

TRADITIONAL CUSTOM BODO MARRIAGE; A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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Abstract

Marriage is one of the strong and most important traditional social customs of Bodo society. Without marriage two young boy and girl couple are not allowed to live together in special home. There are some kinds of marriage system in Bodo society. In the traditional system of marriage the use of pork meat (oma bedor) and the use of rice beer is most commonly found in every bodo marriage ceremony. One of the special marriage system highlighting in this paper is the Widow re-marriage system which is not seen in other community. In bodo society widows are also allowed to live equally as well as other people did. Through This research paper I am going to highlight the different types of marriage and the formalities which are performed in bodo society from early period.

Key words-Custom, Haba, Bodo-Kachari, Hata-Chuni, Admongola, Gwrjia .

Introduction:

Marriage has been defined as a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are reorganized legitimate offs-spring of both parents. Marriage is a social traditional custom of Bodo Society. Marriage creates new social relationships and reciprocal rights between the spouses, between each and the kin of the other, and establishes what will be the rights and status of the children when they are born. Every society has recognized procedure for creating such relationships and rights and for making it known that they have been created.

As with many other societies the marriage ceremony is the most important ceremony in the life cycle of the Bodos. Marriage is called “Haba” by the Bodo words. In Bodo “Ha“ means soil or earth and the “Ba” means to bear something on the back. So Haba means to bear the soil or the responsibility of the earth on the back. It is interesting to note that Sanskrit word for marriage “Bivaha” also has a similar etymological meaning. Finally after marriage a person enters into a circle of great responsibility. With the marriage ceremony the Bodos give the newly married couple a new lesson an life which is full of duties and responsibilities.

Different types of Bodo Marriage system:

The Bodos have as many as six different types of marriage system .These are as follows-

- a) Swngnanwi Lainai Haba (marriage according to standard practice).

- b) Gwrjia Lakhinai Haba.
- c) Kharsonnai Haba.
- d) Bwnanwi Lainai Haba.
- e) Dwnkhar Langnai Haba and
- f) Dongkha habnai Haba.

a) Swngnanwi Lainai Haba:

This marriage is solemnized according to the standard social bodo customs. According to this system of marriage the bride is selected by the parents of the bridegroom and then the marriage is settled after the two parent's negotiation. In earlier days this sort of marriage was solemnized at the house of the bridegroom only. Now a day the marriage is solemnized at the house of the bride also. This type of marriage is regarded as a regular marriage. Bride price was common in bodo society in earlier days. In the present bodo society it is not compulsory. But if the parents of the bride wants to give something else or some money then the parents can give to their daughter as much as they like at the time of marriage either after the eight days of marriage. After eight days the new couple went to the bride's house as a guest to become closeness with the two families and to give farewell to her own villagers friend. This is called "Admongola" in Bodo word.

b) Gwrjia Lakhinai Haba.

It is solemnized at the house of the bride. It may be called a marriage by service. Because the bridegroom has to give his service at the house of the bride before the marriage. If somebody parents dose not have any son and they has daughter only then the parents may be take away to their home anyone young boy by their selection for daughter. Sometime the may be a agreement with the boy and bride parents against the wealth or property of daughter and home maintenance as well their future care. This system is in vogue among the non-bodos also. In Assamese it is called "Ghorjia" or "Ghorjongai". This type of marriage is regarded as an irregular marriage. This system of marriage is rare in the present bodo society.

c) Kharsonnai Haba:

In this marriage the bride directly enters in to the house of the bridegroom before the settlement of the marriage. It is possible if there is mutual understanding between the bridegroom and the bride. The consent of the parents of the bride is not taken into consideration much. This is also an irregular marriage.

d) Bwnanwi Lainai Haba:

According to this system of marriage the bride is forcefully taken away from the house of the bride to the house of the bridegroom and the marriage is solemnized. This system of marriage

was prevalent in the earlier days. It is not a socially approved system of marriage in present bodo society. This type of marriage was happen in earlier bodo society if the boy wants to love one young girl who he was ever seen and propose to married her but the young girl give less interested to him. Now a days this system of marriage is not see in the present bodo society.

e) Dwnkhar Langnai Haba:

Although not approve socially in bodo society sometimes this type of marriage is take place in bodo society. This is the marriage by elopement of both the bride and bridegroom. The mutual understanding between the bride and bridegroom is enough for this type of marriage. Though this type of marriage is not approve by the society the new marriage couple will be accepted after the marriage in to bodo society. This is also a kind of irregular marriage system.

f) Dongkha habnai Haba:

This type of marriage is approved by the bodo society. In this marriage the bride is a widow. If a man lives in the house of a widow as her husband then they are recognized as husband and wife by the society. However they have to regularize their marriage according to the social custom called “Dongkha Habnai”. This type of marriage is very rare in the bodo society.

Another irregular marriage of the bodo customs which is socially recognized is the widow Remarriage. A widow can re-marriage any person who is not related to her. If she marries for the second time then she loses the authority on the property of her decease husband. The male child is always entitle to get the property of his father. Sometime it is seen that the widow is allowed to take the female child of her deceased husband along with her to her new husband.

It is however to be note that there are fundamental ritualistic differences in solemnizing a marriage among bodo community between the two section of Religious- the traditional Boro-Kacharis marriage and the followers of Brahmaism. While the traditionalist recourse to “Hatha Chuni” system, the Brahma take recourse to vedic rites and perform “Hom-Yogya” ceremony in front of sacred fire. Like the rest of the other Hindu communities a Brahma groom himself sets out in accompaniment with a party for the brides house for performing the actual marriage rites, but in the traditional system of marriage the groom instead of going to the brides house sends only a little party to fetch the girl ceremoniously to perform the rituals at the grooms house. When the bride accompanied by her kith and kin and the party arrives in a most joyous mood, she is received at the gate amidst a benedictory ovation and then taken inside. Soon after this, a grand feast is thrown out in honors of the bride and the bridal party by killing a pig and it is customary that a portion of this fork should be kept separately for the next meal of the bridal party to be taken at the brides house on return. As soon as the feast is over, the member of the bridal party back leave. Then the groom party starts a general cleaning operation of the house to hold the “Hatha-Chuni”- the most important function of the day in most serene atmospheres (the word “Hatha-Chini” literally means distribution of rice by the bride with a wooden ladle). Immediately after the cleaning of the entire household the bride is asked to makes a symbolic

cooking and then to offer a little amount of food so cooked to the household duties. Amidst citation of invocatory prayer by the village “Douri” the bride makes the offering first to Mahadeva and then mother Kamakhya. The bride is then asked to touch the rice pot kept normally in a corner of the kitchen which she does with her left hand. At this moment the bride is administered an oath of fidelity to her new home. Then both the groom and the bride are given some sermons of married life by one from amongst the elderly persons or by the village Douri. On the eight days of the marriage the groom is to visit the father in-laws house with his bride and also wherever possible with his friends. This visit of the groom to his father in-laws house is a part of the marriage this is called “Admongola” in boro traditional rites. Until it is done a marriage is not treated as complete.

Conclusion:

Bodo or the Bodo –Kachari of North East India is a big linguistic community having large speakers. The Bodo is one of the second largest populated community of Assam. They have their own Region that is BTAD/BTC. Bodos have their own Religion, culture, a strong social custom and identity. They are very disciplinary community. They always follow their social customs. They think without obeyed social custom there is no different between man and animale.

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