

CHAPTER III

TRADITIONAL TOOLS OF THE BODOS

TOOL

A tool is a piece of equipment, especially a hand-held one, used to carry out a particular function. It is a thing used to help achieve something or perform job.¹ The use of tools was an important step in the evolution of mankind and the presence of tools indicate the presence of culture. Stone was the first material that human beings used for making tools together with perishable wood, bamboo and bone, and to some extent shell. Stone tools remained the industrial material for the largest part of human history. The appearance of the earliest recognizable stone tools, choppers, hand-axes, cleavers, etc., with the appearance of early man in the world more than two million years ago, indicates the presence of culture.²

Till recently, weapons found in digs were the only tools that were studied and given importance. But gradually more tools are being recognized culturally and historically. Not only hunting but other activities like preparing food, grain harvesting, wood working etc. all required tools. The tools are regarded to be the most important items in human civilization and tools that are used in particular fields or activities have different designations such as instruments, utensils, implements, machines, devices or apparatus. The set of tools needed to achieve a goal is called equipment.³

The Bodos like any other civilization used various tools to meet their needs of day to day life like defensive and hunting tools, agricultural tools, fishing tools, domestic tools, tools for social and cultural purposes, house making tools and tools for building communication networks.

It is important also to mention that, Bodo civilization can be called as bamboo civilization, as in making almost every article the Bodos used bamboo as a whole or in a part.

Sukumar Basumatary rightly says:

*“Ouwajwng Boro fwra naithao bathao megonnao gwnang aijeng aila banayw arw hebw. Jekhai, khobai, dals, sandri, phitha sandri, sen, khokha, gisib, khanjong, arw baidi baidi somaine romaine gwmwthao mua hebw. Bini khainw Boro swdwmsri khou swrba swrba fwra ouwani swdwmsri hwnnanwi bungw sanw”.*⁴

In North East bamboo grows wildly and is cultivated as well.⁵ The houses of the Bodos and their furniture, baskets, hunting tools, fishing implements, building materials, implements of agriculture and almost every article used by them are entirely or in part made from bamboo. The Bodos also consume its young and tender shoots as traditional food.

DEFENSIVE WEAPONS AND HUNTING TOOLS

Bodos used various types of armorials and weapons for the purpose of fighting against their enemies. And it can be very well said that in crafting these armorials and weapons the artisans have applied their artistic mind and expert craftsmanship.⁶ And though the main livelihood pattern of the Bodos is predominantly agricultural,⁷ yet they indulge in hunting to vary their diet.⁸ The hunting tools of the Bodos are simple, yet useful, handy and long lasting. Among the Bodos, though the community-hunting is fast disappearing, yet it is being reported that secretly sometimes both individual and collective hunting is practiced as a hobby for an enjoyment and refreshment of mind. The hunting practices are integrally related to the type of weaponry employed. Bodos used many traps, snares and other hunting tools.

Bodos used varieties of weapons and tools for defense and hunting purposes. They are discussed below.

***Thungri* (Sword)**

This is a metal sword used by the Bodos traditionally in fighting wars.⁹ It also has significance during *Kherai puja* as it is used by the Bodos for sacrificing birds and

animals during *Kherai puja* for pleasing their deities. Swords are held by the *Doudini* (female shaman) while performing ritualistic dance during *kherai Puja*. In the installation of *Bathou* and *Kherai* altars two sacred swords are required.¹⁰ The average length of the sword is 62 cm including the grip whose average length is 12-13 cm. The maximum breadth of the blade is 3.7 cm. The swords are straight with one edge. The other end of the blade is slightly narrower and blunt.

***Dahal* (Shield)**

This is a metallic shield used by the Bodos to protect themselves in wars with a handle fastened to the back side by iron nails. These shields are tough and provide strong protection against arrows and swords. These are round in shape, with designs on outer side and concave inside and convex on the outer side. There is a horizontal handle also made of metal on the inner side. The measurement of shields may vary from 81-91 cm, while some measure 93 cm in diameter and some smaller ones measure 32 cm in diameter.¹¹ During *Kherai puja* it is also held by *Doudini* (female shaman) while dancing. In the installation of *Bathou* altar, one *dahal* (shield) is required.¹²

***Jong* (Spear)**

This is used by the Bodos as defensive and offensive tool. It is also used for hunting *mwi* (deer) and *hagrani oma* (wild pigs). *Jong* (spear) is a pole weapon consisting of a beam measuring 1-2 meters, usually made of wood with a pointed head made from stone, wood or other durable material such as iron, steel or bronze fastened to the beam, which of course were not made by the Bodos but bought from others. There are different kinds of spears used by the Bodos such as *jong fisa* which is smaller in size, *jong thopha/japkha* which is also called as pole weapon measuring almost 1-2 meters with 4-6 pointed heads and *jong geder* which is bigger in size measuring almost 2-3 meters.¹³

***Sikha geder- Sikha fisa* (Big knife- Small knife)**

Knives both small and big in size are essential component of defense, offense and hunting. It is used by the Bodos for the purpose of clearing bushes, plants or trees on the way to the forest while hunting. Both the knives are sharp, pointed with one edge

and thin bladed. The total length of the small knife is 10 cm, with a handle made of wood measuring 7 cm long and the breadth of the blade is 1.6 cm. And the total length of the big knife is 92 cm, with a handle made of wood measuring 10 cm long and the breadth of the blade is 4 cm.

***Ruwa* (Axe)**

It is an axe and used as a defensive and offensive weapon, as well as for the purpose of hunting by the Bodos. The Bodos used axe for clearing bushes, plants or trees on the way to the forest while hunting and also for cutting killed animals. The axes are variety in size, made of soft iron wedge-shaped blade and the handle is made of wood.

Ruwa is also used traditionally for cutting shrubs, chopping wood and clearing fields and construction of houses. This is also used in cutting woods while building communication networks and also in path making and other identification marks on trees as to make the network easily identifiable. The handle measures almost 81 cm, the working area measures 17 cm in length and breadth measures 10 cm approximately.

***Jilit-Bla* (Bow and Arrow)**

Bodos used *Jilit-bla* as traditional weapon for defense and offense and as well for hunting *mwi* (deer) and *hagrani oma* (wild pig). The *jilit* is made from bamboo stick with both ends of the limbs connected by a string known as the bow string made of *patw durung* (rope made of jute). It measures approximately 142.2 cm in length. The *bla* is usually made from bamboo stick with sharp pointed on one end.¹⁴ The Bodos used different kinds of arrows such as *sengmari tir* (arrow with sharp pointed toothed end), *dofa tir* (arrow without teeth) and *loutop* or *barlatop tir* (made out of polished cow horn fixed to the bamboo or wooden stick). The first one is the arrow with teeth and the second one is the arrow without teeth. The shaft is made of bamboo piece and the *tir* (arrow pointed top or arrow head) is sometimes made of bamboo, wood or *mosow gong* (cow horn). The total length of the arrow is 70-96.52 cm and the length of the arrow head is 3.3-10 cm.¹⁵

In the book entitled, *The Bodos of Assam*, Halfdan Siiger again mentioned four different kinds of poisoned arrows used by the Bodos for hunting, such as (a) arrow with iron head, the body of which is made of bamboo stick with five steering feathers. The length of it measures 74.5 cm and the head measures 8 cm, (b) this is bamboo made arrow with iron head with four steering feathers and inserted spirally and the length measures 73 cm and head measures 8 cm, (c) this is also bamboo made arrow with iron head having two steering feathers and the arrow head is put through spiral insertion measuring 75 cm in length and arrow head measures 11.5 cm and (d) and lastly, it is a blunt arrow made of bamboo with three steering feathers and the shaft of the arrow is cylindrical end of antler specially for hunting birds. The length of this arrow measures 70.5 cm and the head of the arrow measures 10 cm.¹⁶

Jilit and *bla* are also used for fishing.

***Batul* (Catapult)**

This traditional weapon of defense and offence of the Bodos is also used for hunting birds. *Batul* is used for hunting small animals in general and birds in particular. This is of V shape made out of wood. The ribbon shaped rubber is tied up on top of the both sides of the V shape. After tying both end side of the rubber again the remaining part is tied up with a small portion of leather so as to hold on stones in it or hard objects to throw from it by pulling the rubber, by holding the base of the implement by another hand. The stones or hard objects hit the goal at sudden release of the grip of fingers.

***Oua* and *Dongpang* (Bamboo and wood)**

Bamboos and woods were used by the Bodos for defensive purposes in building traditional fences and gates for blocking the main entrance towards the compound of the house called *hankla* to protect themselves, their domesticated animals and plantations from enemies or thieves, wild animals and stray animals. They built bamboo fencing around their dwelling houses, around their plantation areas, around *maihwng* (heap of hay for feeding cows), around the straw kept for feeding cows and also in building *janla* (bamboo frame) for supporting climber plants and to protect from floods.

Areca nut leaves

The Bodos sometimes used areca nut leaves in building fences around their dwelling houses.

***Lauthi* or *palathokon* (Stick)**

The Bodos used long sticks made out of bamboo or wood as weapon for defense, offence, hunting and for carrying hunted animals by tying it to the stick. These poles are cut out of bamboo plant or *saal* tree measuring almost 152 cm in length and during the olden days were called *palathokon*, and these wooden poles were also used as a lock for closing doors called *hankla*.

The simplest tools of the Bodos which is still in use for the purpose of agriculture is *lauthi*. The digging stick is made of bamboo and is made in such a way that it is pointed at the end for making holes in the soil where seeds are to be plummeted. It helps in planting or spreading seeds in the ground. It is approximately 1 meter in length.¹⁷

Bamboo sticks measuring approximately 152.4 cm in length are used by the Bodos to stir the boiling powdered mass mixed of natural plants, tree leaves, roots and stem of different colours with required quantity of water in preferring colours for dyeing cloths.¹⁸

Bamboo stick called *bathi*, is used for carrying a pair of earthen pots to the bride's house while going to see the bride for marriage.¹⁹

***Theuol* and *Raidwng* (Rope made of split bamboo and cane)**

Ropes made of split bamboo and cane are used in tying split bamboo sticks in building fences.²⁰

***Hathura* (Hammer)**

The Bodos used wooden *hathura* for the purpose of defense as well as for hunting where the trapped animals are hit with the hammer. Both the handle and the

working area are made of wood. The total length of the hammer is approximately 99 cm and the working area measures approximately 22.8 inches.²¹

Sometimes for the purpose of dyeing the Bodos instead of flat stone used wooden hammer to powder the materials for yielding colours for cloths gathered from natural plants, tree leaves, roots and stem of different colours.²²

Sesani Phandw (Trap)

Phandw is used especially for trapping *sesa* (rabbit) or sometimes even *sial* (fox). In *sesani phan sanai* (trapping rabbit), *douleng ban*, a kind of tying with rope or string is used to catch snare. In order to prepare *douleng ban* hunting, a Pillar of 30 cm long with 91-152 cm thick bamboo piece is used. The bottom part is made pointed to pierce underground and on the top of the pillar a wire is tied and a string is tied to the wire. If any animal crosses through, by the tying hole then that animal will be tied up automatically. Such type of tying is called *douleng ban* or *bwnsrwdnai* in Bodo.

Khwisar (Trap)

Khwisar is also a *phandw* (trap) and hunting with this tool is called *khwisar sanai* (trapping) in Bodo. And this type of *phandw* aims only to capture birds of any kind. It is prepared with bamboo branch and bamboo stakes and thin flat strips of bamboo which is of at least 1 to 2 inches of thick and 2 meters long. The bottom part is made pointed to press underground. String or rope is tied on the top of the bamboo stick. Two “[” shapes bamboo laths are pierced underground and edible insects are kept on between this two shapes. The string is pulled down and tied on the “[” shape. The stick shapes like a bow while it is pulled down and tied on the “[” shape.²³

Khal (Trap)

Khal is also a type of *phandw* (trap) used for capturing mice and mongooses, especially in winter season where it is kept open across the way through which the mongooses and mice come in paddy field and in jungles. In order to make *khal*, bamboo sticks and flat strips of bamboo, ropes and strings are required.²⁴ Flat bamboo of 1.5 to 2 inches breadth and 1 inch thick, two pieces of long bamboo almost of 1 feet long and a

piece of 2 to 2.5 feet long bamboo (it may be flat or round shape) of 3 to 4 inches of thickness are required. The longest and thickest bamboo is made a hole about 1 foot long perpendicularly.²⁵ Another two more traps were known to the Bodos such as *dorpi phan*, made of bamboo for capturing rabbit, mongooses or even birds and *gandwi phan* which is made of *sumli* (a tree) trunk or *talir* (banana) *attia* trunk for trapping rabbits, mongooses and peacock. But nothing in details is known about those traps.

***Je Daobojinthe* (Trap)**

Je daobojinthe is a trap and it is used for capturing the birds especially crane, when it comes to eat fish which is kept in the center of the *je daobojinthe*. *Je daobojinthe* is a trap and is made of split bamboo sticks tied to each other with parachute *durung* (string) in square shape. And the four corners of the *je daobojinthe* are made from long bamboo sticks, which bands in bow shape. And two small split bamboo sticks are tied with parachute *durung* horizontally in each of four sides and another two split bamboo sticks are tied with parachute *durung* vertically in each of four sides. Again parachute *durung* are tied in the space between the horizontal and vertical placed bamboo sticks in four corner shape and in each four corners shape a *douleng ban* (tying on slip knot) is used for capturing the birds especially crane, when it comes to eat fish which is kept in the center of the *je daobojinthe*.

***Daba Suri* (Dagger)**

Dagger is a short and pointed object made of metal or stone used to stab and kill the hunted animals²⁶ measuring about 10 inch long.²⁷

***Je* (Net)**

Net is used for trapping animals while hunting. *Mwi* (deer) and *hagrani oma* (wild pigs) are often caught by using large *je*, enclosing a considerable extent of grass land in which some keen eye has detected the presence of the much-prized game. The *je* is gradually contracted until the prey comes within the reach of the hunters. *Je* (net) are made of jute's rope and from *odal* (a kind of tree or bark used as rope by the Bodo people) tree's rope. It is used for trapping animals while hunting.²⁸ *Mwi* or *hagrani oma*

je is very heavy weighing almost 15-16 kg and 20 *hath* in length. It requires 30-40 people to carry the net.²⁹

Tin and Drum

It is used by the Bodos in hunting for scaring the hunted animals while trying to trap them by beating the tins and drums.

***Patw Durung* (Rope made of jute)**

Patw durung (jute rope) is used by the Bodos for tying hunted animals to carry back home from the jungle. It is made out of jute plant, after the leaves of the jute plant is plucked, the plants are tied in bundles and kept in the jute field to dry and after it is dried the bundles are dipped in the river for 15-30 days or even more. Then the outer cover of the plant is taken out with hand and it is kept for drying, when it is fully dried it is twisted with hand and spin in *kerepa* (article for making rope), which is made of two bamboo sticks fixed at the center in the shape of a cross and becomes rope, which the Bodos called *patw durung*.

Patw durung is also used by the Bodos for tying the bamboo pipe for hanging castor-worms for sericulture. And for domestic purposes like tying of cattle on *mosow kuntia* or *thangwn* (Wooden article for tying cattle), *bwisangs* (raised platform made of bamboo) etc.³⁰

It is used by the Bodos in weaving for the purpose of tying *makhu aakhai* (Pulley), *gorkha* (treadle), *putul* (circular bamboo stick) and *nw* (thread). And it helps in hanging *gandwi* (wrap roller) at the bottom of *saal- khuntha* (loom post).³¹

Rope made of jute is also used in fastening woods and bamboos in building bridges and bullock carts.³²

AGRICULTURE TOOLS

The Bodos are agriculturist and their chief source of livelihood is agriculture. From the ancient times the Bodos have been earning their livelihood mainly through

agriculture. Agriculture as the means of livelihood of the Bodos has great impact on the Bodo society and their day to day lives.

Agricultural practices of the Bodos have been carried out by using a wide range of tools and implements in their day to day life of agricultural operations made of wood, bamboo, cane, jute etc. by local artisans or even regular factory-made implements, which were very economical in terms of labour, money and time saving. Each tool was used in association with particular function in the order of agricultural operations such as land clearance and preparation, ploughing, sowing, weeding, irrigation, harvesting, post-harvesting operations and transportation.

Land Clearance Tools

Of all agricultural operations, the most difficult and costly operation is the land clearance. It helps in the development of land with potential for agricultural use. In order to remove native cover including trees, bushes, roots, stumps, boulders and other obstacles from land surface, the land clearance is done.³³ The Bodos for the purpose of land clearance have many tools such as-

***Khodal* (Digging Hoe)**

The *Khodal* used by the Bodos is long-handed cutting hoe with handle made of wood and the working area is made up of iron, of square or rectangular shape. Handle is of 100 cm length and working area has a length of 22 cm and breadth of 18 cm approximately. Hoes are used to trim the embankments which help to retain the water and in upturning the soil of fields on which plough cannot easily move, and also to culture that part of the field inaccessible to the plough. Again it is used for many agricultural operations, such as forming ridges, bunds, water courses and channels, preparing small seed beds and removing stumps of crops, digging out root crops, to bury organic matter and to open the soil up for easy water penetration.³⁴

Khodal is used for the purpose of moving small or large amount of soil, removing wild plant by disturbing the surface of the soil around plants, pilling soil

around the base of plants, creating narrow channels and shallow ditches for sowing seeds and planting bulbs, for copping wild plants, roots and crop residues.³⁵

The digging hoe is used by the Bodos for digging out soil and opening the soil for inserting posts, pillars and fence in building dwelling house, granary, cowshed, loom and houses for domestic animals.³⁶

Dangur/Hasni/Bedha (Local Rake)

The local made *dangur* is used by the Bodos along with the *bedha*, which is bigger in size compared to *hasni/dangur*. It is generally used by male farmers. The local made rake is long-handed in shape. The handle is made of wood and bamboo having a horizontal portion and formed by teeth thin or thick depending on usage made of sharpened bamboo sticks. This tool is used in taking out trash from seed bed and breaking capillary action in soil. The handle is 160-164 cm in length and breadth is 50-53 cm approximately. The length of the teeth is nearly 7-15 cm.³⁷

Land Preparation Tools

The Bodos use varieties of traditional agricultural tools which are animals and human drawn tools for the purposes of tillage and land preparation. These tools are-

Nangal (Plough)

Tilling is done mainly with an ox drawn ploughs made of wood, mainly of *saal* tree. *Nangal* is an agricultural implement with a shoe, a body, a handle and a beam. The measurements of the *dilagon* (handle) of the plough is approximately 60-100 cm long, 5-7.5 cm thick and 7.5-12.5 cm wide and is fitted to the body of the plough. The shapes and sizes of the shoe of the plough is variety in nature. Mild iron bar measuring generally 60-75 cm in length and 1.5-2.5 cm in width is used in preparing the share, which is fixed to the shoe or body by means of a ring shaped clamp or U shaped clamp. The share point projects by 5-7.5 cm beyond the shoe. Beams are in different length

generally. This implement is used with a pair of oxen and can result in 15 cm depth of ploughing approximately. In order to control the depth of the work and to stabilize the plough while operation, the hitching point can be height-wise and sideways adjusted.

Jungal (Yoke)

The *nangal* (plough) can operate only with the support of the *jungal*, which is made of wood or bamboo and measures approximately 150 cm in length. *Jungal* is placed horizontally on the neck of a pair of oxen while ploughing, which is again attached to the *mwidangur* (bamboo stick with a pointed and a split knob at one end) of the *nangal* with the support of *lengra dirung* (jute rope). The *mwidangur* measures approximately 180.34 cm.

Mwi (Harrow)

Mwi is a kind of ladder and is made of bamboo, measuring approximately 152.4 cm in length. Two pieces of bamboos are clogged together in the shape of a ladder and the vertically placed bamboo sticks in between two pieces of bamboos clogged together measures approximately 48.26 cm in length. It is fixed to the *mwidangur*, made of split bamboo with the help *lengra dirung* (jute rope) and the *mwidangur* is attached with the *jungal* (yoke) tied to the bullocks. The *mwi* is regarded as secondary tillage implement, it supplements the work of a *nangal* (plough) for preparing the seed bed for crops and for covering the seeds after sowing. Its main objective is to obtain a proper tilt of soil. Basically, this implement is used for the purpose of leveling land to enable the farmers to prepare the land for tillage and sowing so to improve the irrigation efficiency, where farmer stands on it as it is drawn across the field by a pair of bullocks. The length of *mwi* is 157 cm with breadth of 44 cm and the length of *mwidangur* is 2.13 meters approximately.³⁸

Kontha (Spud)

Kontha is a digging tool. It is used not only for digging, but also for lifting and moving bulk materials such as soil. *Kontha* is a hand held tool. Wood and iron are used in making the handle and the working area respectively. Handle is 6 cm in length, working area has a length of 5 cm and breadth of 2 cm approximately.³⁹

Gandri or Dangan (Leveler)

It is generally used by male farmers. *Gandri or Dangan* (wooden hammer like) though like hammer in shape but in size it is much bigger, with handle as well as the working area made of wood. The hard soil are crushed and leveled by it. The approximate measurements of the handle is of 100 cm in length, working area is of 30 cm in length and breadth is of 10 cm.⁴⁰

Sowing Tools

Sowing is one of the most important steps in agricultural practices. The traditional tools of the Bodos used for the purpose of sowing are-

Khopri and jhopi or khopri gubai (Substitute for an umbrella or wicker hat)

Khopri ('U' shape) and *jhopi* or *khopri gubai* ('O' shape) are made of split bamboos finely woven and in between the split bamboos dried *laihulai* (some kind of wild leaf) or palm leaves are placed in such a way that the farmers are protected from the rain or the sun and the border areas are tied with the help of *raidwng or oua durung* (Cane or bamboo made rope) to the rim made of bamboo which is bent according to the shape of the *khopri*. Farmers wears it on their heads with the support of *durung*, which can be tied around the chin of the user. It is of various shapes and sizes, with *muphur khopri* larger in length and size compared to *khopri*. The length of the *khopri* is 114 cm and its breadth is 67 cm approximately and the diameter of *japhi* or *khopri gubai* is 67 cm approximately. It is used in plantation operation.⁴¹

Khopri made of bamboo strips and *katri* leaf (wild leaf) were also used by the Bodos to protect themselves from sun and rain.⁴²

Mukha/Kho (Mask)

Mukha/kho is like a small basket and is made out of knotted bamboo split, with a rope made of jute to help it tie around the necks of the cows and buffalos. *Mukha* helps

in covering the mouths of the cows and buffalos, protecting the crops from being eaten. Its length is 20 cm and breadth is also 20 cm.⁴³

Water-lifting tools

Water-lifting tools are used to lift water to a certain height to help farmers' easy access to water. The Bodos have their own traditional tools for the purpose of water-lifting which they make themselves for their convenience such as-

Chili (Water-lifter)

Chili is used by the Bodos for spreading water to their paddy fields wherever it is necessary. The *Chili* is made basically of finely woven bamboo split and is of different sizes. The long bamboo pole is used in making the long handle of the water-lifter and the working area is made of woven split bamboos. Handle is of 86-89 cm in length, with breadth of 16 cm and working area measuring almost 53-55 cm approximately.⁴⁴

Chili is also used by the Bodos to lift water from pond or lakes for the purpose of fishing.⁴⁵

Harvesting Tools

The basic harvesting tools of the Bodos are Sickle, knife and cleaver.

Khasi (Sickle)

Khasi is a "C" shaped/curved tool and the main aim is to ease the harvesting operation. The handle of a sickle is made of wood while iron is used in making the working area. The measurement of the working area is approximately 20 cm in length and 3 cm in width. The handle is of 15 cm in length and 5 cm in width approximately. *Khasi* is used in harvesting various crops like cereal, pulses, millets and grasses.⁴⁶

Sikha (knife)

A knife is a small cutting tool and is very handy. The handle of the knife is made of wood but the working area is made of iron. Wooden handle is made by the Bodos

from a piece of log and is of 20 cm in length, with working area of 20 cm in length and breadth of 3 cm approximately. It is used in harvesting operation. It is also used for cutting fruits and vegetables. It is purchased from others.

Sikha-gobda (Cleaver)

A cleaver is a big knife and iron is used in making the handle as well as the working area. It is used especially for cutting out bamboos, sugar cane plant, etc. in harvesting operation. Handle is of 15 cm in length, working is 25 cm in length and 8 cm in width approximately.⁴⁷

This tool is use in the construction of dwelling house, granary, cowshed, loom, *Bathou* Altar and houses for domestic animals.

This is also used in building communication networks as well as for the purpose of helping in path making and other identification marks especially on trees as to make the network easily identifiable.⁴⁸

Post-Harvesting Tools

The Bodos used many post-harvesting tools, which are made by themselves for their convenience. They are as mentioned below.

Hukhen (strainer)

Hukhen is used in post-harvesting operation and is made of bamboo with a pointed knob at the bottom. The wheat and other grains are thrashed after drying with the help of oxen and after that the farmers shake the wheat or other grain materials forcibly with *hukhen* so that the straw and the grains are separated. Farmers can use this tool easily without bending. It is approximately 190-240 cm in length and 3 cm in breadth, and the pointed knob measures 12.7 cm in length.⁴⁹

Royna (Scoop)

Royna, a post-harvesting agricultural tool of the Bodos is used for scooping or gathering paddy and for overturning paddy while drying it. The long handle as well as

the working place which resembles a half circle is made of wood. The Handle is approximately of 170 cm in length, working area is of 55-60 cm in length and breadth is of 25 cm.⁵⁰

***Sandanga* (bigger sieve)**

Sandanga is a bamboo-woven plate or screen such as a mesh or net with rim made also of bamboo stick tied to the working area with the help of *raidwng* (wild leaf used for tying). It is used for the separation of various kinds of grains from thrashed materials. In sericulture it is used to dry *empou pitab* or *eri* cocoon. For domestic purpose it is used for drying meat and fish and for fishing it is used for catching small and medium size of fish in shallow water.⁵¹ Length and breadth of *sandanga* is approximately 75 cm.

***Songrai* (Winnower)**

Songrai is a round bamboo tightly woven plate, used for winnowing the grain and separates grain from husk and it just involves throwing the mixture into air so that the wind blows away the husk, while the heavier grains fall back down for recovery and it also involves fanning the winnower over the mixture so that the wind blows the husk away.⁵²

Songrai is used for placing newly appeared worms too, which is regarded as a place of safety and fed on leaves of castor plant for growing. It is also used for receiving worms' stools as it is placed below the place where the worms are hang. In houses it is used for the purpose of keeping raw *amao* for drying.⁵³ The low rim of *songrai* is also made of split bamboo. Length and breadth of *songrai* is 75 cm approximately.⁵⁴

It was also traditionally used by the Bodos to bed the new born child on a pillow made of mustard seeds.⁵⁵

***Khada* (Basket made of bamboo)**

Khada is made up of a woven bamboo stick for carrying grains of cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits etc. Cow dung is used for plastering this bamboo made basket, in order to keep grains; pulses, etc. secure in the basket without falling out from the

basket. It is used by the Bodos for the purpose of carrying *endi bilai* (*endi* leaves) and also for the purpose of storing *pithop* (*endi* cocoon).⁵⁶ This is used for the purpose of carrying soil in building dwelling house, granary, cowshed, loom and houses for domestic animals. The *khada* measures approximately 38 cm in height and 38 cm in breadth.⁵⁷

***Duli* (Grain storage)**

Duli is a post-harvesting tool used by the Bodos to store grains. *Duli* is made of woven split bamboo sticks in the form of a large basket where the working area is tied to the rim. It is also made of bamboo with the help of *raidwng* (cane rope) or *theoul* (bamboo rope). The external part, as well as the internal part of the grain storage is plastered with cow dung in order to protect the grains from falling outside. The height of smaller kind of *duli* measures approximately 78-88 cm in length and breadth of 88-93cm approximately and the bigger ones measures almost 182-213 cm in height with 100-110 cm in breadth.

***Sandri* (Smaller kind of sieve)**

Sandri is used for the purpose of separating different kinds of grains from lien material using a split bamboo woven screen such a mesh or net. The working area is tied to the rim made of bamboo stick with the help of *raidwng* (cane rope).

It is used in elimination of lien material from powdered uncooked and soaked *mairong* (rice) with some parts of selected plants for making *jou* (alcohol). It is used for drying fish and meat. It is used in carrying *alari bathi* (earthen lamp) while welcoming the bride during marriage. It measures approximately 44 cm in both length and the breadth.⁵⁸

***Dingkhi* (Pounder)**

Dingkhi is made of wood, while its working area is made of iron resembling a sea saw where the user needs to place her leg at the bottom of the lower end, so that the upper portion with a piece of wood hits the grains placed at the hole especially made for the purpose of grinding. It measures 150-198 cm in length; the breadth of upper portion

measures 20.32 cm and the lower portion measures approximately 11.43 cm and the wooden piece meant for hitting the grains measures 63.5 cm approximately.⁵⁹ D. P. Barooah writes, “Every rural family has a wooden instrument called *dingkhi* to husk paddy by pounding it with the foot. The rural people regard it as an essential part of their family requirements and about three-fourths of the entire husked rice of the rural areas is processed in the *dingkhi*”.⁶⁰

***Khasa* (Grain storage)**

Khasa is used by the Bodos for storing grains and it is a kind of bigger size pot and it is made out of knotted cane and bamboo sticks. It measures approximately 50- 55 cm in both height and in breadth.⁶¹

Basket made of *Bata Belai*

Basket made of dried *Bata bilai* (*bata* leaves) was in olden days used by the Bodos for storing *maiqli* (especially rice seeds) for sowing or implantation in future. It is knotted at the bottom till the top by placing dried paddy heap in between to fill the gaps for storing the seeds safely without making it fall. The length and the breadth of *Bata belai* was made depending on the amount of rice seeds.

***Don* (Bamboo pan or basket)**

This bamboo pan is made of knotted bamboo sticks for collecting grains, rice, plant products and broadcasting seeds. This tool made the handling and transportation of grains and other products easier and quicker. It is also used for carrying and keeping household items like grains, fruits, vegetables etc. It is used for sprinkling of rice grains to welcome the bride and bride groom and for accepting blessings by the newly wedded couple to start a new life. It is used for the purpose of installation of *Bathou* altar, in *Garja puja* and in *Kherai puja*, where two fully filled *dons* (bamboo baskets) are required, where one is filled with uncooked rice and one is filled with paddy grains, a pair of areca nuts and betel leaves and also a pair of banana fruit. The length of the bamboo pan measures approximately 20- 25 cm in length and 25-30 cm in breadth.

Ural/Ual (Mortar) and Gaihen/Gan (Pestle)

Ural and *gaihen* are both wooden made and used for the purpose of milling, for preparation of leaf extract, pounding rice, spices etc. The *gaihen* though made of wood, the working area is fixed with round iron ring.⁶² The *ural* resembles torso of the body with narrow waistline and *gaihen* resembles the form of a slim figured, narrow waist Bodo damsel.⁶³ It is used in preparing *jou* (alcohol). *Amao* (yeast, condiment) from uncooked and soaked *mairong* (rice) along with some parts of selected plants which are vigorously powdered using traditional wooden grinder. This is also used by the Bodos traditionally at delivery time where the pregnant woman takes position on her knees by supporting herself on a wooden mortar.⁶⁴ This is also used for the purpose of grinding rice and also to make garlic and ginger paste. It is generally operated by women workers. The length of the *gaihen* measures approximately 140- 144 cm and 5.5 cm in breadth. The length of the *ural* measures 38- 40 cm and 32 cm in breadth.⁶⁵

Measuring Tools

The Bodos used some traditional tools for the purpose of measurement such as-

Phalla (weighing tool)

Phalla is made round in shape of closely knotted split bamboo. Two round shaped weighing plates are tied to a bamboo stick at both the ends of the stick with the help of ropes made of jute and another rope is tied to the middle of the bamboo stick, for balancing the *phalla*, so that people can hold the rope at the middle of the bamboo stick in measuring grains. The length of the handle of *phalla* measures 15-20 cm approximately and both the length and the breadth of the *phalla* is approximately 30 cm.

Nareal koltha (Coconut cover)

The Bodos used *Nareal Koltha* in olden days for the purpose of measuring the grains of cereals, pulses, oilseeds etc. without taking the help of weight units and can be handled easily. It measures 3 cm in height and 4 cm in breadth.⁶⁶

Kurwi kowrai (Kowrai bowl)

The Bodos used *kurwi kowrai* (bowl made of *kowrai*) for the purpose of measuring the grains of cereals, pulses and oil seeds in olden days, without taking the help of weight units. It measures 10 cm in height and 10 cm in breadth.⁶⁷

Kurwi gubai (Bronze bowl)

The Bodos belonging to sound financial background used *kurwi gubai* also for measuring the grains of cereals, pulses and oilseeds, easily without the help of weight units and it measures 3.5 cm and 4.5 cm in height and breadth respectively.⁶⁸

Transportation Tools

Baukha (Stick meant for carrying bundles of paddy)

Baukha is used for the purpose of carrying bundles of paddy from the cultivable land to the house or till the bullock cart. It is made of bamboo stick having pointed ends, measuring approximately 120-130 cm in length and 3 cm in breadth. At a time, six to eight bundles of paddy can be carried with the help of *baukha*. This work is mainly carried out by men.

Sinkhay (A loop of cord)

It is a loop of cord made out of *patw durung* (jute rope) used for tying and carrying *mai boja* (bundles of paddy) from cultivable land to the homestead with *baukha* (bamboo carrying stick).⁶⁹

Mosow Gari (Bullock cart)

Bullock cart as a source of transportation was developed long time ago to help farmers for cheap and simple transportation. It is widely used even today by the Bodo community. Bullock cart is drawn by a pair of oxen and its main work is to carry paddy from the paddy field to the owner's house and also to carry passengers or a load.⁷⁰ Bullock cart is made of wood and bamboo and the two wheels of the bullock cart are

also made of wood, fitted with iron rims. Spokes are wooden and axles are made of iron. Generally bullock cart can carry a load of six to seven quintals of paddy.⁷¹

FISHING TOOLS

The Bodos have strong tradition of fishing and they catch various kinds of big and small fishes in their neighboring rivers and ponds and have them dried.⁷² Rev Sidney Endle writes in his book *The Kacharis* that the women of a village or sometimes a group of villages fish a certain streams for a distance extending over several miles. The fishing implements used are of very simple character, and are commonly prepared from materials found in almost every village.⁷³

The Bodos use different types of fishing tools which are made by them. It had been the ancient tradition that a Bodo man without the ability to make the basic fishing tools for him got lesser importance in the society.⁷⁴ The chief fishing implements of Assam like trap baskets, bamboo rods fitted with iron nails are actually borrowed from Austric or Tibeto-Burman speakers, especially from the Bodos.⁷⁵

The fishing tools commonly used by the Bodos are *Bwrsi* (fishing stick), *Batha* (floatable fishing stick), *Sen* (trap), *Khokha* (trap), *Zekhai* (trap), *Khobai* (fish storage), *Sandanga* (bigger sieve), *Suli* (spear), *Polo* (trap), *Zulakha* (trap), *Khurwi* (polo), *Jilibla* (bow- arrow), *Je* (net), triangular fishing net, *Khakhi* (trap), *Patha* (trap), *Chili* (water-lifter), *shika-gobda* (cleaver) and *Burung* (trap).

***Bwrsi* (Bamboo stick for fishing) and *Batha* (Floatable sticks for fishing)**

Both types of fishing are done with fishing hook inserting into the hook with insects like earthworm, larvae of bee, bee hive, grasshopper etc. The length of the *bwrsi* stick varies from 182-365 cm and the thickness of the stick is usually preferred finger like shapes. *Batha* is prepared by having a hook tied to 20-25 cm long finger like big floatable sticks such as maize stick.

***Sen* (Trap)**

Sen is used by the Bodos for trapping fish. It is made of thin flat bamboo strips and small bamboo sticks, fastened with the help of *raidwng* (cane rope). It is made in such a way that, it seems just like the fencing of bamboo and it is of 76 to 101 cm long with roundish swelling at the center having diameter of 25 to 30 cm. The end parts are slightly flats. There are one or two inlets.⁷⁶

***Khokha* (Trap)**

Khokha is used by the Bodos for fishing and it is made in such a way that fish flowing downstream enters the trap but cannot come out of it.⁷⁷ This fishing trap is prepared with four to five internodes of a bamboo piece.⁷⁸ The length of this fishing gear is 50-170 cm long and the diameter of the mouth is 10-71 cm.⁷⁹

***Zekhai* (Trap)**

Zekhai is a fishing trap made of bamboo splits in triangular shape having a handle made of bamboo stick. The front side is kept open and the three triangular sides are closed to a point at the other. The back side is knitted pointedly with the bamboo slices. The whole body is attached to a bamboo handle of some 91 to 121 cm in length. Two horizontal parts to the front side are tied up with a piece of *patw durung* (jute rope).⁸⁰

***Khobai* (Fish storage)**

Khobai is made of woven bamboo strips used by the Bodo people to store fish while fishing. The upper part or neck is smaller in size than the bottom with small opening at the top to prevent escape of fishes.

***Khobai Khara* (Fish storage)**

It is fish container made of woven bamboo strips. It is very much similar to a *khobai* but bigger in size.⁸¹

***Suli* (Spear)**

Suli is a fishing instrument made of small pointed metallic spearhead attached to a light bamboo, which is detachable and fastened with a fine string. It is especially used to catch *khusia* (eel fish). *Khusia* is a kind of fish that dwells in muddy and wet lands, so it is hunted by stabbing the *suli* in the muddy land or wet land rapidly and firmly. The bamboo pole measures 182-274 cm in length and the metallic spearhead measures 30 cm approximately.

***Polo* (Trap)**

Polo is a fishing tool used to catch big fish in pond and lakes by the Bodos. *Polo* is prepared approximately 91-121 cm long having three to five nodes of bamboo depending on its size. This piece of bamboo is made of weaved split bamboo sticks with two openings, one at the top and another at the bottom and the opening at the top is smaller compared to the opening at the bottom. The rim at the top is made out of fastening with *raidwng* (cane rope) to the frame made of bamboo stick. The *polo* resembles a bell in shape or a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker work. This fishing tool was used to cover the child who cried too much, as doing so as per as they believe would make the child to stop crying.⁸² The height of the polo is 60-90 cm, mouth measures 15-25 cm and breadth at the bottom measures 60-90 cm approximately.

***Zulakha* (Trap)**

It is a fishing tool and its design, mode of operation and size is more or less similar to *polo*. But compared to polo, inter- spaces between adjacent woven bamboos sticks are much smaller, measuring 2-3 cm than polo. The mouth measures 20-30 cm and the bottom measures 28-30 cm.⁸³

***Khurwi* (Bowl)**

Kurai Sanai (trapping with bowl), is carried out by the Bodos for the purpose of fishing in shallow water.⁸⁴

Jangkhra (Stabber)

Jangkhra is used for stabbing a fish on a clear stream. It is made of ten or more umbrella sticks inserting it into the bamboo stake internodes, fastened with *raidwng* (cane rope). The bamboo handle measures almost 182-243 cm and the umbrella sticks measures almost 30 cm approximately. It is used for stabbing of fish in shallow water.⁸⁵

Je (Net)

Je or the fishing nets used by the Bodos are *lab je*, *bidhan mara je*, *langi je*, *kheoali je*, *chag je*, *ashra Je* and *pasi je*.

Lab je

Lab je (hand left net) is a small in size left net measuring approximately 1.5x1.5 m to 4x4 m. The net is fixed to a flexible bamboo frame like x shape, which is made of two bamboo sticks and the four corners of the net are tied to the four flexible bamboo sticks.

Bidhan Mara Je (Double stick net)

This is rectangular in shape and it measures 2-5 m in length and 1.5-2 m in breadth. *Gulis* (sinkers) are fixed at the lower part of the net to make the weight of the net heavy. Two bamboo or wooden sticks are fixed to the two ends of the net vertically or on the two sides of the breadth, where the fishermen hold and pull the net through water for fishing.

Langi Je (Rectangular fishing net)

This is a rectangular shaped nylon net to gill fish having head as well as foot ropes and attached with floats and sinkers. It may be of variety of sizes from 20-30 cm long to 70- 80 cm wide.

Kheoali je (Conical fishing net)

This fishing net of the Bodos is conical in shape and it forms a circle when spread out for fishing. The net is generally 2-2.5 m in length and the size of the mesh is 8-14 mm in length. *Guli* (sinkers) are attached at the bottom cord.

Chag je (Fishing net)

This fishing net is made of knitted parachute string and is fastened to a split bamboo pipe, having four to six splits at one end with parachute string and another split bamboo bent in round shape and tied to the another end of the net. It is kept wide open to let fish enter in and the other side which is closed keep the fishes trapped in.

Ashra je (Fishing net)

It is made of nylon, measuring approximately 152 cm long and it is knitted by the people themselves. The size of the mesh fishing net depends on the size of the fish, for example in order to catch big fish big nylon tread is used and its sewed hole is also big and for catching small fish both tread and the hole of the net is small. The net with small mesh measures 8-10 mm and the total length measures 10-20 m and the net with bigger mesh measures 12 mm and the total length measures 12-22 m.

Pasi je (Rectangular fishing net)

This fishing net is rectangular in shape and made of nylon, without floaters at the top and no sinkers are attached to this net towards the lower rope but provided with head rope and thick foot rope. The size of this net differs in smaller nets. The size ranges from 20-30 m long to 70-80 cm wide and in bigger net the size range from 130-150 m in length and 2.5-3 m in width.⁸⁶

Triangular net with fixed frame

This fishing gear is triangular in shape, where the conical fishing net is attached to bamboo made frame of triangular shape. The measurement of the net is approximately 6-10 mm and the frame is held by hands to the extended bamboo frame or poles from both the sides in order to operate.⁸⁷

Khakhi (Trap)

This fishing trap is made of bamboo sticks and is conical in shape. The length is 50-60 cm long and the diameter is 10-15 cm. It is made of seven to nine bamboo sticks

which are fastened with a thin bamboo like ropes to make it round in shape. One end is kept wide open so as to enter fish and the other end is a closed one.⁸⁸

***Patha* (Trap)**

Patha is placed over the fish in the shallow water to trap fish. It is made of split bamboo fastened together by cane-work, and is about 121 or 137 cm in height and 91 cm in diameter at the base. The upper portion is drawn somewhat closely together, leaving an open space at the top, sufficient to allow the admission of a man's hand, as the whole structure is very light and it is manipulated by one hand.⁸⁹

***Burung* (Trap)**

Burung is placed on the path of the fish under the water. *Burung* is a fishing trap; it is weaved using bamboo shreds having numbers of opening. It is somewhat similar to *sen*. It is long of 76 to 101 cm big, having diameter of 25 to 30 cm. It is placed on the path of the fish and is made in such a way that the fish can enter the *burung* but cannot come out of it. At present, only few of these are found to be in use as it requires great skill to make it.⁹⁰

***Sikha-gobda* (Cleaver)**

The Bodos used *shika* to catch fish at shallow water. It is made of iron, both the handle and the working place. Handle is of 15 cm in length, working area has 25 cm length and 8 cm width.⁹¹

DOMESTIC TOOLS

Every community has its own unique tools and technology that reflect their skills. The Bodos in their day to day life use various utensils for domestic convenience. Most of the equipment used for domestic purpose is crafted by the Bodo artisans themselves with natural available resources. These domestic articles are traditionally in use for very long time. The domestic equipment of the Bodos are crafted carefully by

keeping in mind the beauty, convenience of use and long longevity. These equipment reflects the rich cultural and traditional heritage as well as fine craftsmanship of the Bodo people.⁹²

The domestic tools of the Bodos are as follows.

***Sil-pata* (Stone grinder)**

The Bodos used stone grinder to grind *onla* (rice powder), *amaw* (rice cake), spices, *haani sobai* (lentil), and local- made herbal medicines. The Bodos used stones to make grinder. The grinders are of different types, like some are made of two rounded stones placed in such a way where one stone plate is placed on top of another stone plate with a hole on the center of the stone placed at the top to insert grind able things for grinding through it. And the stone placed at the top is cycled with the help of a holder in grinding things. Another type of grinder made of stone or wood is like a deep bowl, where grind able things are placed and is grinded by another rounded or long stone or wood. And other type of stone grinder used by the Bodos is made of flat stone in ‘u’ shape or rectangular in shape, where grind able things are grinded by another long stone.

***Khamflai* (Stool)**

Khamflai is a traditional wooden furniture of the Bodos. It is a flat wooden seat with four legs which measures 7-10 cm in height and 10 cm in breadth. The length and the breadth of the *khamflai* measures 38-60 cm and 20-30 cm approximately. It is used by the Bodos as a seat while dining.⁹³

***Hangkha* (smoking pot)**

Hangkha is a wooden or earthen smoking pot used by the Bodos. It has two parts and the distal part can be separated when not in use. The top portion is called *silim* which can be used with or without the *hangkha* and the lower portion is called *phuski* (wooden pipe with wide upper end) which is constantly used with the *hangkha*.⁹⁴

***Phuski* (Smoking pipe)**

Phuski is a pipe for smoking tobacco used by the Bodos. It is a wooden pipe with wide upper end where tobacco is placed in a narrow end for placing the mouth to

smoke. Raw tobacco leaves are cut into small bits and placed on the *silim* which is set on fire and sucked from the narrower side.⁹⁵

***Thophsi* or *Thoksi* (Grinder)**

Thophsi is a kind of wooden glass measuring 15-17 cm in length with a hollow at the center. The wood is being carved out to a deep glass shape and it is used by the Bodos to grind spices, garlic, ginger, fish and herbs or herbal medicines.

***Dingkhi* (Pounder)**

Dingkhi is a type of grinder used for pounding rice which is also used as post harvesting tool.⁹⁶

***Oudab* (Hearth)**

Oudab is built in the Bodo kitchen for the purpose of cooking with fire wood. It is built of mixture of *hamamatta* (Sticky soil or clay found by the river side or under the water), *zujai* (cover of rice after pounding), small pieces of *jegab* (straw), cow dung and water. The mixing has to be done properly neither not too sticky nor watery. It is made according to the required shape and size. It has generally three lumps for placing pots, pans etc. and the space between the lumps are lower in height so that flame can pass through it.

***Sanduk* (Box)**

Sanduk is a wooden or metal box used by the Bodos, especially by the wealthy Bodos for keeping valuable things safely. It is made in different sizes and made of *saal dongpang*. The bolt of the *sanduk* is made of wood as well as of iron. The length of the box varies from 60-91 cm and its breath from 30-40 cm.

***Gisib* (Hand fan)**

It is a hand held bamboo fan used by the Bodos. It is made of knitted split bamboos in round or square shape. The knitted round or square shape is tied to the

handle made of a bamboo stick with *raidwng* (cane rope) to a small and long bamboo pipe. It is then inserted to the bamboo stick for making the movement of the *gisib* flexible, which is fixed with the help of the bamboo knob at the bottom. The handle of the *gisib* is approximately 35 cm in length and 27 cm in breadth approximately. The length of the bamboo pipe is approximately 15 cm.⁹⁷

Gisib made of woven bamboo splits or *katri belai* (wild leaf) is also used in welcoming the bride.⁹⁸

***Oua baksu* (Bamboo box)**

Oua baksu is a bamboo box used by the Bodos. It is made of knitted split bamboo in the shape of a box. The border area is fixed to a bamboo stick fastened with *raidwng* (cane rope) or *theuol* (split bamboo rope). The latch of the *oua baksu* is also made of cane.

***Khokhla* (Basket)**

It is a boat shaped bamboo basket. It is used for carrying and keeping grains, fruits, vegetables etc.⁹⁹

***Bwisang* (Raised bamboo platform or rectangular bamboo craft)**

Bwisang is made of bamboo and is a raised platform which serves the purpose of bed.¹⁰⁰ It is also used by the Bodos to keep utensils and household things. It is made mainly in the kitchen above the fire place to keep kitchen utensils with a space bellow for keeping fire wood. The length of the *baisang* is approximately 17 cm and the breadth 7-10 cm. The tools used by the Bodos in making *bwisang* are *sikha gobda* (cleaver), *gondrai* (wooden block), *sikha* (knife) and *patw durung* (jute rope) or *theuol* (bamboo rope).

The newly prepared *amao* placed in a *songrai* (winnowing) is kept inside the house on a *bwisang*, mainly hang over the traditional fire place with the support of *patw durung* (jute rope). It measures approximately 24 cm in length and 12 cm in breadth.

It is a seat made of bamboo with stands made of bamboo or areca nut trunk, used for sitting by the weavers while weaving and the four stands or legs are fixed in the ground.

Hasib (Broom)

It is a broom made of bamboo and thatch used for sweeping the compound or surrounding of the house by the Bodos. Bamboo is split into thin sticks which are dried and tied in a small bundle which is used for sweeping. Bodos also use broom made out of thatch where the harder parts are taken out or cut till naval point. Then both the edges are cut off a bit, dried in the sun and is kept on the top of the roof of the house or hut especially in the early morning or evening to wet it with dew drops which helps in making the color of the *thuri* (thatch) yellow. It is then tied in a bundle with *patw durung* (jute rope) and used for sweeping. Bamboo broom measures 91 cm in length and its thickness is 6 cm. The broom made of thatch measures 45 cm in length and 10 cm in thickness.¹⁰¹

In sericulture brooms are hung on a piece of stick or from roof of a hut, by separating it in the middle, as when the insects make their appearance in the butterfly stage, before they are able to fly, they are collected with care and placed on the brooms for laying eggs. It is used to clean castor-worm's stool.¹⁰²

M (Mat)

It is a bamboo mat used by the Bodos for the purpose of seating and sleeping.¹⁰³ It is used also in spreading cooked rice to allow it to cool down while preparing *jou* (alcohol).¹⁰⁴ For keeping small castor-worms for feeding them with *bithorai endi belai* (new *endi* leaves) and also for the purpose of receiving the *empou* (worm) or *empou ki* (worm fascies) when they fall from the bamboo pipe or wooden piece which is hang a few feet above the ground on the roof of the hut *m* is also used. The *m* is made of plaited bamboo by splitting it with *sikha* (knife) when it is hit by a small piece of *gondrai* (wooden block) whenever needed and the border parts are twisted with *theuol* (bamboo rope) to tighten it. When the making of *m* is done, it is kept in the sunlight for drying. The *m* is woven in different sizes. The length of the *m* measures 152-182 cm and the breadth measures 106-152 cm.¹⁰⁵

Oua hashung (Bamboo tube)

Oua hashung is used by the Bodos for storing dry fishes with *aruma* stem and added with some *kharwi* (alkali) for preparing *napham* (fermented fish). The *oua*

hasung is made of bamboo tube which is cut just below the node on the top with a node on the bottom. The upper part remains open and the bottom part remains closed making it look like a giant glass. The *oua hasung* measures 45-60 cm in length and 152-182 cm in breadth.¹⁰⁶

Before the coming of *haani dwihu* (earthen pot), the Bodos used big bamboo pipes for storing water measuring approximately 36 cm in length. In olden days they used smaller *oua hasung* for the purpose of drinking water and *jou* during feast.¹⁰⁷

Oua hasung measuring 6 cm in length approximately was used by the Bodos to drink *jou* (alcohol) in olden times and also to drink water, especially during feast.¹⁰⁸

Bamboo pipe is also used in *nw khonnai* (coiling thread), measuring 12 inches or more in length.¹⁰⁹

***Sundari* (Lime storage)**

Sundari is a *sun i dwngra* (lime storage) made of *oua hasung* (bamboo tube). This is usually made of smaller bamboo tube. The length of the *sundari* measures 25-30 cm and its breadth measures 5-6 cm.¹¹⁰

***Kerepa* (Tool for making jute rope)**

Kerepa is an instrument made of bamboo for making jute rope. It is made of two bamboo sticks tied to each other at the center, in the shape of a cross. The length of both the bamboo sticks are 30-40 cm.

***Thangwn* (Tool for tying cow)**

It is used by the Bodos for hammering *mosow kuntia* (material for tying cows). It is a small bamboo piece which is pointed at one end and used for tying cow. It measures 15-20 cm in length and 2-5 cm in breadth.

***Khasa* or *Kobai kara* (Basket made of bamboo and cane)**

It is a basket made of bamboo and cane which is used by the Bodos to store various things such as dry fish, grains, *narjwi gwrn* (dry jute leaves), vegetables, fruits

etc. It is made of interwoven bamboo splits and the frame of the mouth of the *khasa* is made of bent bamboo sticks tied with the help of *raidwng* (cane rope). The upper part is somewhat smaller than the bottom part like an earthen pot.¹¹¹

***Haani dwihu* (Earthen pot)**

The use of earthen pots bears an important place in all the history of human civilizations. Similarly, the Bodos since time immemorial used earthen pots of different types, sizes and designs for various purposes like cooking, keeping edibles, storing water, preparing intoxicating liquor, and even for keeping clothes. The height of the *dwihu* is approximately 24.5 cm and its width is 19 cm. But there is no concrete proof whether the Bodos ever indulged themselves in preparing these earthen pots.¹¹²

Bodos have been using it for keeping the *amao* (yeast), ready for use.¹¹³ Rev. Sidney Endle in his book *The Kacharis* wrote that, large number of earthenware Vessels are found in Bodos house, which are used freely and frequently in preparation and distribution of *jou* (alcohol).¹¹⁴

Haani dw of different size and shape is used by the Bodos also to stow away dried cocoons until a fitting time usually in a cold season.¹¹⁵

***Mahendw* (Earthen pot)**

Mahendw is a big earthen pot used by the Bodos for keeping grains. It is of various sizes.

***Sakhi dwngra* (lamp stand)**

Sakhi dwngra is made of wood which is used for keeping lamp by cutting out from a piece of log. The upper part is the working area more or less round in shape with a wooden stand attached to it which measures 20-30 cm in height.

Jor Maida

The Bodos used small earthen pots which were attached together with a single earthen handle or jute rope for keeping salt, turmeric powder etc.

Bucket

The Bodos used silver or iron made bucket for carrying water which they bought from *kumars*.

***Sakhi* (Open lamp)**

Sakhi is made of clay or tin. It is like a small pot with an opening at the top to insert *kun* (cotton) till the bottom of the *sakhi* in which kerosene is filled to burn. The Bodos bought it from others.

***Suni dwngra Dwihu* (Lime pot)**

Suni dwngra is clay made small pot used for keeping *suni* (lime) with opening at the top. It looks like a small pot and the Bodos purchased it from others.

***Sindhay* (Ring made of straw)**

It is a device which is made of dry straw in a ring like shape to place a pitcher.

***Thinkli* (Small earthen pot)**

Thinkli is a small earthen pot used by the Bodos to keep coins which are not made by the Bodos.¹¹⁶

Bamboo stand

The Bodos use stand made of bamboo which is placed above the fire place to dry fish or meat placed on sieve hanged with jute rope. It may be triangular or square in shape where the bamboo sticks measuring 35-40 cm are tied to each other on the edges with *patw durung* (jute rope) or *theuol* (bamboo rope) respectively.

Guji

The Bodos used sharp metal object with wooden handle for roasting meat, fish, chillies etc. on fire. The handle is made of long wooden log measuring 10-12 cm long and a small sharp metal object is inserted in the wooden handle measuring 30-35 cm long. It is mostly taken out from unused or an old umbrella.

***Daba* (Smaller knife)**

Daba is a smaller knife with cover and it is also used for the purpose of cutting vegetables and fruits. It is generally carried and used by the Bodo women. The working area and the handle are both made of iron which they purchase from the *kumars*. It is used for offerings and for cutting bamboo sticks during the *Bathou puja*. It measures approximately 7 cm in length.

***Gatha* (Cow bell)**

It is a pears shaped metal bell for cows. It is tied around the cow's or buffalo's neck to keep a track on them. The *gatha* resembles the temple or the church bells in size and in appearance. The Bodos purchased it from others.¹¹⁷

***Ouani kanjong* (Bamboo comb)**

It was a comb made of bamboo used by the Bodos in olden days. The comb measures 18-20 cm in length with working area measuring 10-11 cm in length and 5 cm in breadth.

***Khwrwm* (Wooden Slipper)**

Wooden slippers were worn by the Bodos with support of a wooden knob measuring 2 cm fixed on the upper portion in olden days which looked like modern slippers of 2 cm in height.

***Pwita* (wooden sandals)**

The wooden slippers worn by the Bodos with the strings made of plaited *patw durung* (jute rope) called *pwita*. It was made in the shape of modern slipper measuring 2 cm in height and the string attached to it is placed between the big toe and the other toes. The string goes over the feet on both sides and is tied into holes at the sides of the sandals. The two sandals may differ in sizes slightly.¹¹⁸

Sokhi

Wooden bed used by the Bodos is called *sokhi*. This wooden bed is made of mostly *saal dongpang*.

Ramjangkla

The Bodos used wooden ladder for climbing which is known as *ramjangkla*. It is made of strong woods cut out in zig zag shape.

***Jigab buntha* (Bundle of straw)**

Jigab buntha is a bundle of straw used by the Bodos. It is made of dry straw for lighting fire. It is also lit and kept in the dwelling houses and cow shed to be free from the mosquitoes.¹¹⁹

***Gondrai* (Piece of log)**

A piece of wooden log is used by the Bodos for domestic purposes like cutting meat etc. It measures approximately 30 cm in height and 15 cm in diameter.

***Dongpangni dw* (Wooden pot)**

The Bodos used *dongpangni dw* in olden days for storing water. The big wooden trunks were cut hollow at the center making its shape like *ural* (mortar) for storing water.

***Kunni kungdung* (Cotton thread)**

Bodos used cotton thread for lighting lamps. Cotton is harvested from the cotton tree which they grow. It is then taken out from the cotton fruits by separating cottons from cotton seeds. After the cottons are taken out, it is then rolled manually for lighting *sakhi* (lamp) and *alari baati* (earthen lamp). The Bodos also used *thaokhri* (spindle), which is a homemade spindle yarning cotton. The cotton yarn or tread is used for weaving cotton *dokhna* (traditional dress of women), *gamcha* (loin cloth), *sima* (bed cover) etc.

***Sarai* (Pan)**

Sarai is an iron, silver or bell-metal pan used by the Bodos for cooking curry. It is of different sizes with a portion to hold it. The Bodos bought it from the *kumars*.¹²⁰

***Khantha* (Rice Vessel)**

Khantha is an earthen rice vessel. They purchased it from others and is of different sizes. Smaller ones are used for daily cooking while the bigger ones are used during feasts.

Brass and silver pot

The Bodos purchased and used pots made of brass and silver of various sizes and shapes. The smaller ones are used in daily cooking while the bigger ones are used during feasts and festivals.

***Sagong* (Blender)**

Sagong is made of bamboo stick used by the Bodos to properly blend curry while cooking. It is a one hand bamboo stick and towards the bottom part a small hole is made, where two 10-12 cm long small bamboo sticks are inserted in such a way where both the sticks interlock each other at the center making it look like the shape “x”. The Bodos use it to blend curry like *narjwi* (dry jute leaf) by rolling it back and forward with both hands.

***Khorsli* (Wooden ladle)**

It is a ladle made of wood by cutting it flat and it is used by the Bodos to stir curry, serve curry and rice. *Khorsli* (Wooden ladle) measures 30 cm in length.

***Kadau* (Bamboo ladle)**

Kadau is a flat bamboo ladle measuring 30 cm in length, used specially to take out cooked rice from rice pot¹²¹ as well as to take out cooked rice from silver pot in preparing *jou* (alcohol).¹²²

***Haasung* (Bamboo pipe for blowing)**

Haasung is a bamboo pipe measuring 30 cm in length, made out of hollow bamboo pipe by cutting the upper end below the internode and the lower end is cut just

above the other internode. It is used by the Bodos to blow at the fire while cooking with fire woods in order to help it burn more.

***Abwijangi* (Bamboo basket)**

Abwijangi is a bamboo basket with four poles made of bamboo sticks and is made in different size by weaving bamboo splits. This basket is used by the Bodos for collecting plant products and for washing vegetables. Its height is 25 cm and breadth is 20-25 cm approximately.

***Maigong kada* (Vegetable basket)**

This bamboo made basket is used for carrying and keeping vegetables measuring 2-3 cm in height and 10-15 cm in diameter approximately. Similar kind of *khada* (basket) made of bamboo is used for picking cow dung and cleaning the cow shed in the morning.

Khirkha

Khirkha is a silver household implement used by the Bodos to wash rice and vegetables. It is a big bowl like shape with tiny holes in it, to let water pass while washing vegetables or rice for cooking. Its height is 20 cm and breadth is 20-25 cm approximately.

Kettle

The Bodos used earthen and silver made kettles for the purpose of brewing tea. It is somewhat like modern tea pot in shape of different sizes, with a long pipe like mouth to pour tea and a removable cover between its “u” size handle.¹²³

***Thwrsi* (Plate)**

The Bodos traditionally have their food on clay pots, banana leaves and plate cut out of banana trunk. The clay pots were medium in size, which the Bodos did not make but bought from others. But gradually they started using silver and bronze plates and also plates made of *kawrai* with elevated border, which they never made but bought from others.

Talir Belai (Banana leaves) and Laihulai (Wild plant leaves)

During feast they used plates made out of *talir belai* and *laihulai*. *Talir belai* was made out of cutting banana leaves in square shape measuring 30 cm in length and breadth respectively. Plates made of *laihulai* (wild plant leaves) by stitching it with small bamboo stick of 2 cm when it is still raw is dried before using it.

Khurwi (Bowl)

The Bodos used *Khurwi* made of silver, bronze and *kowrai*, for serving curry and drinking *jou*. These were not made by the Bodos but bought from others.

Thona and Abwithona (Bowl like)

During feast they used *thona* made of banana bark and *abwi thona* made of *talir lai* (banana leaves) and *laihulai* or *katri* (wild plant leaves) for drinking water or rice-beer. Bodos make *thona* by cutting banana bark measuring into 25 cm in length. The thin upper layer of the banana bark is folded up at two ends and the folding is supported by piercing a thin bamboo stick which is behind the folded banana bark. For making *abwi thona*, *talir lai*, *laihulai* or *katri belai* they fold from two sides with hands. They use for drinking water.

Lotha (Bowl or kind of pot)

The Bodos used *lotha* which is a kind of a large bowl with a small mouth made out of clay, silver, bronze, brass or bell-metal for the purpose of drinking water.¹²⁴

The Bodos also use *lotha* for storing holy water mixed with *dubri hagra* (dub/sacred grass), *tulsi* leaves (basil leaves) and a golden ring for sprinkling the new born child.¹²⁵

Dongpangni gelas (Wooden glass)

Wooden glass was used for drinking water by the Bodos, measuring approximately more than 6 cm in length and 8 cm in diameter.

***Hatha* (wooden plate)**

Hatha is a large wooden plate. The Bodos use it for the purpose of giving food stuff to the pigs.¹²⁶ It is also used in serving foods during feast which measures about 12-18 cm in diameter and the handle measures 213-243 cm.¹²⁷

TOOLS USED FOR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PURPOSES

The Bodos are socially and culturally very rich. They have their own *jou* (alcohol) making articles, dance and musical instruments, spinning, weaving, dyeing, tools for sericulture, instruments used for religious purposes, instruments for indigenous games and recreation, instruments for traditional festivals and instruments meant for traditional rites and rituals. These tools and instruments reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Bodos.

Tools (Articles) used in making *Jou* (Alcohol)

The tribal people are fond of rice beer prepared by themselves¹²⁸ and it is no difference with the Bodos. *Jou* is an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the Bodos and it bears great significance in their traditional life and religious functions. The articles used for *jou* making of the Bodos are mentioned below.

Silver pot

Silver pots are of different size and designs. The Bodos used it for cooking rice and in preparing *jou* (alcohol). In preparing *jou goran* (distilled alcohol) silver pot with shorter neck and open mouth is also used in the process of distillation. It is placed at the top, filled with cold water acting as condenser and another silver pot placed at the lowest part consisting of diluted fermented rice.¹²⁹

It is also used for boiling *eri* cocoons for softening it before spinning.¹³⁰

***Dala* (Rounded bamboo mound)**

Dala is used to mix the cooked rice for preparing *jou* (alcohol) with powdered *amao* (condiment). It measures approximately 45 cm in diameter.

Maldang/ Dabkha (Earthen pitcher)

Maldang/Dabkha is of different size and designs. It is used by the Bodos in preparing their intoxicating drink *jou* (alcohol), where they store cooked rice mixed with *amao* (condiment) for fermentation.

Dungsu (Wooden made alcohol container)

Dungsu is a wooden article and it is somewhat like *ural* (mortar). In the process of making *jou bidoi* (rice beer), the incubated mixture forms an abundant whitish foam which is poured in the sterilized *dungsu* where *janta* (conical bamboo sieve) is inserted into it for easy harvesting of *jou* (alcohol). It measures 30 cm in height and wide respectively.

Janta (Conical or cylinder shaped bamboo sieve)

Janta may be a conical or cylinder shaped bamboo sieve used by the Bodos for easy harvesting of *jou* (alcohol). *Janta* is inserted into the *maldang* (earthen pot) for separating *jou bidoi* (rice beer) from *afri* (diluted alcohol). It measures approximately 25 cm in length and 10.5 cm in diameter.

Loutai (Bamboo Ladle or ladle made out of lau, a vegetable)

Loutai is a bamboo ladle or ladle made out of *lau* (gourd), a vegetable. It is used for taking out *jou* (alcohol) from *dabkha/Maldang* (earthen pitcher). It measures approximately 12-15 cm in length.

Mwkhra Koro (Earthen pot with small holes)

Mwkhra koro is used in process of distillation of alcohol. A small earthen *dwiuhu* (pot) is placed in the middle inside part of *mwkhra koro*, which acts as receiver of *jou* (alcohol), between the short neck silver pot at the upper part and another silver pot at the bottom. It measures 12.7 cm or more in height and 20.3 cm or more in breadth.¹³¹

Dance and Musical Tools (Instruments)

The Bodo are culturally distinct and are also a great lover of music and dance.¹³² They have their own music, dance and instruments. The seasonal festivals of the Bodos

like *domashi* (harvest festival) and *baisagu* (a new year festival), agricultural festival like *mainao lainai* (bringing *mainao* from paddy field to house) and religious festivals like *Kerai* (ritualistic dance), *Bathou* (traditional religion) and the *Garja puja* (purification of the village community) and marriage functions are closely related to music and dance. The Bodos since ancient times have been able to place a glory to their culture through their traditional dance and music.¹³³ While some of their dance and musical tools are still in use but some are on the verge of extinction. The dance and musical instruments of the Bodos are mentioned below.

***Kham* (Drum)**

Kham is a big traditional drum of the Bodos. The circumference varies from 42 to 41 inches to the right side, 48 to 46 inches in the middle and 49 to 48 inches to the left end. The *kham* varies in length from 38 to 34 inches.¹³⁴ The trunk of *sama*, *odla* (*Sterculiavillosa*), *kanthal* (jackfruit), *thaijau* (mango), *serfang* and *ghugra* are used by the Bodos in making drum. In olden days, it is also said that the Bodos used *sijou* (*euphorbia splendens*) plant to make *Kham*. *Barma* (goat) or *mwi* (deer) *bigur* (skin) is used to cover the two sides of the *Kham*. Buffalo skin is used in making braces. It takes 7-14 days in making *kham* and a single *kham* generally lasts for a period of 30 to 40 years.¹³⁵

This dance and musical instrument is used in *Kherai* dance, *bagaroumba* dance, *bwisagu* dance, *huchari* dance, *raijw janai* dance and marriage ceremonies.

It is a Bodo musical instrument drum, which is big and long in size. It is played on the occasion of *Bathou puja* and *Kherai puja*.

***Siphung* (Flute)**

The *siphung* is a long flute of the Bodos and it is made of a species of bamboo called *ouajlau* (*bambusa pallida*) and *ouathare* (*bambusaassamica*).¹³⁶ The length of the *siphung* may differ from 26-30 inches and diameter is 2.5 cm. The *siphung* has generally five holes for playing, out of which a hole is for blowing. The average circumference of a Bodo flute hole is 3 inches through its whole length. Different parts of the same flute may have different circumference, but not in wider sense.¹³⁷

Siphung is used in *Kherai* dance, *habajanai* dance, *bagaroumba* dance, *bwisagu* dance, *huchari* dance and *raijwjanai* dance.¹³⁸

It is a flute, a musical instrument and it is long in size having five holes only, played in *kherai puja*.

***Serja* (Four string musical instrument)**

Serja is a musical instrument of the Bodos which is somewhat like a violin having four strings and traditionally it is played by a small bow, made of bamboo strip.¹³⁹ The Bodos used *chetawne*, *kanthal* (jack fruit) and *sijou* (euphorbia splendens) logs for making *serja*. But in making it, the *sijou* (euphorbia splendens) log is considered the best. The lower body part of a *serja* (four string musical instrument) is oval-shaped hollow wooden resonating chamber and a part of it is covered with the skin of the *barma* (goat) or *maphou* (iguana),¹⁴⁰ while its wider portion is open. The waist of the body of this instrument is so narrow shaped that it looks as if the portions of upper and lower halves are separated from each other. The length of the *serja* measures 60-70 cm. The lower portion of the body is oval or a small pear-shaped. The middle portion of this instrument is large in shape and both the edges are wide as feathers of a bird, without any cover. Generally three pegs are fitted to the top portion of the instrument for fastening the strings¹⁴¹ and the four strings of the *serja* is made of *endi* or *muga* silk, which pass over a crude bridge made of wood or animal horn and its garnishes consist of four *puthis* (tuning knobs), one *ghora* (bridge), one bow (made of bamboo) and string, (made of a small bunch of hairs of horse's tail or sometimes made of *odla* (*Sterculia Villosa*) fibers. The bow measures 63-.5 cm in length and the string measures 50.8 cm in length.¹⁴² It takes 3-7 days usually in making a *serja* and some of these instruments are decorated with beautiful carving which resembles human heads or heads of animals and birds. A *serja* can last for a period of fifty years.¹⁴³ Ostad Kamini Kr. Narzary has described the names of the four strings of *serja* as-

- i. *Roda*,
- ii. *Mwcha*,
- iii. *Saolaand*
- iv. *Rangyee*

The parts of *serja* are divided into the following parts-

- i. *Thikhni*
- ii. *Khuga*
- iii. *Dirung dwidengra Khala*
- iv. *Khoro*
- v. *Gwdwna*
- vi. *Bikha*
- vii. *Cha Udwi*
- viii. *Bikha Shu*
- ix. *Janjai*
- x. *Aheb*
- xi. *Ching Udwi*
- xii. *Gorai*
- xiii. *Gudung*
- xiv. *Khithu*
- xv. *Serja Dirung*

The bow of a *serja* is divided into following parts-

- i. *Bwrla dirung* (bow string)
- ii. *Bwrla gon* (bow)
- iii. *Bwrla bijou* (apex of the bow)
- iv. *Bwrla gudi* (root of the bow)¹⁴⁴

This musical instrument is used in *bagaroumba* dance, *baisagu* dance, *domasi* dance and *raijwjanai* dance.¹⁴⁵

***Jotha* (Smaller cymbal)**

It is a cymbal which is a small bowl like musical instrument. Musical sound is created when this pair is beaten together. The shape and the size of *jotha* are similar as those used by the musicians of genuine Indian music.¹⁴⁶ It may be made of metal or brass. The Bodos purchase it from the market, as they do not make it.¹⁴⁷ The different parts of *jotha* are namely-

- i. *Jotha thakhri*
- ii. *Rugung* (circumference measuring approximately 7.2-8 inches)
- iii. *Jotha bikhung*
- iv. *Dirung gudung*
- v. *Dirung*
- vi. *Jotha bikha*
- vii. *Dirung Khoro*¹⁴⁸

This instrument is used in *kherai* dance, *bagaroumba* dance, *bwisagu* dance, *huchari*, dance, *raijwjanai* dance,¹⁴⁹ marriages ceremonies, *baisagu* dance and *domasi* dance. The *jotha* measures 6 cm in diameter and the cord which connects the *jotha* measures 53 cm.

It is a cymbal which is basin like musical instrument beaten together in pairs to produce sound, played by the Bodos in *Kherai puja*.

***Jabkring* (Rattle)**

Jabkring is a kind of castanets¹⁵⁰ and it may be called tambourine. It is made of wooden frame having a number of oval holes piercing through its body for the purpose of fitting metallic disc coins like pins. One hole (somewhat oval or round) is for inserting thumb and the other hole (somewhat square) for inserting two-three fingers. In order to produce sound of clapping and jingling as the result of friction made by each other, more than one disc is adjusted in each hole.¹⁵¹ *Kanthal* (*Artocarpusheterophyllus* or jackfruit) log is used in making the wooden frame of the *jabkring*.¹⁵² The different parts of *jabkring* are namely-

- i. *Achima chwnai gudung* (Hole for tumb)
- ii. *Achi fisa chwnai gudung* (Hole for fingers)
- iii. *Chwkhri gudung* (Holes for discs)
- iv. *Chwkhri* (Discs)
- v. *Chani chwkhri* (Upper discs)
- vi. *Chingni chwkhri* (Lower discs)
- vii. *Chwkhri khala* (Pins foe fixing discs)¹⁵³

It is used in *bagaroumba* dance, *bwisagu* dance and *raijwjanai* dance. It is played with the right hand by putting the thumb through the oval hole and two- three fingers through the square hole.¹⁵⁴

Jangengra

It is a traditional musical instrument of the Bodos made of reeds¹⁵⁵ and it is believed that it was used before the use of *Kham* (drum).¹⁵⁶ The length of *jangengra* measures 43.18 cm and the breadth measures 17.78 cm.¹⁵⁷

This musical instrument is played in most of the ceremonies and festivals, but not during *Kherai* (ritualistic dance) and *garja pujas* (purification of village community).

***Khawang* (Bigger cymbal)**

Khawang is a kind of *jotha* (cymbal) but in size it is bigger and is made of brass or metal. A cord is used to connect a pair of *khawang*s. The Bodos purchase this instrument from the market, as they do not make it.¹⁵⁸ The diameter of *khawang* is 10 cm and the cord measures 53 cm.¹⁵⁹ This instrument is beaten together in pair to produce sound.¹⁶⁰

***Gongona* (Jew's harp)**

It is a kind of small wind instruments. It is made of light and soft bamboo (*Bambusaassamica*) pieces. The *gongona* is flat in size having only one internode and its length is 6-7 inches and breadth is 3 or 4 inches approximately. There is a ridge hook in the anterior side of the wider end of *gongona* to make it easy to catch it in between the lips in a balanced form. The other end is somehow narrowing and is tightened by a very firm *muga* thread. The thread is drawn exteriorly while playing and immediately loosens it. This process is repeated frequently in lightning moment for vibration, as it is obligatory with the rhythm of music.¹⁶¹ Another type of *gongona* is made out of a very smooth bamboo sheet which is carefully placed between two flat-shaped bamboo sticks measuring 6-7 inch and 3-4 inch in length and breadth respectively. This instrument is played by keeping it within the two rows of teeth of the player for controlling the wind

and knocking by the thumb at the end of the instrument. The bamboo for making *gongana* is generally cut on a sunny morning and kept for more or less six months on smoking-rack on top of the hearth. The bamboo tube used by female in weaving is also a material for making *gongana*.¹⁶²

This instrument is used by the Bodos in *bagaroumba*, *domasi* and *bwisagu* dances.¹⁶³

***Bingi* (One stringed musical instrument)**

Bingi is a blowing instrument of the Bodos having only one-string. Wood or bamboo is used in making the body of this instrument, having a best divided shell of a coconut at the base, which remains covered with *maphou* (iguana) or *barma* (goat) skin. The entire wooden or bamboo made portion is called the trunk of *bingi* and it is long in size starting from the apex down to the coconut shell. The coconut shell is divided horizontally and the bigger portion and the best portion are taken for connecting it at the base. On the leather below the string, there is a small bridge and the bridge is applied to make the string proper for easy playing of the instrument. A bow is used for playing this instrument and the string of the bow is made from a few hair of horse's tail, which is not wrapped but freely kept.¹⁶⁴ It measures 38.1 cm in length and 12.7 cm in breadth.¹⁶⁵

It is used in *bwisagu* (New Year) and *domasi* (harvest festival)¹⁶⁶ and *raijw janai* dance.¹⁶⁷

***Thorkha* (Clapper)**

It is a bamboo (*Bambusatudla*) made clapper measuring approximately 76-91 cm in length. The clapper has two internodes and three nodes in the upper, middle and lower part. The clapper from being completely split is protected by the lower node. In order to handle *thorkha* properly during playing it, a small portion is cut away from both the perpendicular edges of the splitting sides of the lower internodes but the upper one is simply split which turn out to make it good clapper. *Thorkha* can be divided into different parts namely-

- i. *Khoro ganthi* (Upper node)

- ii. *Gejer ganthi* (middle node)
- iii. *Ching ganthi* (Lower node)
- iv. *Cha fabw* (upper internodes)
- v. *Ching fabw* (Lower internodes)
- vi. *Swdwb ringkhang hwgra jing*
- vii. *Homgra jing*¹⁶⁸

It is used in *bwisagu* and *domasi* dances.¹⁶⁹

TOOLS USED FOR SERICULTURE

Sericulture and rearing of different kinds of *eri* (castor) worms for manufacturing *endi* (croaser) cloths were known to the people of the North- East since the time of Ramayana and Arthasastra.¹⁷⁰ The *eri* worm (*attacusricini*) derives its name from *eri* or castor plant (*ricinuscommunis*) on which it is fed usually.¹⁷¹ The culture of the castor-worm is common among the Bodos, and from it they obtain a raw material known 'endi or eri', which has a great value. The Bodos rear the cocoons, spin the yarn and weave the cloth.¹⁷² The manufacture of the *endi* cloth and active cultivation of castor worms is one of the chief and profitable industries among the Bodos.¹⁷³

The rearing of *eri* worms is an indigenous culture of the Bodos and they have been using various tools for the purpose of sericulture which are few and simple and almost all these tools are made by the artisan himself and by the members of his family. They are mentioned below.

Reed

The Reed is a hollow stem of tall, stiff plants like grasses growing together in groups near water. They are used by the Bodos to perforate the cocoons. The Bodos after drying the plant stems, the stems are split and any pith or tissue in the stems are removed and turned into rope. The colour of the rope initially is white or pale in but eventually turns into deeper brown.

Forked twigs

It is used as suspended across a piece of wood to hang castor leaves from roof of a hut to feed bigger worms. The Bodos split the branches of a tree for making forked twigs.

***Ouani danda* (Bamboo pipe)**

The Bamboo pipe used by the Bodos for hanging moth females a few feet above the ground to protect them from rats or insects. They are simple cut bamboo pipe and are neatly cut at both the ends. Its measurement depends on the measurement of the roof of the house, where it is to be hang.

Wooden piece

A long wooden piece of *sumli dongpang* (a kind of tree) is cut off according to the length of the roof of the house, where the moth females are to be hang along with castor leaves.¹⁷⁴

WEAVING, SPINNING AND DYEING TOOLS

The art of spinning and weaving was introduced into Assam by the pre- Aryan tribes such as the Bodos and the allied tribes. To support our contention, the names of the places like *Jonga*, *Donga*, etc. occurring in *Arthasastra*, associated with the industrial products of Kamrupa are of Bodo origin.¹⁷⁵ The spinning and weaving is an indispensable part of every Bodo family which has played a distinctive role in preserving Bodo identity in the world. Since time immemorial, the Bodos have been spinning and weaving.¹⁷⁶ It is said that, a sensitive ear from distance wouldn't fail to catch the incantatory note of regular strikes by a Bodo maiden's expert hands at the loom.¹⁷⁷ The Bodo women still wear their traditional dress *dokhna*, a home spinning product woven by women themselves.¹⁷⁸ In olden days, knowledge of weaving was considered as a qualification for the bride and the women felt ashamed, if they did not know the art of weaving. They knew the methods and ingredients of indigenous dyeing prepared from raw indigo and wild herbs. The Bodos use many traditional weaving, spinning and dyeing tools, which mostly are made by themselves with available materials such as wood, bamboo and cane.

The traditional weaving, spinning and dyeing tools of the Bodos are mentioned below.

***Thaokhri* (Spindle)**

Thaokhri is a bamboo or wooden made spinning tool of the Bodos used for *kundung lunnai* (yarn spinning). It is a spindle of a straight slender rod, usually made of

wood or bamboo with disc- like base used in the traditional spinning process of the Bodos. The wooden disc remains fixed at the thicker base of the bamboo stick and it is inserted to the bamboo stick through the upper smaller and the pointed edge. Bodos sometimes instead of wooden disc use neatly polished flat hard *kapra* (clay material for making roof) by making a small hole in the center. It measures 8-12 inches in length.

***Saal-Gandwi* (Wrap roller and cloth roller)**

It is the wrap and the fabric beams of the Bodos. It is wooden tool used by the Bodos for *kundung thunnai* (yarn coiling) as well as for *se thunnai* (cloth coiling).¹⁷⁹ The wrap beam is a circular wooden bar fitted and located at the back of the loom upon which the warp yarn is wound and it releases the wrap yarn whenever needed in the process of weaving. The cloth beam is located at the front of the loom, where after finishing weaving, the woven fabric is wound on this beam.¹⁸⁰ Both the beams measure approximately 120-123 cm in length and the diameter measures approximately 6-8 cm.

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***Tath* (Sleigh or slay)**

The most important tool or instrument for weaving is the *tath*. It is a wooden frame accommodating the shuttle box, reed and swings forward and backward. In its forward motion the last pick of weft is beaten and in its backward motion the shuttle is allowed to pass over the slay-race.

Picker

It is a piece of leather placed in grooves inside a shuttle box on which the spindle is kept. The picker is used to give blow to the shuttle to drive in from one box to the other.

***Makhu* (Shuttle)**

It is a wooden shuttle and in the process of weaving, the shuttle is placed horizontally to the weft and pass over under the wrap threads by pushing and pulling and then thrown across the shed by hand releasing the weft yarn from *bobbin* (pirn). When the loom is stationary, the shuttle remains in the shuttle box.¹⁸²

***Natha* (Spindle)**

Natha is a spindle made of bamboo used by the Bodos in yarn coiling. Bodos use it along with *sorkhi* (Spindle), for neatly coiling of yarn. They make it with 8-10

pieces of bamboo sticks depending on the size. The bamboo sticks are cut and polished smoothly. The longest bamboo stick is placed at the center, measuring almost 32 inches in length and generally six shorter bamboo sticks measuring 24 inches in length are fixed surrounding the longest bamboo stick. They are supported by cross shaped two bamboo sticks (generally one cross at upper middle and one at cross lower middle part), through which the longest bamboo stick at the center passes, as a small hole is made at the center of the cross for the purpose. They use *raidwng* (cane rope) to tie the shorter surrounding bamboo sticks to each other at the upper and the lower ends, making it cubic in structure. The upper and the lower breadth measures 6 and 7 inches respectively.

***Danganatha* (Spindle)**

Danganatha is a bigger kind of *natha* (spindle) and it is a spinning tool used by the Bodos for coiling yarn. It is made of 9 bamboo sticks. The longer bamboo stick with a pointed end measures 36 inches in length and a wooden handle in “S” shape is placed at the middle, measuring 4 inches in length and other four short bamboo sticks are placed surrounding the longer bamboo stick, measuring 13 inches in length. These sticks are supported by four even shorter bamboo sticks in the middle, where two bamboo sticks intersect each other making it look like a cross at two places, one just below the upper end, measuring 4 inches in length, and another above the lower end, measuring 3 inches in length. All the sticks are further supported by tying to each stick by *raidwng* (cane rope). Towards the lower end, the four surrounding bamboo sticks are tied to each other with *raidwng* making it cubic in structure. The shorter bamboo sticks, which intersect to each other at right angle, have a hole in the center through which the longer bamboo passes.

***Jenther* (Spinning tool)**

It is a handmade wooden wheel or spinning tool used by the Bodos to spin yarn into *mushra* (bobbin). It is a wooden framework, comprising of wooden wheel, very similar to that of the English spinster but made upon a smaller construction. The entire body is made of wood and the wooden base is made to sit on the ground measuring approximately 22 cm in length and the wooden wheel is fixed on a small wooden bar on one side of the frame measuring approximately 20-23 cm in diameter. The wheel is

powered by the hand with the S shape wooden handle fixed at the front of the wooden wheel measuring approximately 10-11 cm in length. On the other side, a smooth and straight iron bar or rod measuring approximately 10 cm is fixed on a wooden bar, where *mushra* (bobbins) is inserted for reeling of thread for weaving. A single jute rope is tied to the wheel passing through the straight iron rod for rounding of the wheel in process of reeling the thread. The height of the jenter on the side where the wooden wheel is fixed measures approximately 13 cm and the height on the side where the bobbin is placed measures approximately 9 cm.

***Sorkhi* (Spinning tool)**

It is a spinning tool used by the Bodos for *kundung tunnai* (yarn coiling) and it is used together with *jenther* (wooden wheel). *Sorkhi* is a wooden wheel used by the Bodos for spinning. It is made of round flat hard wood, with a hole at the center to insert straight wooden rod through it to fix it to the wooden frame. Its wooden wheel measures approximately 66.04-73.66 cm in diameter and the wooden rods measures approximately 29 cm in length.¹⁸³

***Rasw* (Reed)**

Rasw is a comb through which the wrap passes.¹⁸⁴ Earlier the Bodos made it with bamboo. Two long bamboo sticks are placed parallel to each other to make a frame and small thin bamboo sticks are fixed vertically within the frame, making it look like a big comb through which the wrap passes in the loom while weaving. It measures 147.32 cm in length and 10 cm in breadth.

Gonsha

It is a circular long bamboo stick measuring 187 cm in length, used by the Bodos in *nw khonnai* (coiling of thread) and in weaving. It is placed at the back of the *tath* (slay).

***Bodangi* (Circular bamboo stick)**

Bodangi is made out of long slender circular bamboo stick measuring 187 cm in length and is placed at the back of the *tath* (slay) for creating design while weaving, where *nw* (thread) is coiled.

***Gorkha* (Treadles)**

These are treadles to which a heald is connected by means of cards in weaving to give *mohor* (designs) to the cloth. 2-4 *gorkhas* are placed in weaving depending on designs. It is made of bamboo pipe or slender wooden bar measuring 30 inches in length. In weaving generally two treadles are used and fixed at the bottom to a small wooden or bamboo bar which is fixed to the ground under the loom with the help of another bamboo or wooden stick piercing through the pedals towards the lower end to make it easy in moving up and down when pressed by the weaver with their feet. Both the treadles are tied up with jute rope individually in the front side to *bodangi* with two jute thread. In a handloom, the shed is controlled by giving proper movement to these treadles manually by using foot.

Kaita

It is used in the process of *Raswao khundung khainai* (inserting of yarn in the bamboo made reed before fitting in the loom) measuring approximately 6 cm in length.

***Putul* (Circular bamboo stick)**

It is made out of two slender circular bamboo sticks measuring 2 inches in diameter and is placed at the front of the slay, where both the sticks intersect each other at the center, making it look like X shape and four pointed pins are tied to the two sticks with the help of *nw* (thread) at all the four ends and the pins are pinned at the edges of the cloth for tightening the cloth in order to give smooth finishing and proper weaving. It measures approximately 60 cm in length.

***Baseb* (Flat bamboo stick)**

It is made of flat straight bamboo stick measuring 147.32 cm in length. It is used in coiling yarn.

***Berani* (Circular bamboo stick)**

It is used in weaving for coiling cloth in *gandwi* (wrap roller). It is made of circular bamboo stick measuring approximately 36 inches in length and two of such

sticks are stroked to the *gandwi* (fabric beam) at both the ends in the holes meant for the purpose which passes through it and hits the ground to support the rolling of woven cloth.

***Mushra* (Bobbins)**

It is a tool used for rolling yarn for the purpose of inserting it in *makhu* (shuttle). *Mushra* (Bobbins) is wooden made small spindle on which the weft yarn is wound. In the process of weaving, *mushra* is placed inside the shuttle in a long pointed iron piece meant for the purpose. It is 12-13 cm long and circular in shape where the lower side is smaller than the upper side and this wooden piece has a knob kind of thing on the upper side as well as hollow opening at the top to insert it to the iron piece present in the shuttle.

***Gorai* (Small wheel)**

It is wooden wheel used in weaving for tying *nw* (thread of a weaving loom, heddles). It helps in giving *mohor* (designs) to the woven cloth. It measures approximately 6-7 cm in diameter.

***Nw* (Thread)**

It is rolling of 3-4 *khundung* (thread) together in a *thaokhri gider* (big spindle).

***Nasoni* (*Makhu aakhai* or pulley)**

It is a wooden made handle measuring 6 inches in length with a hole in it to tie jute rope through it, where the two ends of the rope are tied to the picker where the piece of leather gives blow to the shuttle to drive it from one box to the other in the process of weaving, when the weaver pushes and pulls the handle.

***Ban gwja* (Wooden piece)**

The Bodos make *ban gwja* out of wood, where two wooden pieces measurement depend on the size of the frame of the loom measuring approximately 100-110 cm in length which is cut in such a way that the bottom side is smooth and somewhat jagged at the upper side to make it possible to hold the *tath* (slay) without sliding.¹⁸⁵

***Nw dwngra* (Thread basket)**

It is a small kind of basket made of bamboo or cane to keep *nw* (thread of weaving loom) and it is placed hanging on the *tath* (slay).

***Saal-khuntha* (Post)**

It is the four post of *isan-sali* (loom) made of wood or bamboo or betel-nut tree, measuring approximately 152.4 cm in height.

***Saal-saikong* (Bamboo pole)**

It is made of three long bamboo poles measuring approximately 182.88 cm in length and is placed horizontally above the *ban-gwja* (wooden piece) and across the weaving cloth. It is used in tying *nw* (thread) above the weaving cloth.

***Sewari* (Bamboo stick to lead on cloth while coiling thread)**

It is made out of flat and a long bamboo stick measuring 187 cm in length and it is used in *se swngnai* (to lead on cloth), in *nw khonnai* (coiling thread) and as well as in *agor kainai* (creating designs). It is placed just at the back of *rasw* (reed) in weaving.

Flat Stone

It is used by the Bodos to powder the materials for yielding colours for cloths gathered from natural plants, tree leaves, roots and stem of different colours.

Silver Container

A silver container of different shapes and sizes are used by the Bodos for boiling the powdered mass for yielding colours for cloths with required quantity of water.¹⁸⁶

TOOLS (INSTRUMENTS) USED FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES

Religious concerns belief and social institution for maintaining social relationship within the society. Religion regulates individual, family and community life in general. It further influences people's behavior, actions, faith for enforcing social norms and ethics. Religion helps bringing changes in a society and organizations and so it is a system of belief as well as an agent of value enforcement and action.¹⁸⁷

Bathou is the traditional religion of the Bodos and it is based on the 'Philosophy of Five' or the 'Principle of Five'.¹⁸⁸ These five principles or philosophy are *Ong* (Earth), *Hring* (Air), *Khling* (Water), *Fwt* (Fire) and *Che* (Universe).¹⁸⁹ 'Bathou' word

is based on two words 'Ba' meaning 'five' and 'thou' means 'Spiritual things', the elements of which are- *Sijou* (euphorbia splendens), *siphung* (flute), *ou* fruit (*dilenisindica*), the bamboo fencing (with five circles) and preaching of the Bodo priests.¹⁹⁰

Rev. Sidney Endle describes *Bathou* religion of the Bodos as "animist and it's underlying principle is characteristically one of fear and dread".¹⁹¹ R. N. Moshahary says that "the traditional Boro religion is not 'animistic' but *Bathouism* presided over by supreme God- *Bathou* or *Bathou Raja*".¹⁹² P. C. Bhattacharya mentions, "The Boros are not animistic; but they are worshippers of *Bathou*, the Supreme God".¹⁹³

Kherai puja is the greatest religious festival of the Bodos for welfare of the villagers. Traditionally it is celebrated for the welfare of the lives of the people and also for the good harvest of crops¹⁹⁴ where else *Garja puja* is a ceremony to purify the uncleanliness of the village community.¹⁹⁵

The traditional tools or instruments used for religious purpose of the Bodos are mostly made by them and still they use many instruments bought from others. The traditional religious tools or instruments are-

***Oua* (Bamboo)**

It is used by the Bodos for building fence in the installation of the *Bathou* altar and also in building small huts for God and Goddesses called *Dera* during *Garja puja* (purification of village community), along with *theuol* (Rope made of split bamboo), *thuri* (thatch) and some woods for building small steps to climb a special house called *Sang Dera* built for the *Bathou Bwrai* (Supreme God).¹⁹⁶

Oua (bamboo) is also used by the Bodos to play *bata* (a game), it is a game played with the help of two bamboo sticks¹⁹⁷ measuring approximately 45 cm in length. It is used to play *ghora chak*, which involves standing of boys on a piece of wood or spike inserted on bamboo pole¹⁹⁸ measuring approximately 205 cm in height. It is also used for building loom like structure for playing *sudam danai*, where the children imitate the weaving practices of the elders.¹⁹⁹ One bamboo pole measuring 120 cm in height and 3 cm in diameter is required in playing *dhop* (playing ball out of cotton

cloths).²⁰⁰ It is used in making bow and arrow for playing *bwrla gaonai* (shooting bow) as well as.²⁰¹

Oua (bamboo) is the most commonly used material of the Bodos in house building. The posts, beams and the pillars of the dwelling house, *bakhri* (granary house), houses for domestic animals, *goli* (cowshed) and *ishan-sali* (loom) of the Bodos are all made of bamboo. Split bamboos are used by the Bodos for building the walls of the dwelling house, *bakhri*, houses for domestic animals. Sometimes cut down areca nut tree is also used to build the pillars and posts of the *ishan-sali*.

The Bodos use bamboo in making bridges and bullock carts.²⁰²

***Gambari khamflai* (Low stool)**

Khamflai is traditional wooden furniture of the Bodos. It is a flat wooden seat with four legs of 3-4 inches tall and with 4 inches breadth. The length and the breadth of the *khamflai* measures 15-24 inches and 10-12 inches approximately. The *Roja* (the priest) uses it as a seat during the *Bathau Puja* (traditional religious ceremony) and the Bodos use special *khamflai* (low stool for seating) made of *gambari dongpang* (*gambari* wood). During marriages ceremony the bridegroom stands on the *gambari kamflai* and the younger cousin or the sister of the bride washes his feet and puts perfumed oil and cosmetics on bridegroom's hair and face than she combs his hair²⁰³ after that he is blessed by the bride's mother by applying *tilak* on the forehead.²⁰⁴

***Jewari Bathi* (Earthen lamp)**

It is an earthen lamp used by the Bodos to light the *Bathou* Altar during the time of *Bathou*, *Kherai* and *Garja pujas*.²⁰⁵ During the performance of *Kherai puja*, more than twenty two earthen lamps are required.

***Lotha* (Earthen, bronze or silver pot)**

It is Earthen, bronze or silver pot of different sizes and shapes, measuring approximately 4-10 cm in height and 6-8 cm in diameter used by the Bodos for the purpose of sprinkling holy water during the *Bathou puja* and *Kherai puja*.

***Gasa* (Lamp stand)**

It is an iron lamp stand used by the Bodos for lighting the Altar of *Bathou* during the *pujas*. In the installation of *Bathou* altar as well as in *Kherai puja* two *gasa* supposed to be male and female are required. It measures 24 inches in height.

***Batha* (Plate like with stand)**

It is used by the Bodos to offer a pair of betel- nuts and handful of rice grains to their Deities during *Pujas* (religious ceremonies). *Batha* made of both of bronze and canes were used by the Bodos. It measures approximately 8 cm in height and diameter respectively.

***Thamjang* (Big pot)**

It is a bronze pot of different sizes and shapes are used by the Bodos for keeping rice grains in *n'mano* (main house) where *mainao* (Goddess Laxmi) is placed and worship.

***Raidwng Lauthi* (Stick)**

It is stick made of cane measuring 30 to 36 cm in length, used during the performance of *Bathou puja* by *Douda* (male exorcist) to beat himself on his back and predicts in *Kherai puja*.

***Sonani Astham* (Golden ring)**

Golden rings are used in purification of house with the help of *Roja* (*Bathou* priest) or *Dauri* (Male Shaman).

***Dhuna Dhani* (Holder of aromatic article)**

It is an earthen made container for placing *dhuna* (aromatic article) during *Bathou puja*, *Garja* and *Kherai pujas*. It measures 15 cm in height and 10 cm in diameter approximately.

***Khurai* (Bowl)**

The Bodos used *khurai gadra* (silver bowl) for prediction if any unhealthy things are buried at home. Here a *Roje* (Priest) asks a person of libra zodiac sign to hold the

bowl. Again *Khurai* is also used by the *Doudini* (Female Shaman) for drinking blood of the sacrificed chicken during *Kherai puja*.

***Kun* (Cotton)**

Kun is used in preparing the altar of the *Bathou puja* and the *Kherai puja*, it is tied on the post of bamboo with green leaves signifying the unending principle of the creator.

***Jou* (Rice beer)**

During the performance of *Kherai puja*, a pair of *seref bottle* (two bottle of local liquor) and rice beer (*jou*) are required.

White cloth

A white cloth is required during *Kherai puja*.

***Khangkhla* (a kind of sacred plant)**

Eighteen pairs of *khangkhla* are required in *Kherai puja*.²⁰⁶

***Kho* (Bamboo net)**

It is a bamboo net required in *Kherai puja*. The Bodos used *kho* (Bamboo net) called “*mayaje*” during *Kherai puja*. During *Kherai puja*, a kind of “*ali*” or small road at the size of one feet breadth and four or six inches high is made in roman ‘L’ shape, starting from *Bathou* Altar to the north side measuring 10 to 12 feet long, known as *Bwiswmuthini ali* (the road of earth) and on the eastern side 18 pairs of “*khangkhla*” (sacred plant) are planted and a line of “*mayaje*” (bamboo net) is made by the Bodos from weaving split bamboo sticks, which stands for “the process of *songsar* (state of worldly existence) is such a time when human beings sustain their lives critically and successfully”.²⁰⁷

***Dona* or *thona* (plates cut out of banana stem)**

The Bodos make plates cut out of banana stem for storing holy water for sparkling during *Kherai puja*. The Bodos cut the outer layer of banana stem in to 14-15

inches long and insert a piece of twig inside both the ends in between the upper and the lower surface of the stem, measuring 3-4 inches long in order to make the plate deep enough for storing water.²⁰⁸

Besides the above mentioned materials, some materials are also used by the Bodos in *Bathou*, *Kherai* and *Garja puja* are, milk, *sindur* (Vermillion), *dhub* sticks (aromatic sticks), *guphur aowa kundung* (White rayon, *Kherai puja*), mustard oil, *sijou* plant (*Euphorbia splendens*), *tulsi* plant (holi basil), *kush* or *khungkhla* plant (*kherai puja*), *dubri* plant (Sacred grass), *dhuna* cocoon, fowls in abundance (chicken, pigeons, etc. in *Kherai puja*), plantain leaves (*Kherai puja*), eggs (*Kharai puja*),²⁰⁹ *makhna* or *lakhna* (wild) trees, areca nuts, betel leaves, banana fruits, rice, pounded rice and pig in *Kherai puja*.²¹⁰

TOOLS (INSTRUMENTS) USED FOR PLAYING TRADITIONAL GAMES AND RECREATIONS

The meaning of the word indigenous is native and the games and recreations played indigenously are called indigenous games and recreations.

Games and recreations are a part of any distinct cultural society of indigenous people. The Bodo indigenous games have been arranged depending upon the various seasons of the year. It was played by Bodos when harvesting time was over or in any leisure period. They help in the physical, mental and social development of the children. Most of the games and recreations are imitation of nature as we find in these games and recreations reflection of the culture of Bodo society. In due course of time the indigenous games and recreations have been regarded as essential symbol for healthy growth of society though these games have remained very much traditional. The Bodos have many indigenous games and recreations which are precisely which are connected with the way of living of the people. Instruments for indigenous games and recreations are mentioned below.

***Ghila* (seed of a creeping plant)**

Ghila (Seed of creeping plant) is used by the Bodos in *ghila gelenay*, an entertaining game of the Bodos which is played in any plain area of paddy field or plain

road side with *ghila* seeds. It is a circular flat seed of a creeping plant, measuring 1.5 cm in diameter.²¹¹

***Zumbra phithay* (Big kind of citrus fruit)**

The Bodos used to play football out of *zumbra phithay* (big kind of citrus fruit). They used to simply take out the fruit from the tree and play football out of it. The fruit is circular in shape and resembles the modern football in shape. This game resembles the modern football game.²¹²

Black and white *tarto* tree

The Bodos used black and white *tarto* tree as playing material for playing *mongal bata*.

***Talir dongpang* (Banana Trunk)**

A banana trunk is required in playing *bwrla gaonai* (shooting bow). One meter banana trunk is stabbed after cutting and raising it on the ground for the purpose of *bwrla gaonai*, where the archer has to touch the point marked on the banana trunk with the arrow.²¹³

***Jegab* (Dry straw)**

A knot made of a small and short straw (dry straw) is used by the Bodos for traditional toss system in playing any games.²¹⁴

Cotton Ball

It is used by the Bodos in playing *dhop*. It is a cotton ball played by two teams of boys in a court separated by a demarcating line. It is played by throwing the ball to the opposite party.

***Onthai* (stone)**

Onthai is used by the Bodos for playing a game of picking up chips.²¹⁵ It is also used in playing *gud-gud* and *gob gelenay*, games played on hard bare surface of the land, either in the street or in country ward.

***Dubri hagra* (Sacred grass)**

Dubri hagra is used in playing *gaanthi-khanai kela* (knob tying game).

Paper

Paper is used in playing *juguni bahaa*, a game played by the children sitting in circle and placing their clenched hands together.

Thimble

A small thimble is used in playing *daosri bahaa* (bird's nest). This is played by sitting in circle on the green grass.

Marble

Marbles are used for playing *aaiswb* and in these game five marbles like rocks are required.²¹⁶

TOOLS (INSTRUMENTS) USED FOR TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS (SEASONAL AND AGRICULTURAL)

Festival is the sign of culture of a society. Through the organized worship of deities the individual shares the unity and harmony of the social order. The Bodos also observed several major and minor festivals as part of religion, throughout the year.²¹⁷ The seasonal and agricultural festivals are closely connected. *Baisagu* (New Year festival) is the major festival of the Bodos and it is celebrated in mid of April. According to Ostad Kamini Kr. Narzary, the word *baisagu* is derived from combination of two words *baisa* (year) *angu* (start) and *baisagu* means the starting of the year.²¹⁸

By far the most important traditional festival of the Bodos living in Kokrajhar district of Assam is *Baisagu*, and besides it, they celebrate many seasonal and agricultural festivals such as *Domasi* (harvest festival), *khathi-gasa saonai* (seasonal festival), *amthisua* (uncleansed period) and *khotia phonai* (sowing of seeds), *khotia phunai* (uprooting of seedling), *mai gainai* (paddy plantation), *nangal jankhra* (feast after finishing rice plantation), *mainao lainai* (bringing Goddess Laxmi from paddy field to house), *enkham godan janai* (new rice eating ceremony) respectively. They use many instruments in celebrating their traditional festivals which are mostly made by themselves for natural sources and they also use some instruments which they don't make traditionally but purchase from others.

Seasonal Festivals

***Baisagu* (new Year festival)**

The Bodos remember their Supreme God in every occasions, ceremonies and festivals. It is no different during *Baisagu* too. The Bodos light *alari bathi* (an earthen lamp) for lighting in the Alter of *Bathou* during the first day of *baisagu*.²¹⁹ Besides they used many musical instruments and domestic articles in celebrating *baisagu*. The musical instruments such as *kham* (drum), *siphung* (flute), *jotha* (cymbal), *serja* (four stringed musical instrument), *bingi* (one string musical instrument), *gongana* (jew's harp), *jabkhring* (rattle) and *thorkha* (clapper) are used by the Bodos during *baisagu*.²²⁰ Besides music and dance, they eat and drink and enjoy during *baisagu*. *Oma khagi* (pork fry) and *gakha- gakhoi* (bitter- sour taste wild vegetables) and their traditional drink *jou* (alcohol) are must during this festival. Many domestic tools or articles like *jegab buntha* (bundle of straw), kettle, *sarai* (iron pan), *korshli* (silver ladle) *hatha*, a big wooden ladle made by the Bodos with a handle for serving rice, *twrsi* (plate) made out of *talir lai* or *laihulai* (banana leaves or wild leaves) for feast are used. For the purpose of drinking *jou* (rice beer) and water during feast, the Bodos used *thona* (bowl like made of banana trunk), *abwi thona* (bowl like made of wild leaves) and wooden glass.²²¹

***Domasi* (Harvest festival)**

The Bodos light *alari bathi* (earthen lamp) at the paddy field, at the *Bathou*, near *tulsi* (*ocimum sanctum*) plant, at *goli* (Cow shed) and the *bakhri* (granary) during *Domasi*.²²² *Domasi* is the seasonal festival of the Bodos where people enjoy different types of foods, like *pithas* (rice cake), *laaru* (rice cake), *sitau* (rice cake) and they sing and dance.²²³ The musical instruments used in this festival are *siphung* (flute), *kham* (drum), *jotha* (cymbal), *serja* (four stringed musical instrument), *bingi* (one string musical instrument), *thorkha* (clapper) and *gongona* (jew's harp). The Bodos used many household or domestic articles during *domasi*, such as *ural-gaihen*, *songrai*, *sandri gubung*, *sarai* (iron pan), *korshli* (silver or wooden ladle), *hatha*, a big wooden ladle, *twrsi* (bronze, silver or *kawrai* plate) or *twrsi* made out of *talir lai* (banana leaves) or *laihulai* (wild leaves), *jegab buntha* (bundle of straw), etc. are used. And for the purpose of drinking *jou* (rice beer) and water during feast, the Bodos used *thona* (bowl made of

banana trunk), *abwi thona* (bowl made of leaf of wild plant) and wooden glass respectively. During *domasi*, the Bodos also used dried banana leaves and green bamboos, sometimes *jegab* (dry straw) to construct *bilagur* or *bhelaghar* like a high temple in conical shape with pointed end towards the top out of a long green bamboo pole and dried banana leaves or *jegab* for making bon fire.²²⁴ They also used round rope like ring made out of *jegab* or *tharai* (wild plant) to tie around fruits bearing trees.²²⁵

***Khathi-Gasa Saonai* (Seasonal festival)**

During the *Khathi- Gasa Saonai*, the one more seasonal festival of the Bodos is incomplete without lighting *alari bathi*.²²⁶ They use *sewari* (weaving tool) made out of flat and long bamboo stick; measuring 42 to 48 inches in length. This tool is carried by unmarried Bodo girls to touch the paddy field with the stick for bearing a large scale of paddy as far as their belief.²²⁷ The Bodos use traditional *gasa* or candle, by cutting and taking out the outer layer of the *thaigir* (an indigenous fruit with acid content) fruit, which is like a small bowl in shape, then placed it on top of a long stand made of *oua gubwi*, which is cut like a stick, making it like a sharp needle like in one side, which is stabbed in the paddy ground and used it for lighting candles in the paddy field for the welfare of paddy crops. The Bodos also used *dwi hu* (earthen pot), for carrying a pair of unbroken rice, a pair of basil leaves and five pieces of *dubri* leaves for sacred bathing.²²⁸

***Amthisua* (Unclean period)**

During this period, the main tool or article needed to be mentioned is *haseb* (broom). Bodos throw away their old broom sticks and replace them by new ones.²²⁹

Agriculture Festivals

***Khotia phonai* (Sowing of seeds of paddy)**

For *Kotia phonai* the agricultural tools meant for land clearing, such as *ruwa* (axe), *Khodal* (hoe) and *dangur/ hasni/bedha* (rake), for land preparing, such as *nangal* (plough), *jungal* (yoke), *mwi* (harrow), *kontha* (spud), *gandri* or *dangan* (leveler) and *lauthi* (digging stick), for sowing, such as *khopri* (wicker hat), *mukha* (mask) and for water- lifting such as *chili* are all used.

***Khotia phunai* (Uprooting the seedling)**

The Bodos before uprooting the seedling light *alari bathi* (earthen lamp) in front of the Goddess *Mainao* (Laxmi) and offer areca nuts and betel leaves and while uprooting, they use *khada* (bamboo basket) to place the uprooted seedling, which they uproot with their hands.

***Mainao Lainai* (Bringing *Mainao* from the paddy field to the house)**

For *Mainao lainai*, the Bodos used *khasi* (sickle) for cutting a small quantity of reap paddy to bring it home to store it in granary. The whole process is carried by dancing and playing musical instruments like *serja* (four string musical instrument), *siphung* (flute) and *jotha* (cymbal).

***Nangal jangkhra* (Ceremony of eating rice after finishing rice plantation) and *Engkham Gadanjanai* (New rice eating ceremony)**

For *nangal jangkhra* and *engkham gadanjanai* ceremonies which are generally related to feasting, the Bodos use many domestic articles such as *sarai* (pan), *dw* (pot), *korshli* (ladle), *hatha* (ladle), plates made of *talir lai* (banana leaves) or *laihu lai* (wild plant leaves), and for drinking water and rice beer they use *thona* (bowl like made of banana trunk) and *abwi thona* (bowl like made of wild plant leaves) respectively.²³⁰

TOOLS USED FOR TRADITIONAL RITES AND RITUALS

Man's faith in a power beyond himself is religion and he expresses religion in acts of worship and service. The ritual is a type of formal action of rites which is performed in the form of ceremony, which is so persistent and significant in human culture.²³¹ Ritual has been defined as "the formal acting out of a ceremony, usually repeated in exactly the same way on specified occasions".²³² The distinctive features of Bodo culture is connected to their religion like every society of the world and the Bodos observe rites and rituals related to birth, marriage and death. The Bodos use many traditional tools for their rites and rituals:

Birth

***Oua themal* (Bamboo strip)**

Traditionally the Bodos in order to cut umbilical cord of a new born child used *oua themal* and it is made of thin hard strips of green bamboo with hard edged. It appeared more or less like a knife, measuring approximately 6 inches in length. When a female child is born the Bodos make seven such kinds of bamboo knives and five of such kind when a male child is born.²³³

Cotton tread or *muga* tread

The cotton treads or *muga* treads are used by the Bodos to tie around for detaching *uthumai* (umbilical), six or seven times around female baby's cord and five times around male baby's cord traditionally.²³⁴

***Zonga baukha* (Bamboo or wooden made stick used during child birth)**

The Bodos during the times of complications at the time of child birth used *zonga baukha*, which is made out of bamboo stick. It measures 84-96 inches in height and is made pointed at both the ends, to pierce the thatch roof in order to pour water from roof top to the mouth of the pregnant lady, as the Bodos traditionally believed that doing so could end the complications related to child birth.²³⁵

Marriage

***Alari Bathi* (Earthen lamp)**

One pair of earthen lamps is used by the Bodos to light it near the *Bathou* Altar and to place on *sandri* (sieve) while welcoming the bride during marriage ceremony.

Musical instruments

Musical instruments like *kham* (drum), *siphung* (flute), *jhotha* (cymbal), *thorkha* (clapper), *khawang* (bigger cymbal), *jabsri/jabkring* (rattle), and *gongona* (Jew's harp) are also used during marriage ceremonies by the Bodos.

***Thinkli* (Earthen pots)**

A pair of earthen pot is used to carry betel-nut, sugar, tea leaves, etc. in it to the bride's house when going to see the bride for marriage.

***Sundari* (Lime storage)**

It is used for carrying lime; it is made of earthen pot or bamboo pipe used for carrying to the bride's house while going to see the bride for marriage and also for serving lime in the marriage function.

On addition to the above mentioned tools, many more domestic articles are used during marriage feast such as *dwihu* (pot), *sarai* (pan), *borthon* (pot), *twarsi* (specially plates made from *laihulai*), *gilas* (glass), *ouahasung* (bamboo pipe), *hatha* (big ladle), *korsli* (ladle made of wood), *kadau* (bamboo stick's ladle), *topshi* (grinder), *kurwi* (bowl), *kada* (basket), *sikha* (knife), *abwijangi* (basket), *talirlai* (plate made out of banana leaves), *dabkha* (earthen-pitcher), *dungshu* (wooden pot with three legs), *jantha* (special bamboo strainer), *laotai* (ladle of bamboo stump with a handle), *thona* (instrument for drinking alcohol made out of banana bark) and *abwi thona* (instrument for drinking water or *jou* (alcohol) made of banana leaves and wild plant leaves) etc. Bullock cart used to carry the bride and the marriage party.²³⁶

Death

***Kundung* (Yarn)**

It is left by the *Douri* (Male Shaman) on the way from the house of dead person to the cremation ground so that the soul of the dead may see the yarn and go to the cremation ground as far as the Bodos belief.

Coins and cowries

According to the belief of the Bodos, the soul of the death man will have to pay the boat-fare to cross river or to buy some food during journey, so few coins and *cowries* are buried along with the dead body.

***Rwiswm* (Red thread)**

It is placed by the Bodos on the lips of the dead body, as they believe that he will be reborn with red lips.

***Dwihu* (Earthen pot)**

Dwihu with full of fresh water is placed on the grave of the dead body for the dead body.

***Oua* (Bamboo) and *durung* (Rope made of bamboo or cane)**

These are used for making *Seren* or *sangra*, a kind of fencing made out of raw bamboo to carry the dead body to cremation ground and *bathi*, the projecting bamboo poles to carry the dead body on the shoulders attached to *seren* or *sangra*. Rope made of cane or bamboo is used in tying the dead body to the *seren*.

After the death, on the eleventh or on the thirteenth day, *saradu* (post dead) ceremony is conducted. And on this day, relatives and villagers are entertained with *jou* (alcohol) and meats. Therefore, many domestic articles for cooking, eating and drinking are also used here.²³⁷

HOUSE MAKING TOOLS

The Bodos used various naturally available materials in building their traditional houses, dwelling houses, *bakhri* (granary store), fence, *goli* (cow shed), houses for domestic animals, and *isan-sali* (loom) which represents their way of life and environment into which they settled. The houses are built of bamboo, *ekra* reed and thatch, and woods were also used when found handy in the locality. The floor is generally plastered with cow-dung; and this act proceeds from a spirit of religion and it also helps keeping away the insects from house.²³⁸

The various house making tools and materials used by the Bodos are-

***Dongpang* (Wood)**

The Bodos also used wood in constructing their dwelling house, *bakhri* (granary), *goli* (cow shed) and houses for domestic animals. The posts, beams and

pillars are also constructed using woods by the Bodos. The Bodos also used it as post in building *maihung* (heap of dry thatch for feeding cows).

It is also used for making bridges, boats, bullock carts and *baitha* (an oar).

Engkhwr (Ekra reed)

The Bodos used *engkhwr* (*ekra* reed) which is a tall, slender-leave plant with a hollow stem and grows in water or on marshy ground for building walls of the dwelling house, granary, and houses of domestic animals as well as in building fence around the houses. Presently *engkhwr* is hardly in use.

Soil and Cow dung

The floors of the Bodo traditional houses are plastered with soil and cow dung. They use cow dung as they believe this act proceeds from a spirit of religion and it also helps in keeping away the insects from houses. *Hamamata* (sticky soil or clay found by river side or under water) is mixed with cow dung to add colour to the walls.

Thuri (Thatch)

The roofs of the dwelling houses, *bakhri* (granary), *goli* (cowshed), houses of domestic animals and *ishan-sali* (loom) of the Bodos are made of *thuri*.

Theuol (Rope of bamboo split)

The Bodos use *theuol* (rope made of bamboo splits) to fasten the roof of *thuri* (thatch) to the pillars and post of the dwelling house, *bakhri* (granary), *goli* (cowshed), houses of domestic animals, *ishan-Sali* (loom) and also to fasten the fence made of *ekra* reeds, jungle grass or split bamboo.

Raidwng durung (Cane rope)

The Bodos also use *raidwng* (cane made rope) to fasten the roof to the pillars and post of the dwelling house, granary, cowshed, houses for domestic animals, loom and also to fasten the fence made of *ekra* reeds, jungle grass or split bamboo.

Nwlw

Nwlw is a jungle plant, used by the Bodos traditionally in building fence around the houses.

***Sikha Kongkai* (Bended knife)**

Bended knife is used in cutting bamboos and jungles in the construction of dwelling house, *bakhri* (granary), *goli* (cowshed), *ishan-Sali* (loom), *Bathou* Altar and houses for domestic animals. The handle measures approximately 15 cm in length with a working area of 50 cm in length and 3 cm in width.

TOOLS FOR BUILDING COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

The communication networks of the Bodos were limited to the traditional method of building bridges, boats and bullock carts. The tools used by the Bodos for building communication networks are mentioned below.

***Theuol* (Rope made of split bamboo)**

Rope made of bamboo is used in fastening woods and bamboos in building bridges and bullock carts.

***Raidwng* (Cane rope)**

Cane rope is used in fastening woods and bamboos in building bridges and bullock carts.

***Thalir dongfang* (Banana trunk)**

Bodos used boat made out of banana trunk.²³⁹

Thus from the above discussion we have come to know how innumerable tools were/are made by the Bodos for manifold purposes. Some of them have become obsolete while several others are still in use.

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