



# JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)

An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## A STUDY OF MULTILINGUALISM IN BODO

(With special reference to Kokrajhar district of Assam, India)

*Nerswn Goyary (Research Scholar)*  
Dept. of Bodo, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar  
Email: gnerswn@gmail.com

*Dr. Bhoumik Ch. Baro*  
Associate Professor, Dept. of Bodo  
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar

**Abstract:** Linguistically Bodo belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan language family. Racially it belongs to the India-Mongoloid race. From the ancient period they have been living in Assam in the northern bank of Brahmaputra River, Assam. Kokrajhar district is situated in the western part of the Brahmaputra valley. In this district, some other communities have been living together with the Bodo community and their languages are also different. As a medium of communication Bodo people speak more languages with other speakers of the other community in their daily life. In this context, multilingual situation has been taking a great role in the society. Bodo people speak Garo, Rabha, Assamese, Bangla, Hindi, English, Nepali, Santhali, Rajbangshi, and Bhojpuri along with their mother tongue, Bodo. In this paper, causes and factors of multilingualism will be studied.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism, Bodo, Cause, Factor.

### I. Introduction:

Multilingualism is a social phenomenon, which is prevailing in the society and linguistic community of Bodo. Racially, Bodo is originated to the Mongoloid race and linguistically belongs to the Tibetan- Burman group of Sino-Tibetan language family. Bodo people usually have concept on second, third and more languages and more languages have been becoming as a medium of communication. Bodo people speak Assamese, Hindi, English, Bangla, Rajbangshi, Nepali, Santhali, Garo, Rabha and Bhojpuri along with their own language, Bodo. The multilingual situation is prevailing in the Bodo society due to some social causes and social factors. Bodo people are very enthusiastic to speak different languages for better communication with the people of other society. It is important to study the social causes and factors based on the multilingualism.

### II. Area of the study:

The area of the study is basically relevant with the causes and factors of multilingualism in Bodo society. The impact of society on the linguistic aspects as the causes and factors of multilingual situation is confined in this study. This study confines the multilingualism in Bodo society within the state of Assam, India.

### III. Aim and objectives of the study:

The aim of the study is to complete the objectives taken in this paper. The objectives are to study the causes of the multilingualism in Bodo society and to study the factors behind the multilingual situation prevailing in Bodo society.

### IV. Significance of the study:

Bodo people need to adjust with the other language speakers as they have been dwelling with other communities since the time immemorial. In this context, so many language speakers hesitate to speak the Bodo language due to its tonal quality and Bodo people compelled to speak so many languages to communicate with other people, hence multilingualism situation come up automatically. This is natural situation and it has the importance to study with the point of view of linguistics so that the general people be able to know the causes and factors of multilingualism in Bodo society.

### V. Data collection:

The data have been gathering from the primary and secondary sources as well. Primary sources include observation and questionnaire, and secondary sources have been collected from reference books.

### VI. Methodology:

This study purely based on the description of causes and factors behind the multilingual situation prevailing in Bodo society. The use of other languages such as Assamese, Hindi, English, Bangla, Nepali, Santhali, Rajbangsi, Garo, Rabha and Bhojpuri along with the Bodo language in the Kokrajhar district is a matter of multilingualism study. In a multilingual context, data will be gathered for the requirement of the study. The descriptive method has been applying in this study. The Bodo people speak more than one language randomly and casually in formal and informal situation in their livelihood as a medium of communication. The multilingual situation of Kokrajhar district under the state of Assam, India is happening due to some causes and factors of multilingualism.

### Causes of multilingualism in Bodo society:

1. **Love amongst literatures:** The Bodo people mostly fond of other literatures, such as English literature, Hindi literature, Assamese literature, Bengali literature. Bodo readers read these literatures and inspired to create Bodo literature. In this context, they are concerning with the languages like English, Hindi, Assamese, Bangla and other languages which are prevailing in the Kokrajhar district. The Bodo people have been creating a multilingual situation by loving other literature. Therefore love of other literature is been a cause of multilingualism in Bodo society.

2. **Geographical causes:** There are some society, i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Bihari, Marowari, Rajbongshi, Santhali, Nepali, Garo, Rabha, and Muslim, which have been living together with Bodo society. The geographical location is occupied by all these communities and creating the multilingual situation as well. All the people of different communities have influenced to Bodo community and Bodo people have been communicating with other communities by speaking their languages and creating multilingualism. The geographical context is becoming a cause of multilingualism in Bodo society.

3. **Political causes:** Since, Assam is a state under India and Kokrajhar district belong to Assam, the political environment is also creating a multilingual situation in Bodo society. The national Party of India such as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Indian National Congress (INC) and the regional political parties like Assam Gana Parishad (AGP), Bodoland People's Front (BPF), and United People's Party Liberation (UPPL) have been playing a major role in Bodo society. Bodo community has been participating in these apolitical parties and many communities also have been participating in these political parties and communicating with other communities through different languages. Bodo people speak with Assamese people in Assamese language, Bengali people in Bangla, and Marowari people in Assamese, Bangla and Hindi languages, Bihari people in Assamese, Bangla, Hindi and Bhojpuri languages. In this context the political phenomena has been arising as a cause of multilingualism in Bodo society.

4. **Psychological causes:** Bodo people have been using several languages to move among different emotional realities. Indeed multilingual situation has been linked to different language enjoyment and this situation has been showing the decrease of anxiety of psychological level and other negative emotions are also diminishing through the speaking of different languages with different communities. Hence, multilingualism is caused by the psychology of the people.

5. **Historical causes:** The globalization is becoming a key cause of leading the rise of multilingualism all over the world. Due to the mobilization of man power on economic migration, education migration, marriage migration, it has been causing a conflict in language and communication. The history of migration in Kokrajhar district of Assam has been influencing the Bodo society in the context of language and communication and creating a multilingual situation. The other communities like, Marowari, Bengali, Assamese, and Bihari have been involving in the economic, education migration over the Bodo society.

6. **Increasing Regionalism and Parochialism:** Linguistically increasing regionalism in the expression or pronunciation favored by the speakers in particular geographical area. In Kokrajhar district, so many speakers of different languages are dwelling together and the medium of expression and pronunciation are fulfilled by different languages. The Bodo people favored some languages to express ideas, emotions and social feelings. Parochialism is the state of mind, when one focuses on small section of an issue rather than considering its wider issue or context. Generally, it has narrow scope of expression and pronunciation. In this context, Bodo people have been taking help of other languages to express their, idea, emotion b and social feelings. They speak Assamese, Bangla, Hindi, English, Bhojpuri, Rajbongshi, Nepali, Santali, Garo, and Rabha to express their ideas, emotions and social feelings. So, increasing of regionalism and parochialism are causing multilingualism in Bodo society.

#### **Factors of multilingualism in Bodo society:**

1. **Multiple languages Acquisition:** In Bodo society multilingual speakers are acquired and maintained at least one language during their childhood. Later, they team non-native languages. The language acquisition in the multilingual environment depends on the different linguistic units and these units are received by the children in different languages as an opportunity to mingle with the other society. This acquisition happens in case of male and female person too. So, this acquisition of multiple languages creates multilingualism in Bodo society.

2. **Language dominance and proficiency:** Language dominance is interpreted as referring to the relative strength of a multilingual proficiency in each language. The degree of multilingualism is manifested by individual who knows and speaks more than two languages. The frequency of use by Bodo people in overall fluency and domains of using other languages is the factor of multilingualism. The four domains of language proficiency are reading, writing speaking and listening. Language proficiency is the measurement of an individual by each language that the individual may be proficient in English or Hindi or Assamese and other

languages. The proficiency of Bodo people in some languages has been creating a multilingual situation in Bodo society.

**Conclusion:** It is seen from the above study that the multilingualism in Bodo society has some causes and factors from the point of view of dwelling of different communities in Kokrajhar district of Assam, India. Speakers of different communities have been influencing by their languages to Bodo speakers in the contexts of love amongst literature, geographical causes, political causes, psychological causes, historical causes, and increasing regionalism and parochialism. It is also seen that some factors like multiple languages acquisition, and languages dominance and proficiency are the factors of multilingualism.

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