Kamala Kant Tahsidah	Gangacharan Kochari
1899	1st	Dighali	Kamala Kant Tahsidah	Gangacharan Kochari
1911	2nd	Dighali	Kamala Kant Tahsidah	Gangacharan Kochari
1913	3rd	Dighali	Kamala Kant Tahsidah	Gangacharan Kochari
1915	4th	Dighali	Kamala Kant Tahsidah	Gangacharan Kochari
1927	5th	Dighali	Sabharam Basumatary	Darika Basumatary
1941	—	Kuchbodh	Sabharam Basumatary	Darika Basumatary
1946	—	Bakhapara	Duliram Subedar	Milam Membor
1950	—	Bagulamari	Keshab Basumatary	Shantamuni Basumatary
1953	—	Sharaniya	Shantamuni Basumatary	Prashanna Kumar Basumatary
1958	15th	Kudhiyamari Field	Narendra Khakhwlari	Rameswar Boro
1959	16th	Dumuni Para	Mahat Hazowary	Lalit Mohan Kochary
1960	17th	Dighali	Mahat Hazowary	Lalit Mohan Kochary
1962	19th	Bagulamari	Surendra Narayan Basumatary	Satish Chandra Basumatary
1963	20th	Roumari	Surendra Narayan Basumatary	Satish Chandra Basumatary
1964	21st	Kaur Hagi Bilpara	Surendra Narayan Basumatary	Satish Chandra Basumatary
1965	22nd	Halbari	Lalit Mohan Patgiri	Satish Chandra Basumatary

1966	23rd	Amjonga Munpara	Lalit Mohan Patgiri	Satish Chandra Basumatary
1967	—	—	<i>Annual meeting not held (Dudhnoi Boro Sahitya Sabha Conference)</i>	
1969	25th	Kudhiyamari	Ramsingh Patgiri	Khirod Mohan Basumatary
1970	26th	Dighali Daukhanibwi	Ramsingh Patgiri	Khirod Mohan Basumatary
1971	27th	Sharaniyapara	Ramsingh Patgiri	Karmeswar Kochary
1972	28th	Bagulamari	Ramsingh Patgiri	Karmeswar Kochary
1973	29th	Dalowabari	Ramsingh Patgiri	Ramesh Chandra Khakhwlary
1975	31st	Dumnipara	Ramsingh Patgiri	Ramesh Chandra Khakhwlary
1976	32nd	Patpara	Khirod Mohan Basumatary	Ramesh Chandra Khakhwlary
1977	33rd	Amguri & Dahela	Khirod Mohan Basumatary	Bhairabendra Boro
1978	34th	Khedelapara	Khirod Mohan Basumatary	Bhairabendra Boro
1979	35th	Gathiyapara	Khirod Mohan Basumatary	Bhairabendra Boro
1980	—	—	<i>Annual meeting not held (Assam Movement)</i>	
1981	36th	Dighali	Khirod Mohan Basumatary	Bhairabendra Boro
1982	37th	Bangalpara	Kunja Bihari Boro	Bhairabendra Boro
1983	—	—	<i>Annual meeting not held (Assam Movement)</i>	
1984	38th	Bagulamari	Kunja Bihari Boro	Narendra Khakhwlary

1985	39th	Dhaluwabari	Rammesh Chandra Khakhwlary	Charu Mohan Hazowary
1986	40th	Dumnipara	Rammesh Chandra Khakhwlary	Charu Mohan Hazowary
1987	41st	Haldiya River Shore	Rammesh Chandra Khakhwlary	Charu Mohan Hazowary
1988	42nd	Bengdoba	Satish Chandra Basumatary	Premananda Basumatary
1989	43rd	Majjakhili	Satish Chandra Basumatary	Premananda Basumatary
1990	44th	Phakirpara	Satish Chandra Basumatary	Premananda Basumatary
1991	45th	Roumari	Bhairabendra Boro	Kanak Basumatary
1992	46th	Kushdhowa	Bhairabendra Boro	Kanak Basumatary
1993	47th	Dighali Daukhanibwi	Bhairabendra Boro	Kanak Basumatary
1994	48th	Bagulamari	Bhairabendra Boro	Basanta Kumar Daimary
1995	49th	Dumnipara	Bhairabendra Boro	Basanta Kumar Daimary
1996	50th	Bangalpara	Bhairabendra Boro	Basanta Kumar Daimary
1997	51st	Dhalowabari	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Manik Hazwary
1998	52nd	Khara, Pharaphuta	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Manik Hazwary
1999	53rd	Kothakuthi	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Ananta Kumar Boro
2000	54th	Mazpara	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Ananta Kumar Boro
2001	55th	Maz-Jakhili	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Ananta Kumar Boro
2002	56th	Dhowanipara	Rabilchan Khakhwlary	Ananta Kumar Boro
2003	57th	Patpara	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary

2004	58th	Roumari	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary
2005	59th	Amjonga Naorabitha	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary
2006	60th	Dighali Daukhanibwi	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary
2007	61st	Bagulamari	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary
2008	62nd	Dumnipara	Madhab Chandra Hazwary	Jatin Khakhwlary
2009	63rd	Sonali Pathar	Manik Hazwary	Rohini Kr. Daimary
2010	64th	Dumnipara	Manik Hazwary	Rohini Kr. Daimary
2011	65th	Sialmari Thagir Field	Manik Hazwary	Rohini Kr. Daimary
2012	66th	Kothakuthi	Manik Hazwary	Rohini Kr. Daimary
2013	67th	Gwjwnphuri	Manik Hazwary	Rohini Kr. Daimary
2014	68th	Amguri Dahela	Jatin Khakhlary	Satrasingh Basumatary
2015	69th	Rangjuli Roumari	Jatin Khakhlary	Satrasingh Basumatary
2016	70th	Rangjuli Roumari	Jatin Khakhlary	Satrasingh Basumatary
2017	71st	Amjonga	Jatin Khakhlary	Satrasingh Basumatary
2018	72nd	East Bikali	Jatin Khakhlary	Angad Basumatary
2019	73rd	Damra	Jatin Khakhlary	Angad Basumatary
2020	74th	Damas	Jatin Khakhlary	Arabinda Basumatary
2021	75th	Darangiri	Ananta Kr. Boro	Dhananjay Khakhlary

2022	76th	Dirma	Ananta Kr. Boro	Dhananjay Khakhlary
			<i>Following sequences are counted from the establishment of Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal</i>	
2023	113th	Sialmari	Ananta Kr. Boro	Dhananjay Khakhlary
2024	114th	Kothakuthi	Ananta Kr. Boro	Dhananjay Khakhlary
2025	115th	Sanswring	Ananta Kr. Boro	Dhananjay Khakhlary

Due to some unavoidable circumstances some of the meetings are not held in time. But, the portfolio members had been in their level best for the reformation and development of the Bodo society at Goalpara district.

1.1.1 Social Organization:

An organization is a mechanism that brings different people together into a network of interaction to perform different functions. D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan mention on the social organization, “*The social organization of a small group is the organization of interrelated roles at a particular time within it as expressive of certain permanent structural principles. The social organization of a great association (i.e., group of group) is the pattern of inter-group relation within it*”.⁹ It is always a type of collectivity and has its own definite purposes. Each organization has some specific aims or goals. Individuals come together and establish among themselves a definite pattern or system of interaction. The family as an organization can run smoothly only when its members have mutual understanding, cooperation and consensus among themselves. An organization has its own norms or rules, which maintains its control over the behaviour of its members and regulates their activities.

⁹ Majumdar D. N., Madan T. N. *AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY*. 30th Print Edition, Mayur Paperbacks, Indrapuram, 2016. p. 212

1.1.1.1 Formation of Family:

Family is a social institution and the basis of human society. Without family society is not formed. Family is a social group, which is consisted by husband, wife, their children, father, mother, brother, sister, and servants. Relationship between the members of the society as husband wife and their offspring are constituted by the bond of marriage. D.N. Majumdar and T. N. Madan mention about the family, “*The family provides for the satisfaction of the fundamental bio-psychic drives of hunger and sex, and make it possible to perpetuate the species through reproduction and the social heritage through the handing down of traditions from generation to generation*”.¹⁰ Family is legalized by ‘*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*’ through the customary law book ‘*Boroni 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.

1.1.1.2 The Village:

The term village (*Gami* in Bodo language) usually refers to a consolidated number of families situated in surroundings by the gap between two houses. Indrani Basu Roy mentions, “It consists of small clusters of dwellings situated in such a surroundings that is empty of other housing”.¹¹ A village is a small, rural human settlement, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town, characterized by a close-knit community, limited infrastructure, and often surrounded by nature or farmland, where residents typically share close social ties and may engage in agriculture or other primary activities. Bhumeswar Basumatary mentions on the formation of village, “*Nokhoranw jabay subung jiuni mwnse gubwi arw dersin afad. Bebadinw dabse jaygayao makhase nokhor jo thananwi mwnse rwkhwmmni asarkhanthi, nemkhanthi, dhwrwmkhanthi ajaona lananwi mwnse bandwao gwrwbna thanaykhounw gongse gami bungnay jayw*”.¹² English rendering: “Family is the basic and the greatest organization of human

¹⁰ Majumdar D. N., Madan T. N. *AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY*. 30th Print Edition, Mayur Paperbacks, Indirapuram, 2016. p. 42

¹¹ Roy, Indrani Basu. *ANTHROPOLOGY THE STUDY OF MAN*. Reprint. S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd., Ram Nagar, New Delhi. 2014. p. 571

¹² Basumatary, Bhumeswar. *Boroni Asar Bikhanthi*. First Edition. Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dol, Amjonga, Goalpara., 2019. P. 1

life. Thus, some many families live in a place by combining with a similar ritual, customs, religious systems, with a barrier is called a village". Actually, a village stands on the people-land relationship. Villages offer peace, pace, and proximity to nature, with opportunities for self-sufficiency like growing food. 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 Baro Dal*. According to the guideline of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*, to constitute a village there must be at least five families of different clans.

1.1.1.3 Formation of the Village Council :

To run the village in everyday life in the society, every Bodo village must possess a group of four portfolio members in the village. This group of portfolio members of the village is constituted by the following executive members:

1. *Hadwnggwra Sase* (One Village Headman)
2. *Nehathary Sase* (One Secretary)
3. *Gwthari Sase* (One Purifier)
4. *Khara/ Hal Maji Sase* (One person is appointed by the villagers to call and inform for meeting)

All the executive members are selected by the villagers themselves. Any problem is solved by the village council with the help of unanimous decision of the villagers. Tenure of the portfolio membership of village council is three years.

1.1.1.3.1 Selection, Powers, and Functions of the *Hadwnggwra* (The Village Headman):

The *Hadwnggwra*, i.e. the village headman must be a wise, respectful, and favourable person. He must have full knowledge about the customs, tradition, rituals, and social systems of the Bodo society of Goalpara district. Every village must have a village headman. When the village headman is posted in his portfolio, he needs to give one pair of betel nut, one pair of betel leaf, and pray once by paying Rs. 10/ (Rupees ten) to the villagers. Again, he needs to give one pair of betel nut, one pair of betel leaf, and pray once by paying Rs. 10/ (Rupees ten) to the Med council. Then, he needs to learn about the customs, tradition, rituals, and social systems of the Bodo society from a senior village headman. The family and villager provide a *Shriasitham*, i.e. a shring

(finger ring) made of five metals, such as gold, silver, copper, brass or bronze, and iron to the newly appointed village headman. In this context the five metals are symbolized, such as gold signifies the earth, silver signifies the water, copper signifies the sun or fire, brass or bronze signifies the air, and iron signifies the sky. These five metals represent the invisible power of the *Bathou Bwrai*, i.e. the supreme God. The head of *Shriasitham* is designed by three nobes. The three nobes are symbolised on three leaders of invisible powers, such as *Rangrasi*, i.e. God the Father as Creator, *Mwithahaji*, i.e. God the Son as Redeemer, and *Barigongtham*, i.e. God the Holy Spirit as Happy, Sad, and Sanctifier or Destroyer. The village headman purifies the accused person falls under 'Agor Bad' by sprinkling the water where the *Shriasitham* is keep soaked. In the context of judgement of social chaosness the decision of the village headman will be the final, but he cannot purify all kinds of accused persons. The village headman can resign from his post in case of any inconveniences, However he must select another person as a village headman to his post by his own choice on the basis of the eligibility of the village headman. But, in the time of resignation, the village headman needs to give one pair of betel nut, one pair of betel leaf, and pray once by paying Rs. 10/ (Rupees ten) to the villagers.

1.1.1.3.2 Selection and Functions of the *Gwthari* (The Purifier):

The *Gwthari*, i.e. the purifier must be a wise, respectful, and well educated person. He must have full knowledge about the customs, tradition, rituals, and social systems of the Bodo society of Goalpara district. Every *Med Afad*, i.e. the Med council must have only one purifier. When the purifier is posted in his portfolio, he needs to give one pair of betel nut, one pair of betel leaf, and pray once by paying Rs. 10/ (Rupees ten) to the villagers. Then, he needs to learn about the customs, tradition, rituals, and social systems of the Bodo society from a senior purifier. The family and villager provide three layered *Shriasitham*, i.e. a shriring (finger ring) made of five metals, such as gold, silver, copper, brass or bronze, and iron to the purifier. In this context the five metals are symbolized, such as gold signifies the earth, silver signifies the water, copper signifies the sun or fire, brass or bronze signifies the air, and iron signifies the sky. These five metals represent the invisible power of the *Bathou Bwrai*, i.e. the supreme God. The head of *Shriasitham* is designed by five nobes. The five nobes are symbolised on five invisible powers, such as the earth, water, sun or fire, air, and

the sky. The purifier purifies the accused person falls under any ‘*Bad*’ by sprinkling the water where the *Shriasitham* is keep soaked. In the time of resignation from his post, the purifier needs to give one pair of betel nut, one pair of betel leaf, and pray once by paying Rs. 10/ (Rupees ten) to the villagers.

1.1.1.4 Formation of the ‘*Med Afad*’ (Med Council):

‘*Med Afad*’ means a *Med council*, it is one of the most important council of the organization in the area. The word ‘Med’ is originated to Sanskrit, it means ‘a group of tribal community dwelling in a particular geographical location’. Five and more than five villages are needed to form the *Med Council*. Bhumeswar Basumatary mentions, “*Gongba eba beni bangsin gami-giyasti lwgw lananwi gongse Med afad danw hagwn. Be afada Barodolni singao thanay wnswl hisabwi gongfa dalai afad*”.¹³ English rendering, “Combination of five villages or more villages may form a Med council. This council is the one council of a region under the Barodol”. Every Med council has total number of seven portfolio members. Following are the portfolio members of the executive body of the Med Council.

1. *Khwlgwra Sase* (One President)
2. *Lengai Khwlgwra Sase* (One Vice-President)
3. *Gahay Nehathary Sase* (One Secretary)
4. *Lwggw Nehathari Sase* (One Vice-Secretary)
5. *Ranggiri Sase* (One Treasurer)
6. *Gwthari Sase* (One Purifier)
7. *Khara/Halmaji Sase* (One Information bearer)

If a Med council has more than five villages, then new Med council may be formed. But, this new Med council must be formed by five villages. Any problem is solved by the Med council with the help of unanimous decision of the portfolio members of the Med councils. Tenure of the Med Council is three years.

¹³ Basumatary, Bhumeswar. *Boroni Asar Bikhanthi*. First Edition. Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dol, Amjonga, Goalpara., 2019. P. 2

1.1.1.5 Formation of ‘Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol’:

The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is the parent social organization of the entire Bodo community of the Goalpara district. Under this organization every Med council is included. At present it has total number of eighteen Med councils under the jurisdiction of the ‘*Goalpara District Boro Baro Dal*’. Along with these Med councils, it has three more sub-committees under the ‘*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*’. These are: (i) Religious Committee, (ii) Cultural Committee, and (iii) Women Council. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* governs the duties and functions of the sub-committees. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* was formed a committee named ‘*Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi Bijab Fwsab Afad*’ means ‘Book Reformation Committee of Bodos Ritual System’. There are eighteen Med councils named as (i) *Sanjaha Bikali Med* means Eastern Bikali Med, (ii) *Kwtha-Kwthi Med*, (iii) *Swnab Bikali Med* means Western Bikali Med, (iv) *Patpara Med*, (v) *Dwar-Rangjuli Med*, (vi) *Dwar-Rwumari Med*, (vii) *Dwar-Daranggiri Med*, (viii) *Daranggiri Sanjwurang Med*, (ix) *Dwar-Amjongga Med*, (x) *Pragati Med*, (xi) *Sialmari Med*, (xii) *Maj-Jakhili Dahela Med*, (xiii) *Maj-Jakhili Amguri Med*, (xiv) *Maj-Jakhili Mainw Med*, (xv) *Damas Med*, (xvi) *Dwar-Damras Med*, (xvii) *Dwar-Dirma Med*, (xviii) *Iragdaw Med*, and (xix) *Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi Bijab Fwsab Afad*. These Med councils have different portfolio members.

The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* stands as a durable social and cultural organization within Goalpara district, embodying the collective identity, ritual life, and organizational energy of the Bodo community in the area. Over the decades it has functioned less as a narrow interest group and more as a civic cultural association that organizes festivals, annual conferences, and local public meetings. These activities both reproduce community solidarity and provide a platform for inter-generational transmission of Bodo cultural knowledge. Evidence of recurring district-level conferences and large public gatherings demonstrates the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*’s capacity to mobilize people, coordinate complex events, and maintain a recognizable set of roles on rituals, and norms that anchor Boro civic life in Goalpara district. Structurally, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* reflects the typical features of grassroots social organizations, a bold leadership, area-level committees, and event-focused sub-committees for culture, religion, youth, and logistics. This constituent architecture allows the organization to combine stable institutional memory with

flexible, event-driven mobilization. Leadership positions whether elected annually or rotated by custom serve both symbolic and practical functions. They have been conferring representational legitimacy within the Bodo population of Goalpara district and create accountable nodes for negotiating with neighbouring communities, and other civil-society activists.

Functionally, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* operates at several intersecting levels. First, as custodian of social organization, it has been holding programs on music, dance, and ritual performances that reproducing core symbols and narratives of Boro identity. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* membership composition and participation patterns further illuminate its social role. Membership tends to be diffuse spanning elders, cultural practitioners, youth groups, and women's branches which broadens the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* social base and ensures that its programs resonate across age and gender. This multi-generational involvement helps to explain the durability of the organization. Institutional knowledge is passed down in practice of dancers, teaching younger members, elders advising on ritual proprieties, while younger participants inject new energy and adaptations into the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* activities. At the same time, the presence of specialized sub-committees such as religious, cultural, women council indicates a growing professionalization of civic work at the district level, and duties are divided and expertise consolidated, thereby reducing the fragility that purely volunteer efforts often face. In normative terms, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* functions as a moral and cultural adjudicator. By setting standards for ceremony, public behaviour during events, and symbolic representation, the organization shapes what counts as legitimate Bodo practice in Goalpara district. This normative power can include controversial decisions, who is permitted to perform certain rituals, which local variants of songs are favoured, but it also carries a stabilizing effect. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* imprimatur reduces social uncertainty by creating agreed-upon templates for festival life. Moreover, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* events attract outsiders and other community groups, and they become sites of cultural diplomacy where Bodo identity is both asserted internally and showcased externally. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal's* practices also reveal an adaptive relationship with modern organizational demands. While rooted in traditional forms, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* has incorporated contemporary

techniques scheduled annual conferences, documented programs, and coordinated publicity that make it legible to the Bodo community. It also helps the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* to translate cultural capital into civic leverage, being a visible, well-run association increases the likelihood that its petitions or requests for venue support, for instance will be treated seriously by organization.

The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is resilient, and its longevity depends on navigating these structural and social constraints. From a developmental perspective, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol* is well placed to contribute to broader community goals beyond cultural performance. Its networks and convening power could be used to advance education, health awareness, environmental stewardship, and local economic initiatives for example, promoting customs and tradition, cultural aspects, religious aspects, and women empowerment. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*'s existing committees and event platforms provide a ready-made infrastructure for awareness campaigns, training workshops, and livelihood-linking activities that respect cultural rhythms while addressing socio-economic needs. When cultural organizations expand into these civic domains thoughtfully, they multiply their social values and build constituencies that perceive culture as linked to tangible benefits. Looking ahead, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*'s future vitality has been likely to hinge on its capacity for selective innovation for the Bodo community in the entire Bodo dominated areas of Goalpara district. This means preserving core rituals and artistic repertoires while experimenting with complementary formats, digital archiving of songs and dances, festival formats that include discussion, workshops, and partnerships with educational institutions for curricular inclusion of Bodo heritage. Importantly, innovation should emerge from participatory processes so that changes are seen as legitimate evolutions rather than externally imposed reforms. To summarize the evaluative arc, the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is an entrenched social organization with solid grassroots interconnected. It plays multiple roles of cultural custodian, religious hub, women empowerment, and generates social goods that extend beyond festivity to identity formation and Bodo community mobilization. The constituent organization of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is best understood not as a static entity but as a living institutional field that continuously negotiates continuity and change, ritual and modernity, particularity and openness. If it manages these dynamics well, the *Goalpara*

Jila Boro Baro Dal will continue to function as a meaningful site of cultural reproduction, religious entity, and women empowerment for the Bodo people of Goalpara for decades to come.

1.1.2 Nomenclature:

The name of '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*' is changed from time to time. In 1912, when the organization was set up, it was known by the name as '*Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni*' due to the location under *Habraghat Paragana*, which was under the jurisdiction of Bijni ruler. In 1927, under the chairmanship of Shri Darika Basumatary, the fifth convention was held and the nomenclature '*Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni*' was changed to the name of '*Dakshin Goalpara Boro Baro Dal*'. In 1975, '*Dakshin Goalpara Boro Baro Dal*' was replaced by the nomenclature '*Khula Goalpara Boro Barodol*'. Again, the name of the organization was changed in 1984 at the 38th convention by the resolution number fourteen, by the name of '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*'. According to Shri Matilal Basumatary, '*Baro Dal*' word is derived from Bangla word '*Baro*' means twelve and '*Dal*' means party. These 'twelve party' means the twelve clans (*Mahari* in Bodo language) of the Bodos which is related with the myth of '*Asagi and Bwisagi Sikhla and Sando Baodia*'.¹⁴

A folktale of *Asagi* and *Baisagi* from Bodo society, especially prevalent in parts of Assam including Goalpara district framed as a narrative. It is drawn from recorded folklore, oral history accounts, and ethnographic mentions to create a rich, culturally rooted version of the story. The Folktale of *Asagi* and *Baisagi* is a Bodo legend. The setting of the scene is like that, in the timeless era of hills, forests, rivers, and spirits long before villages and towns as we know them lay stretches of deep forest where the Bodo people lived close to nature and spirits. These woods were alive with the songs of birds, the music of bubbling streams, and the whispers of the wind. Here begins a tale of two sisters, *Asagi* and *Baisagi*, a story woven into the cultural memory of the Bodo community, especially in the districts like Goalpara where Bodo oral literature thrives. Throughout Bodo folklore, stories like these are not just entertainment they are cultural carriers of values, norms, community law, and cosmology, passed from one generation to another through storytelling, festivals, and performance. *Asagi* and

¹⁴ Op-cit. Matilal Basumatary: (M. 78) Bangal Para, Goalpara.

Baisagi were two sisters and young villagers renowned for their curiosity and bravery. They were daughters of a modest farming family in a small settlement near the borderlands of forest and meadow. Their name itself carried meaning: ‘*Asa*’ and ‘*Bai*’ relating to the elder and younger a symbol of unity as well as individuality. Their lives were simple, tied deeply with the rhythms of the land. The sisters were adventurous, always exploring the forests for roots, herbs, and the melodies of nature. They loved to walk barefoot on dewy grass at dawn and listen to the rustling leaves. Though gentle in heart, their curiosity sometimes led them to play near places others avoided deep forests, old shrines, or areas marked by ancient spirits.

The forest and the music of *Sandw Baodia* is in deeply rooted in the folktale of *Asagi* and *Baisagi*. Not far from their village lived a young man known as *Sandw Baodia*, a solitary yet gifted musician. He was a master of the ‘*Serza*’ means violin in English, a traditional Bodo string instrument. Whenever he played, the melody was said to charm even the forest spirits, luring birds and deer into a trance-like calm. One day, *Sandw Baodia* traveled into the deep forest with woodcutters to gather timber. They built a temporary hut beside a stream where *Sandw Baodia* was left alone to cook while the others felled trees. As was his habit, *Sandw Baodia* played his *serza* every evening, filling the forest clearings with sweet resonance.

The Encounter of curiosity and trouble were drawn by the mesmerizing music, *Asagi* and *Baisagi* ventured deep into the forest. They followed the sound through thick groves of bamboo and tall sal trees until they came upon the hut where *Sandw Baodia* stayed. Entranced by the melody, they approached quietly, peering through the bamboo slats. But that hut was not merely a shelter it was also trapped. *Sandw Baodia*, wary of wild animals and thieves, had set clever snares around the place for protection. When the sisters stepped closer, they were suddenly caught and tangled in the traps, they terrified and unable to free themselves, and *Asagi* and *Baisagi* cried out for help. Their shouts echoed under the canopy, yet no one from their village heard them. Eventually, *Sandw Baodia* returned and found the sisters ensnared. Moved by their plight, he released them from the trap but in doing so, he touched them physically, which according to Bodo social norms of that time, carried deep implications. The dilemma of cultural norms in Bodo tradition, physical contact between an unrelated man and a maiden was seen as taboo and a serious social offense. Even if accidental, it was

believed that such an act carried spiritual and moral consequences requiring restitution or sanction from the community. When elders learned about the incident, then an uproar spread through the village. Someone argued that *Sandw Baodia* should marry the sisters to restore harmony and cleanse the social imbalance. Others said the young man had acted out of compassion, and that his touch was unintended. The dispute echoed far beyond the village council. Elders debated in the open field where all could gather. Some invoked the old laws of *Bathou* the supreme deity of the Bodo people saying such matters must be judged by both law and ritual to appease the spirits disturbed by human transgression. At this point, a respected sage named *Khaina Shanti* advised the community to release them and face the judgement of law and spirit, and again suggested that the matter be resolved not by gossip, but by rite and law.

When community leaders could not reach consensus, *Khaina Shanti* spoke of a prophecy: that *Mwnsing-Sing Bwrai*, an intercessor between humans and *Bathou*, was to come and deliver new laws, a spiritual lawgiver capable of settling social disputes and restoring balance. To call upon *Mwnsing-Sing Bwrai*, the community prepared for a grand *Kherai* ritual, one of the highest forms of Bodo worship, song, danced, and performed to invite divine presence. Young and old gathered, beating traditional instruments, chanting ancient hymns, and making earnest prayers. Through rhythm and prayer, they hoped to reconcile human errors and uphold cultural justice. Thus, the invoking of *Mwnsing-Sing Bwrai* becomes great ritual amongst the Bodo community.

In the end, the counsel of spirit and tradition led the elders to a resolution that balanced compassion with social law. *Sandw Baodia* accepted responsibility for his part in the incident, and the sisters were also honored for their courage and resilience. The community, having witnessed the limits of human judgment, turned to the wisdom of spiritual law, the *Kherai* to teach a deeper lesson in unity, harmony, and renewal.

This folktale of *Asagi* and *Baisagi* thus survived not just as a story of two sisters, but as a morality tale about respect, cultural norms, spiritual mediation, and the power of communal rites in Bodo life. It reminds us that within Bodo society, individual acts are closely entwined with collective values, and harmony with nature and spirits guides human relationships far beyond mere rules. Stories like this are narrated during community gatherings, around fires in winter, and during festivals such as *Bwisagu*, the Boro spring festival celebrated with song, dance, and ritual reverence for *Bathou*. It has

cultural significance amongst the Bodo community. They serve not only to preserve Bodo language and oral tradition but also to teach younger generations about social ethics, spiritual balance, and the interconnectedness of all life. The folktale of *Asagi* and *Baisagi* is more than a myth, it embodies the socio-cultural, ethical, and spiritual fabric of Bodo society. From the heart of Assam's forests to the riverbanks of Goalpara, this story continues to shape how communities understand honor, law, the sacred, and the human heart.¹⁵

1.1.2.1 *Baro Mahari* (Twelve Clans):

The *Bodo* or *Boro* is an indigenous Tibeto-Burman ethnolinguistic group of northeastern India, mainly in Assam including the Goalpara district, and parts of Meghalaya. They constitute one of the major tribal peoples of the region, speaking the Bodo and practicing traditions shaped by agrarian life and religion, i.e. Bathouism. Their extended social organization includes clans or lineage groups, often called '*Mahari*', which historically served as functional, ritual, and clan identity markers in Bodo society.

The term *Baro Mahari* literally means '*Twelve Clans*' (*Baro* means twelve, *Mahari* means clan or social group). It refers to an ancient clan system believed to have existed among Bodo people in myth and early society, often cited in traditional songs and oral narratives. According to folkloristic and sociological studies, *Baro Mahari* is derived from Bodo folk tradition and is associated with clans created for organizing key ritual functions in early society. Although the strict clan system is no longer actively practiced in most Bodo communities today, the concept remains culturally significant and is remembered through myths, songs, and surnames.

The '*Baro Mahari*' literally means "*Twelve Clans or Social Divisions*", i.e. *Baro* means Twelve, *Mahari* means Clan or Social Group within Bodo society. These groups are more than just surnames they represent traditional social divisions based on ritual roles, livelihood practices, and mythological assignments within the Bodo worldview. According to ethnographic and sociological studies, a mythological narrative in Bodo oral tradition recounts that ancestral members were organized into these groups during important purification and ritual events, guided by a supernatural

¹⁵ Matilal Basumatary. (M. 78). Bangal Para, Goalpara.

elder, i.e. *Mwnsingsing*, who assigned different roles to each group. These clans were originally functional and ritualistic, representing duties like priestly or ritual officiants, earth or land-holding settlement responsibilities, linked to jute or agriculture staple, protection roles or traditional guardian, areca nut cultivator, bamboo cultivator, collectors of sacred ceremonial grass, associated with river or water, leaf collection, residents of hills or foothills, thatch cutters, and sesame growers or ritual suppliers. Later became key social identifiers or surnames *Boro/Bodo -aroi/ -ari*. The Baro Mahari system reflects the traditional clan-based social structure of the Bodo people, rooted in cultural history, ritual functions, livelihood patterns, and oral tradition. A traditional Bodo folk song describes the *Baro Mahari* as a fundamental social structure in ancient times:

“*Saboti megong singri daba Agwi baro mahari*”¹⁶

English rendering: “Saboti vegetable singri daba..... Dear twelve clans”

This refers poetically to the twelve clans that under the ancient Bodo social and ritual life. This song implies that the twelve foundational clans were seen as essential to social order and ritual functions of the Bodo community. Their extended social organization includes clans or lineage groups, often called *Baro Mahari*, which historically served as functional, ritual, and clan identity markers in Bodo society. According to ethnographic and sociological studies, a mythological narrative in Bodo oral tradition recounts that ancestral members were organized into these groups during important purification and ritual events, guided by a supernatural elder *Mwnsingsing*, who assigned different roles to each group. *Baro Mahari* refers to a traditional clan system within the Bodo community, especially among groups in region like Goalpara in Assam. Dhuparam Basumatary writes, “*Mwnsinsing porom kalyanmoyi Bhagawanor issa itimodhye buji payse. Teur issa mote eibor xongghotit hoise. Ojola manusya xomaj byowostha shrusti kori monusya xomajor byowosthar karone teuo ei ghotona xongghotit korise. Tar byowostha koriboloi Mwnsinsin burai monusya xomajor pora baro jon upojukto lok chai basil ole*”.¹⁷ English rendering, “*Mwnsinsin*

¹⁶ Dinen Basumatary. (M. 81). Maj Para, Goalpara.

¹⁷ Basumatary, Dhuparam. *Boro-Kacharir Bathou Dharma Aru Somaj Sangskriti*. First Edition, Pushpakpur Publication, Nalbari., 1985., p. 21

has known now about the hope of supreme God. All things are happening according to his wish. By creating social system for the simple people he has conducted this kind of incident. To solve the incident *Mwnsinsin* old man selected twelve eligible persons from the human society”. In Bodo society, the extended social structure historically organized people into exogamous clans with *Baro Mahari* meaning the twelve principal clans that formed the foundation of Bodo kinship and lineage identities. These clans are rooted in mythological and ancestral traditions and have historically been linked to distinct social roles and functions within the community. In the Goalpara Bodo context, such clan identifies play a part in regulating marriage exogamy and maintaining cultural continuity, and it reflect how Bodo society traditionally balanced family lineage, community roles, and social cohesion. These twelve clans (*Mahari*) are:

- (i) ***Swargiary/ Swargiari:*** Priestly clan, “*Swargiary/ Swargiari*” traces to “heavenly folk” and is often the group involved in religious leadership and ritual officiation.
- (ii) ***Basumatary / Basumatari:*** Earth / Land-holder clan. They traditionally have roles linked with the earth, land ownership, and settlement in some myths they mediate land disputes or hold symbolic relationship to mother earth.
- (iii) ***Daimary/ Daimari:*** People associated with water or rivers. From *daima*, meaning the water, this clan name points to early river-based livelihoods and roles in water-related ritual or daily life.
- (iv) ***Narzary / Narziari:*** Jute leaf clan. From *narzi*, meaning the dried jute leaves; historically tied to jute cultivation and significance in rituals.
- (v) ***Mosahary / Mushahary:*** Tiger / protector clan. “*Mosa*” refers to a tiger, indicating a traditional role linked with protection of livestock or symbolic association with this powerful animal.
- (vi) ***Goyary / Goyari:*** Areca nut growers. Historically this clan is linked to ‘*goy*’ (areca nut) the areca nut cultivation, which is vital in social rituals and cultural life.
- (vii) ***Owary / Owari:*** Bamboo clan. Traditionally this clan is associated with gathering or supplying bamboo for daily use and festival needs.
- (viii) ***Khakhlary / Khakhlari:*** Plant clan, possibly named after the *Khangkhla* plant, once essential for religious rites like *kherai puja* or *kherai* worship.

- (ix) ***Mahilari / Mahalari***: Leasing / Fishery clan, possibly deriving from leasing rights to fisheries or forest areas, reflecting specialized economic roles.
- (x) ***Sibingary / Sibingari***: Sesame clan, tied to sesame gathering and agricultural production.
- (xi) ***Ramchiary / Ramsiari***: Place-named clan, possibly referencing settlement history from specific localities or villages.
- (xii) ***Chainari***: Cleaning / Support clan, identified in some lists as linked to ritual space preparation and support tasks.

The *Baro Mahari* system reflects the traditional clan-based social structure of the Bodo people, rooted in cultural history, ritual functions, livelihood patterns, and oral tradition. In Goalpara district and beyond, these clans continue to inform social identity, marriage norms, and cultural continuity, even as modern influences and mixed settlement contexts evolve. The Bodo community has its self social governance. Bodo social norms often revolve around clan exogamy, i.e. marrying outside one's -ari/mahari, embedded social rituals, and local councils, such as village-level elders that manage disputes, land rights, and clan participation in rituals. In districts like Goalpara, Bodo people live among other tribal groups like Rabha, Garo, and Hajong. Though smaller in population compared to Bodo heartlands further east, Bodo communities in Goalpara maintain customary clans -ari/ mahari, and cultural practices. Integrate traditional *Bathou* rites, rice and jute cultivation, and multi-ethnic interaction. Their clan identities, while significant internally, often blend with broader linguistic and tribal identities in multi-tribal Goalpara society.

Bodo clan identities -ari/ mahari are not hierarchical castes; rather they are exogamous lineages linked with traditional roles and totems. Unlike caste systems where social status is fixed and hierarchical, Bodo clans are functional identifiers, each important in community life, marriage rules, and ritual roles. The *Baro Mahari* system reflects the traditional clan-based social structure of the Bodo people, rooted in cultural history, ritual functions, livelihood patterns, and oral tradition. In Goalpara district and beyond, these clans continue to inform social identity, marriage norms, and cultural continuity, even as modern influences and mixed settlement contexts evolve. Unlike caste systems in caste-stratified Hindu society, Bodo clans are primarily exogamous and non-hierarchical in traditional sense, it means that members typically must marry

outside their own clan *-ari/ mahari*. Historically, each clan often had associated ritual, economic or environmental functions, and traditional roles. Bodo oral tradition and scholarly works generally identify twelve principal clans that constitute the Baro Mahari social framework. Although the exact lists vary by region and source, a commonly cited set based on myth and inherited surnames includes on the basis of the Bodo community of Goalpara district.

No.	Clan Name	Typical Role / Attribute
(i)	<i>Swargiary</i>	Priestly or ritual officiants — Heaven folk, Ritual leader or Judges
(ii)	<i>Basumatary</i>	Earth or land-holding clan, Land and Settlement Responsibilities
(iii)	<i>Narzary</i>	Linked to jute leaf or agriculture, Jute and Cultural Staple
(iv)	<i>Mosahary</i>	Tiger-folk, traditional guardians, Protection roles (symbolic or practical)
(v)	<i>Goyary</i>	Areca nut cultivators/suppliers, Resource provision areca
(vi)	<i>Owary</i> <i>/Owari</i>	Bamboo collectors, Resource provision bamboo
(vii)	<i>Khakhlary</i>	Collectors of sacred ceremonial grass
(viii)	<i>Daimary</i>	Associated with river or water, Water-associated Livelihood
(ix)	<i>Lahary</i>	Leaf collection
(x)	<i>Hajoary</i>	Residents of hills or foothills
(xi)	<i>Kherkatari</i>	Thatch cutters/suppliers
(xii)	<i>Sibingari</i>	Sesame growers or ritual suppliers

Many Bodo surnames today, e.g., *Swargiary*, *Basumatary*, *Narzary*, and *Mosahary* are remnants of these ancient clan titles, preserved even if their original clan roles are no longer strictly followed. In modern Bodo society, these clan identities are not strictly enforced as exogamous or marriage-restricted systems as in some other northeast tribal societies. Rather, they survive through surname usage and cultural memory. Goalpara district of Assam is part of the traditional Bodo homeland where clans such as *Basumatary*, *Narzary*, *Mosahary*, and *Swargiary* are found among the Bodo community. Bodo cultural practices, including the remembrance of ancient clan structures like *Baro Mahari*, continue in oral traditions, weddings, festivals, and

sociocultural identity. Although the exact lists vary by region and source, a commonly cited set based on myth and inherited surnames includes. These clan names largely originated from traditional occupations or associations with nature and were used historically as identifying surnames, *-ari* means people or folk. Over time, many Bodo clans became surnames used by individuals and families. These surnames are linked culturally with ancient clan roles, and it has flexible caste status amongst the Bodo Community of entire Goalpara district. These reflect ancestral identifiers and social belonging within the larger Bodo community. Over time, many Bodo clans became surnames used by individuals and families. *Baro Mahari* refers to the twelve foundational clans in traditional Bodo society rooted in myth and ritual. These clans correspond to inherited surnames in Bodo culture. The ancient clan system helped assign social and ritual roles but is not practised rigidly today. Identification through clan-based surnames persists as a cultural legacy among Bodo people in places like Goalpara district.

1.1.3 Population:

The following is the list of population census of the Bodo voters under the jurisdiction of Goalpara Jila Boro Barodal from the year 2015 to 2025. This chart is made based on the year, male, female, total population, and total family.

Year	Male	Female	Total Population	Total Families
2015	13,741	14,270	28,011	5,967
2016	14,605	14,577	29,182	5,467
2017	14,846	14,895	29,741	5,577
2018	14,850	14,675	29,525	5,877
2019	14,936	15,207	30,143	5,967
2020	14,865	15,025	29,890	6,060
2021	14,699	15,240	29,939	6,189
2022	15,228	15,274	30,502	6,258
2023	15,393	15,598	30,991	6,332
2024	13,976	15,902	29,878	6,389
2025	14,699	15,260	29,959	6,406

1.1.4 Religion:

The Bodos of the entire Bodo dominated areas of Goalpara district, which is included under the jurisdiction of 'Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal' profess different religion. Among them majority of the Bodos profess Bathouism. Bathouism is the sponsored religion of the 'Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal'. Besides this, Bodo people profess Christianity, and Brahmaism at Goalpara district.

1.1.5 Location:

Geographical location of the study area of 'Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal' is confined within Dhupdhara in the east, Krishnai in the west, Meghalaya state boundary in the south, and river Brahmaputra in the north which is included Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council of Assam.

1.2 Review of Related Literature:

For this area, the written documents or books are not available. A few published books and annually published souvenir relating to the role of organization are found. 'Banduba Bathou' published in June, 1994 which was edited by Rup Nath Basumatary and Mangalsing Hazowary. The collection of various articles of this book is reflected about Bathouism. In this book, 'The Kacharis' authored by Rev. Sydney Endle, social and domestic life, laws and customs, religion and tradition and superstition are reflected. In the book 'Aspect of Social Custom of the Bodos' in 1995, Kameswar Brahma, reflected various rites and rituals, social ceremonies of the Bodos. In the book 'Kirata Jana Kriti' S.K. Chatterji reflected the civilization of India which is the joint creation of their diverse people, i.e. Aryan and Non-Aryan. The author reflected the Indo-Mongoloid culture in Assam and West Bengal along with linguistic influences. Indrani Basu Ray, in her book 'Anthropology: The Study of Man', reflected the concept of family, marriage, village, characteristics of tribe. In the book, 'Folk Literature of Bodos', authored by Anil Kumar Boro, brought reflection of origin of the Bodos religion, culture, and their literature. H.K. Rawat, in his book, 'Sociology: Basic Concept', reflected concept of society, social norms, social sanctions, folkways, socialization and social control system. In the souvenir 'Dalong Dabari Hagwn' in 2017, edited by Mamoni Daimary and 'Sanja Bikalini Sanshri' in 2018, edited by Kumar Basumatary reflected various social pictures of the Bodo society under the

jurisdiction of the 'Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol'. In the book 'Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi' in 2019, published by 'Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol' reflected appointment process of 'Hadwnggwra' which means the village headman, 'Gwthari' which means the Purifier, 'Halmaji' which means the village informer. It is also reflected birth ceremony, marriage ceremony, and death ceremony of the Bodos. Further, the followings are the review of texts.

- (i) In the book, 'Boroni Ficha O Ayen' published by Harichandra Kachari and Madharam Kachari in the editorship of Ganggacharan Kachari and Narapatichandra Kachari, in 1915 describes about the origin of Bodo community written in Bangla language. This was initiated by *Habraghat Boro Sanmilani*. The author describes on the customary law of Bodo community. In Bodo customary law, it has basically five customary laws, every law has its jurisdiction of rules on the basis of particular incidents, and also the way of purification. In the book, 'Boroni Ficha O Ayen' the food habit, rites, rituals of the Bodos is reflected.
- (ii) In the book, 'Boro-Kacharir Bathou Dharma Aru Samaj Sangskriti' published by Puspakpur, Nalbari in the year 1955, written by Dhuparam Basumatary describes about the 'Bathou' as the supreme God of Boro-Kachari, origin of the creation of living and non-living things, and the mortality of human being or the people. He describes on the development of Bodo community as well as the *Bathou* worship, 'Kherai' as religious festival, and the three culture of human life, such as *Jwnwm*, i.e. Birth, *Haba* or *Juli*, i.e. Marriage, and *Thwinay*, i.e. Death.
- (iii) In the book, 'Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi' published by *Goalpara JilaBoro Baro Dal* in the year 2019, by the initiative of the Secretary, Anggad Basunatory of *Boroni Ashar Bikhanthi Fwshab Afad*, describes about the formation of *Mad Afad* (Mad Council), formation of Village Council. The writer describes on the customary law of the Bodo community and the process of purification, traditional culture related to the rituals of birth, marriage, and death. In this book, the role of Goalpara Jila Boro Baro dal is described thoroughly

- (iv) In the book, '*BHATHOU DHWRWM*' published by *Goalpara JilaBoro Baro Dal Dhwrwm Afad*, and compiled by Matilal Basumatary as President and Janmejy Machary as Secretary in 2010, describes about the devotional songs of Bathou religion as the original religion of Boro-Kachari. This book contains devotional songs of Bathouism and describes on the rituals of Bathou worship, and the establishment of *Bathou Thansali* (Bathou Temple).
- (v) In the book, '*HABA ARW HABA GIDW*' published by Buddha Dev Patgiri of Dudhnoi Khara, collected and composed by Sanatan Brahma Patgiri, in 1997 describes about the rituals of Bodo marriage. He writes on the marriage songs sung in the time of Bodo marriage ceremony.
- (vi) In the book, '*BORONI SONA MUGA*' published by Buddha Dev Patgiri of Dudhnoi Khara, and written by Sanatan Brahma Patgiri, in 2018, describes about the contribution of *Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni* to the development of Bodo community. He writes on the traditional culture of the Bodos, and also the renaissance of the Bodo community of the Goalpara district.
- (vii) In the souvenir, '*ZOUSE BWSWRAO BORONI FICHA O AYEN*' published by Centenary Celebration Committee '*Boroni Fichha O Ayen*' organized by All Bodo Sahitya Sabha & Goalpara District Bodo Sahitya Sabha in the chief editorship of Champabati Khakhalary describes about the contribution of the book '*Boroni Fichha O Ayen*' in Bodo literature. The articles published in this souvenir describes about the contribution of Habraghat Boro Sanmilani to the development of Bodo community. The Authors write on the contribution of '*Boroni Fichha O Ayen*' for the description of customary law of the Bodo community, and its jurisdiction of rules on the basis of particular incidents, and also the way of purification.

But, in the above review of literatures, in deep study on the role done by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol* is not seen.

1.3 Problem Statement:

The study entitled '*A Study on the Role of Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*' is a social organization of the Bodos in the district of Goalpara. It is a premier organization among the Bodos, and was first constituted in 1912. The Bodos settling areas, like

Dhupdhara, Rongjuli, Dudhnoi, and Krishnai in the district of Goalpara is known as ‘*Daikhong Khula*’ by the outsiders Bodos. The Bodos inhabited in these areas were very backward in every aspect of lives. Before the establishment of ‘*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*’ and ‘*Habraghat Boro Sanmilloni*’ in 1912, they had no such kind of social organization. They were organized and established an organization and discussed jointly any problem of the Bodo society. They were lacking behind in every social aspects. The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* has been playing various roles in respect of social, religious, and cultural fields. The organization has been prohibiting religious conversion and cultural assimilation since the inception. The organization has been promoting social integrity and social solidarity among the Bodos of the entire Bodo dominated area of Goalpara district. It has also been protecting their social rites and rituals as well as their traditional customs. But, the study of these activities done by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is not seen. The study of the structure of social organizations related to the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is not seen. The study of the social ceremonies celebrated by the Bodo society of Goalpara district on the basis of social bonds, cultural norms, and religious values, is not seen. The study of the role of different committees of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* such as *Religious Committee*, *Cultural Committee*, and *Woman Council* is also not seen. The study of the social control activities for the reformation of Bodo society in the Goalpara district through Bodo customary law is not seen.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study:

The following objectives have been put forward for the present study:

- (i) To study the social ceremonies celebrated by the Bodo society of Goalpara district on the basis of social bonds, cultural norms, and religious values.
- (ii) To study the role of different committees of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* as *Religious Committee*, *Cultural Committee*, and *Woman Council*.
- (iii) To study the social control activities for the reformation of Bodo society in Goalpara district through Bodo customary laws done by *Goalpara Jila Boro Barodol*.

1.5 Significance of the Study:

The study is entitled as '*A Study on the Role of Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*', and it has a significant from the point of sociology. The role played by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is basically based on social aspects. It is an attempt to bring out the background of the formation of the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*'. The Bodos do not have their own script. The manuscript book '*Boroni Ficha O Ayen*' published in 1915 was written in Bangla script. In this book, their rites, rituals, and various social and folk beliefs are reflected. The aim of the organization was to protect their customs, tradition, and to create social awareness among them. As a pioneer social organization of the Bodos of Goalpara district, it has been trying to protect their religious and cultural identity. This research work has the significance to help the people to know about the role played by the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* in the field of social, religious, cultural fields, and Bodo women empowerment as well as their social control system.

1.6 Area of the Study:

The basic subject area of this study is based on sociology. This study has been based on the role of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* for the development of Bodo society dwelling in the Goalpara district. The study mainly explores on the structure of social organizations related to the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*', the social ceremonies celebrated by the Bodo society of Goalpara district on the basis of social bonds, cultural norms, and religious values. This research work is also explores on the role of different committees of the *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* as Religious Committee, Cultural Committee, and Women Council, and the social control activities for the reformation of Bodo society in Goalpara district through Bodo customary laws. Geographical location of the area of study related to '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*' is Dhupdhara in the east, Krishnai in the west, Meghalaya state boundary in the north and Brahmaputra in the south which is included Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council of Assam.

1.7 Method of Data Collection:

The data is a most important part of a research work. Primary and secondary data have been collected by using method of data collection. Primary data have been collected by fieldwork through questioning the local people from the proposed area covered for study along with qualitative approach. The secondary data have been

collected from published materials like magazines, books, journals. The direct observation method has been using to collect the data.

1.8 Hypothesis:

Hypotheses have been made that the role of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* is significant in the development of the Bodo people of entire Goalpara district.

- (i) The social ceremonies celebrated by the Bodo society of Goalpara district on the basis of social bonds, cultural norms, and religious values on the guidance of *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*. It generates unity and solidarity.
- (ii) The role of different sub-committees of the *Goalpara Zila Boro Baro Dal* as Religious Committee, Cultural Committee, and Women Council is concerned with the overall development of the Bodo society.
- (iii) The *Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal* has been doing the social control activities for the reformation of Bodo society in Goalpara district through Bodo customary laws. It has own codified customary law.

1.9 Methodolgy:

This research work has been adopted the descriptive method to analyze the collected data. Sociological approach, such as ethnographic description, participant's observation, surveys and interviews have been adopted in this research work. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection have been adopted. As a primary source, interview and field study have been done and as a secondary sources, books and periodical published souvenir relating to the activities of the social organizations of the Bodo dominated areas have been collected and studied. This research work has been done on the role played by the '*Goalpara Jila Boro Baro Dal*'. It plays a vital role on marriage, birth and death ceremonies and social control system. This research work have been collected the data from the sources of primary and secondary data. The latest Modern Language Association (MLA) citation method has been adopted in this research work.