

## Impact of Modernity on Cultivation of the Bodos As Reflected In a Short Story of Z.D. Basumatary

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### ABSTRACT

The Bodos are an agricultural community. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the Bodos. They mainly depend on paddy cultivation. They cultivate three types of paddy. They are *Maisali* (rice grown in low lying land), *Bawa* (rice grown in marshes with deep water), and *Ashu* (grown in high land). *Maisali* has two varieties, i.e. *Maima* (large variety) and *Maisa* (small variety). Their method of cultivation is primitive. For tilling the soil they use wooden plough. Normally they make two bullocks or buffalos together and join them with plough and yoke and till soil. For cultivation they mainly depend on monsoon rain. They select plain and alluvial land for agriculture. Normally they prefer such a plot of land where cultivation is done with the help of rain water. They construct artificial irrigation system to supply water in the paddy field. They also construct embankment for preserving water to use in cultivation. They divert the preserve water through canals to paddy field. Their traditional tools of cultivation are- *Nangwl* (Plough), *Jungal* (Yoke), *Mwi* (Harrow), *Laothi* (Stick), *Khodal* (Hoe), *Khwthia Bathi* (Carrying rod), *Khasi* (Sickle), *Baokha* (Carrying tool), *Hukhen* (Bamboo hook), *Hasib* (Broom), *Khada* (Basket), *Sandanga* (Large Sieve), *Songrai* (Winnoing pan), *Roina* (Implement for collecting seeds), etc. However, it is seen that the traditional methods of cultivation are changing slowly due to impact of modernity in course of time. Today, some of the farmers use hybrid or high-yielding seeds and modern scientific methods. They use modern scientific tools like- tractor, sprayer, duster, chemical fertilizer, pesticides etc. for more production. Earlier they are only confined to rice production. However, now, they also cultivate difference types of cash crops and vegetables. They also grow areca nuts. Moreover, some farmers cultivate tea and rubber. Generally in traditional Bodo society, cultivation is done mainly for domestic consumption. However, it is observed that now they produce crops both for consumption as well as for marketing. They sell their surplus crops to earn money. Moreover, some of the new generation has taken up the cultivation on a commercial scale. Crops are now their main source of cash income.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture, Economy, Occupation, Modernity and Society

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The Bodos are one of the indigenous tribes of India. They are one of the earliest inhabitants of Assam. Bodos are the single largest ethno linguistic community of Assam. Besides Assam, there are some Bodo pocket areas in the neighboring states like -Meghalaya, Nagaland and West Bengal. Moreover, they are also found in some pocket areas of neighboring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh etc. In olden times, they were known as Kiratas, Asuras, Danavas etc. G.A. Grierson mentions that the generic name 'Bodo' was first given to them by B.H. Hodgson. He observes, "*The generic name 'Bodo' was first given to them by B.H. Hodgson.*" [1] According to him, Bodo or Boro, Mech or Mes and the Kacharies are the same people. Racially the Bodos are Mongolian.

Bodos have their own language and culture. However, they did not have written literature until the second decade of the twentieth century. The Christian missionaries started publishing books on grammar, dictionary, religion, tales, rhymes and songs. '*Bodoni Phisa O Aiyen*' is the first published book in Bodo language. It was published by '*Habraghat Bodo Sanmilani*' in 1915. This is a book on Bodo customary laws. The proper Bodo literature was started from 1920 when Satish Chandra Basumatary brought out the '*Bibar*' magazine editing in the manuscript form. The '*Bibar*' magazine as its first printed form appeared in 1924 in the editorship of Satish Chandra Basumatary. '*Abari*' written by Ishan Mushahari is the first short story of Bodo literature. It was published in 1930 in the magazine '*Hathorkhi Hala*' edited by Pramod Chandra Brahma. Since the 40s decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century the Bodo short story has been flourishing with a literary flavor in which social life has been reflected to a great extent. In due course of time, the Bodo literature has recognized as one of the

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<sup>1</sup>Grierson, G.A. *Linguistic Survey of India, vol-3(part-2)*. Delhi:Lowprice Publications,2005.Reprinted.p.1

Indian literatures. Consequently, the Bodo literature has gain a status in the context of literary discipline. Many writers of this language have mirrored the social and cultural changes in their short stories eloquently. Thus, the literary texts may be taken into account for critical discussion from multifarious aspects.

**Z. D. Basumatary** is a talented and famous short story writer of contemporary Bodo literature. So far, he has contributed two short story books in the granary of Bodo literature. According to critic, Basumatary's stories tell sarcastically the men and women of decadent society. Basumatary's first short story book '*Ang Fwifingwn*' (I will come back), was published in 1997. Basumatary's second short story book call '*Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi*' (Mr. Haibrid's sweat and tear) was published in 2005. There are thirty-two stories in the book. Phukan Ch. Basumatary and Swarna Prabha Chainary observe, "*Gobinda Basumatary and Zumai Dala Basumatary; the two another upcoming Boro short story writers are trying to reflect the ethnic clashes taking place between the Santhals and the Boros in the western part of Assam, particularly in the Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts during the time of the Bodoland movement.*"<sup>[2]</sup>

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For scientific research review of literature is an important part. S. Endle described about Bodo society and culture in his book call '*The Kacharis*'. In a book call '*Social Mobility*', Binoy Kumar Brahma discusses about the transition of Bodo society and culture. Anil Kumar Boro has highlighted about the social and cultural changes of the Bodos in a book call '*A History of Bodo Literature*'. Phukan Ch. Basumatary and Swarna Prabha Chainary have discussed about the transition of Bodo society in a book call '*Monograph of the Boros*'. K. Brahma has elaborately discussed about the Bodo society and culture in his book call '*Aspects of social customs of the Bodos*'.

## III. OBJECTIVES

According to many critics of the language, **Z. D. Basumatary** has mirrored the contemporary Bodo culture through his short stories. In his stories, he has eloquently portrayed the impact of modernity on cultivation as well as culture through storytelling and characterization. Therefore, this paper aims -

- a) To study the cultivation of the Bodos,
- b) To study the impact of modernity on cultivation, chiefly based on the story call *Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi* (Mr. Haibrid's sweat and tear) written by Z. D. Basumatary and
- c) To highlight the impact of modernity on cultivation.

## IV. HYPOTHESIS

Culture is adaptive and dynamic. Culture is responsive to the changing condition of the physical world. Change is inevitable for every culture. Thus, it is assumed that the traditional cultivation methods of the Bodos are changing slowly in course of time due to impact of modernity. It is also assumed that the impact of modernity on cultivation is reflected in selected short story through storytelling and characterization. Thus, it is assumed that the Impact of modernity on cultivation may be observed if the chosen texts are analyzed from sociological point of view.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on literary text. The short story call '*Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi*' written by **Z. D. Basumatary** is the primary data of the chosen topic. The data is collected from the anthology of short stories. Thus, the topic has been analyzed critically based on the chosen text (Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi). In addition, for analyzing the proposed topic the secondary data which are directly related to the study are used. Thus, help is taken from some books and articles which are directly related to the study. In addition, observation method has been used for analyzing the study. The collected data have been analyzed extensively from sociological point of view, though the data are purely literary text.

## VI. THE STORY

**Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi:** In the story call '*Mister Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi*' (Mr. Haibrid's sweat and tear); the writer has nicely reflected the impact of modernity on cultivation through the character of Jwngblao, a modern and progressive farmer. He is the main character of the story. Thingini and Roje are two other characters of the story. They are Jwngblao's wife and daughter respectively. As reveal in the text, before engaging in agricultural work, Jwngblao serves Bodo society as social worker. He gives service to society for long twelve years during Bodo movement. However, he has no interest in politics. On the other hand,

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<sup>2</sup>Basumatary, Phukan Ch. & Chainary, Swarna Prabha. *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakshi Publishers & Distributors, 2017. First Edition.p.40

he has no interest in doing service and in contract works. But, he has a great interest in cultivation. He thinks that if other community can earn money cultivating in barren land, then why the Bodo community cannot make the Bodoland a second Punjab. Thus, he becomes a cultivator. Jwngblao is a modern cultivator. He keeps himself busy with cultivation. He gets inspiration for doing cultivation from Punjab and Haryana state. Jwngblao keeps himself busy with cultivation works as well as with new scheme of cultivation. He believes one can earn lacs of money through cultivation, if he cultivates with modern scientific methods using hybrid seeds. Therefore, from the beginning he uses modern tools and modern scientific methods for cultivation in place of traditional methods and tools. He uses tractor for cultivation. Besides, he uses hybrid seed and modern pesticide for cultivation. First he cultivates *cabbage* crop with scientific methods. Again he decides to cultivate hybrid tomato call *Obinash-2* following scientific methods. He takes loan from private company for cultivating the hybrid tomato call *Obinash-2*. He wants to produce more tomatoes and hopes to earn more money after selling them. He decides to grow hybrid tomato, the *Obinash-2* in five bighas land. He desire to cultivate 3600 saplings of hybrid tomato, the *Obinash-2* in one bigha land keeping two fit distance from each saplings. He desire to produce 15,000 kilograms tomatoes in one bigha land. He hopes to sell the tomatoes for fifteen rupees per kilogram. Accordingly he hopes to earn more than ten lacs money after selling them. He hops to repay the private loan with the earning of tomatoes. Moreover, he thinks to buy a new tractor with the earning of crops.

## VII. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The Bodos had a very primitive way of cultivation as regards technology, seeds, instruments etc. Cultivation was carried on in the beginning by the crude method by cutting down jungles and trees, setting them on fire, making holes in the land with the help of digging and the sowing seeds. Traditionally the Bodo farmers use *Nangwl* (Plough), *Jungal* (Yoke), *Mwi* (Harrow), *Laothi* (Stick), *Khodal* (Hoe), *Khwthia Bathi* (Carrying rod), *Khasi* (Sickle), *Baokha* (Carring tool), *Hukhen* (Bamboo hook), *Hasib* (Broom), *Khada* (Basket), *Sandanga* (Large Sieve), *Songrai* (Winnoing pan), *Roina* (Implement for collecting seeds) etc. for cultivation. They could not think other means for cultivation besides wooden plough and bullocks. Their method of cultivation is primitive. For tilling soil they use wooden plough. Normally they make two bullocks or buffalos together and join them with plough and yoke and till soil. For cultivation they mainly depend on monsoon rain. They select plain and alluvial land for agriculture. Normally they prefer such a plot of land where cultivation is done with the help of rain water. They construct artificial irrigation system to supply water in the paddy field. They also construct embankment for preserving water to use in cultivation. They divert the preserve water through canals to paddy field. However, from an inclusive analysis of the text, it is observed that Jwngblao is a modern cultivator. The mindset of Jwngblao is progressive. Jwngblao cultivates with modern scientific methods. He uses tractor in place of traditional wooden plough and hybrid seed in place of traditional seeds. Moreover, in place of the traditional manure, the cow dung; he uses modern chemical fertilizer and pesticide for his cultivations. Jwngblao cultivates *Cabbage* using scientific methods and tools. He also decides to cultivates hybrid tomato call *Obinash-2* following scientific methods. He decides to cultivate 3600 saplings of *Obinash-2* tomato in one bigha land maintaining two fit distance from each sapling. Earlier, they mainly depend on paddy cultivation. They cultivate three types of paddy. They are *Maisali* (rice grown in low lying land), *Bawa* (rice grown in marshes with deep water), and *Ashu* (grown in high land). *Maisali* has two varieties, i.e. *Maima* (large variety) and *Maisa* (small variety). However, it is observed that Jwngblao cultivates cabbage and tomato also. He gets inspiration from Punjab and Haryana for cultivation. Now, they also cultivate difference types of cash crops such as mustard seed, tobacco, jute, varieties of pulses etc. Besides, they also produce various types of vegetables like potato, cabbage, onion, garlic, coriander, ginger, cauliflower, radish, carrot, cucumber, gourd, etc. They also grow areca nuts. Moreover, some farmers cultivate tea and rubber.

Previously Bodo people are not interested in trade and commerce at all. Earlier crops are cultivated mainly for domestic consumption only. However, it is observed that Jwngblao has taken up the cultivation on a commercial scale. Even, he takes loan from private company for cultivating the hybrid tomato call *Obinash-2*. He decides to cultivate hybrid tomato call *Obinash-2* in five bighas. He wants to produce more tomatoes and hopes to earn more money after selling them. He cultivates on commercial scale in order to get additional income for essential commodities and services. Crops are Jwngblao's main source of cash income as well as livelihood. He hops to repay the private loan with the earning of tomatoes. Moreover, he thinks to buy a new tractor with the earning of tomatoes. The traditional method is more time consuming and needs more manual labor. Nevertheless, it is very hard to produce more crops with traditional seeds and methods. The acceptance of cultivation on commercial purpose and the attitude of running a family with the earning of cultivation are modern and progressive. This is the impact of modernity. Besides, vegetables, pulses, fruits, cloth etc.; now they rear poultry and other domestic animals for commercial purposes. It is seen that the traditional methods of cultivation or production has changed due to impact of modernity. Emergence of science and technology has been playing an important role in changing the traditional cultivation methods many aspects. Knowledge of modern education, urbanization, development of science and technology, development of communication,

market economy and new world view encourages Jwngblao to produce crops in commercial purpose as well as to adopt modern means of methods for cultivation. Science and technology is one of the major factors for changing the traditional cultivation methods.

### VIII. FINDINGS

From an extensive analysis of the selected short story from sociological view point, the following observation can be made.

1. Writer of the selected short story has attempted to reflect the impact of modernity on cultivation.
2. The traditional techniques of cultivation are changing slowly in course of time due to impact of modernity.
3. Some of the new generation has taken up the cultivation on a commercial scale. Now these are the basis of Bodo economy. Thus, the importance of towns or cities has increased highly in Bodo society.
4. The Knowledge of modern education and the development of science and technology enable them to modernize their cultivation process.
5. Realization of modern education brings changes in mindset as well as in cultivation.
6. Production increases after modernization of cultivation methods.
7. The economic condition and standard of living improves after modernization of cultivation.
8. Money economy emerged against traditional barter system.

### IX. CONCLUSION

From an inclusive analysis of the selected text call *Mr Hybridni Gwlwmdwi Arw Mwdwi* (Mr. Haibrid's sweat and tear); it is observed that Jwngblao is a modern and progressive cultivator. He cultivates with modern tools and methods for more production of crops. He uses modern tools like-tractor, sprayer, duster, modern chemical fertilizer, pesticides etc. for cultivation. It is seen that due to impact of modernity the traditional methods of cultivation are changing slowly. Farmers of present generation use modern tools and methods for more production of crops. Previously Bodos are not interested in trade and commerce due to prevailing social customs and beliefs. However, it is observed that the new generation has taken up the cultivation on a commercial scale. Now, crops are main source of cash income. It is observed that Jwngblao produces crops both for family consumption as well as for selling. Such kinds of descriptions are vividly visible in the selected short story.

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