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“Changing trends in the Bodo marriage system”

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Methodologies: For the collection of data different kinds of methodologies were used such as Oral sources by conducting interviews from the people of different age groups from the young age to the older age as those peoples are the ones who could see and witness the major changes that has occurred in the traditional marriage system of the Bodos. Secondary sources were also used for this purpose but on a very low scale.

Keywords: Bodo Kachari, Hinjaw, Gwrjiya, Kharsonny, Swngnanwi Langny Haba, Houwa, Mahendi, Haldi, Rasam, Sangeet.

Abstract: The Bodo society has a strong connection with different societies nearby and it cannot be denied the fact that due to that connection a large scale influence of other cultures can be seen amongst them. At present we can see huge wave of changes that has come from time to time in the marriage practices. Thus, these changing trends will be discussed below.

Introduction: The Bodo also called Boro, is one of the largest tribal community group in the state of Assam and they are probably the largest group of scheduled tribe (plains) in Assam state of India. The Bodos are a part of the great Bodo Kachari family of ethno-linguistic groups and they are spread across most of the Northeastern states of India. The largest section of the population of the Bodos resides in the region of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) under the state of Assam. The Bodo society traditionally is an agricultural society and like the other community groups, a large section of the population of the Bodos lives in the rural areas. They are very much connected with nature. Like the other communities of India, the Bodos also have a unique tradition of social practices. They are very much proud of their culture, their food habits, dresses they wear, language they speak, their marriage systems which are very unique and beautiful.

Main Body: In today's world globalization has brought different corners of the world together and many other communities who does not have any kind of alien impact in the earlier days, now all these groups are coming together living in the same regions and sharing love. Due to that factor slowly and gradually, changes can be seen in each and every society. People began to adapt new things from the others, few are bad and many are good. Our country India has a diverse culture, it has got over thousands of communities who speak different languages, follows different religions, different customs, practices and different social norms as well. For example in the Northeast India itself there are many groups of peoples, those groups have got their own culture and tradition, out of them the Bodos are also one of the community who have resided in the plain parts of Northeast India for over thousands of years and they are not the only group staying in that part, there are other groups as well such as Rabhas, Tiwa, Lalung, Ahom, Mishing, Assamese, Bengali etc. After staying alongside for hundreds of years those peoples have the same diet for example people living in this areas consume the same food, meat and grow same vegetables. Due to this cultural assimilation many habits of these groups spread among each other but it was just a beginning, during the colonial period the colonial masters have always tried to subjugate the local

indigenous peoples and they have tried many tactics in doing so. Spreading education to make the people read and later on making them as servants is the most important one. When education came lots of knowledge came, it gave birth to new ideas, new thoughts and new perspective to look at the things not in the old fashioned way but with a new perspective. The spread of modern education in the post-colonial period brought the change that was required in that point of time. The society too evolved and began to adapt new things in order to cope up with time, adapting new things doesn't mean that complete modernization will take place putting an end to the traditional way of life, no it was not that. Adopting new things means making the old ones in a better shape, there were some set of social rules which had to be changed to cope up with time. The traditional marriage system of the Bodos includes Swngnanwi Langnai Haba, Gwrjiya Lakhinai Haba, Kharsonny Haba, Bwnanwi Langnai Haba, Dongkha Habnai Haba and Dwnkharny Haba. There are many changes that we can see as of today which are the results of the influence of other Indian cultures, they are:

1. Mahendi Rasam:

This is a kind of pre marriage ceremony in which girls take part and make some beautiful design on their hands, especially at the hands of the bride to be. This kind of system entered in the Bodo marriage system entered in the Bodo marriage system very recently and it is not a part of traditional practice.

2. Haldi Rasam:

It is also one of the pre-marriage ceremony in which haldi or turmeric is part on the bodies of both bridegroom and bride. This system is followed mostly in North India but due to cultural exchanges and the influence of others culture to the Bodo society, it has managed to make its place in few urban regions.

3. Sangeet Ceremony:

Sangeet which is a Hindi word meaning music is again one of the major influence that has come to make its place in the traditional Bodo marriage function. In this system music and dance programme is organized where both boys and girls sing and dance. In many urban places there we can have several example of this system. In the Bodo society earlier the practices of singing and dancing did take place but in the traditional way.

The traditional way of marriage ceremonies are very much different as compared to that of modern ways. In this way the Bodos till today follows all the major ceremonies and sub ceremonies but there are many new things coming up due to course of time. Many factors are responsible for the changes coming in today, such factors are- education, development of transport, communication, growing connectivity between one place to another, influence of other Indian cultures and last but not the least the adaptive mindset of the Bodo people. The Bodo society is a very welcoming society, the Bodo people in a good sense are very much adaptive. They can adapt things quite good and they know that whatever the changes that has come over be adjusted between them. They accepted the changes that came in the marriage ceremonies which are very good entertaining.

4. Pre wedding photoshoot:

It is not a ceremony actually but we can say this is a practice of clicking pictures just for their memories and nothing else. Now a days this is practiced mostly by many couples, earlier days for example this was not present.

Conclusion: The present generation has passed the ways which was earlier recognized as social taboos, they don't believe in such taboos anymore. Issues such as caste, religion, looks, race, etc. are all thrown away in today's day. Getting married with a guy or a girl from different community was labelled earlier as taboo but not today, as of today there is a little restriction from the society for this issue and they complains about it but all goes well when the parents gives their support to them. Caste matters in the marriage but the growth of education has helped to shut all these stereotype norms from the society, the Bodo society as of now is opening up and the conservative thoughts of the people are slowly getting out of their minds. But in case of religion a little change can be seen in today's day, the younger generation of people does arranged marriage very less in numbers and love marriages are the mostly favored one. Many learned intellectuals of the Bodo society does support this idea of love marriage, earlier there was not any kind of scope for it because of the various factors mentioned earlier. By looking at all of these developments there is a clear difference in the viewpoint of older generations and the new generations. Accepting new things and adapting the cultures of different communities are present not only in the marriage system only as there are changes in the everyday life of every single individuals as well, which has to be accepted and it should not be seen as an extinction of our age old practices which we are following from the time immemorial.

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Interviews:

1. Interviewed, Buddhadev Brahma Choudhury, elderly person, Village Head Narabari, Kokrajhar, age- 65, on 15th of April.
2. Interviewed, Dahar Gwra Narzary, young age, Engineering student, Kokrajhar, age- 25, on 15th of April.
3. Interviewed, Xavier Basumatary young age, Master's student, age- 22, on 17th of April.
4. Interviewed, Dr. Jelina Mochahary, middle age person, Assistant Professor, Diphu Government College, age- 47, on 16th of April.