

## IMPACT OF OTHER RELIGIONS ON TRADITIONAL RELIGION OF THE BODOS

**Dr. Nushar Bargayary** Assistant Professor, Department of History, Bodoland  
University.

**Bardwi Chila Narzary** PhD Research Scholar, Bodoland University.

### Abstract

The Bodo is one of the oldest tribes of North Eastern India. Since early days they have been worshipping nature. Traditionally Bodos are the followers of Bathou religion. However, in the subsequent years, the arrival of different religious sects has brought a remarkable impact on traditional religion. Poverty, illiteracy, diseases, blind faith, compulsion, inferiority complex, humanitarian services by others necessitated the people to embrace other religions. In the face of the widespread engulfment of Christianity and different sects of Hinduism, it was critical for a traditional religion to prevent its believers from conversion. The poor, innocent and illiterate Bodo people became prey and easily assimilated. They were convinced and attracted by some dogmatic for their mystical self-made principles. Significantly, some new Gurus or Dharmasashtras took birth. Their philosophies detached some innocent Bodo people from their traditional religion, culture and language. The present study intends to cover the entry of new religion in the 19th century and its impact on the traditional religion of the Bodos.

**Keywords:** Bodo, traditional religion, new religious sects, conversion, and impact.

### Introduction

India is a secular country. There is neither official nor state religion in India. Every person in India has the right to profess, practice and propagate religion. Being a secular state India does not interfere in the religious affairs. Despite having traditional religion known as *Bathou*, Bodos also respect the Right to Freedom of Religion of others. The Bodo community is one of the largest tribes of Assam belonging to the Indo-Mongoloid ethnic group of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Brahma, 2006, pp.7-8). They are known as the earliest settlers of Assam and the whole of North-Eastern India. The Bodos are concentrated in Assam are also found in some other parts of the North-Eastern states, including West Bengal and neighboring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Their language, Boro, is related to Tibetan and their physical features are Mongoloid (Siiger, 2015.p.2). They have been worshipping *Bwrai Bathou* as the Supreme God since ancient days. The Bodo word *Bwrai* signifies the old person having plenty of knowledge. There is no idol worship in the *Bathou* religion. They do not have a fixed place for community worship. Temple, church, or mosque are unknown to them. But one can see a *Sijou (Euphorbia Splenden)* tree planted at the center of the *Bathou* altar as the symbol of *Bwrai Bathou* in every courtyard of Bodo house (Siiger, 2015.p.8). The tradition, socio-culture, rites and rituals of the Bodos are reflected through the worship of the *Bathou* religion (Narzary, 2022). The *Bathou* religion is an oral faith of the Bodos. No religious scripture, founder and preacher are found in *Bathou* religion. In Bodo society, the entry of new religious sects i.e. Brahma Dharma, Christianity, *Satsang* and different branches of Hinduism were seen. Many Bodos accepted these religions. As in the name of traditional religion, various ill activities associated, therefore people tried to get rid of from *Bathou*.

The Bodos were regarded as *Asuras*, *Dasas*, *Mlecchas*, untouchable, etc. by their neighbouring high class people and the process of Sanskritization or Hinduisation was also continued without any disruption throughout the tracts inhabited by the Bodos (Narzary, 2009, p.1). On the other hand,

they found the newer religions are much better organized in comparison to *Bathou* religion (Basumatary, 2022). In addition to this racial derogating attitude inflicted by other believers was also a reason for conversion. Bodo people converted to Christianity in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Education and health care facilities of the Christian missionaries attracted the Bodos towards Christianity. When the traditional religion of the Bodo was unable to ensure the inevitable process of growth and development which every tribe and nation has to go through for its very survival and existence, Christianity offered an opportunity to worldwide solidarity without losing their identity (Pulloppillil, 1997, pp.47-48).

Moreover, the selfless service of the missionaries for the upliftment of education and health opened the mind of the Bodos. The missionaries established educational institutions and health care centers. Another great collapse of traditional *Bathou* religion occurred during the beginning of the twentieth century when Brahma Dharma propagated by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma emerged in the Bodo society. He took this religion from the Parmhansh Shiva Narayan of West Bengal (Pulloppillil, 1997, p.65). Kameswar Brahma has stated that a number of the Bodos also became Muslim by way of conversion into Islam in villages like Panbari and Alamganj of the present *Dhubri* district of Assam (Brahma, 1992, p.194). The process of the conversion had greatly impacted the solidarity of the Bodo community and the conversion disintegrated the traditional religion of Bodo society.

The history of religion is one of the continual changes. Each religion changes over time. New religions appear and some older traditions disappear. It may be mentioned that the Bodos and their culture became rudderless between the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century led to gradual wearing down in their rich culture and tradition and it was probably the darkest period in the history of Bodo society (Hazowary, 1998, p.123) Many Bodo people had given up tribal identity and embraced Hinduism (Narzary, 2022). The traditional Bodo society came under the uncontrolled odious position in the name of traditional *Bathou* religious rites and rituals and its performances. For instance, a large number of disproportionate and habitual uses of *Jou* (rice beer) and meat in the name of traditional religion and festivity had demoralized the common people in the Bodo society. In the meantime, the Bodos and their religion were affronted by the high caste Hindus and consequently, a large number of the Bodos converted into the fold of Hinduism and other religions for various reasons. Thus, a considerable portion of the Bodo people had converted to different religions like- Christian, Brahma religion, Satsang religion and many other religions. They were adopting other religions like *Saraniyas*, *Modahis*, *Koches*, etc. and some sections converted to Hinduism (especially the Brahmas) and Christianity. The age-old religious beliefs and social system were crumbling. An unhappy state of affairs was prevalent among them. Following are the religions which entered into the Bodo society from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

### **Advent of Christian Religion**

By the Charter Act of India 1813, the Christian missionaries were permitted to propagate the faith of Christian religion in India. Three prominent personalities were sent to India from England to spread Christian religion, namely William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward respectively (Brahma, 2006, p.44). The Christian missionaries came among the Bodos in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Christian Missionaries by different names and denominations appeared in Assam to propagate Christian religion among the Bodos. In the early time, the Christian missionaries could not take much advantage to propagate the Christian religion among the Bodos. Bodos were persuaded by showing love and the principle of charity (Basumatary, 2020). However, in the case of charitable relief and care for the sick, the missionaries gained good attention, sympathy and goodwill from the Bodo people. Many new missionary schools and churches were opened in the Bodo populated areas and became available. Most of the churches or centers were set up in the Bodo areas with schools attached to them. The first Missionaries who came to contact with the Bodos of Assam were the

Baptist Missionaries of America (Assam Mission, 1992, p.212). They established a center at Gauhati in 1843 and a Boarding School was started in the year 1846 respectively. Many Bodos had been admitted to the boarding school. Aphinta one of the students of the boarding school was the first Bodo convert into the Christian religion. Aphinta belonged to the Jhargaon village of North Kamrup (Assam Mission, 1992, p.46). The American Baptist Missionary Society mainly worked on the Garos of North East and later this missionary entrusted the Australian Baptist Missionary to work on the Bodos in 1965(Sebastian,1997,p.45). In turn, the Australian Baptist Missionary got connected with the local people and significantly Goalpara Baptist Church Union was formed. Thenceforth, the villages like Bamungaon, Tukkrajar, Haraputa and many other villages came under this mission (Sebastian, 1997, p.45).

The Society for the Propagation of Gospel (SPG) was established in Tezpur by Mr. Hessel Mayor who belonged to the Anglican Church. The main objective of the SPG was to spread the gospel among the Bodos of the Tezpur area. Rev. Sidney Endle was deputed by The Society for the Propagation of gospel. Rev. Sidney Endle arrived in Tezpur in 1864 and by that time a good number of Bodos had already converted to Christianity. As a consequence, a full-fledged Church was established by him at Bengnabari near Harisinga (Udalguri District) for the spreading of Christianity among the native people (Sebastian, 1997, p.45). And so forth a good number of Bodo people converted to the Christian religion. The number of the conversion of the Bodos into Christianity had been gradually increasing every ten years from 1851 in the following way (Assam Mission, 1992, p.46).

Serial Nos.	Year	Number of converts
1	1851	3
2	1861	70
3	1871	130
4	1881	210

Table- 1 (Assam Mission, 1992, p.46)

In 1922 many centers of the Christian missionaries were set up in Gaurang (near Kokrajhar), Bongaigaon and Parkijuli in Kamrup District respectively (Pulloppillil, 1997, p.45). After arriving in Assam, the Lutheran Missionary established a colony in Goalpara District. Rev. Holger Winding and Rev. Aksel Khristiansena who visited India in 1927 worked with Santals and the Bodos respectively. The missionary gave the responsibility of the Bodo church to Aksel Khristiansena. Later he invited Bodo people of neighboring areas to attend the church. By 1887 a good number of Bodo people accepted the gospel. They went to the church as well. Sekhar Brahma and Sebastian Ayilookunnel stated that the Scottish Presbyterian Church also extended their service to the Bodos of Duar areas and established a centre at Panbari for missionary activities and to spread Christianity. A good number of the Bodo people of Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal had professed Christianity (Pulloppillil, 1997, p.45). In 1893 the Catholic Missionary started the work of spreading Christianity. Initially, they concentrated to work with the hill tribes and in the plain, they could not get connected with the Bodo people. Since no workers from the Bodos were at hand. However, it was in the year 1928 a Bodo from Udalguri invited Fr. Piasieski, later he baptized him along with a small number of Bodo people. To spread Christianity two missionaries namely Fr. Alessi and Fr. Ravalico carried out their work among the Bodos of Darrang District (Pulloppillil, 1997, p.45). Fr. Scunderi a Catholic Priest from *Gauhati* was invited by Phulsing who was one of the leaders of the Bodo. Subsequently, the first Catholic Community in Kokrajhar was established at Nandorbari village (Pulloppillil, 1997, p.45). Later many new centers were opened at different places like- at Tangla in 1965, a new missionary at Udalguri in 1966, at Bengtol in 1966 and at Saraibil in 1972, respectively.

The following table from the census report of India, 1911 shows the actual numbers of Christian and their variation percent.

<b>SUBSIDIARY TABLE I.</b>									
General distribution of the population by Religion.									
Religion and locality	Actual number in 1911.	Proportion per 10,000 of population in				Variation percent. (increase+ decrease-).			Net variation.
		1911	1901	1891	1881	1901-1911	1891-1901	1881-1891	1881-1911
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>HINDU</b>									
Assam	3,838,76	5,437	5,597	5,472	6,258	+11.9	+14.4	-6.1	+20.2
Brahmaputra Valley	9	7,014	7,182	6,984	8,504	+15.9	+9.9	-9.6	+15.2
Surma Valley	2,180,339	4,771	5,140	4,980	5,010	+5.7	+5.7	+10.6	+21.6
Hills	1,401,985	2,584	2,584	599	2,661	+15.7	+627.3	-81.6	+54.5
<b>MUSALMAN</b>	254,445								
Assam		2,693	2,581	2,710	2,591	+20.2	+6.6	+12.3	+43.8
Brahmaputra Valley		1,143	930	941	918	+42.8	+3.6	+17.6	+73.9
Surma Valley	1,901,032	5,166	4,920	4,910	4,906	+16.3	+5.7	+11.6	+37.2
Hills	35,530	251	299	136	156	-.5	+27.2	-29.2	+161.5
<b>ANIMIST</b>	1,530,302		1,744	1,771	1,124	+16.0	+10.2	+69.1	+116.1
Assam	2	1,755	1,782	1,974	5345	+15.5	-3.5	+307.1	+353.8
Brahmaputra Valley	25,320	1,734	73	110	59	-19.8	-29.9	+108.7	+17.3
Surma Valley		53	6,845	9,080	7,135	+17.6	+27.0	+3.8	+55.1
Hills	1,230,280	6,700							
<b>CHRISTIAN</b>			59	31	14	+85.1	+113.5	+137.2	+837.5
Assam	538,994	94	48	28	14	+69.8	+83.7	+16.8	+574.4
Brahmaputra Valley	15,590	68	6	6	5	+54.6	+17.1	+26.9	+129.8
Surma Valley	684,706	9	256	256	45	+96.2	+153.6	+205.1	+1,417.6
Hills		423							
<b>BUDDHIST</b>	66,562		15	14	13	+18.0	+15.8	+17.2	+60.1
Assam	21,272	15	30	28	29	+23.3	+14.5	+7.9	+52.4
Brahmaputra Valley	2,629	31	...	...	...	+109.	+110.0	...	...
Surma Valley	42,661	...	11	15	2	-28.6	+26.0	+434.8	+380.9
Hills		7							
<b>OTHERS</b>			4	3	1	+36.4	+83.2	+324.4	+960.5
Assam	10,513	5	8	5	1	+40.6	+58.3	+420.4	+1,058.0
Brahmaputra Valley	9,791	9	1	...	...	-19.1	+107.3	+59.0	+166.7
Surma Valley	41	1	4	1	...	+52.1	+1,083.33	+67.5	+3,275.0
Hills	678	5							1
	3,701								
	2,953								
	208								
	540								

Table-II (Census of India 1911.p.45)

Christianity brought some significant changes in the traditional religion of the Bodos. With the advent of the Christianity, Bodo society changed at various institutions. Subsequently, certain age-old traditional beliefs, customs and traditional rites and rituals was discarded by the newly formed Christian Bodo society. They discarded their traditional *Bathou* religion and gave up all the puja connected to traditional religion like- *Kherai puja*, *Garja puja*, *Hambai puja*, etc. The Christian Bodo started to celebrate Christmas, Good Friday and Easter of the Christian faith. The advent of Christianity witnessed a significant change in the traditional Bodo marriage. The Christian Bodo people began marriage in the Church with the help of their Catholic father. Thus from the last decade of the nineteenth century, the rapid growth and development of Christianity in the Bodo populated areas influenced a large chunk of the Bodo population affecting the authority of the traditional Bodo religion.

### **Advent of Brahma Dharma**

Brahma Dharma was started among the Bodos in the early part of the 20th century by Kalicharan Mech, who was later known as Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma. He was born at Kajigaon village of the Porbatjhora area of the present district of Kokrajhar in 1862 A.D. Kaola Ram Mech was his father and his mother was Rindini Mech (Brahma, 2006,p. 65). His father Kaola Ram Mech was a timber businessman. Kalicharan studied up to only class IV standard. He was proficient to read and write both Hindi and Bengali. At the age of fifteen, he entered into family life and after the death of his father; he looked after the timber business of his father as *Ejadar*.

In the Brahma religion, it is believed that there is a supreme being known as Param Brahma.

“Brahma is by nature eternally and absolute blissful. He is eternally self realized, self perfect and self enjoying. He also possesses the unique power of creating from within himself or manifesting himself as the phenomenal world of divinity without the least prejudice to the perfect unity of his self existence”(Banarjee,1989,p.III).

Kalicharan brought the Brahma Dharma into the Bodo community when in the name of religion and festival, the excessive use of liquor and meat had demoralized the common Bodo people in 1906 (Basumatary, 2005, p.53). However, during that time the Bodo society was ruined by evil, disorder, superstition, backwardness etc., which led the Bodos into degradation and degeneration in their socio-economic life. As a result, some of the Bodo people converted to Christianity and some became Saraniya by adopting Ek Saran Nam Dharam of Srimat Sankardaeva. In such a terrifying period, Gurudev Kalicharan came out as a hero and realized that the Bodos needed education for the development of the entire socio-economic and political condition and also realized that religion like Islam or Ek Saran Nam Dharam could not protect the identity of the Bodo community for which he decided to preach Brahma Dharma to save the Bodos. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma was determined to teach the Bodo people. In 1906 A.D., Kalicharan Brahma brought Phani Bhusan Chatterjee from Calcutta as a Purohit and Hum Yajna was performed in a village named Bwinyaguri (Brahma, 2006, p.66). In this Yajnahuti thousands of the Bodos participated and came to be known as the beginning of the *Vedic* religion among the Bodos. Following this, in the same year, another Yajnahuti was performed at Kajigaon with a massive gathering. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma preached the Brahma Dharma not only in the Parbatjhora area but also in other villages like Adabari, Auabari, Banargaon, Khashibari Roumari, Khagrabari, Bamungaon, Dangaigaon, etc. Many of the Bodos became followers of Brahma Dharma under the leadership of Gurudev Kalicharan. The Bodo people were more attracted to the Brahma Dharma and many of them became the upholder of Brahma Dharma. The credit for following the Brahma Dharma by the Bodos goes to Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma who took a painstaking effort to preach Brahma Dharma among the Bodos with the aim of eradication of the evil practices that cope among the Bodos before the advent of the Brahma Dharma.

The following are the six principles of the Brahma Dharma (Brahma, 1992, p.200).

- (i) It is the duty of every human being to keep the universe clean.
  - (ii) To treat all the creatures equally.
  - (iii) The items offered to Hom-Jagya should be pure and fragranced.
  - (iv) Param Brahma, the Almighty God, should be called by Om sat guru.
  - (v) Saluting light (Jyoti) in morning and evening as Param Brahma appears in the light of sun and moon.
  - (vi) Every person should be attached to the omnipresent, the Param Brahma.
- The 20<sup>th</sup> century is considered the darkest period in the history of Boro society.

### **Advent of Rupamoni Religion:**

*Rupamoni* religion is a refined cult of traditional *Bathou* religion that has adopted many basic elements of Hinduism and Brahma dharma (Brahma, 2006, p.75). *Rupamoni* or also known as *Moni Bathou* was founded by Guru *Rupamoni Devi* of Gossaigaon, Basugaon of Bongaigaon District in Bangla 1380 (Brahma, 2006, p.75). Unlike *Bathou* religion *Moni Bathou* does not offer the sacrifice of birds and animals. According to this religion, Siva is the Supreme God and creator of all lives and the universe. The followers of these religious sects believe the universe is born out of him. They worship him in the form of *Bathou*. The main altar of *Bathou* is built on the north east corner of the courtyard. *Sijou* tree is planted in the middle of the altar. A *Jatrashi* plant (a kind of tree used in religious activities) and a *Tulushi* (Basil leaf) plant are also planted towards the east and south side of the altar.

*Rupamoni* religion has a considerable number of followers throughout Assam and mainly Kokrajhar, Chirang, Dhubri, Bongaigaon districts, among the Bodos. This religion brought a major modification of the conception and practice of the traditional *Bathou* religion. This religion has discarded the sacrifices of birds, animals, etc. in the name of traditional *Bathou* religion of the Bodos.

### **Advent of Satsanga Religion**

*Satsanga* religion is also known as Anukul Thakur dharma in Bodo. It is one of the religious sects of Hinduism. Many Bodos converted into the *Satsanga* religion from the last decade of the twentieth century. The *Satsanga* religion believes in the incarnation of Purushottam (Brahma, 2006, p.83). Purushottam who incarnates for the welfare of human beings on the earth is believed as the creator of the whole universe. The *Satsanga* religion is monotheist in nature. Sri Sri Anukul Thakur is regarded by the devotees of Anukul dhanna as Purusattam who incarnates on the earth for religious inculcation.

The coming of the *Satsanga* religion and other Hindu cults among a section of the Bodos in the last decade of the twentieth century brought some significant changes in the social customs, beliefs, traditions, thoughts, etc. The *Satsanga* Bodo converts consider themselves more refined in their customs, traditions, foods, drinks and beliefs, like a religiously purified class in the Bodo society which signifies the sign of the emergence of a new social class among the traditional Bodos. After embracing the *Satsanga* religion the Bodo people gave up the habit of eating meat, fish and became purely vegetarians. The most notable change that occurred in the Bodo society was the separation of the *Satsanga* Bodo converts by themselves from their age old traditional mainstream and culture. The *Satsanga* Bodo converts directly accepted the customs, traditions, manners, culture, rites and rituals of the Aryans. They also avoided taking onion, garlic, etc. They enjoyed equal status or position like other high castes Hindu Brahmins in the domain of Hinduism. The *Satsang* religion now holds many followers among the Bodo community.

However, the conversion of many Bodos into different religions fragmented the traditional Bodo society into several religious sects. It also adversely undermined the age-old practices among some of the Bodos.

**Impact on Traditional Religion**

Thus, the conversion of the Bodos in large numbers into other sects of religion continued. Consequently, the morality of the *Bathou* religion was invariably degraded in the Bodo society. To counter the new religious reform movement there were no organized platforms by which the followers of *Bathou* religion could resist. However, for modification of the traditional *Bathou* philosophy, some intellectuals Bodos came up with the objectives and spread of the *Bathou* religion. It follows that a new religious organization named Sanja Darang Bathou Dwhwram Afad was formed in 1975 CE in the district of Darrang due to the initiative of Bihuram Boro. Later, for the preservation of Bodo culture and their traditional religion, a section of people came forward and consequently, in 1958 Sadou Asom Bathou Mahasangha was organized by Dhuparam Basumatary (Narzary, 2011, p.74).

The main objective of the Mahasangha was to spread the messages of the traditional *Bathou* religion and to preserve the related traditional practices and rituals. Following the same objectives to spread the traditional religion of the Bodos in 1960 CE, a '*Bathou Dharma Mahasabha*' was convened by Bhaben Swargiary popularly known as Bhaben Fwrwngiri. The sacrificial offerings of ducks, goats, pigeons, fowls, and offering and drinking *Jou* in the name of deities at different religious occasions and festivals began to be demeaning and unacceptable in the eyes of modern concepts of religion. So, a section of the Bodo elites began to feel ashamed of this atrocity and tried to find the superior features of other faiths from the beginning of the 20th century CE onwards. This ultimately led to the formation of the Dularai Bathou Gouthum or All Bathou Mahasabha (All *Bathou* Religious Union) on 10th May, 1992 for reformation and modification of the age-old practices. The aims and objectives of this organization may be cited here (Basumatary, 2021).

1. To revitalize *Bathouism* along with propagation of its religious preaching all over the world.
2. To enshrine the divine ideas of *Bathouism* along with its related traditional rites and rituals as well as social customs.
3. To publish and highlight the theosophical matters, philosophy, thought and beliefs, moral teaching, hymn and,
4. To organize discussions, seminars, study circles and research as required on *Bathou* religion and its philosophy from time to time.

Thus and thus the reformation leaders under this organization tried to give an organized and unified institutionalized shape to the traditional Bodo religion called *Bathou*. The fact is that the leaders of this organization were inspired by their adherence to the traditional values. Thus a section of Bodo elites played a very crucial role in reviving the old *Bathou* religion and gave it a new form and a sense of status. By the last two decades of the twentieth century, the different sects of *Bathou* worship emerged among the Bodos, such as *Gudi Bathou* (*Bwli Bathou*), *Zangkhrao Bathou*, *Bibar Bathou*, *Moni Bathou of Guru Rupamoni Devi*, *Bathou Siva dharma of Swami Nabin Brahmari* (Brahma, 2022). All types of *Bathou* worship are now accepted as different sects of *Bathou* religion. The most ancient and original form of *Bathou* worship is found in *Gudi* or *Bwli Bathou*.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Brahma dharma propagated by Kalicharan Brahma brought about inexpensive rituals and equality among its adherents. Kalicharan Brahma initiated the religious reform movement of Brahma dharma in the Bodo society. This religious movement greatly affected the age old beliefs systems, religious practices and traditional culture of the Bodos which were mostly associated with the *Bathou* religion. The formation of the Boro Chatra Sanmilan in 1919 at Kokrajhar was another turning point in the development of the *Bathou* religion in the Bodo society (Brahma, 2022). It brought about social consciousness among the Bodos and thereby contributed a lot to the development of literature and language besides religion. *The Boro Chatra Sanmilan* adopted some voluntary measures along with the Boro Mahasanmilani to bring reforms in the age old beliefs and practices in the society. But the opinion of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma in the Boro

Mahasanimilani to abandon the traditional Bodo musical instruments, such as *Kham* (drum), *Sifung* (flute) and *Jotha* (cymbal) at the religious ceremonies received a hard opposition from one of his disciples like Nepal Chandra Brahmachari popularly known as Fwrlang Babaji and some followers like Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma and others. Realizing the importance of the rich cultural heritage of the Bodos, Fwrlang Babaji strongly held the view that the unique identity and culture of the Bodo vested in these three musical instruments. The preservation of rich cultural heritage thus sprang up in the minds of a section of the educated Bodo Brahma converts. Consequently, a section of the Bodo intellectuals who were staunch *Bathou* worshippers attempted to reform the traditional *Bathou* worship with some modifications to preserve their traditional religion and culture.

### Conclusion

The advent of a new religion among the Bodos witnessed a significant change in the traditional religion of the Bodos. The traditional religion of the Bodo the *Bathou* religion could not ensure the inevitable process of growth and development which every tribe and nation has to go through for its very survival and existence. Thus many came to look upon Christianity as a religion that will satisfy their inner yearnings. The process of conversion to different religions like Christian religion, Brahma religion, Satsang, Saivism, Vaisnavism, etc. brought many reforms in the traditional Bodo society as well. Changes were brought in age old traditional religious beliefs, marriage institution, traditional rites, rituals and customs of the Bodos. After embracing the Christian religion the Bodos gave up all traditional fairs and festivals. Moreover, due to the rapid spread of the Brahma Dharma, the process of conversion among the Bodos into the Christian religion was checked to some extent.

### Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the informants for providing information.

### References

1. Banerjee, A. K. (1989). *Discourses on Hindu Spiritual Culture*, Vol-I, New Delhi.
2. Brahma, K. (1992). *Dr. A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta.
3. Basumatary, K. R. (2005). *Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma and the Bodos in Modern Times*, *Mugani Sakhi*, Baksa.
4. Brahma, S. (2006). *Religion of the Boros and Their Socio- Cultural Transition*, DVS Publishers, Guwahati.
5. Swiney, J. Mc. (1911). *Census of India Volume-III, Assam, Part-I*.
6. Hajowary, M.S. (1998). "Gwjam Mugayao Boro Harimu Sibinaini Bidinti" *Rupesri*, Kokrajhar
7. Narjinari, H. (2009). "Sanskritization and De-sanskritization of the Meches or Bodos", *Birgwsrini Thandwi*, Souvenir of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Banggaldoba, Bodoland Autonomous Council.
8. Narzary, N. (2011). "Role and Responsibility of *Bathouism* in the present context of the Boro Society", *Sijou Jwngma*, Udalguri.
9. Sebastian, A. (1997). "Christianity among the Bodos", *The Bodos of Bhullumbutter*, Guwahati.
10. Siiger, H. (2015). *The Bodo of Assam, Revisiting a Classical Study from 1950*, NIAS Press.
11. Swiney, J. Mc. (1911). *Census of India 1911, Volume-III, Assam, Part-I*.
12. *The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union, Papers and Discussion of the Jubilee Conference held in Nowgong Dec, 18 to 29, 1886*, The Baptist Mission Press, (1887), Calcutta.
13. Thomas Pulloppillil, T., Aluckal, J. (1997). *The Bodos Children of Bhullumbutter*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati.



14. Narzary, C.R., Age- 74 Date of Interview 25/2/2022.
15. Basumatary, A.K., Age- 67 Date of Interview 12-1-2022.
16. Basumatary, J., Age- 83 Date of Interview 26-12-2021.
17. Narzary, P., Age- 60 Date of Interview 7-1-2022.
18. Basumatary. T., Age- 58 Date of Interview 5-2-2022.
19. Narzary, S., Age- 71 Date of Interview 10-1-2022.
20. Brahma, S., Age- 58 Date of Interview 15-1-2022.