

An Analytical Study on Bathou Religious Folk Belief and Traditional Knowledge of the Bodos

Munmi Baro

Asst Professor,

Dibrugarh University.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Folk belief is a kind of social experience. It is believed and shared more or less by the folk-society. It has contextual uses for validating social philosophy to some extent. R.M. Dorson said that 'Folk belief is a part of folklore'. Further he said, "*Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present*".¹ In this regard, Folklorists have opinion that folklore is the part of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses the traditional way of living as a whole. It covers a wide area including within its periphery. i.e. traditional songs, prose narratives, beliefs and superstitions, customs, material culture etc.²

As part of the folklore folk belief is also the result of social experiences which is transmitted from generation to generation orally. Folk belief and practices provide valuables of the folk-society. To speak, folk belief is in essence, nothing but knowledge of the 'folk'; it encompasses collective wisdom and experiences of the folk-society.

Bodos are the community who has been leading their livelihood at the forest areas since ancient period. They scared by seeing the natural calamities as a result they started to belief in existence of supreme power and worship the nature to get rid of dangers. Thus belief arises from religious philosophy; and this is also one of the causes of extant of folk belief. It may be observed that, in this way, folk beliefs occupy an important role among the Bodo folk-society. Folk belief reflects culture and validates social folk customs. It is the result of social experiences. Therefore folk belief is accepted as knowledge of the society and also advisor of the society.

2.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study has sociological and folkloristic significance that may be summarized as given below:

- (i) Folk belief validates belief system of the Bodo folk-society to a great extent.
- (ii) It constitutes traditional knowledge which focuses folk philosophy or social philosophy of the society which may be visualized in the folk belief.
- (iii) Also it validates culture as well as way of living of a group or society.

¹ Dorson, R.M: Folklore and Folk life an Introduction, p. 17, 1972.

² Ibid. p.17, 1972.

(iv) It has social function to the various dimension of the social life.

These are the significances of the study from a sociological and folkloristic view point.

3.0 HYPOTHESIS:

Some hypothetical viewpoints are considered for the study. These are given below:

- (i) From a folkloristic study folk-psychology of the Bodo folk-society may be observed to a great extent.
- (ii) It is hypothesized that folk belief reveals way of living of the people.
- (iii) The text related to the folk belief is occurred based on traditional belief system.
- (iv) Social function may also be observed from the study of folk belief of the Bodos.

4.0 METHODOLOGY:

The topic entitled “AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON BATHOU RELIGIOUS FOLK BELIEF AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODOS” is closely related to the research adopted in folklore studies. It is a field oriented study where related data have been gathered by conducting field works. Chiefly two kinds of data have been gathered; one is primary data collected from active informants and on the other hand secondary data collected from passive bearers and various published materials as found in printed books of culture and knowledge based books. The researcher being a native speaker of this society has own intuition and information about folk belief of the Bodo society. It helped me immensely when went to field for data collection and further analysis. To assess the data questionnaire method has also been adopted for cross-examination as far as required.

5.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The study has more scope for analysis from the perspective of folklore as well as sociology. From a survey, it is observed that there is less number of published materials in Bodo language relating to the folk belief. Of course, some of the published books are gathered relating to folk belief written in Assamese and English language which is more important from theoretical viewpoints.

Binay Kumar Brahma wrote a book on culture of the Bodos and Assamese society entitled “Asamni Somaj Arw Harimu (2011) which highlights some aspects of the culture. Also, in this book the writer attempts to discuss about Boro culture and traditions. He wrote some of the books regarding Boro folk culture, literature and folk belief. These are “Boroni Subung Harimu” (2009), “Asamni Somaj Harimua Subung Fwthainai” (2012), etc. In the book “Boroni Subung Harimu” an attempt has been made to discuss about Bodo culture. In the book “Asamni Somaj Harimua Subung Fwthainai” the writer discusses about Bodo community and folk belief. Anil Boro has also discussed some aspects of the Bodo folk literature. The name of the book is “Folk Literature of the Bodos” (2001). This is an outcome of his research work. Kameswar Brahma has also written a book entitled “A study of Socio-religious Beliefs, Practices and

Ceremonies of the Bodos”. Other books of the writes are namely “Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos” (1995), “ A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Bodos” (1998), “Boroni Harimu” (1999). Many writers also carried out some outstanding books on the Bodo folk Literature. Bhaben Narzee, in his book entitled “Boro Kacharini Somaj Arw Harimu (translated version into Bodo from Assamese original) discusses extensively about social folk customs and traditional knowledge of the Bodos.

Besides, Dorson’s outstanding edited book entitled “Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction” (1972) is one of the sources in this research. In this book many aspects relating to folklore e.g. folk life and folk culture have been taken into account from theoretical perspectives as a whole. Benudhar Rajkhowa’s “Assamese Popular Superstitions and Assamese Demonology” (1973) is also one of the sources in the research work that has been acknowledged as secondary data. As a whole, the above mentioned published works are reviewed from the folkloristic as well as an analytical point of view; and used as reference as well as supporting data to analyze the proposed work.

6.0 IDENTITY OF THE BODOS:

Racially the Bodo linguistic community belongs to the Mongoloid stock; and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman sub-branch of the Sino-Tibetan family of Languages. This indigenous tribe of the north-east India has own linguistic and cultural traits. In ancient days they were known as Kirātas, Dānavas, Asura, Pichāsa etc. S.K. Chatterji, an Indologist, remarked them as the Kirātas or Indo–Mongoloids. About the Bodos, he wrote, *The Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and north Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid block in North-eastern India, were the most important Indo Mongoloids people in Eastern India, and they form one of the main Basis of the present day population of these tracts.*³

The Bodos are concentrating throughout the state of Assam. Their concentration is also found in the neighboring states like Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and in the state of West Bengal, particularly in some Districts of North Bengal. They are found in the neighboring country particularly in Nepal Bhutan and Bangladesh

Now a days, some sections of this community have converted into other religious sections like into Vaishnavsim, Christianity, Brahmaism and so on. In spite of diverse religious faith and belief, a majority of the populations are practicing their ethnic religion i.e known as Bathouism for which they believe to be the ancient linguistic community in Assam in particular.

To identify themselves, they have traditional culture and linguistic vitality. The language is now used as the language of educational institution, medium of instruction, as the language of literature and any kinds of

³ Chatterji, S.K: Kirāta Janakriti. p.21, 1951.

creative arts and so on. The written literature are flourishing day by day. Different literary genres are being written by the creative litterateurs.

During the initial decade of 21st Century the Bodo language is recognized as one of the scheduled languages of India. It is being encouraged and enthused by various academic agencies founded by the Government of India. Also, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha have been taking prolonged initiative for development of the language and literature. The literary and academic activities taken by the various social organizations extant in this society is to be marked enthusiasm. It is a mark of progress of the Bodo society which gives them linguistic and cultural identity to a great extent.

On the other hand, they have their own traditional culture which reflects social philosophy and values of the society as a whole. Besides, they have enormous folk-literature, traditions and distinct ways of living. To speak, these are also racial features of the social identity of the Bodos.

It is observed that majority of the population are being practicing agricultural activities inhabiting in the village. They gather livelihood from the product of agriculture. Therefore the village people are immensely practice fairs and festivals that closely related to the agriculture. Folk-believes and superstitions are also immensely prevailing in their ways of living. These may be called symptom of the primitive ways of living from a sociological point of view. Though these are becoming obsolete among the educated people, it may be observed to be the functional in the context of traditional fairs and practices. Expecting profuse product of crops the village people are being practicing traditional worship which is popularly known 'Kherai'. This is a ritualistic festival of the Bodos. Many of the folk-believes are closely related with the ritualistic worship which focuses folk-philosophy of this community. Besides, various kinds of seasonal rituals are also being practicing among the society. Through these observances, it may be easily observed the ways of living of the traditional Bodo society in particular.

Along with Kherai worship, the Bodos are being observing Bathou festival, which is the ethnic religion that traditionally handing down among the Bodo society. Many of the folk-believes are also closely associated with this religious practices. They belief to be the truth and socialized practices. Hence, folk-believes are being prevailing in this society.

They have a tradition to working together in a social institution; and helping each other in regards to the mutual works. In respect of food habits, they have a distinct traditional technology which is prevailing as the traditional knowledge of the society. Folk-believes are also noticed in various aspects of their ways of living like in housing, making of agricultural tools, making of costumes and floral designing, recipes of food etc. These are the result of traditional knowledge of a group of people. It may be vividly observed in respect of the Bodo folk-society.

7.0 FOLK BELIEF RELATED TO RELIGION:

Religion is a part of Bodo traditional culture. Bodo people have their own traditional religion named Bathou. They worship Bathou as their supreme God. They consider him all in all of all beings. Religion plays a dominant role in their social functioning like changing social pattern, economy, mode of living and way of thinking. Bathou religion means Bathou Dhwrwm in Bodo language. Bathou Dhwrwm is corporate rites, ritual, social norms, ethics and philosophy of the Bodos. Apart from the supreme god Bathou, the Bodo people worship many other deities. They consider Sibrai as the head or above of all other deities. According to their Folk belief in order to have blessing and affection of the God Bodos worship to the God. It is sure that God bless them if he worshipped with heart and soul. Hence, as per rites and ritual of the religion any social functions are performed. In many sacred occasions like happy wedding ceremony, and so many other individual and social functions are done according to the rites and ritual of the religion.

The religion is a custom of worshipping to god where people always conduct their life keeping this custom of truth among them. All the human beings of the world need a religious way in order to run their life in truthful and flawless manner. The religion retains the discipline, sacredness and truthfulness of a society or community. Really, The man who believes in religion heartily this difficult to him to step forward astray and if somehow he does unexpectedly he is sanctified or purified with the five religious or social disciplinary laws. These five disciplinary laws are – Ogarbad, Fongslodbad, Daokhibad, Khoulbwdbad and Khawalibad. The fault/ or commit of the offender is purified as these bathou religious laws and re-accepts him in social bound. The Bodos have been forming their society believing in these five laws since the past. In a certain religion there should not have any criticizing, hating, alienation, and exploitation or deprivation to others. Truth and sacredness are always given an important or significant place in religion. Hence, by the way of believing in the religion a society is tied up with a rope of unity and fraternity. Bathou is the prime and origin religion of the Bodos. Bathou religion has been traditionally accompanying the Bodos since the past. The Bodos have been practicing the Bathou religion as their main and origin religion since the past which even the history unable to reach and conducting their life by praying and worshipping to god with many traditional religious rites. In this study, only the Bathou religious folk belief is attempted to be discussed. The supreme god Bathou is believed or considers as their almighty, superior, creator as well as destructor in Bathou religion. Mainly the five elements or principles are the Bathou or the supreme god. ‘Ba’ stands for five and ‘Thou’ stands for depth. Bar (air), Dwi (water), Ha (soil), Or (fire) and Okhrang (sky) these five elements are the essential or crucial things are believed as the Bathou or god by the Bodos or Bathou religious and no things or beings are not created or formed without single elements of them in the world. It is believed or proofed that the Bodos are Bathou religious since the early time. The foremost book written about the Bodos ‘The Kacharis’ tells that Bathou is the supreme god of Bodos. In the book ‘The Kacharis’ the Bodos are called as – Animistic.

According to Rev. Sidney Endle- “The religion of the Kachari race is distinctly of the type commonly known as ‘animistic’, and its underlying principle is characteristically one of fear or dread.”⁴

This is however only partially true and the religion of these simple minded Mongoloid people are not animistic as labeled by Endle. P.C. Bhattacharya rightly remarks: “The Bodos are not animistic. They are worshippers of Bathou, the supreme God.”⁵

Great beliefs are seen among the Bodos in regard religion. Dread and beliefs are the main basis of religion. On the basis of the beliefs many religious rites and rituals are performed or executed properly. The great folk beliefs of the Bodos in respect of religion are the sacrificing of animals to God and goddesses. It is beliefs among the Bodo Bathou religious that the different deities do not satisfy until they sacrifice different animals for them like- chicken, pig, pigeon, goat, duck etc. It is also beliefs among them that if the deities or Gods and Goddesses dissatisfy their sacrificing, the slaughter of animals is unable to be completed in a moment and by this way, they are able to know that something may be happened in the family. If such events happen at the time of worshipping, as soon as they try to re-sacrifice so far they possible. There was a prevalent among the Bodos, to worship Marai Puja(worshipping to Mahamaya or Rwnswndri) in the past and it was performed in the month of bwisag/sawan (month of april and july). Even, still today in some places such Marai Puja is (feted) revered by sacrificing different animals. Domesticated buffaloes are sacrificed in this Puja or adoration in order to satisfy the goddess Mahamaya or Rwnswndri burwi. It is unusual for children to see this Marai Puja and it is belief among the Bodos that those families and its member forwarded this adoration without any faults they can able to achieve a victory in their life and can able to be successful in every sphere whether be in business be in cultivation or be in battle of life. It is imagined that after the festival of enjoyment like bwisagu there may have any wrong or fault among the village youth girls and boys which is believed to be unusual to the Bathou religious rites and that is why, in order to sanctify the village, the villagers hold a Garja Puja. Thus, the words delivered from the female shaman (doudini) during the Kherai Puja are believed as reliable and truth and if someone has any fault or wrong on himself he begs pardon through praying.

The main five philosophies of Bathou religion are the- air, soil, water, sky and fire and this over world would not be created if there was no existence of these elements. According to the beliefs of Bodos the combination or result of these five elements are the Bathou. There are five philosophical Mantras in Bathou religion like-

⁴ Endle, Sidney: The Kacharis. p.33, 1911.

⁵ Bhattacharya, P.C. : A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language. P.14, 1977.

sijou siri siriba

thaigir khonga khongba

sifung gudung gudungba

subungni asara asarba

afa bwrai bathouni bandwabw bandwba.

(The sijou plant has five spines

Elephant apple has five shells

Flute has five holes

Human being has five rites

The bathou has five bonds).

From the above characters it is believed that these characteristics of sour fruit, spine of sijou (euphorbia) as well as the words of Guru and the ritual laws of the folk are adapted to the five elements of the world. Hence, the Bodos believe that the Bathou is the combination of these five elements like air, soil, water, fire and sky. The folk festivals concerning to the religion of Bodos and how they have beliefs in these festivals are discussed below:

7.1 Folk belief in kherai festival or puja:

The kherai festival is the important religious festival of the Bodos. The kherai festival is celebrated in context of the Bathou religion. Kherai adoration (puja) is done with the help of doudini (female shaman) or done without her help. Thus, the kherai puja or festival is administered with the help of the shaman and when she is in the mood of trance various religious as well as social matters are asked from her spiritual soul. The kherai puja which is sacrificed with flowers along with other fruits and with animals is appeared with effect of folk beliefs. Although the chicken blood sucking dance and dancing upon the sharp sword of doudini (shaman) are astonish able deed these are one folk belief. Role of the doudini (shaman) is seen to be major in this kherai festival. Along with sacrificing to Gods she tells about the incidents happening at the present time as well as vulnerable incident amongst the society. How her telling is reliable or truthful we are unable to say it directly. But a society is bounded in such folk beliefs and the members of a society are retained far from an immoral act or sinful act.

The bodos used to conduct the kherai puja (ceremony) in the past at any day or time whenever they got scope during the growing crops. But Tuesday and Saturday on these two days kherai puja was not conducted or done because these two days were believed as an unusual days for such religious occasion or ceremony. Only some harmful deities were used to be worshipped on these two days in order to satisfy them. But, at present as recommended by the Bathou religious and teacher (insinuator) the Tuesday has been accepted as the holy Bathou day among the bathou religious. Accordingly, nowadays the Kherai festival is celebrated on second Tuesday of the month of Magh. But, still today the commitment to the ghost and devil given by the village traditional practitioner (oja) to sacrifice something to satisfy them are performed on the Tuesday and Saturday. However, these are the one evidence or facts of folk beliefs.

In the worship of Kherai there are so many philosophical thoughts of folk belief starting from encircling in the bathou bitha (alter) and planting of sijou are adhered in. Thus bathou bitha (alter) is encircled with eighteen pairs of bamboo strips height of about one and half to two feet and five long and thin strips produced from only a single bamboo. These strips stems are pushed in the soil around the alter slightly leaning order backward and other five pairs of long and thin strips are interlaced upon the strips placing straight as stem in the layer of pair. The eighteen pairs of stripes are placed perpendicularly pushing a little in the soil paired around the alter and these are placed in reverse mood which means spouse of each other who were the earlier guru or priests teaching the Bathou religious rites. The five layers of pair of stripes which are interlaced on the base level means the religious rites of the Bodo society. Apart from these, this layer of strips means the five elements of the world which are the philosophical principle of Bathou religion. Each circling of the pairs of strips around the altar represent the shelter moor place where the god or creator live in and the cotton yarn that spanned upon the flags (jatha) is the symbol of doorway through which the god makes his going and coming (entry and exit). Besides these, the little heap of cotton fibers that tied up along with the cotton yarn means the symbol of temporary shelter where the Bwrai Bathou takes rest for a while. After that, a tip of sijou plant brought from other sijou plant is grown at the Bathou altar. But as per the folk belief the tip of the sijou branch that would be removed should be blessed with holy water (religiously) and then to be spin with cotton yarn five times before removing or sectioning. After doing these it should be removed and should be spanned loosely with fali gwadan (new skirf). Five times spinning of cotton yarn adapts to the new born infant because when an infant takes birth its navel is spin with cotton yarn five times and then snithe below the spin. In this way spinning to the sijou tip is compared to the infant born. After doing as per the rites and rituals of the religion all the members of the family as well as the people of the village greet it to home by dancing along with their religious musical instruments like – kham, sifung, serja, jotha etc and starts to encircle the altar accordingly. A hole is made at the middle of the altar and in this hole a stone, an egg and five no's or pieces of unbroken rice are kept and then the tip of sijou is earthen or filled with soil gently and fairly. The stone and egg are spotted with sindur(a kind of red colour that the Hindus married women use on their head or forehead as ornament). The sijou plant is grown by showing gratitude giving pair of betel nut. The

stone that kept immortal the sijou plant means a young baby or unborn baby which remains steady in her mother's heart during the pregnancy and it is also the symbol of Bima Mainao (Lakshmi). There are folk beliefs among the Bodo society by taking the broken and unbroken peace of rice. The broken rice is not used in religious affairs or matter. Because, there is folk belief among the bodos that broken rice is unusual to be used and it means the person who has lost his/her spouse. That is why; the Bodo people always use the unbroken rice only in religious way. According to their beliefs, they get fear to use such broken because they believe that if they use such thing in religious affair it may cause them to lose their spouse untimely. The broken rice is compared with the (khorogoj), khorogoj means the men or women who has lost his/her spouse two or more times, it is believed that if one once loses his/her spouse untimely he/she would lose his/her spouse frequently or for more times. In this way, the widows or widowers are not allowed to take part in sacred occasion. There is an extended altar named Bwiswmuthini Ali which is considered as extended altar to the north attaching with the main altar and on that folder line some reed leaves are pushed or inserted in soil gradually in line and its meaning is to represent the symbol of couple. In celebrating such Kherai festival all the religious deities and ritual starting or beginning from the encircling of altar fence is the result of folk beliefs and it is prevailing still today among the Bodo people.

7.2 FOLK BELIEF IN GARJA PUJA :

The bodos perform SONGSARIYA GARJA PUJA once in a year in every village. This puja is given different names in different places i.e. BHELA HOGARNAI, MWDAI HOGARNAI, LAMA GATHENAI etc. Bodos perform this puja once in a year as they believe that GARJA MWDAI keeps eating by visiting the world. Every bodo village has a particular place for performing GARJA PUJA. They perform GARJA PUJA forever at a place where they perform once at that place. Bodos perform GARJA PUJA by choosing/selecting a good day after BWISAGW. The villagers clean the GARJA SALI before a day of performing puja and make BITHA(alter) for puja. The main BITHA is made bigger than others and small huts are built on every BITHA. BITHA for the holy Gods/deities are built to the North of Main BITHA and to the south for the evil Gods. After that, all gather at the residence of DOURI and take food with drinks. On the next day in the morning, DOURI along with some aged people of the village go and see the left/kept rice at GARJA SALI to check the holiness of the village. If the kept/left rice is seen as it was then it is believed that the village has holiness and if spread here and there then it is believed that the village is cursed. After that they DOUDINI ASHRANANWI or conduct a meeting and given to chew rice, touch flame/fire etc. to find out the offender. Before worship/offering puja, the offender is made sacred and then they proceed for the worship. First they worship holy deities by offering various items. After that, evil deities are chased by riding horse from the village to THANSALI (worship place) of evil deities located at the corner of GARJASALI. After worship and offerings, evil deities are taken to river bank. During the worship/offering puja to evil deities at the

THANSALI of evil deities, every individual of the village cannot participate. Only aged people of the village can participate. After chasing the evil deities to the river bank, they make small boats of banana tree and small sheds/huts are made on these small boats by banana BIKHONG (banana tree) for evil deities and decorated with AOJAR flower. During worship, evil deities are offered frogs, crabs, snails, JUJUMAI etc. which are found in the river. As per folk belief, evil deities prefer those edibles which are not eaten by human rather than those edibles which are eaten by human. As per folk belief, the person should be naked while he searches insects in the water for offering to evil deities. After completion of worship and offerings, the DOURIs lift the small boats on his head and release these boats by facing opposite to the water of the river. After releasing the boats, they dive and come up to the bank. As per folk belief of bodo, looking back towards released deities on the boats means the calling the evil deities back. That's why, prohibited to look back after releasing the evil deities. Aftermath, they come to their village and worship GAMINI mwdai (deity) and NONI mwdai(deity) so that released evil deities are restricted at the corridor of the village from entering in the village. This worship is called LAMA DANTHENAI or LAMA GATHENAI and those are full of folk beliefs and through such beliefs GARJA PUJA is performed.

8.0 RELIGIOUS FOLK BELIEF AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE:

Belief has close relationship with religion. Various hard and tight rules of religion and that maintain discipline in a society. Knowledge encompasses many religious beliefs and those are not acquire today rather it has been prevailing with social livings since ancient times. Beliefs were given place by the people in social living as a consequence of feeling and struggles in day to day life, and this beliefs have been transmitted to future generations as a message. Due to struggle in day to day life and feelings, belief have been given place and transmitted to future generation as a message. That is why, Benudhar Rajkhowa, a prominent author wrote on his “Assamese Popular Superstitions and Assamese Demonology” that – “If religion is that which binds, Superstition is the best religion. It binds society”.⁶

Generally religion is a way to worship the almighty where ritual and customs are created by adoring truth and beliefs to run a society. The prime religion of the Bodos is the Bathou. The Bodos have been accepting Bathou religion as their main religion since the period while history was not written and since then various folk beliefs have been prevailing with Bathou religion. There is no evidence to worship at other religion by the Bodos before worship bathou. There is much valuable knowledge in folk beliefs related to Bathou religion. These are as follows:

- (a) Traditional knowledge in Bathou Gaisonnai (Bathou fencing).
- (b) Traditional knowledge in choosing and planting of sizou plant.
- (c) Traditional knowledge in inserting of Jatha.

⁶ Rajkhowa, Benudhar: Assamese Popular Superstition and Assamese Demonology. P.13, 1974.

- (d) Traditional knowledge in forming the Bwiswmuthi Ali (the extended Altar).
- (e) Traditional knowledge in sacrificing.

8.1 Traditional Knowledge in Bathou fencing:

The Bathou religious generally chosen the Sizou plant (*Euphorbia Splendens*) as the representative symbol of Bathou. Bathou altar is seen with Sizou plant in every Bathou religious families and it is kept at the north-east corner of the yard and the Sizou plant is planted at the middle of the Bathou bitha (altar). The Bathou alter is surrounded by a structural fence which is interlaced in many rites and principles.

Usually, the Bathou altar is fenced or bounded with a bamboo strips and the strips must be produced from a single bamboo known jathi ouwa(a kind of bamboo). It means that the God is single according to the Bathou religion. Hence, as the creator or god is single Bathou altar is to be woven with strips from a single bamboo, Air, Soil, Water, Fire and Sky found in this world are created by the same God. No creature can exist in this world unless these five elements present. Besides these, the five natural principles – concept, birth, marriage, maturing and death have been sent along with the human beings. Bathou altar is interlaced with fifth tier on level in order to imply the principles mentioned above. To make the existence of human beings in this world continuous the marriage system is very necessary and it is gift of nature maintained by the creator. Usually, there is a fence around the altar and it is interlaced with many bamboo strips. There are many rites and principle as well as rules is weaving the Bathou fence. There are totally five pairs of long and eighteen pairs of short stems of strips as well as three thin and long spenders' strips of bamboo are used in Bathou fencing on altar.

Eighteen pairs of short strips are put uprightly on the ground around the Bathou altar in pair in extending order towards the above and the five pairs of long stripes are interlaced over and under one another upon the eighteen pairs of strips on a level over each other in a fifth layer which has a gap of distance of half fit to ten inches approximately and finally, on the top of them three long thin and slender stripes are also interlaced one after another. Each pair of strips put uprightly on the ground around the altar and each pairs of long strips woven on level in fifth tier has its meaning in regard of Bathou religion.

8.2 Traditional knowledge in choosing and planting of Sijou plant:

There is lot of mysteries in Sijou plant. When this earth was created earlier by the Bwrai Bathou (the Supreme God) its surface was in liquid form and the surface was covered with same flowerless plants known as moss plants. The Sizou plants originate from this moss plant. The Sizou plant is the first organism of plant grown on this earth. Generally, Sizou plant has no seeds and breeds by its existence part of body (leaf or branch). As the Sizou plant never leave to exist in this earth such as there is no end of living beings and the universe

continued to be exist one after another. This means, the God is everlasting or immortal. So the Sizou plant is compared with the god. The word 'Sizou' is composed of two meaningful word that is si + zou. Here 'Si' means 'soul' and 'Zou' means 'great and high'. That means 'great soul'. The Sizou plant has five pines. By these five pines God's five elements – air, water, soil, fire and sky are meant as well as five rites and principles of Bathou Bwrai (earlier Bathou religious priest). That is why the Bathou religious choose the Sizou plant as the symbol of Bathou or supreme god as it is adapted to the Bathou principles.

8.3 Traditional knowledge in inserting of Jatha (flag):

The Jatha (flag) the extreme part of the small kind of bamboo (ouwa) there is inserted on the ground about the both sides of the gate of the Bathou altar. It means that when the Kherai fuza or worshipping is performed in relation to the Bwrai Bathou (the supreme god) he enters in to the soul of the female-shaman (doudini) coming out through these Jatha and show him dancing with telling the sadness and problems happening to the people as well as speaking the wrong and guilty done by the people. There is a casemate tied up on the Jatha in which rice and a pair of betel – nut contained. The Jatha (the flag) is blinded with a yarn of cotton on the half height of the bamboo tip or Jatha. There is mystery meaning in it and its means the symbol of way through which the god makes his going and coming in worshipping occasion. Further, the small heap of cotton tied up along with the cotton yarn means the place where the god rest for a while in the worshipping occasion. Generally, or indeed there is mystery knowledge in inserting of Jatha and these are performed in religious rites.

8.4 Traditional knowledge in forming the “Bwiswmuthini Ali” (the extended altar):

Usually, the Bwiswmuthini Ali is formed by maintaining the religious rites. Though there is no hard and fast rule in forming the extended altar, it is generally formed stretching to the left about the length of one half to two fit at the height of two to two half inches from the ground level and its wideness is about 3-4 inches in sloping mood on the both sides of the fold. Here eighteen couples of deities who are considered to be the prophet sent to the earth is worshipped a paid reverence to them.

8.5 Traditional knowledge in aroj (praying to God):

The word 'Aroj' (the devotional song) is very meaningful as well as artful. The word Aroj consists of three meaningful words and it is described by the religious prophet or preachers like these Bodo words— आर'ज=आ(A)+र(RO)+ज(J)|आ(A) stands for anthukherainai (kneeling down), र (ro) stands for raisonnai (reciting) and ज (jo) stands for jurogkhalamnai (aspiring to have the god).

The main purpose of praying Aroj is to get the god and to have his blessing and that is why the praying is performed with a deep mind and sacred heart. Praying means singing devotional song and it is sung keeping many reasons and aspiration of an individual or common people. These are:

*Summoning pray to god.

*praying to god to make accept the offering in worshipping.

*Venial pray to god to be pardoned the mistake done unknowingly.

*Venial praying to god for the fault done by the common people.

*Praying to be excused for something left in worshipping or offering unknowingly.

Certainly, there is allots of meaning or mysteries traditional knowledge in aroj (praying to god).

9.0 CONCLUSSION:

Folk belief is an unwritten social mirror which leads a society with customs and social norms. Culture of a community, their survival, life style, customs, religious customs, social justice etc. is reflected in folk belief. These may be regarded as code social philosophy of a society. During justification folk belief and superstition are sometimes contradictory but justification vision of both is different to each other. In simple word, folk belief is traditional knowledge of society which gives direction to a society or a community and where we find logic but in many superstitions cannot find acceptable logic or it is not accepted. There is no any demerits due to folk belief rather people remain conscious for solution of own problems by adoring it. Based on such folk beliefs of the Bodos, it is observed that the Bodos have been conscious regarding danger and good results. There may various types of beliefs. It has also taken changes with changes of time and situation but nobody could be free from it. These beliefs are exists within developed communities also. Perhaps, there is existence of power of Almighty for which we find its result.

Folk belief varies from community to community and place to place. It cannot finish such beliefs by discussing it that exists within the Bodos. But we see unity due to such belief. Yet, above mentioned folk belief divisions, which are mainly derived/prevailed since ancient times being discussed based on role and effect of those belief in the society.

The Bodos are rich in folk literature and also rich in social experience. The social behavior of the Bodo people is generally taken by the Bodo society and it is related to each other and both are also related to folk belief.

It is collected from the things which were heard since ancient times or discussions on day to day life experiences and some data are collected by conducting interviews with the Bodo people residing in various places. It is collected from the things which were heard since ancient times or discussions on day to day life

experiences and some data are collected by conducting interviews with the Bodo people residing in various places.

There is absence of scientific reasons in many aspects. In spite of all, it is believed to be valid and essence of the folk-society.

LIST OF INFORMANTS

1. Name : Bani Kanta Tulchiary
 Village : 2 No. Dakhin Sekadari
 District : Kamrup, Assam
 Gender : Male
 Age : 71 Years
 Occupation : Farmer
2. Name : Bishnu Ram Mohilary
 Village : Udiyaguri
 District : Baksa, BTAD, Assam
 Gender : Male
 Age : 70 Years
 Occupation : Douri (Priest)



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PHOTOGRAPHS

1.



Bathou Fencing (Bathou Dumnai)

2.



Worship in front of Bathou altar

3.



Bwhi Hwnai(Sacrifice animal to God)

4.



Mainao Thisonnai