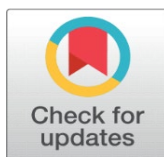
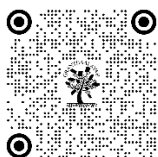


# AN OVERVIEW OF FAIR AND FESTIVALS OF THE BODOS AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMENFOLK

Dr. Bibungsar Swargiary <sup>1</sup>  

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Bodo, Khoirabari College, Udalguri, Guwahati, Assam, India



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## Corresponding Author

Dr. Bibungsar Swargiary,  
[bibungsar1985@gmail.com](mailto:bibungsar1985@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

The Bodos are the early settler of North-east India basically Assam and also inhabitants of neighboring countries of India like Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. Racially the Bodo belongs to the Mongoloid stock of the Indo-Mongoloids or Indo-Tibetans. The Bodos are most adventurous in their cultural activities. The Bodos are most close to nature. Hence, the maximum activities are closed to nature and their livelihood also depends on nature. The observation of the socio-cultural activities and their economy depends on nature. The Bodos observe diverse fairs and festivals at different times or seasons before cultivation, during the cultivation, and after the end of the cultivation. During the observation of the fair and festivals, all the people come to enjoy willingly together. The Bodos are very rich in their culture and tradition which are reflected quite in their fairs and festivals. The fair and festivals of the Bodos mostly related to agriculture and allied activities. These fairs and festivals are classified into three types of Seasonal festivals, Agricultural festivals, and religious festivals. In all the fairs and festivals womenfolk have a big contribution or role in Bodo society. The womenfolk are foremost part of the celebration of the fair and festivals of the Bodos.

**Keywords:** Bodo Women, Types of Festival, Celebration, Participation of Womenfolk, Culture

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bodos have mainly resided in rural areas and beauty of the nature. The Bodos are mostly closed to nature. Hence, the activities are also shown in close relation to nature. Other hands, their livelihood, and socio-cultural activities are also dependable on nature. But at present, the Bodos are shifting from rural to urban areas and their livelihood is also transforming into modernization with the impact of globalization. The Bodos are an agricultural-based society and their family economies also depended on agriculture. With the impact of globalization, they also cultivated the scientific way of their cultivation and make the strongest economic condition in their family. The Bodos are celebrated at diverse fairs and festivals

before cultivation, during cultivation, and at end of the cultivation. During the celebration of the fair and festival, every people come to enjoy willingly together.

## 2. METHODS

The methodology is the essential part of the study and the key point to measuring the research problem. So, the article has completely done based on fieldwork and after the completion of the fieldwork, the article is written by applying the observation and analytical method.

To make the study properly the data are collected with the help of fieldwork in the different places of Bodo dominated area. The important data for the proposed study has been collected mainly from primary sources as well as secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from visiting different places in the majority area of the Bodo people.

The study is enriched by collecting the secondary data from the various existing published materials in different regions of the Bodo living area such as books, journals, magazines, souvenirs, periodicals, articles, etc. After the collection of data from both primary and secondary sources, the article is written.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the fair and festivals, we see the reflection of the culture, tradition, language, and aspects of livelihood, etc. of a society. The Bodos are very rich in their culture and tradition which are reflected quite in fairs and festivals. The fair and festivals of the Bodos were mostly connected to agriculture and allied activities. The fair and festivals of the Bodos are classified into three types of Seasonal festivals, Agricultural festivals, and religious festivals. Every fair and festival the womenfolk play creates a vital role in Bodo society. The womenfolk are the foremost part of the celebration of the fair and festivals in Bodo society.

## 4. SEASONAL FESTIVAL

*Bwisagw* is the greatest seasonal festival of the Bodos. *Bwisagw* festival has been celebrated since the early period of the Bodo Society. *Bwisagw* festival is celebrated in the springtime (in April). In the springtime, nature becomes more beautiful. At that time tree blooms new leaves, flowers also start blooming and nature becomes fully green. *Bwisagw* festival is mainly celebrated before the harvesting and after the celebration; the cultivators get ready to cultivate paddy crops.

Regarding the *Bwisagw* festival, Padmashree awardees Kameswar Brahma eminent scholar of Bodo literature rightly observed that the -"This springtime festival is observed at the starting part of the Assamese month Bohag. Which they cal Baisakh. It may be stated that as it is observed in the very early part of the first month of the year, it is called Baisakh + Agu > Baisagu. Brahma (2008). *Bwisagw* festival is celebrated in the two types such as *Mwswoni Bwisagw* (for cattle) which is celebrated on the *Makar Sankranti* of *Chaitra* month (April) and *Mansini Bwisagw* (for a human being) which is celebrated from the first day of Baisakh month (April) up to seven days of the month. *Mwswoni Bwisagw* festival is consecrated to the cattle. The cattle are garlanded and dotted with spots and are taken to the nearest pond or river for bathing on that day. Before taking the cattle for bathing the womenfolk wake up in the early morning to clean the houses, and they co-operate with the men folk in collecting important things which are most relevant to the

*Mwswoni Bwisagw* such as pieces of gourd, brinjal, turmeric, *Mwkhwna bilai* (a kind of medicine tree), *Khatri bilai*, *Digilithi*, *Raideng bilai* (leaf of cane) to beat the cattle and in the decoration with garlands, dotted spots, taken to the pond or river to bathing on the day of *Mwswoni Bwisagw*.

The cowherds drive the cattle on that day with the *Digilithi* or *Dighalithi* plant despite stick. The cowherds throw pieces of gourd, brinjal, and turmeric toward the cattle being bathed in the pond or river. The cowherds and young one sing songs during bathing the cattle like as-

"Lao ja phanthao ja  
Bwswr bwswr er hanja hanja  
Bimani khither Biphani khither  
Nwngswr jagwn haluwa geder  
Bima gaide badi daja  
Bipha bolod badi ja  
Bari khonani embu bongla  
Bibadi ja gidir jangila."

**English Rendering:**

(Eat gourd, eat brinjal  
Grow up year to year  
To spite your mother and your father  
You will be large bullocks  
Don't be short statured like your mother  
Be large like your bull father  
Like the frog in the corner of the garden  
May you be sleek and long).

After bathing, the cattle are left free in the grazing fields on that day. There is a tradition in Bodo society to take *Khungkha* (a kind of curry which is prepared of more than 100 kinds of varieties leaves and fruits etc. of nature) on the day of *Mwswoni Bwisagw*. *Khungkha* is made and collected by the womenfolk. The Bodos take the *Khungkha* as herbal medicine, and they believe *Khungkha* cured the diseases of the human body. Evening time cowsheds are cleaned and surrogated by womenfolk. The womenfolk earthen and pray the God for the bright future of cattle using to tie with new ropes.

The womenfolk actively participated from beginning to end of the festival such as guest receiving, worshipping the God and Goddesses, dancing and singing, preparing varieties food items, cakes, etc. On the first day of *Mansini Bwisagw* every member of the family offers prayer to *Bathou Bwrai* in the temple of the village and remembers the deceased members of the family. In the festival mood, all welcome the New Year for all the members of society. The children, young girls, boys, aged men, and women also willingly sing melodious *Bwisagw* songs and dance to the beat of musical instruments which are beaten by men folk such as *Kham* (a kind of drum which is made by 3.4` feet wood, skin of the animals), *Siphung* (flute, which is made by bamboo), *Jabkhring* (metallic instrument/ tambourine), *Jotha* (cymbals), *Serja*, (a traditional musical instrument of Bodos like modern Violin) *Gongona* (harp, which is made by the split of bamboo). During dancing and singing, young boys and girls

express their feelings of pure joy and mirth through the *Bwisagw* song. In the *Bwisagw* song, the importance of womenfolk is reflected and also reflects the shape of nature, working activities, love, weaving activities, repentance, joking, etc., and these songs are not sung in the absence of womenfolk. During the enjoying, they ask families to donate them something if possible, such as rice, money, eggs, etc. At present, the celebration of *Bwisagw* festival is decreased from seven days and it is happening in the open field one day to two days. The celebration of *Bwisagw* festival reflected the love of nature, unity, and integrity among the different sections of the people, the tradition of the Bodos.

The singing of *Bwisagw* song and its enjoyment are not completed without womenfolk. In the *Bwisagw* festival, different kind of song is sung, and, in these songs, the importance of womenfolk is also reflected. The *Bwisagw* song is classified into the following categories. These are:

- 1) Mithingani Mohor Berkhanghwnai (Reflection of nature).
- 2) *Maonai Dangnaini Methai* (Reflection of working activities).
- 3) *Gwsw Thwnai* (Reflection of Love).
- 4) *Danai Lunai Berkhanghwnai* (Reflection of handloom activities).
- 5) *Daha* (Reflection of repentance).
- 6) *Jongkhainai* (Reflection of Joking).
  - *Bigumwi Bibwnang Jongkhainai* (Teasing husband of elder sister and younger sister-in-law).
  - *Bibajwijwng Jongkhainai Methai* (Teasing wife of elder brother).
  - *Megon Khebnai Sengra-Siklajwng Jongkhainai* (Teasing love younger boys and girls).
  - *Bihaokhwu Jongkhainai* (Teasing father & mother both daughter-in-law & son in law).
  - *Bikhumjw Bijamadwijwng Jongkhainai* (Teasing mother-in-law and son-in-law).
  - *Gaojwn Thakhakhw Lananwi Khonnai Methai* (Song of Gaojwn thakha, (money payable to the parents of the bride).

Generally, the *Bwisagw* festival is for enjoying. During the *Bwisagw* festival the young boys and girls, old men and women, and children enjoy willingly.

#### 4.1. AGRICULTURAL FESTIVAL

As an agriculturalist society, maximum festivals of the Bodos are connected to agriculture. *Magw Domasi*, *Kati Gasa Saonai*, *Wngkham Gwrlwi Janai*, *Hal Jangkhra*, *Gosa Lajennai*, *Mainao Borainai* are known as agricultural festivals and these festivals are celebrated during the plantation, weeding, and after harvesting.

#### 4.2. MAGW DOMASI

*Magw Domasi* is celebrated in the *Makar Sankranti* of Assamese month *Puskh* (middle of January) and on the first day of Assamese month *Magh*. Basically, the *Magw Domasi* festival is celebrated by taking varieties food items, and cakes and enjoying them. In the *Magw Domasi* festival, the womenfolk wake up in the very early morning to dash powder of rice to prepare various cakes such as *Enthap* (a kind of flat shaped cake prepared from dry rice powder), *Sinthao* (flat shaped cake made of rice powder with oil), *Engkhrong/Mwswu Tafli* (a flat size cake made of

mixing water), *Laodum* (big size cake make on cattily), etc. These are delicious food items of Bodos. Before taking the cakes the chief woman of the family firstly burns them to flame or fire, offers them to cattle in cowsheds, and after that all the family members or attending members take the cakes. The male members or cowboys tie fruits bearing trees with the paddy corn cords. The Bodos believe the fruits bearing would bear more and more fruits if the tress is tied with cords of straw during the *Magw Domasi* festival. In *Magw Domasi* festival the womenfolk overlap the houses and granary which is known in Bodo terms as "*Bakhri Gaikhonnai*". On the 1st day of *Magh* month, both womenfolk and men folk gathered to pray to God for the flourishing of paddy and water of the village.

The young boys and cowboys construct the *Bilagur* or *Bhelaghar*, like a high temple that is constructed with dried banana leaves and bamboo. They also arrange *Argeng* (heap of fire) with the big pieces of stick generally stolen and spend sleepless nights singing and dancing. They enjoy the whole night by singing songs and dancing and together have their dinner also. This is known as *Laokhar Wngkham Janai* (traditional picnic). It means the cowboys and domestic labours (*Dahwna*) are mainly outside members of the family. So, having their dinner on the bank of the river or ponds is called *Laokhar Wngkham Janai*. The cowboys and young boys burn the *Bilagur* or *Bhelaghar* before dawn before the crows come out from their nests on *Mokar Sankranti*. They take bathe in the river and warm up themselves standing by the side of the bonfire in wet clothes, amidst much rejoicing and dancing, they pray for the wellbeing of their cattle and the prosperity of their village in this manner:

"Jwi, Jwi, Jwi,  
Jwngni lagani Jwi,  
Khwlahani rag biadia khwlaha thangthwng;  
Swnabhani rag biadia swnabha thangthwng;  
Sahani rag biadia saha thangthwng;  
Sanjahani rag biadia sanjaha thangthwng;  
Jwngni lagaya maiwi dwiwi  
Jwi jwi mwi mwi jatwang.  
Jwngni lagani mwsoua ganda phisabadi  
Soklo boklo gedet bwlwgara jathwng.  
Jai mansia jwngni masoua mai jayablabw  
Jadwng hwnnanoi jwngkhwo  
Bukhrub sukhrub khalamdwn gmwn.  
Bi mansia nidanwi din thangthwng.

**English Rendering:**

(Victory, victory, victory

Victory for our village

Let the diseases of the South move past to the south.

Let the diseases of the West move past to the west.

Let the diseases of the North move past to the north.

Let the diseases of the East move past to the east.

Let our village be flourishing with paddy and water.

Let the cattle of our village be big sized and energetic  
Like the young ones of a rhinoceros and an elephant  
Let those who did beat us to crumbs without us  
Cattle encroaching on their paddy field  
Wallow deep in misery and sorrow).

### 4.3. KATI GASA SAONAI

*Kati Gasa Saonai* festival is observed from *Sankranti* of Assamese month *Ahin* (October) to the first day of Assamese month *Kartik* (October). This festival is known different terms in Bodo society such as *Gasa Hwnai*, *Kati Gasa*, *Gasa Saonai* etc. On the first day of *Kati Gasa Saonai* festival generally light up with an earthen lamp at the paddy field, at the altar of *Bathou* (Supreme God of Bodos), at the cowshed (*goli*), in the garden of fruits, vegetables, and also at *Bakhri* (granary) in the evening. The Bodos belief from the early period if earthen the lamp in the paddy field, then the bad insect (who attack the paddy corn) died, earthen the lamp at cowshed is for bright future of the cattle, earthen the lamp at granary is for good hope for paddy corn and peace expectation of the family lighten the lamp at the altar of *Bathou*. Traditionally, in the *Kati Gasa Saonai* festival after collecting important materials like wood apple fruits, 3 to 4 feet stick of the bamboo, and a small piece of the Banana tree any one member of the family goes to their paddy field in the evening to earthen the lamp. They poke the bamboo stick on the paddy field in the side North-east. They pray to God looking to the Eastside, light the lamp, and pray for the safety of paddy crops. In the *Kati Gasa Saonai* festival, the womenfolk help the men folk in the collecting the essential materials of the earthen the lamp and they clean the houses, and cooking materials, make a varieties food item, etc. The womenfolk participate on the 1st day of *Kartik* month (Assamese month) at the temple (*Thansali*) to pray the God for the expectation of peace and harmony in their personal life, family, and village. The agricultural festival of *Kati Gasa Saonai* is not celebrated in a way greater than the seasonal festival of *Bwisagw*. Because during the celebration of *Kati Gasa Saonai* the economic condition is bad, or every family is living in crisis. But despite that, the Bodos celebrate the *Kati Gasa Saonai* festival as an agricultural festival with the traditional customs.

### 4.4. HAL JANGKHRA

The agricultural festival *Hal Jangkhra* is celebrated in the paddy field on the last day of the plantation. The enjoyment of *Hal Jangkhra* festival takes place first in the Paddy field and after that, both male and female members enjoy it in the family. They enjoy the family by taking and drinking various food items after the bath. The *Hal Jangkhra* festival is celebrated as a festival of pleasure for the cultivators after the end of the Paddy cultivation in Bodo society. In this agricultural festival, both womenfolk and men folk participate together. This festival is celebrated with full enjoying and after the cultivation of paddy crops is over. Generally, a family at the end of paddy cultivation enjoys in the paddy field with other members of the village who are being invited on that day for plantation. Basically, at this festival, there is no fixed song and dance. Yet, they sing varieties of songs. The male and female members jointly enjoy together by spreading the mud in the paddy field. The *Hal Jangkhra* festival is celebrated as a festival of pleasure for the cultivators after the end of the paddy cultivation in Bodo society.



#### **4.5. GOSA HWJENNAI OR GOSA LAJENNAI**

This festival is mainly performed by the womenfolk only. The Bodos celebrate this festival during *Sali* paddy cultivation, and this festival is celebrated on the first plantation of the *Sali* paddy. The chief woman of the family takes the important materials for offering to *Lakhi* or *Mainao* (Goddess of wealth) and selects the North-east corner of the paddy field. After offering to *Mainao* the chief woman starts to plant paddy and other womenfolk also starts to plant. They joke with each other saying fill up the granary with paddy, flouring with paddy this year, etc.

#### **4.6. BAKHRI GAIKHONNAI**

The womenfolk of the Bodo society observed the *Bakhri Gaikhonnai* festival in the paddy field at end of the paddy plantation in a corner. During the plantation, a small area is kept in the North-east corner which is planted by the chief woman of the planted family. Before the plantation of the small left area, the chief woman of the family firstly prays to "*Mainao Burwi*" (*Lakhi*), and at that time the other womenfolk sprinkle mud on her by joking and singing the various songs. The Bodos have a traditional belief that with the celebration of *Bakhri Gaikhonnai* festival the granary will be filled with the paddy core. This festival is observed mainly on Monday and Thursday. But at present, the Bodos do not observe on selective days only or now this festival is observed according to their convenient day.

#### **4.7. MAINAO LAINAI OR LAKHI LAINAI**

In the Assamese month of *Agon* (November) the paddy core is getting ripe then the chief woman of the family or another womenfolk brings the paddy core cutting it off from the paddy field and which is known as *Mainao Lainai* festival. But this festival is also mentioned in different terms in Bodo society such as *Aglainai*, *Lakhi Lainai*, *Mainao Borainai*. During this festival, the womenfolk who will bring the paddy core needs to bathe and wash their hair on that day. During the bringing of paddy core, the womenfolk need to open her hair and she is also prohibited from talking to another person on the way. She also takes along with her some important materials in the paddy field to offer such as bananas, holy water for sprinkling, five pieces of bent grass, a sickle for cutting off paddy core, mustard oil, and a sieve to take the paddy core. She brings a small quantity of ripe paddy core from the paddy field and keeps it inside *Bathou Bindu*, in the Kitchen, or on *Bakhri* (granary) also.

#### **4.8. WNGKHAM GWRLWI JANNAI**

The Bodos observed the *Wngkham Gwrlwi Jannai* (eating ceremony of the new rice) festival within Assamese month of *Agon* (November-December) after harvesting the major paddy crop of the year. On the occasion, they worship the *Bathou Bwrai* (supreme God) at *Bathousali* (Temple) and invite the villagers to take the new rice. But at present before taking the new rice or observing *Wngkham Gwrlwi Jannai* festival worship the *Bathou Bwrai* together in the temple of the villages and offer a little number of cooked food items. After offering the cooked food items all the villagers eat together with the new rice. The Bodos observe this festival separately also in their home offering the *Bathou bwrai* on a convenient day. The Bodos do not eat the major rice crop (*maisali*) before offering it to *Bathou Bwrai* or without observing the *Wngkham Gwrlwi Janai* festival. The womenfolk also participate in all the activities of the *Wngkham Gwrlwi Janai* festival jointly with

male members and they help men folk in the preparing of rice, offering *Bathou Bwrai*, etc.

#### 4.9. RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL

The Bodos are the follower of the *Bathou Bwrai* (Supreme God among them), and they worship the *Bathou Bwrai* to get a blessing with the celebration of various festivals which is known as a religious festival. The religious festivals of Bodos are *Kherai* and *Garja*.

#### 4.10. KHERAI

Padmashree Awardee K. Brahma has called '*Kherai* the Greatest festival of the Bodo' [Brahma \(1992\)](#). The *Bathou Bwrai* is the chief god in the *Kherai* worship. The Bodos also honour Gods and Goddesses during the *Kherai* worship like *Aileng*, *Agrang*, *Khwila*, *Kharji*, *Rajkhandra*, *Song Raja*, *Alai Khungri*, *Bhandari*, *Rwnswndri*, *Bwlli Burwi*, *Laokhar Gosai*, *Nowab Badsha*, etc. The Bodos honour the Gods and Goddesses with sacrifices of animals and birds like pigs, goats, fowl, ducks, hens, cock, etc. A *Bathousali* is made in the *Kherai* worship to honour the Gods and Goddesses. A *Siju* tree (*Euphorbia Splender*) is planted in the *Bathousali* and earthen the lamp is lighted under the *Siju* tree, areca nuts, betel leaves, banana, or other sacred things like egg, a piece of stone is put on plantation leaflets and placed under the *Siju* tree. For the sprinkling of the holy water with the pure water kept the uncooked rice and top branches of *Jatras* or *Tulsi* (*Basil* plant). The *Khangkla* (a kind of sacred plant) are poked to the end in the Northern where the *Mainao* (Goddess of wealth or crops) is installed and designed beautifully. '*Doudini* perform most essential rites during the *Kherai* worship with help of *Oza* and *gidal*' [Boro \(2004\)](#). The musical instruments like *Kham* (Drum), *Siphung* (flute), *Jotha* (Cymbal) are played during the performance of *Doudini* in the *Kherai* worship. *Doudini* is charmed by the mantra (incantation) of the *Oja* whereupon she falls into a trance and converts into a spiritual being like the deities. She can tell the tales of the Gods and Goddesses in their voice, and she moves around the *Bathou* followed by devotes, sprinkles holy water, and dancing to the playing of musical instruments. *Doudini* demonstrates eighteen kinds of dances, and these are danced to worship the Gods and Goddesses.

In the religious festival, *Kherai* of Bodos, womenfolk also participate together with men folk. The womenfolk also play a big role in the *Kherai* worship. From the starting to the end of the *Kherai* festival without womenfolk worshipping cannot be completed. In the offering, to Gods and Goddesses, the womenfolk also co-operate with men folk. They wake up in the very early morning to do the household work, to co-operate the men folk in collecting the important materials of worshipping. The womenfolk overlap and clean the houses wash the cooking materials, utensils things, etc. At the end of *Kherai* worship devotes to retrieving *Mainao* and dancing in the beating of musical instruments of *Kham*, *Siphung*, *Jotha*.

The *Kherai* worship is celebrated at present in three types. These are-

- 1) Following traditional customs such as beating musical instruments like *Kham* (drum), *Siphung* (flute), *Jotha* (cymbal) with the help of *Doudini*, *Oja*, and *Dewri* with the sacrifices of animals and birds.
- 2) Following traditional customs such as beating musical instruments like *Kham* (drum), *Siphung* (flute), *Jotha* (cymbal) with the help of *Doudini* offering of natural fruits and flowers, etc.



- 3) Following modified customs by the *Dewri* without the help of *Doudini* and *Oja* offering of natural fruits, flowers, etc.

Eminent scholar Suniti Kumar Chatterji puts about the origin of the *Kherai* worship of the Bodos-"The common element (Kela or Kera, Ker) in these two names is noticeable: its meaning and affinity are not known. But there is an ancient pre-Hindu religious rite among the Tipras which is known as Ker puja, which appears to be a ritual in honour of the Earth goddess and the Creation. It is not unlikely that Kela, Kera is connected with the Tipra word Ker, and may have some significance connected with the Earth."Chaterji (2011).

The *Kherai* worship is celebrated in four kinds and held in different seasons of the year-

- 1) **Darshan Kherai:** *Darshan Kherai* is performed during the first week of the Assamese month Kati (Sept-Oct). This *Kherai* is known as the *Lakhi Kherai* or *Sali Kherai (Mainao)* (the Goddess of wealth).
- 2) **Umrao Kherai:** *Umrao Kherai* is held during the month of *Ashar* (June-July), at the end of the *Amti Sua* (*Ambubashi*). This *Kherai* is also known as an *Asu Kherai*, being connected with *Asu* or a summer season crops and observed for the well-being of summer crops.
- 3) **Phalo Kherai:** The *Phalo Kherai* is performed especially on the day of *Maghi purnima*.
- 4) **Nowaoni Kherai:** The *Nowaoni Kherai* is performed by each household for the well-being of the family members.

The Bodos worship many gods and goddesses during the *Kherai* worship. They possessed different positions in the hierarchy of the Bodo pantheon and offer different kinds of sacrifices according to their position.

- 1) **Bathou Bwrai or Khuria Bwrai:** The chief God of the Bodos. Bodos placed him in the top position and offer or sacrifice him along with areca nuts, and betel leaves with a pig.
- 2) **Aileng:** *Bathou Bwrai* takes him as a bodyguard and for him, the Bodos sacrifice a cock.
- 3) **Agrang:** General of the god-in-chief and Bodos sacrifice for him a cock.
- 4) **Khwila:** Messenger of the God-in-chief and sacrifice to him a cock.
- 5) **Kharji:** He is the follower of the *Bwrai Bathou* and a goat is sacrificed to him.
- 6) **Raj Khandra:** Another follower of the *Bwrai Bathou* and for him, a pig is sacrificed.
- 7) **Song Raja:** He is also another follower of the *Bwrai Bathou* and owner of the wild animals of the *Bwrai Bathou*.
- 8) **Alai Khungri:** She is the princess of Goddess and follower of the *Bwrai Bathou* and a pig is sacrificed for her.
- 9) **Bhandari:** She is the owner of the store the foodstuff and a cock is given to her.
- 10) **Rwnswndri or Ran Phasli:** She is known as a Goddess of war and a cock is sacrificed for her.
- 11) **Bwlli Burwi:** Owner of the fish and also known as a Goddess of medicine and mantras. To her, a pig is sacrificed.
- 12) **Laokhar gosai:** God of cowsheds and a pair of pigeons are sacrificed for him.

13) **Nowab Badsha**: Muslim God is also given a seat during *the Kherai* worship, and a cock is sacrificed for him.

#### 4.11. GARJA

The *Garja* worship is celebrated to free themselves from the evil Gods. During the *Garja* worship, the harmful Gods and Goddesses are expelled publicly who may create deadly diseases. There is a permanent place to worship the *Garja* covered by the tress and deep jungle which is known as *Garjasali*. The Bodos observed the *Garja* worship two to four times a year. The first *Garja* is known as *Phojaonai/Bhasani/Bhela Hogarnai*, the second *Garja* is known as *Bohor Garja*, and the third is known as *Mainao Garja/Lakhi Garja* and the fourth is known as *Narajonai* or *Narasinga*. Eminent Scholar of Bodo literature and Culture Kameswar Brahma observed and said that "the Bodos perform the Garza puja to purify themselves and the village after any seasonal festival like "Baisagu" etc. They believe that at the annual festivals the participants of the village become impure due to free mixing with each other eating, merry making, walking, and drinking rice beer from one's house to another's house. So, to purify themselves they perform the Garza puja at the village." [Brahma \(1992\)](#)

During the *Garja* worship, the womenfolk does not participate directly but co-operate with the men folk in every works in the worshipping. The offering done to Gods and Goddesses in the *Garja* worship is only done by men folk, but the womenfolk also help them in collecting the important materials for the offering. The womenfolk do the entire household activities such as cleaning and overlapping houses, cleaning cooking materials, etc.

#### 5. OBSERVATION

Festivals are nothing but the external expression of social behaviour. These may have sprung from primitive beliefs and magical rituals. The inhabitants of North-east India Bodos also enjoyed the celebration of various festivals in different seasons. The Bodo society is generally a cultivated society, and their enjoyment is mostly related to cultivation. The agricultural-based Bodo society observes various kinds of cultural activities during the plantation, weeding, and harvesting. In every celebration the participation of womenfolk in Bodo society is mentionable. The Bodo society is a patriarchal society, but the womenfolk of the Bodo society play the most important role in cultural, agricultural, and religious activities also. The Bodos are very rich in their socio-cultural activities. Without womenfolk, it's impossible to observe the cultural activities or festivals in Bodo society. So, womenfolk are getting top positions in the cultural, agricultural, and religious activities too.

#### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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