

Role of Women in Traditional Development in BODO Community

(A study in Chirang District of Assam)

Laimwn Basumatary

Trainee, Reimalie Academy College (B. Ed.), Bijn

Abstract-Woman is the social name of the female counterpart of human being. Women are physically less strength, more attractive and sensitive bodily structure than men. Tradition of a community is the base of its culture. Dictionary meaning of the term Tradition as defined by Webster is “an inherited, established or customary pattern of thought, action or behavior such as religious practice or a social custom.” It refers to a part of culture that is passed from person to person or generation to generation possibly deferring in detail.

In bodo community along with most of the tribes of the region women have comparable high status along with their male counterparts. Since the time of immemorial, women in bodo community have been playing a favorable role in their socio-economic life. In maintaining and advancing traditional culture, bodo women play a great role. They are able to portray their traditions. It is probably said that traditional culture is the base point of the identity of a community. A community with rich culture must have a strong traditional background. Bodo Women’s dress, weaving and other firming is a mentionable point in their culture.

In this paper the investigators’ has trying to focus on the role of women in development of their traditional culture. Here the specific area will be studied on the sample taken from different villages or areas of the particular district.

Keywords: *Woman, Tradition, Bodo Community.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Woman is the social name of female counterpart of human being. Women are physically less strength, more attractive and more sensitive bodily structure than that of men. Base on this concept socially women are considered as weaker and dependent section.

The total way of life of any community is called culture. Culture is the identity of a community which shows the passion of a community. A community is said to be rich when its culture is properly developed. Tradition is a part of the culture. It is narrower than that of the concept of culture. Tradition as defined by Webster is “an inherited, established or customary pattern of thought, action or behavior such as religious practice or a social custom.” It refers to a part of culture that is passed from person to person or generation to generation possibly deferring in detail.

Bodo is a tribe of North east India having majority in the state of Assam with its rich cultural heritages and social stratum. It has a good number of population in the lower part of the state and north bank of the river Brahmaputra. It is possibly said that bodo community is the largest tribal community in the state and politically a step faster than the others.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Along with the most of tribal community, in bodo community also women have almost equal status and roles in their social-economic life. Generally they maintain male superior society still there is a high status for women along with their male counterparts in the community. They are maintaining their traditional culture which is also helpful for the development and advancement of the traditional culture among the bodo community. It is high time to study the role and function of bodo women in advancement of traditional culture so that it can be understood by everyone.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Tradition: The dictionary meaning of the term tradition as given by Webster is “an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action or behavior” . The term Tradition has been derived from the Latin word ‘traditio’ which means to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping. From this it is clear that tradition is the way of transmission. It is the part of culture. Culture of a community which is transmitted from generation to generation and people to people without any purposes is called traditional culture.

Bodo Community: Bodo community is an indigenous inhabitant of north east India with rich cultural heritage. Bodos are the largest tribal community found its originality in Tibet-Burma. They have their own traditional culture and language that got identification as a recognized language of India in 2000.

IV. OBJECTIVES

To study the traditional culture of bodo community.

To study the role of bodo women in advancing and developing the tradition of the community.

V. STUDY AREA

Chirang is a newly created district of Assam being under the B.T.A.D. It is created from a part of older district Bongaigaon which is a reflection of the culture of various communities. It covers the area of 109985 hcr within the boundary of Bhutan by North, Baksa and Barpeta district by East, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar by South and West respectively. The total population of the district is 482162 out of which 37% is belongs to tribal community. The district comprises two sub divisions that Bijni and kajolgaon. Kajolgaon is the Head Quarter of the district. Bodos have majority population in the district along with which less number of other tribes such as Rabha, Garo etc. and other non tribal communities are living peacefully. For the purpose of study survey covers both of the sub divisions.

VI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- a. The study is confined with only the role of bodo women in advancement of their traditional culture.
- b. The study is delimited only for Chirang district of Assam.

VII. PROCEDURE OF COLLECTING DATA

This paper used descriptive survey method. Population of the study is women from different villages of the district from which 100 samples are selected through cluster sampling technique. And data of the study are responses collected from the sample as well as from the general observation of the investigators. Some of the information is also taken from the secondary sources such as books, journals and government report etc.

VIII. ANALYSIS OF DATA FINDING

A. Objective no 1

To achieve the objective an analytical study is done based on the data collected from the secondary sources and general observations of the investigators.

Bodos are the major indigenous community of Assam with rich cultural heritage. It has its own fibulas culture that distinguished from the others. Apart from this traditional culture of the bodos are much broader. Bodos have their won customs of day to day life, festivals of their won that celebrated beautifully and other activities that make the traditional culture of bodos too much colorful. A brief analysis on the traditional culture of the bodo community is given below.

To precede sound and to maintain the social order some custom have already fixed in every community. Bodos have also their won customs that make the social wellbeing of the community enough sound. It is commonly said by the community people that

“Bathwoni Bandwa Bandwba;

Sijwoni Siria Siriba;

Taigerni Konga Kongba;

Sifhungni Goronga Gorongba;

Boroni Asarabw Mwnbba.....

This rhyme refers that bodos have five specific customs which is called ‘Asars’. Detail explanations on it is difficult is a single paper thus quoted heading are made on it

- a. Jwnwm kanti (Birth custom): Ritual custom that practiced during the time of birth of any child.
- b. Dwi sarnai: This custom is practiced after the birth of any child.
- c. Haba kanti (Marriage custom): Ritual custom that practiced during the time of marriage ceremony.
- d. Twinai kanti (Death custom): Various rituals practiced in the time of death of any person.
- e. Bandra custom: A ritual practice of purification that done after the death of any person at the home of the person and rest people of the family.

There is another traditional custom in bodo community that is Purification custom: This is one of the important customs of bodo community that practiced for the purification of socially unaccepted activities performed by someone. Deferent kind of way of purifications are there for different unfavorable.

Bodos have their original religion called Batwo. With times they accept other religions such as Christianity, Hinduism etc. but still the traditional culture is based on the basic religion. Kherai is the religious festival of the bodos along with several other religious practices. The festivals are celebrated according to the time and session.

The major festivals of bodos are Bwisagu, Kati Gasa and Magw or Domasi in bodo. Most of the festivals of bodo community are based on their religion. It is said that the traditional dances and songs have been developed from the Kherai festival. Besides these Amtisua (Ambubasi) cerebrated in the month of Asar in bodo calendar (June-July) is another festival among bodos. Bodos welcome newly produces paddy seeds with a celebration that called Wngkam Gwrlwi. Bodos have several traditional dance forms and unique songs. Bagurumba, daosri delai, bardwishilka, na gurnai etc. are the famous among them. Their dances and songs are based on their day to day life.

Weaving is another important traditional culture of the bodo community. It is universally practiced by the bodos which is too much important for the female members of the community that earlier women without weaving skilled

were unfavorable and had difficulties to get married. Their weaving skill is worldwide popular that they prepare every needed instruments and raw materials for the weaving. They are able to design distinguished embroideries in different beautiful colors. Their selection and matching of colors is fibulas. There is many sweet stories and song in bodo literature related to the field. Since the time of immemorial till date the weaving skill of bodo women is a point of discussion.

Another most important and inseparable traditional culture of bodos is sericulture. It is proudly said by some historians that bodos are the inventor of the sericulture in north east India. It was the basis of weaving production of the bodo women. In earlier times it was a common picture being seen in each and every home of the bodos. However in history there is no exact time of introduction and practice of silkworm hold at the home, it can be observed that from the time before history can asses' bodos practicing the sericulture. It was one of the basic sources of socio economic development of the community people. Now sericulture is a separate broad department of the state. With the recent trend of technological advancement and easy way of having variety garments and rush for the better opportunities downfall of practices of silkworm and sericulture can be seen. But it is totally not been replaced by the industrial cloths.

Animal husbandry is also another traditional culture of the bodo community along with sericulture that related to their socio economic life. This practice is alive strongly till now among the bodos. Earlier it was only for the fulfillment of the basic needs of the family but now a day it is practiced for the business purposes. Poultry, piggery, diary, goat firming etc. are included within the animal husbandry in the discussion.

B. Objective NO. : 2

To reach the quoted objective following studies had done.

A list of typical questionnaires is provided to be filled up to the women who can read and write. Unfortunately some of the women was totally illiterate for them same list of questions are asked trough face to face interview. The responses given by the respondent are

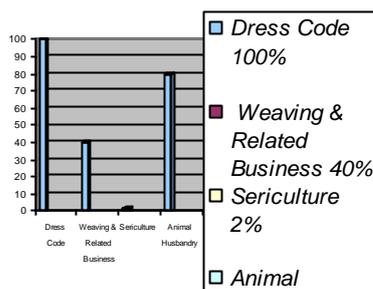


Fig.: Diagram showing involvement of Bodo women in Different Traditional Activities

The diagram shows that women in bodo community involves in various traditional culture and activities. They play a significant role in the traditional cultural development which helps to maintain their socio economic sector also. Along with the performing in various traditional cultures bodo women also involved some allied business sectors which are base on their tradition.

There is a good sign in wearing traditional dress among the community. Purely 100% women from the sample are familiar with their traditional dress called "Dokhona". They dressed up with it in day to day life. Even it is observed that young girls (approximately 15 years and above) are also wear Dokhona. With the modernization of the society westernization in the dressing style is seen among them. Young women have welcome western dress codes but still they are close to their traditional dresses.

Women mostly from the village show positive responses to the questions of weaving and its related business. Families in the village have their won instruments of weaving at their homes and women of the family produce their necessary clothes but unfortunately this micro industry have been decreasing continuously. With the need of the society people rush for the better opportunities and more profitable job and get less time to learn weaving skill. In recent time dresses are made available in market now it is easy to have variety designed clothes in the market. Some of the bodo women are also engaged in business based on weaving. They weave for the business purposes and small industry being opened by some families and basically women in the community opened shops for selling their traditional dresses mainly dokhona in town areas or any market places which help in bringing up the clothes

The next field in which the role and function of bodo women are incredible is Sericulture sector. It is proudly being said by some historians that bodos are the inventor of the sericulture. In this field none but women are involved. Since the time of immemorial bodo women are working in sericulture field as a source of production of cloths when machine or industrial treads and cloths was absent. In the survey, only 2 among the 100 samples show positive attitude or expertness toward the sericulture. In the time of technology it can be considered a good sign that still they are continuing this culture.

Animal husbandry is another traditional culture of bodo tribe. Influence of female counterpart is great in this field. As most of the time the responsibilities of taking care of the home and all the activities given to the women of the family. Since the time of immemorial till now here the investigator include all the animal firming such as piggery, poultry, goat firming etc. within the animal husbandry. In earlier time animal husbandry of bodos was not for business purposes. But now it is done for business purpose

along with the fulfillment of basic necessities of the family. The respondent gave 80% positive responses toward the animal husbandry. According to the response almost all the families and women are related to the poultry, but most of them are not favor to other animals such as pig and goat etc. they show unfavorable toward it due to various reasons.

The last point of the study is other activities. The investigators include all the traditional cultural activities such as dances, songs, fashion and festivals of the bodo community. The informants have shown average result. They have knowledge about the traditional dances and songs but due to lack of scope they could not show it.

IX. CONCLUSION

In the above survey it is found that women in the bodo tribes have important role in the advancement of traditional culture. Women play a great role in controlling the declination of the culture.

As we already mentioned that the traditional dress of almost every community are being let or developed by female counterpart of the community. Women in bodo community have great role in some specific fields which are already stated in the above discussion. The study says that women take important part in every traditional activity which help to develop their traditional culture and in controlling it from the declination.

X. SCOPE OF FURTHER STUDY

- a. The study can be replicated on a large sample to assess the women as a component of advancement of traditional culture in Bodo community.
- b. An analytical study of traditional culture of Bodo community can be done.

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