



# THE BODO WOMEN'S EXPERTISE IN HANDLOOM

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## ABSTRACT:

Dress and culture is play very important role in Bodo society. From the primitive age to modern, the traditional handloom of Bodo Women have played a very important role in molding the socio-cultural life of the Bodos. They have their own culture, tradition, belief and customs, etc. The women still wear their traditional dress like- Dokhna, Gamacha, Jwmgra Phali, Sadri and Aronai. The Bodo people weave traditional hand woven dresses such as Dokhna, Sadri, Gamsa and Aronai. The Bodo women are bestowed with expertise in weaving their own traditional dresses. The Bodo women wear Dokhna and Sadri, while men wear Gamsa and Aronai.

**Keywords:** Dokhna, Jwmgra, Aronai, Khorom, Ficha, Thaosi, Matha, Bwirathi, Agor, Ishan.

## OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the study is to highlight and study the Bodo women's handloom. Handloom is occupied the most important place in Bodo society. The main purpose of handloom is weave the hand woven dresses which are used in the Bodo society. With the sole objective of understanding the transition of traditional dresses has been developed in this paper.

## METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of the study is obviously inter-disciplinary method with the combination of historical sources and field work. Both primary and secondary sources are consulted. Accordingly, the work is primarily based on field investigation for collecting first hand data as well as also based on all the literary texts. The technique of anthropological, data collection, participants, observation, interview methods, both structure and non-structure, case study, genealogical methods are adopted. The collected data have been analyzed both quantitatively and the qualitatively whenever necessary.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Bodo women constitute an integral part of the society and actively participate in the socio-economic development process of the society. Weaving and sericulture is an integral part of Bodo women folk of the Bodo community. Every young women knows the art of weaving, which they learn from the early childhood within the family. Traditionally, they weave all required cloths for the family members, which includes. Dokhna, Aronai, Gamochoa, Eri Chadar Maharar (bed-sheet) etc.<sup>1</sup> (Traditional dresses of the Bodos which is wear by women.) The Eri and Muga cloths produced by the Bodo women are very popular amongst the non-Bodos also. It is said that Bodo women girls finds it difficult to get married if she does not know the art of weaving.

**ANALYSIS:**

The Bodo or Boro belongs to the Mongoloid stock of the Indo-Tibetans and linguistically they belong to the branch of the Tibeto-Barman family of language. They constitute a very important section of the different ethnic and races people setting in Assam with their distinct cultural, social and linguistic traits. They are the largest ethnic tribal people of Assam. The Bodo women are not only the mistress of the house but also the expert spinner, weavers and handloom embroidery. They weave various kinds of clothes like- Endi Si, Dokhna, Zwmgra, Aronai, Gamsa and Alon etc. Dokhna has number of design such as Daothugod (dove's neck), Pharwo Megon (pigeon's eye), Pahar Agor (hill's scenery), Mwidar Agan (elephant's foot print), etc.<sup>2</sup> (Brahma, 2015: pp. 20-21.) They also known the art of dying of various colours. They have certain fondness of colours costume. They make beautiful handloom embroidery in their various clothes and costumes some of the embroidery is like designs of dove eye, various flowers, hills design etc. In present day the Bodo clothes are competent enough with various clothes of their neighbors from quality valuation. The Bodo male people wear Gamsa woven in their home loin to knee and below it and the women from the ancient to present wear Dokhna hangs from the armpit to ankle or toe including blouse and Alon are put and wrapped on the Body. Along with Dokhna they also used a wrapper called Jwmggra<sup>3</sup> (a kind of scarf hangs on the shoulder by Bodo women) The Bodo ethnic identity is clearly identical with the women costume use by them from the time immemorial. The Bodo can be proud of about their clothes and costume.

Bodo are known as one of the finest weavers in entire North East region. This traditional art of weaving has been isolated as traditionally followed custom amongst the Bodo women for many centuries. Today this traditional Bodo motifs and colours have greater dimensions to its potential. The fabric produced by the weavers need skills up-gradation, and the power of information technology to give boost to its handloom (weaving) sector in Bodoland Territorial Council. The present govt. is trying hard to set up various handloom units in order to provide income option for below poverty line population but has not been able to implement it in an organized manner. Within Kokrajhar district there are numbers of weaving units run by individual, SHGs, NGOs and enterprises. Almost everyone is following the same pattern of weaving as traditional used fabric materials.

The Bodo women are expert in their loom. At least a simple loom is seen in every household family in the Bodo village and urban areas. The Bodo women should know the spinning, weaving, handloom and embroidery. Otherwise, those women who do not know weaving spinning handloom, embroidery and works in the Bodo society stood problems in marriage. The rearing of Bodo

family depends on the agricultural production of the person himself. The works of the women influence very much in peaceful family life.

The above saying influences each Bodo women to become expert in every work. It also makes them aware towards the future responsibility of the family and the society. It indicates to the young girls of yesteryears that the works is not only the pre-requirement for marriage; but it is the way of life creating peaceful, happy and development in family. The expert women are not only concern with marriage, it is also carrier of peace family and the society too. There were household proverb that when the war with the enemy began then the Bodo women spin and weave a kind of scarf for her husband within the night and gift it to their husband as the symbol of safety and victory in the war. The boys also ignore the girl for their marriage on the basis of spinning, weaving and handloom embroidery in the previous years. No girls were considered marriage –worthy unless she could acquire proficiency in the art of spinning, weaving and dying and handloom embroidery.

#### **SOURCE OF THREADS:**

The Bodo women rear silk worm Eri or Endhi (*Attacus Ricini*) known as Emphou Latha and Muga (*Antheroea Assamoea*) known as Muga Latha for Eri and Muga cocoons and cultivate cotton cultivation for the Eri, Muga and cotton threads. It was said that the Bodo were the traders of silk in ancient times. They also consume the insect or worm known as Endi or Erandi known as Amphou Latha by them. They cultivate the castor plants, Gamari, Tha Sumli<sup>4</sup> (a small variety silk cotton tree bearing tasty tuberous root) for Eri worm. At least 3 to 4 weeks is required to get Eri cocoon from the Eri worm. At present day the plantation of mulberry, campa tree (*Michelina Champaka*), Adakari tree (*Tetranthera polyantha*), etc. plants are planted for the Muga worm by the Bodo people. The Bodo women use a spindle called Thaoukhri to produce the threads from the Eri, Muga cocoons and cotton from ancient times. In fact, spinning, weaving dying and handloom embroidery clothes of Endi, Muga and cotton yarn are the household industry and every Bodo women is expected to excel in finer are of handloom craftsmanship. The Bodo women are also expert in dying colors in their handloom yarn Endi, Khundhung Aouwa and their clothes.

#### **LOOMS:**

The Bodo women weave traditional hand-woven various kinds of dresses in their homely prepared pit of loom known as Hisan Sali in one of the corners of their household courtyard or the shed prepared for the purpose. Some of the educated or industrious people established weaving and spinning centres for business as well as occupational purposes. They also using modern technique of spinning, weaving and embroidery machines and employed some less- educate poor women as per their requirement. The art of spinning weaving and handloom embroidery of the Bodo women are never inferior to another race of people all over of India. They know the art of swelling embroidery in their clothes and costumes. The kochari women are healthy and very handsome. They are good weavers. The kochari women usually weave lovely flowers on the borders of their clothes.

The Bodo women weave various kinds of , Zi gidir, Sima ( use as bad cover) Endi Si (Endi clothe Gamsa and Aronai (wrapper on neck Zwmgra wrapper on body and Sadri etc.<sup>5</sup> (Narjinari, 1985: p. 71.)

#### **TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS:**

The tools necessary for weaving consist of yarns (acrylic, cotton or silk, spindle, spinning machines, warp drum or pegs and a loom (loin or throw- shuttle). Most of these tools are made of bamboo and sometimes wood. Bodo women use various weaving, looms tools and instruments, in such as Sal khuntha, Thart, Gandwi, Rashw, Jothar, Swrghi, Bhan Gwjha, Makhu, Thard Aakhai, Seoari, Gorai, Khadini, Gorkha, Gonshi, Noli, Dhanganatha, Khaitha, Nwhasung and Bobin, Khuntha and Bhaleb, etc.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The contemporary spinning, weaving and handloom embroidery clothes and costume of the Bodo have become the time-tested occupation for some of the indigenous Bodo people. The adequate care and recognition and timely intervention by the authority in proper stage and encouragement is necessary in such way like the use of Aronai in high profile social podium to welcome the guest in the state, NE India and even country. Let the world know about the clothes and costume of the Bodos.<sup>6</sup> (Narji, 2006: p. 138)

#### **References:**

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3. A kind of scarf hangs on the shoulder by Bodo women.
4. a small variety silk cotton tree bearing tasty tuberous root.
5. Narjinari Hiracharan, In Search of Identity: The Mech, Calcutta, 1985, p. 71.
6. Narzi Bhaben, Boro Kocharini Somaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publication Board, Kajalgaon, 1st Ed. 2003 & 2nd Ed. 2006, p. 138.