



---

## **Bodo Tribe Customs Relating to Marriage: A Philosophical Study**

Bisti Ram Narzary  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Philosophy  
Digboi College,

### **ABSTRACT**

Marriage is a universal social custom. Marriage gives a man and a woman social approval to live together and have biological relations with each other and to have sons and daughters. The anthropologists have divided the marriage custom of mankind into two categories: a matrilineal custom and the other is patrilineal custom. Both these customs are prevalent in India. Aryans and Dravidians perform marriage ceremonies according to patrilineal customs. The Austrians and Mongols perform marriage ceremonies according to matrilineal customs. In present -day North-east India, marriages between the Khasi tribes and the Mongolian Garos are performed according to the matrilineal custom.

Marriage is called 'Haba' by the Bodos. In Bodo 'ha' means soil or earth and 'ba' means to bear something on the back. So, 'Haba; means to bear the soil or the responsibility of the earth on the back. The Bodo kacharis are influenced by Aryan culture and perform marriage through two customs, paternal and maternal. The Bodos have six different types of marriage systems. These are 1. Swngnanoi lainai haba, 2. Gwrjia Lakhinai haba, 3. Kharsonnai haba, 4. Bwnanoi lainai haba, 5. Dwnkhar langnai haba and 6. Dongkha habnai haba. To highlight the different marriage systems of the Bodos would be the main focus of the paper.

**Key Words:** Bodo, Tribe, Marriage, Custom

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Marriage is a social custom of mankind. Marriage is one of the deepest and most complex relationship in human life. In India, marriage is an institution that covers religious, social and legal aspects. It is considered to be a sacred relationship and an integral part of the life circle. Despite differences in cast, creed, religion etc. marriage usually involves a commitment between a man and a woman. The pure union between a man and a woman is a popular concept of marriage. Marriage is a social approval of the union of a man and a woman and is perform through various rituals and customs. Human society has separated themselves from animality through marriage. It is a welfare policy for the peace and order of the human society. Marriage is not only a joyful custom of union between a man and a woman; it transforms the lonely life of the individual into a family. The married husband bears full responsibility for the happiness and financial affairs of the wife. The wife also bears the responsibility for the peace and security of her husband.



Marriage is called 'Haba' by the Bodos. In Bodo 'ha' means soil or earth and 'ba' means to bear something on the back. So, 'Haba; means to bear the soil or the responsibility of the earth on the back. The Bodo kacharis are influenced by Aryan culture and perform marriage through two customs, paternal and maternal. In the Bodo marriage systems proper permission from the guardians are obtained and the consent of both the bridegroom and bride are taken before solemnizing marriage ceremony. In the present day, there is restrictions of ages of bridegroom and bride. Marriage is allowed when a girl is 18 years old and a boy is 21 years old. Violating this law there will be no marriage. As per the customary law of the Bodos there is no provision of restriction in inter-cast marriage system.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- a. To highlight the custom of the Bodo relating to marriage.
- b. To understand the different types of marriage of the Bodos.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources and data have been collected from different journals, magazines and articles. The present paper has been applied in descriptive method.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

In the marriage systems of the Bodos, unlike other ethnic groups in India, the Bodo society does not have the rule of horoscope narration by the astrologer. They go to see the bride on a date and time according to their traditional custom. When visiting a bride, the reaction of nature and the sight of animals and birds determine the future auspiciousness of the couple. It is said that it is bad if the clouds thunder when you go to see the bride. While traveling to bride, it is bad to see mongoose crossing the road from right to left in front of you, the result will be separation of husband and wife in future. As soon as the people who go to see the bride arrive at the house, they see her spreading paddy in their yard or harvesting paddy etc... it is considered that the girl will be Lakshmi. In the Bodo society, Sunday is considered an auspicious day to visit the bride.

It is mentioned above that there are six types of marriages performed by the Bodo- Kacharis. These are – 1. Swngnanoi lainai haba, 2. Gwrjia Lakhinai haba, 3. Kharsonnai haba, 4. Bwnanoi lainai haba, 5. Dwnkhar langnai haba and 6. Dongkha habnai haba. The first four of these are socially recognized practice while the other two are considered as illegal. Now let us discuss briefly the different types of system of the Bodo society:

### 4.1 Swngnanoi lainai haba:

This marriage is socially performed in accordance with social customs. In this type of marriage, the groom's parents select the bride and the marriage ceremony is performed after consultation with bride's family. In the old days, marriage ceremony was performed only at the bridegroom's residence. But nowadays, wedding is also held at the bride's house. This type of marriage is considered as a standard practice.



---

#### 4.2 Gwrjia Lakhinai haba:

When a groom marries a bride with promise of staying with her forever and with the consent of bride's parent, it is called Gwrjia Lakhinai haba. This type of marries is rarely performed in the society, but still prevalent in the Bodo society.

#### 4.3 Kharsonnai haba:

When a bride enter the groom's house of her own free will before marriage, it is called Kharsonnai haba. However, in this case of marries, there is a prior mutual understanding between the bride and groom. In such a marries, the consent of the parents is not given special importance. This type of wedding is held in the Bodo society from time to time.

#### 4.4 Bwnanoi lainai haba:

According to this marries system, a groom forcibly takes a bride of his choice to his house and gets married. This type of marriage is not socially approved but was once prevalent in the Bodo society.

#### 4.5 Dwnkhar langnai haba:

When a boy and a girl, despite their love and affection, are prevented to be married by their parents or other member of the family, the bride and groom go to another place far away from home and get married by mutual understanding. This is called Dwnkhar langnai haba. This type of marries is seen sometimes in the society.

#### 4.6 Dongkha habnai haba:

When a man marries a widow and takes up residence in his wife's house permanently, it is called Dongkha habnai haba. In this type of marriages, society recognizes them as husband and wife. However, this type of marriage is very rare in the Bodo society.

### 5. CONCLUSION:

Marries ceremonies are considered to be very sacred and important in the Bodo society. Society does not approve of a man and a woman living together without the principle of marriage. Marriage is the only way for a man and a woman to start a life together. Marriage is the means by which the human race is preserve. Therefore, it is very important that it is to be done in holiness and according to the rules of the society. Marriage is respected by all in the society if it is performed according to the rules and regulations of the society and according to religious rituals. In Bodo society, it is not customary for a man and a woman to live together without marriage. If someone does so, it is socially



---

punishable and society punishes them through social norms. Traditionally, in Bodo society, illegitimate sexual relations between a man and a woman without marriage are considered evil for the society and both man and woman have to apologize to the society and purify themselves through religious rituals.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Narzi, Bhaben: Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti, 2009
2. Brahma, Kameswar (1995): Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos, Bna Library, GHY-781001
3. Brahma, Kameswar (1998): A Study in Cultural Heritage of the Boros
4. Rev. Sidey Endle: The Kacharis
5. Sources from internet.