

Review Article

# Reflection on Socio-cultural Life in the Novels of Rita Boro: A Selective Study

Chittaranjan Mushahary<sup>1</sup>, Laishri Molilary<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Barama College, Barama and Scholar, Bodoland University.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Bodo Bodoland University.

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**Abstract** - It is important to consider the cultural context of any literary work, which reveals the mystery and beauty of a certain society reflected in the text. Culture is a part of social status that has grown within society since its inception. At present, Bodo, Literature has attained a position of pride with its credit for many novels that have directly enriched North East Literature. Rita Boro is recognized as a luminary in Bodo literature with a creative strategy in cultural phenomena. This paper attempts to identify the various categories of cultural statements available in the novels of Rita Boro. In this regard, the most related part of the culture in Bodo society are worship, festival, agriculture, weaving, food habit, superstitious beliefs, etc., which are projected to be discussed in the full paper elaborately. In this paper, two remarkable novels, namely *Gongse Okrangni Singao* ( *Beneath the Sky*) and *Thwisam* ( *Reddish Black*) by Rita Boro, are selected for the concerned aspects to be studied to reflect the Bodo culture represented in Bodo literature. The topic *Reflection of Socio-cultural Life in the Novels of Rita Boro: A Selective Study* has found the cultural strategy in a glorious interpretation of the society.

**Keywords** - Cultural context, Worship, Agriculture, Weaving, Superstition, and Food habit.

## 1. Introduction

Rita Boro is one of the prominent novelists of Bodo literature. As a writer, she has contributed many literary works to Bodo literature. In this regard, one of the exceptional attitudes to consider from the creation of Rita Boro is the representation of social status, i.e., the reflection of the socio-cultural life of the Bodo society. From the particular point of view of socio-cultural norms and their terms being configured, the author considers a large number of traditional knowledge from a real picture of society. That kind of motive of the author has been produced in the experiment outcomes of a real-life situation. Rita Boro, at present, has completed five remarkable novels *Gongse Okhrangni Singao* ( *Beneath the Sky*), *Thwisam* ( *Reddish Black*), *Saikhong* ( *Shadow*), *Bachiram Jwhwlaio* ( *The Bachiram Hero*) and *Swmaosarnaini Organg* ( *The Revolution as Volcano*) respectively to her credit.

Different cultural statuses color human life. There is an analytical necessity to study the cultural strategy that the author project for significant characters in different novels. The author makes some distinct information about the cultural practice of the Bodo society. The structure of the text should be discussed analytically in this topic.

Rita Boro's novels depict the cultural scenario of the social life that prevailed in the Bodo society. Culture is concerned with an indispensable part of society in its existence.

The particular portion of the study should be discussed religion, festival, food habit, weaving, superstitious belief, etc., which is seen in the social life cycle.

Culture is an essential part of the human being, which is first propounded by E. B. Tylor *culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, moral law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society*. [1] In the novels of Rita Boro, we observe the significance of different cultural identities, and an attempt is made to elaborate on these as follows.

### 1.1. Aims and Objective

- This research study aims to explore cultural phenomena.
- To be discussed the traditional knowledge from reading the novels of Rita Boros.
- The classification of different cultures prevailed in Bodo society.

### 1.2. Methodology

The content is the basic determinant of ideas and thoughts for the research option. The author's interpretation is the most important possibility for the research analysis. Beyond it meant the transparent outcomes of the feelings and imagination of the author. Under this study, that context helps us as raw materials for the analysis. In this regard, a descriptive and analytical method is used for the study. The research method aims to discover the prevailing cultural phenomena in Bodo society that emerges in the novels of Rita Boro.



### 1.3. Data Collection

The using process for data collection is both primary and secondary data for the research study. The primary form of data in its collection includes textbooks collected from different publications. Another primary information is that there has been direct contact with the author to glimpse her concern related to the selected topic. Secondary data collection sources are included from different references collection provided to fulfill the articles. The library visit, newspapers, magazines, the internet, international journals, national journals, etc., are the important prime prevalence for the research paper's findings

1. [https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/culture/culture\\_1](https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/culture/culture_1)
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_novel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_novel)

## 2. Reflection on Socio-Cultural Life in the Novels of Rita Boro

The above introduction part has explained Rita Boro's contribution to literature. As a novelist, Rita Boro has explored the various significant identity of the socio-cultural life of the Bodo society. The scope is there to study one by one each of Rita Boro's novels by the purpose. The basic information is related to the Bodo society reflected in most of the novels by Rita Boro. The *Gonse Okrangni Singao (Beneath the Sky)* is a related novel to the Bodo culture where people are seen observing the *Bathou* religion. The God of the *Bwrai Bathou* is worshipped by the Bodo people holding the religious belief in common justification. On the other hand, the food habit, weaving and superstitious beliefs, etc., are the rare outcomes of traditional knowledge. In the *Thwisam (Reddish Black)*, some ideas of agriculture and weaving are also commonly related parts of the culture.

The '*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*' and the '*Thwisam*' are social novels relating to different social problems and issues. The Britannica is defined as a *social problem novel, also problem novel or social novel, a work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel* [2] The society is a root concern to accomplish the text that has considered by the author's which is run continuously different character in each novel. '*Gongse Okhrangni Singao*' is the main protagonist in the novel 'Fwisali.' According to the author, the character of *Fwisali* has to see as a worker at any time in their home related to worship, weaving, collection of food processing, etc. That is interpreted as the cultural status of the Bodo society. In '*Thwisam*' novel '*Thulusi*,' the main protagonist in the novel has taken some initiative role in academic and social development in her life. Those activities of '*Thulusi*' are related to the socio-cultural life of the society as a whole.

### 2.1. Worship

The writer has been engaged in many kinds of cultural treats where religion is delineated as an indispensable part of society. The delineated part of the way of worshipping

practiced in the Bodo community demands a certain religion in the Bodo society. In most of the novel, we find traditional exposure of the Bodo community in worshipping the God of *Bwrai Bathou*.

#### 2.1.1. Bodo Version

*Ang bathou thansaliyao gwdan bwswni fuja hwnaiao thangdwngmwn page no- 7*

#### 2.1.2. English Version

*I went to Bathou temple to offer the puja for the god in the advent of bwisagu.*

#### 2.1.3. Bodo Version

*nwnswrni be jalukbariao Bathou thansali lubai? Lekhaya Jibonkhwo naina swngyw.*

*ou bajwi jalukbarini borofwra khwose jana gwdani sw gaisondwngi page no17*

#### 2.1.4. English Version

*'Oh! Ok, have you built the Bathou temple at Jalukbari?' Lekha asked Jibon. 'of course, sister-in-law, the Bodo peoples have unitedly built up the new Bathou temple there.'*

The above conversation highlights the belief of the Bodo people towards *Bathou*, an image of unseen power. The belief and faith in *Bathou* among the Bodo people unite them as a community anywhere where they start living. We find the same religious belief in the novel *Thwisam*, where *Bathou* is placed at the height of the Almighty in the formation of the Bodo society.

#### 2.1.5. Bodo Version

*Thilaba Bathou gudikhwo liranwi alari bathi saonw thiyari khalamdong. Dinwi mongolbar. Gubun barfwrao alari bathi saonw hasslababw biw jabw Sana aba gwswhwo jebw mwna. Nathai dinwini sankhwo hole biyw Nagar thara (page 3)*

#### 2.1.6. English Version

*'Theleb is ready to light up lamp in the religious place of Bathou Sali. The day is today, Tuesday, and the special day to pray. There is nothing to think on other days though she does not visit the place. But she could not fail on Tuesday'.*

On Tuesday, the traditional belief considered a holy day for visiting religious places by Bodo people, is distinctly observed in the above-quoted utterance.

## 2.2. Agricultural Evaluation

'*Thwisam*,' another important novel, is loaded with the verity of cultural outputs carried forth by the creative art of the novelist. The Bodo society is based on agricultural occupation. The writer has painted several characters involved in the agricultural operation in different moments and situations in the novel '*Thwisam*.' The novel's story is based on the social-economic aspect where several cultural trends emerge.

### 2.2.1. Bodo Version

*Be sandung gwsayao dubliyao ayjwfwr mai gainayao arw haluyafwrni hal aoniayao nunanwi thulunsiya gaonibida Rajen, bibajwi Mala arw bimayongmwnkhwo jwbowd gws khanghorbai. Da mai gainai bwthwr janangwobiswrbw sandung okhayao mai gaidwng, khwthiya fudwng, hal aodwng. Page no- 57*

### 2.2.2. English Version

*'During the hot weather, Thulunchi remembers the women folk, servant, her brother, sister-in-law and uncle working in the paddy field. It might be summer that everyone is busy in the cultivation field.'*

The above version narrated by the author has a filing and imagination of 'Thulunchi's mind on the cultivation work in the paddy field. 'Thulunchi' was an educated girl who became a doctor in life. Yet, during their teenage age, she was given importance to agriculture, which is explained in the text as having known the Bodo society's agricultural picture.

## 2.3. Festival

Observance of certain festivals in a specific period of the year is a significant characteristic in the socio-cultural life of the Bodo community. Bodo people observe different festivals on different occasions, reflecting the Bodo society's cultural norms. In this respect, Rita Boro is found as a keen observer as we get a real description of some festivals observed by the Bodo people in the pages of her novel. In her novel 'Gonse Okhrangni Singao,' we find the real picture of the observance of *Bwisagu* as.

### 2.3.1. Bodo Version

*Nenayaonw nenayaonw bwisagua sofwimarbai. Bifang bifang khilibai bilai gwrlwi ..... page no- 12*

### 2.3.2. English Version

*'Bwisagu has arrived at the gate after long waiting, and new leaves are seen in the trees.'*

'Bwisagu' is a colorful festival of the Bodo society, observed annually as a spring session in a year if there will begin the *Bwisagu* before the village girl prepares 'aronai' cloth and handcar ship to give presents to beloved or respected persons during the 'Bwisagu' festival.

## 2.4. Food Habit

Consumption of traditional food is a prime characteristic of Bodo culture. Since time immemorial, Bodo society has maintained its food processing system, which is identified as a specific culture belonging to the Bodo community only. All the foodstuff prepared by the community is collected from natural resources. Rita Boro has succeeded in describing the food habit of the Bodo people in her novel.

## 2.5. Fishing Habit

The technique of catching fish is peculiar and has been practised since the old days. Bodo women are especially involved in this activity which is recognized as a social

custom of the community. Again, the preparation of fish with the food item by the Bodo people is also specific. Rita Boro has nicely represented the culture of fish catching in her novel, which gives vent in the following expression in the novel 'Thwisam.'

### 2.5.1. Bodo Version

*Habab mathw Thelabalai mathaikhwnw khonakhwi. Mathai khonwi khonwi na hwblasw naya jakhaiao Awywnw. Page no- 61*

### 2.5.2. English Version

*'Ba Ba Theleb, why are you not singing, you will be able to catch fish only when you start singing.'*

The reflection on food habits is focused on the above conversation of fishing activity between 'Thaleb' and 'Nafathi', which were attained similar characters in the novel. Both are simple lifestyles. Still, 'Theleb' was suffering from depression her son because her son *Ansuma* always did not obey her advice. For instance, ultimately, *Ansuma* is spoiled in life. So that reason, 'Theleb' was disliked for singing the song at the fishing moment, although 'Theleb' was joined to fish catching with *Nafathi*. That scenery is represented the fishing lifestyle in the Bodo society.

## 2.6. Weaving

Weaving is another extraordinary activity exercised by Bodo women, contributing to the enrichment of Bodo culture. Bodo people still use the traditional process of weaving, which is unique in the global scenario. Rita Boro recorded the Bodo community's weaving culture in her novel 'Gonse okrangni singao.'

### 2.6.1. Bodo Version

*Fwisali nwnw angnw gangse somaina aronai dananwi hwnaisai. Ang mithing daothing fwrao lanangwo page no 13*

### 2.6.2. English Version

*'Fwisali need for me a beautiful aronai to wear in the place of meeting to be held.'*

Here the significance of the traditional *aronai*, which is worn around the neck, is express an *aronai* is considered highly honorable in the socio-cultural life of the Bodo people.

## 2.7. Superstitious Belief

Bodo society is deep-rooted with some beliefs or power which have since long been considered graceful or ill signals without any rationality. Nevertheless, they are in force which could be analyzed as a part of the socio-cultural life of the Bodo community or religious beliefs followed by the tribes. Such beliefs or customs held by the Bodo people find expression in the novels of Rita Boro realistically. She succeeds in sketching the socio-cultural aspect of society in this regard. In certain pages of her narrative *Gonse Okhrangni Singao*, we find realistic expressions of superstitious beliefs held in Bodo society.

### 2.7.1. Bodo Version

*Nokhorao kali sabbai bikhainw kwifwdnifray khwifwd*  
page- 72

### 2.7.2. English Version

*Kali, the image of course or evil, enters the household,*  
*so there is danger every way.*

## 3. Conclusion

The discussion of the two novels by Rita Boro claims her social concern from the angle of a kin observer. She lively presents the behavior, customs, religious beliefs, festival, food habits, social structure, economic conditions, and cultural heritage of the Bodo community so that such a

novel reflects the picture of the Bodo society minutely. The above analysis from which the creative output by the author has convenient value where there has no boundary to compare with the quantity. That is assured of building up a common spirit of development in literature. Culture is an interrelated subject matter with the literature. Both are close connections because, without culture, there has no meaning in the literature. So, culture is referred to as a source of social phenomena in the existence of human beings. The member of society can believe that the culture is maintained the stability of the social milieu within their exchange of communication. That regularity function of society explores in this analysis.

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