
A Philosophical Study on the role and status of women in Bodo Society

Bisti Ram Narzary

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

Digboi College, Autonomous, Digboi

ABSTRACT

The present day Bodo society is changing tremendously in every respect. A lot of evolutionary and revolutionary changes have marked the deserving role played by Bodo women. Traditionally Bodo women enjoy equal human rights to that enjoyed by men. Truly speaking, Social and customary laws of the society enable Bodo women to exercise equal human rights in every sphere of life. With the spreading of modern education and revival of national awareness among Bodo people in general more and more important role has been shouldered by the Bodo women society.

Some distinctive contributions provided by Bodo women are discussed here in brief illustration in socio-economic and cultural perspectives. Truly speaking Bodo women can perform mental and manual works at home and outer social functions. In economic activities Bodo women act as supervisors, managers and producers. Some women are very good entrepreneur and adventurous. Farming, rearing of endi (eri) muga, pat, taming of pigs, poultry, dairy and weaving cottage industry are not possible without their role and support. Bodo women are weavers by birth hereditary. In Bodo society a girl must have to earn weaving experiences. Now a days weaving has become a traditional industry which solves women unemployment. To highlight the role and status of women in Bodo society would be the main focus of the paper.

Key Words: Bodo, Women, Role, Status, Society

1. INTRODUCTION:

The importance of women's participation in the development of their society has been recognised around the world. Due to illiteracy or certain other reasons, the women have not been able to come forward as required. But time has come to provide them with all the required opportunities by creating opportunities through awareness among them. Women now themselves want to be given the means and the tools to increase their independence through empowerments. The empowerment of women is the by to better standards of living. As such, to enable them to take equal part in the development process, empowering women in necessary.

Naturally Bodo people think that human society as a whole should enjoy equal status and parallel number of human rights. As human being is classified into two sections male and female, hence Bodo community does not categorise the society as the other Hindu society does like

Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baishya and Sudra etc. Unlike other communities Bodo community never belittle women society. The regard female society as equally worthy of honour and status as well as human rights.

Accordingly, a few distinctive contributions provided by Bodo women are discussed here in brief illustration in socio-economic and cultural perspective. Truly speaking Bodo women can perform mental and physical works at home and outer social functions. They are more industrious than male people. They can bear much more hardships in family life. They are skilled in agricultural and allied activities thus play important role in socio- economic upliftment of Bodo society.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- a. To highlight the role of Bodo women in society.
- b. To understand the source of economy generated by Bodo women.
- c. To understand the activities and contribution of Bodo women in society.
- d. To understand the equal status of man and women in society.

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:

The Bodos are one of the important indigenous tribes of North East India. In the present day the Bodos are live in all over Assam, West Bengal (North and east Bengal), Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Bangladesh and Nepal. Bodo Society is basically dependent on the land and agricultural products. With the spreading of modern education and revival of national awareness among the Bodo people in general more and more important role has been shouldered by the Bodo women society. Of course, some important enactment of laws for upliftment of Bodo women society irrespective of cast and creed under the provisions of Indian constitution awareness is generated among the Bodo women to some extent. But unfortunately, due to lack of pioneering and spreading of value-based education various important facilities and rights are remaining beyond the reach of Bodo women society in practical life. Still but important role played by women society have recorded a high position of status and nationality spirit. Thus, this clearly shows that how important role women are plays in contributing towards the upliftment of the family in the Bodo society and this need to be identified.

5. ROLE OF BODO WOMEN:

5.1 Family Economy

Most of the Bodos of Assam live in the plains and their main livelihood depends on agriculture. Traditionally Bodo women have contributed equally to men in agriculture and other activities. They have been playing an important role in the economic development of the family through various household activities. These include paddy plantation, paddy harvesting, vegetable production, cloth weaving, yarn production through larval rearing, pig rearing, poultry, fish production etc. Through these activities women plays important role in their family economy.

5.2 Livestock farming:

Traditionally, the Bodo people have been rearing various domestic animals and this contributes greatly to the economic situation of the family. Every family in the Bodo community raises livestock such as cows, pigs, goats, ducks, chickens etc. These domestic animals are mainly cared for by women of the family. These are sold in the markets and contribute to the family development.

5.3 Weaving Cloths:

Bodo women are weavers by birth and hereditary. Weaving cottage industry are not possible without the role and support of the women. Weaving is an integral part of the women folk of the Bodo community. They weave their cloths themselves in their handlooms. Bodo girl without weaving training and experience can never get married and deem qualified as bride or worthy of bride. A girl must have to earn weaving experience. Now- a days weaving has become a traditional cottage industry which soles women unemployment. The hand-women cloths traditionally includes 'dokhona', 'aronai', 'gamcha', 'endi (eri) chadar', 'muga chadar', 'shima chadar', etc. which may be either be for family use or for commercial purpose.

5.4 participation in various business activities:

Nowadays, Bodo women are choosing new ways of earning their livelihood. In addition to assisting the men in various activities, some women have acquired small business skills. They buy organic vegetables from the village and sell them in the market. Some have set up financial institution for traditional Bodo clothing. Some have been able to earn money in the hotel business. Some have been able to earn money by manufacturing clothes at home and selling them. Thus, Bodo women play an important and commendable role in the upliftment of the family economy and society.

5.5 Production of rice beer:

Rice beer making from rice is an integral part of the social and cultural traditional life of the Bodo community. Rice beer pitha (cake) is first made by collecting leaves, stems, roots etc. of various natural plants. The pitha is mixed with rice to make rice beer. This family work is only done by women. Traditionally, this rice beer was prepared for worship of God, social and religious ceremonies, entertainment of guest etc. However, women are now able to contribute to the family economy by making rice beer from a commercial perspective.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it can be said that traditionally Bodo women have played an important role in the social and economic development of the Bodo society. In economic activities Bodo women act as supervisors, managers and producers. Some women are very good entrepreneur and adventurous. They deal in various business. Even male husband has to consult them about future plan-policy and strategy and must have to come with concrete decision. This trend is a unique characteristic of an ideal Bodo household. They have contributed equally to men in various external activities along with their household activities. Therefore, men and women are given equal status in Bodo society. However, the lack of modern education sometimes makes their lives difficult. Many Bodo women in rural areas are still deprived of modern education and proper training. There is no doubt that Bodo women can move forward to the peak of development if they enjoy proper education and training. Bodo women have played along with a sacred and important role as motherhood and have made significant contribution to the development of families and society equally with men. In India, women are compared with Goddesses. Goddess is a symbol of strength and power. Therefore, the Goddess as a strength and power can do good deeds in the family and society anywhere. Finally, we must recognise that women have an important contribution to the development of the family and society.

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