Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Review Of Research Journal

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

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ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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Review Of Research



ISSN: 2249-894X Impact Factor : 3.8014(UIF) Vol ume - 6 | Issue - 10 | Jul y - 2017



HATHASUNI : THE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE CEREMONY OF THE BODOS.

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AB<u>S</u>TRACT

arriage is a social contract for the satisfaction of physical, biological, psychological and spiritual needs of a male and female leading to the formation of a family to bring up children and live together. Sexual relationship and procreation are undoubtedly the primary aims of marriage. Marriage validates sex relationships.

KEYWORDS: social contract, satisfaction of physical, biological, psychological.

INTRODUCTION:

Marriage is a social custom. After marriage an individual become a social being. Road connected the communication like this marriage connected the two unknown families. In custom of marriage the two unknown families to appear oneself of the society. In Rig Veda : "The marriage had two objectives namely to enable and individual to perform scarifies for God and to have children. According to Anthropologist : "Marriage is a traditional process and social recognition of union of the two opposite sexes. Male and female for the purpose of sexual relationship".

There are two types of marriage system in human being, i.e. Patriarchal and Matriarchal. The Aryans and Dravidians are to perform patriarchal types of marriage on the other hand the Austrics and the mongoloids are to perform the matriarchal type of marriage but due to influence of the Aryan culture the Bodos also performing both patriarchal and matriarchal types of marriage. The Aryan are to perform Brahma, Daibo, Arjyo, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Raikhas, Paisas as many as eight different types of marriage. The Bodos have as many as six different types of marriage. These are- (a) Swngnai Haba (Arrange marriage), (b) Kharsonnai Haba (Girl flee away), (c) Gwrjiya Lakhinai Haba (Groom Staying with brides family in their house) (d) Bwnanwi Lainai Haba (Marriage by capture), (e) Dwukharnai Haba (Elopement) and (f) Dongkha Habnai Haba (Widow re-marriage). The earliest and traditional form of Bodo marriage. All kinds of marriage mentioned above are to celebrate this system of marriage. In this type of marriage, first of all bride is made virgin by the law of Bodo society. After that inside the kitchen, bride is allowed to kneel down in front of the fire where the "Mainao Bwrai" "Mainao Burwi" (God and goddess) are kept, and the wise lady the one who has the knowledge about the marriage cultures some holly words introducing the bride to the God and goddess. After that an egg is rounded in the bride's head and this called "Daodwi neosinai" and the bride pray to the God and Goddess "Mainao Bwrai-Mainao Burwi" for their

marriage life.

As a ritual the bride prepares meal. The meal consists of rice and curry prepared with the rice powder and chicken without applying spices and colouring agent like turmeric. The rice and curry are kept in two "hatha" (Landler utensil) in front of Bathow and the prist (Dwury) which is given responsibility for that marriage prays to God. "Bathw Borai" the meal is placed on banana leaf, while the priest (Dwry) chants the mantra, introducing the bride to the God and Goddess.

In the time of reception of the bride, the two "Bwirathi" used to remain at the forefront and lead the procession towards the house of the groom from the place where the bride's party rested till formally received along with the villagers. In their hands there remain a Sandri (Sieve) upon which a circular space is created by moulding the Banana flaps and inside it put a lit 'Alari gasa; (oil light) which is kept covered by bamboo fan (Gisib). At the time of greeting the bride they move the fan to give air the bride. The participants the procession use to shout all together "Hinjao gwdanni jwi, jwi hinjao gwdanni jwi" which means glory, glory to the new bridew.

The bride is made to stand on a wooden plate called 'Gambari Khamplai" at the main gate of the grooms house and younger sister of the groom sprinkle holy water and wash her feet with holy water. If the groom has no sister than relative sister perform the duty. It is belived that coming for a long distance the bride might feel tired and the groom's sister should touch and washed her feets off. When the reception is moment for marriage ceremony. Till that time the bride's party is served with Dwi (water), Saha-Muri (Tea with fried rice) and Goipatwi (betel and leaf). The audience takes chance to play joke with the two Bwirathies with the following words :

"Wi bwirathi loliya Nwngni babangsin Goi ghaonaikho Jwnglai jaliya, jaliya"

English translation : "Oh ! Dear Bwirathi we are not going to eat betel as you have lazily cut while cutting the items".

The Bwirathi sing the following song and dance :

Goi-dedere patwi sinari Daobo khi sunwi Motham lanjai badi thangkhu; Khao regang khaodw Ja regang jadw Sona mukhi khuga mwina mukhi rao Apathni bwrai-bento Sikhla jwhwlao"

English translation: "Round small betel, beautiful nut leaves, lime like heron stool, tobacco like mangoose tail, cut an betel gladly, eats with gay, golden mouth yours, speech like maina, elders in the audience, bravo the heroine."

The 'Bathow Haba' (Marriage before Bathow) is the traditional system of the Bodo marriage. In this case, from Noma No (Main house) the bride and bride groom party is brought in the procession in front of the Bathow which is located at the North-East corner of the countryard. An 'Oja' (priest) performs the proceeding of the marriage. One cock and one hen are sacrificed at the altar of the Bathow. The new couple will kneel down before the after till the marriage proceeding is over. The Oja binds ends of the cloth being warm by couples as nuptial knot and newlywed couple respects the oja by kneeling down and touching his feet. Then the oja recite the following:

'Aham de, Sanni giri Sanja Mwdaini giri Bwrai bathow Moharaja, Dainigiria dai kalamwbla Nimaha giri nwng. Jwngni mwjang-gajri nidan-apwt, rog biadniprai Pwtangraya nwngnw. Nwi dinwi bipha guru-Amwkhaya amwikhiko bihamjw laibai, Dinwi bininw nwgnw akai-laru Ankham engkri hwnai jabai, Najaodw nwng apa guru Bihamjwni munga amwki Samprwmbw suk by suk lakhi Ap hwngtanga mini kusi hajaonanwi Bwr-asirbad hwdw. Jwnghalai swr dongbaoyw Nailo-jalo nwng bipha hurulo Gole-gole kulumwjwng".

After the end of advice to the bride and the groom the "Hathasuni Khungnai" is served to the villagers present first of all, bride serves the groom and after that she serves each items of the meal to the villagers present. Then the main function of the "Hathasuni Khurnai" comes to the end.

The feast of the marriage continues at least for three days. During these three days, rice-beer and pork are supplied in abundance. In earlier days-that feast is said to have continued for five to seven days/ traditionally rice-beer and pork is the main feast in Bodo marriage. Without rice-beer and pork Bodo marriage is meaningless. That's why Bodos have a famous idioms "Wgkhamni ali zwu ni phukhri" (pond of wine and road of rice)

Now the earlier system of Hathasuni masrriage is not found in Bodo society and to perform only one day. The feast is found but not abundance. Traditionally Hathasuni is the most respectable and socially recognized marriage in the Bodo society.

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