

Chapter: 2

Material culture and its change

2. The material culture:

The culture can be classified into, material and nonmaterial culture. Again these two can be categorized as the individual and commercial culture, national or local culture, universal culture and particular culture. A culture is a unique form which is shared, learned by a society and handed down from one generation to another. The material culture means, the physical things or objects produced and used by the society to which they belong. For example, the housing, jewelers, art, tools, weapons, clothings, hairstyles, sports, food habits, household items, etc. The changes in the material cultures of different societies are found. The change is found in the form of slow and steady. The change in the material culture of the *Bodos* is also obvious. The study of change in the material culture of the *Bodos* is an objective of this chapter.

2.1. Rite, tradition related to the housing and their changes:

The *Bodos* called the house *no*. The people of Assam constructed the houses using the materials available from nature. Gunabiram Baruah opines ‘the people of this country made houses with the help of wood and thatch. The kings-queens of this place also made such houses. Today such system of construction is changing.’¹ The *Bodo* people also constructed the houses, using the materials available from the nature and the same thing is happening to the *Bodos*. In traditional housing system, they are strictly abided by some rituals. These are: the plot chosen, site chosen and the construction.

¹. Baruah, Gunabhiram : Assam Buranji, Assam Pakashan Parishad (Reprint), 2012, p-191

2.1.1. *Jaiga saikhonai* (plot chosen):

The *Bodos* chose the plot of land and constructed houses during the time of winter. The chosen plot was made in three ways. According to Bhaben Narji, ‘in the evening of the winter a male person will stand at the plot. During the time of standing if he feels uneasy and hot, the plot is not favourable for housing and if feels pleasant, it is favourable and chooses the plot for housing.’²

The second way of choosing the plot is, the centre part of land where houses are going to be constructed is dug out up to two feet or more and soil is tasted. If land is tasted bitter and sour, they believe it is not favourable for housing and tasted sweet, it is suited for housing. An informer, Puwaram Basumatary says, ‘earlier, the *Bodos* housing systems involved, different rites, first plot is observed whether favourable for housing or not, on the basis of demarcation by an *oja*, but at present such rite is not adopted. Only, a few people are adopting.’³ The third method is, the centre place of land is un-earth grasses, clean and plaster with the mud and is performed in the evening of Tuesday or Saturday. For this purpose, a glass of water in a brass glass, a small leafy branch of *tulsi*, pair of betel nut and leaves, flowers, *prasad* are essential. In any evening of these days, all items are kept on the top part of a banana leaf and covered it with *don*. Next morning whatever the items are offered is observed, if everything, remains as usual, then, they believe the plot is favourable. On the other hand, if things remain scattering here and there; the plot is not suitable for housing.

But, development of education, science and technology, changes in attitude of the people have influenced in the plot chosen. The traditional method of plot chosen is abolished and some of them offer after housing and at the time of *nolanai*. Today, they construct the houses at any time as per their convenience.

2.1.2. *Bithing saikhonai* (site chosen):

There is a traditional belief *mwdai lama* along which unseen Gods and Goddesses travel. The *mwdai lama* should not be blocked by housing. According

². Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -23

³. Informant: Puwaram Basumatary, Age 58 years

to Rameswar Boro, ‘if those *lamas* are blocked by houses the unseen Gods and Goddesses create troubles among family members. They may create sudden stomach pain, chest pain and unnatural death of family members etc. Thus, in site choosing, carefulness is taken; an *oja* is invited and taken to the site.’⁴ He chooses plot and demarcates pointing by the *khunthias* where different houses to be constructed.

He advises not to change the *khunthias* fenced by him in construction of houses. The site is distributed, *nomano* to the north, *bakhri* to the east, *soura* to the south. The oldest traditional site of *soura* is far from the *sithla*. In ancient time, unknown people, whom they think profaned by religion, are not allowed to enter at *sithla*.

Today, they do not have faith in *mwdai lama*, the site is chosen based on the size of the the plot of land. The education, religion, changes in the attitude of the *Bodo* people, globalization have created change in the *bithing saikhonai*.

2.1.3. No lunai (construction):

The style of *Bodo* houses is typical in nature. Regarding the traditional *Bodo* houses, Rev. Sidney Endle says, ‘the houses are of the usual type, one-storied only, the walls being of *ekra* reed or of split bamboo and the roof of thatch fastened by a cane.’⁵ Houses are generally being constructed by them, very close to each house, keeping a yard in the centre. Regarding *Bodo Nomano*, Bhabendra Boro says, ‘the *nomano* is made to the north side, having and not having veranda and the house is divided into three rooms. These rooms are *ising*, *okhong* and *khophra*. The *ising* is used for keeping *Mainao Burwi* (ceres) and for cooking, middle room is used for eating and the last one is bedroom for the head of the family.’⁶ Out of these three rooms, in *ising*, except family members, other persons are not allowed to enter.

⁴. Informant: Rameswar Boro, age 65 years

⁵. Endle, Rev. Sidney : The Kacharis, Venture of Low Price Publication (Reprint), 1990, p-11

⁶. Informant: Bhabendra Boro, age 55 years

However, flexible that, bachelors are allowed to enter who are in same faith, have not illicit sexual relation and ever have not food in the house of Christian, Muslim or other than the *Bodos*.

Another type of house constructed by the *Bodos* is *bakhri*. This is constructed to the east; a few of them construct a little north-east parallel to the north-south. Whatever the *maisali* paddies reaped are stored in the upper part of granary and the lower part is used for keeping firewood, agricultural items, like the plough, yoke, spade, *hasini*, *beda*, *mwi* and others. The *bakhri* is made in the form of *sangbangla* having only one entrance without windows. The wall of the *bakhri* is made of bamboo split or reed by plastering of mud and floor is made up to 3 - 4 feet high by laying bamboo poles and *seren*. The sides of the floors are extended by bamboo poles and *seren*, which is known as *nagan (bakhri nagan)*.

The next house constructed to the west is called *swnabni no* and it is divided into two rooms. One room is known as *soura*, which is used for sitting and resting for guests and another is used for sleeping of young members of the family. The last one is *mwswo goli* which is constructed to the south of yard without the walls.

Besides, these above houses, some other house is also made for servant within the campus looking for suitable site and some small huts are made for keeping domestic animals. These huts are *dao gogra*, *bwrma gogra*, *oma gondra*, *bon jabgra*, etc. These houses are made in small size, making *bwisang*. The small entrance is given to each house for coming out and in of the animals, no windows are made. These houses are thatched by *thuri*.

But, at present, it is obvious that their housing system is changing in course of time. Puwaram Basumatary opines, 'as per knowledge received, the *Bodos* constructed the houses dividing *ising*, *okhong* and *khophra*. The system of dividing the houses are not seen since our childhood, still most of our *Bathouarians* are maintaining *ising* system in kitchen and somebody just near to the *Bathou* altar at yard.'⁷ The chosen of plot, knowing suitable and unsuitable by their traditional belief is not followed and choose the plot of land according to the

⁷. Informant: Puwaram Basumatary, age 58 years

suitable for construction. They also look for, suitable for communication, better facilities and society surrounded in the areas.

They are giving up the house, containing the *ising*, *okhong* and *khopra*, *bakhri*, *sw nabni no*, *soura*, *mwswo goli*, *dao gogra*, *bwrma gogra*, *oma gondra*, *bon jabgra* etc. Even in the village too, they are constructing RCC houses, buildings and adopting high architect. A few of them do not construct two, three or more houses and build only one big house composed of different rooms.

The semi-traditional houses are available among the economically weaker people, like made the wall either by *engkhwr* or bamboo split, install the post either by wood logs or cemented posts, make either *sangbangla* or not, thatched either by thatched or thin sheet. On the other hand, modern one is seen both in rural and urban. According to Khagen Basumatary, 'the economically rich *Bodo* people are constructing the building, half wall, RCC. room, L size or U size, corridor system and one storey, two or more concrete storeys.'⁸ A few of them residing in rural areas are constructing different houses, possessing of different rooms and using, like kitchen, TV room, drawing room, bedrooms, rooms for son, daughter, etc.

2.2. Traditional dress and its change:

The *Bodos* have their distinctive traditional dresses and adoptions of those dresses among them are not traceable and it is ascertained that they adopted those dresses when they are civilized. According to Bhaben Narji, 'the anthropologists say those kinds of dresses are handed down to them since the time of ancestors.'⁹ The dresses are called by them *gangra-jwmgra*. The *Bodo* dresses can be classified into two types: dresses for male and dresses for female. The male dresses are not used by the female, vice versa.

The male dresses are *gamsa*, *gosla* or *genji*, *lengthia marigra*, *sakhagra*, *aronai*. In ancient time, male person used *lengthia thepnai*. This system is slowly

⁸. Informant: Khagen Basumatary, age 65 years

⁹. Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -134

abolishing from them and transformed to *gamsa* system. The *genji* dress is an influential dress of the Aryan.

However, old male persons used *duthi-kurta* and *pyjama*. The *pyjama* and *duthi kurta* system were prevalent among old male persons up to seven decade of 20th century. The *gamosa* is a most common dress for all male person and they use it everywhere. Nowadays, the maximum Christianize *Bodos* are using long-pant, coat, T-shirt, half pant. In the *Bwisagu* celebration they use a coat made of *agorgubwi* clothes, *khadi-kurta*, and take *bwisagu phali* and *aronai* around neck. According to Pabitra Boro, ‘the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* have classified the people in religious offering into *gwthari*, *asari*, *deuri* and others. The male person of these categorized group, use green colour *gamsa* or *gwmwgrlwi*, yellow shirt and take *aronai* (green colour) of white or yellow flower during *Bathou* offering.’¹⁰ Uses of such dresses are due to the reformation of *Bathou* religion.

The traditional women dresses are *dokhona*, *jwmgra (phasra)*. The traditional female in between 10-16 ages put on small *dokhona* and T-shirt or shirt. They put on *small dokhona* up to the waist, which they called *janjiao gannai*. They use *dokhona* of various colours and woven of different flowers. The *dokhona* used by a bride and *dwodini* is known as *dokhona thaosi*. According to Ripi Basumatary, ‘the *Goalparia* women use *dokhona* since the time of ancestors, the *Kamrupia* and *Sanjaris* women use *langga*, a dress like *lungi* woven by them.’¹¹ The use of *dokhona* is common everywhere and only a few women of *Tangla*, *Khoirabari*, *Bhakatpara*, *Bhergaon*, *Dimakuchi* and Christianize women of different parts of the district are using *langga* in their home and as a usual dress.

However the female children living in town areas and who are economically developed in rural areas are using skirt, frock, long-pant, *churidar*, *kurta* and some modern dresses. According to Chandramali Basumatary, ‘the women residing in cities, metro-cities are using *churidar*, *kurta*, *pyjama*, long-

¹⁰ · Informant: : Pabitra Boro, age 65 years

¹¹ · Informant: Ripi Basumatary, age 65 years

pant, coat and other dresses common in the market. In the case of *dokhona thaosi* for a bride, rich family gives a *dokhona* of *muga* or *pat* in marriage.¹²

At present, it is observed that some *Bodo* women working in medical (grade-iv and nurse) and the Brahma religious women use to put on white *dokhona*, white blouse and *white phasra*. In *Mainao borainai* and *ag lainai* the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* have fixed white *dokhona*, white blouse and *white phasra*. In the *Bathou* prayer, at community *Bathou thansali* or someone's family, women should put on *gwmw gwrlwi (bidun) dokhona* (light yellow), white blouse and *white phasra*, as a uniform for the women attended in prayer. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* have accepted those dresses for those religious ceremonies.

Nowadays, they also use, blanket, bed-sheet, towels, hanky, pillows, snuggles. Their bedding items are *sima*, *gandu si* (pillow, inside pillow worn out clothes are put) and *bwisagu phali*. The male persons are also giving up the use of *gamsa* at the time of traveling to distant place.

2.3. Traditional ornament and present use:

It is uncertain, when women started to use ornaments and it can be regarded. The women are very interested in wearing and designs of ornaments, made of gold, silver and bronze. In this regard, Padami Boro opines, 'while a groom gets married to a girl, he has to provide some ornaments. If he fails, he is not regarded as the prestigious or valuable person. The teenagers or aged women also keenly observe, on the providing of ornaments, during the marriage.'¹³ If a groom provides the bigger size of ornament to the bride he will get good appreciation from bride party.

The use of silver and bronze ornaments is abolished among the females. A few rich male persons are started to put on golden chain on their neck. They used the *asan*, *khera*, *angthi*, *nakhaphul*, perforating at nose and ears. 'They put bangles on wrist and leg, at nose both onside and inside, finger rings and

¹². Informant: Chandramali Basumatary, age 60 years

¹³. Informant: Padami Boro, age 65 years

necklace.’¹⁴ The names of their ornaments are- *jumkha*, *okhaphwrmala*, *phulkhuri*, *ring*, *samo khingkhiri*, *diamond*, *mohor*, *makhri khera*, *moniphuri*, *suki phisa*, *kham phasa*, *nuri khera*, *nepal sona* and many more.

They have used same ornaments of different names and code of designs, as used by the other communities, which are because of the influences of others communities, economic development, market development and different designs available in market.

2.4. Weaving and its change:

The weaving can be said that this system starts among them since the time of they are civilized and felt about the need of clothing. They weaved the clothes for personal and domestic need only. The traditional knowledge of design of flowers and woven are changing among the *Bodos*. Earlier female children learned from mother or elders regarding the woven of their clothes. Today, most of the children remain busy in their schooling since childhood. So the knowledge of traditional design, making flowers and woven of clothes are relegating. They regarded everyone maid, bachelor; women should be expertise in weaving clothes. This is an extra quality for getting married of a damsel (*sikhla*). According to Bhaben Narji, ‘the girls, who do not know about weaving and making flowers are known as *aluri*. They regarded *aluri* girl as an ineligible girl. A person who gets married to an *aluri* girl means making himself unlucky.’¹⁵ The girls were always tried to be fit for weaving and making flowers.

The old method of weaving is found less frequencies of use. A few of them are weaving clothes for business purpose too. Rahini Ramsiary says, ‘most of the men and women of the *Bodos* are opening weaving centres personally or by group and producing traditional clothes.’¹⁶ The changes in regards are the producing yarn, dying, warping, wafting, making flowers and tools use.

¹⁴ . Endle, Rev. Sidney : The Kacharis, Venture of Low Price Publication (Reprint), 1990, p-14 (Plate)

¹⁵ . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -137

¹⁶ . Informant : Rahini Ramsiary, age 50 years

2.4.1. Yarn used:

The *Bodos* are not scientifically developed in those times and though their techniques of doing are scientific. They do not use machine made yarns. They produced yarns using *thaokhri* from cocoons, cotton tree, silk and jute.

The *Bodos* rear cocoons till date in marginalizing nature. The *endi khundung* is produced from cocoon web. First cocoons are taken out from the web and soaked in water four or more days and boiled in water. The cocoon webs are then kept in water and spun with the help of a *thaokhri*. The yarn is bobbed on a bobbin, made of reed plant or banana or mango leaves or some other. Later it is re-bobbed on a *phogai* or *swrkhi*.

They planted the cotton trees and while the fruits are matured and burst out from fruits, they pluck it and seeds are separated. They keep it in the sunshine and completely dry it up. While pieces of cotton are dried, they keep inside a bag or sack and little amount are taken on the hands and spun as *khundung*, using *thaokhri*, *phogai*, *swrkhi* and *phaneo*. They produced silk yarn in ancient time by their own techniques and methods. According to Mahini Mahan Brahma, ‘the *eri* and strawberry cocoon rearing is a hobby and favourite job for the female *Bodos*. They produced yarn from these cocoons and weaved clothes.’¹⁷ The spinning of *thaokhri* is becoming less frequencies of usage and use some yarn available in the market.

The Govt. trainings and invention of machines and tools have brought to change, for example, training given by Assistant Director of Handloom and textile, Udalguri and Bhergaon- Sub-division, to the self help groups, individuals and beneficiaries.

2.4.2. *Gab hwnai arw maidi hwnai* (dying and stiffening):

They used different forest materials for dying of clothes. According to Chandramali Basumatary, ‘the leaves and fruits of different colors are grinded and boiled in water and the yarn produced from cottons is soaked and boiled, the

¹⁷ . Basumatary, Sunil Phukan & others eds : Boro Harimuni Nijra, Raithai Bihung, Publications Board B.S.S., 2006, p-29

coloring is made. The leaves, like the *sigun*, *mwiphrai*, and the *silikha*, hey and some others which they think suitable are used.¹⁸ The process is becoming obsolete due to the environmental factor, market and scientific development.

The *maidh hwnai* is another process of the weaving. The *enkhur* or *mairong* is cooked in loose form. As soon as the rice becomes cold, *thunnai khundung* (unknotted) at *danganatha* is soaked at rice, smeared gently so that loose cooked rice mixed with yarn. The natural dying process is vanished and a few are using some chemical available in the market.

2.4.3. *Swngnai* (warping):

They decide wide and length of clothes according to their need and fixed at *rasw*. They measure the length in a traditional system, which is called *mu*. The *khundung swngnai* is done at a yard or an open place where they feel for suitable. The two small wooden or bamboo posts are installed in two distance place. They called it *khuntha* and just attached to it two small sticks are installed. The yarn is rewind many times warping as per the wide required for the clothes.

The *khundung swngnai* was made taking yarn from *swrkhi* keeping many numbers, to the side in which a *khuntha* and two split bamboo sticks are kept. This system is made firstly unknotting yarn at *danganatha* and then rewinding at *swrkhi*. This process is becoming obsolete from the Bodo society. The next system of warping is keeping the bobbins at bobbin case or trill. The bobbed containing different colors of yarn are kept inside the bobbin case. The yarn is rewind, wafting on *khuntha* and installed bamboo stick. As soon as the *khundung swngnai* is over a *boudangi* is placed in place of *khuntha*, and a *gonsa* is put in place of bamboo stick and *sewari* is put across near to *gonsa*. In another side, a *boudangi* and a *gonsa* are put. All the processes are over; a collective helping from neighboring in making unknot or weaveable is made. This is called *ji* or *si thwrnai*. In *si thwrnai* a *boudangi* is replaced by a *gonsa* and placing it on a *gandwi* to the side a *rasw* fixed. As the *si thwrnai* is finished and rewind the yarn

¹⁸ . Informant: Chandramali Basumatary, age 60 years

on a *gandwi*, this is known as *thwrkhangnai*. This *thwrkhangnai ji* is taken to the loom for *nw khonnai*. These are done only by females.

At present, most modern *khundung swngnai* is prevalent among them and it is done by both male and female. This is called *drumao swngnai* (i.e. warping on a drum). The yarns of different colors are bobbed and drum is fixed with a *gonsa* or nails as per number of clothes suppose to be woven, drum is rounding up. A bobbin stand and yarn rest are required for the *drumao swngnai*. The rewind yarn on a drum is fixed with a *gandwi* and makes *nw khonnai*. The *drumao swngnai khundung*, is knitted either by *nw* or a plastic readymade rope. The *flowers* on the clothes are made fixing with the readymade G.I. wires. In traditional and modern *khundung swngnai* there is in need of an open space, but in case of *drumao swngnai* no need and can be done in a small space.

2.4.4. Agor danai (making flowers):

The Bodos have different traditional flowers, like the *agor gubwi*, *mwphur apha*, *mwsa agor*, *daorai mwkhreb*, *daosri gwba*, *dingkhia agor*, *thaigir bibar*, *laihagor*, *hajw agor*, *daosa mwkhreb*, *sikhri agor*, *parwo megon*, *rege-regang*, *mwi agor*, *ful bibar*, etc. ‘The traditional flowers which are to be woven into the clothes are designed on the graph, dotting the blocks of graph papers by cross marks.’¹⁹ According to the flower, different *gonsa* are put inside the yarn, rewind on a *gandwi* and *nw* is knitted on a bamboo pipe which is known as *nw hasung*. Today technique of dotting of flowers at graph paper is also not observed and they embroidered flowers by sewing machine too.

The clothes which is plain and not having any flower or design is called *matha*. The *drill ji* (drill clothes), *khadi* and *sal matha* are their famous clothes. These clothes are relegating from them. Today, the designed and making flowers on clothes are purely depending on the demanded of the customers in the market. The commercialization has led to culture changes. According to Marti Ann Reinfeld, ‘traditional arts and festivals are often commercialized to generate revenue. As a result, the authenticity of these crafts and customs are lost in the

¹⁹. See at photographs at appendixes

race for economic prosperity that both modernization and Western tourists promote.’²⁰

It is obvious some modern flowers on their clothes, not having exact name. For example, the traditional *agor gubwi* was made using *gongbrwi gorkha* (four *gorkha*), but at present to make more flowers, five or nine *gorkhas* are taken. The designs of the *Bodo* clothes are developing more beautiful than the earlier as well as they weave clothes as woven by advanced weavers.

2.4.5. *Isan sali* (Bodo loom):

The *Bodos* called the loom *isan sali*. The traditional loom is not portable and fixed at ground permanently. A few of them, who are taking weaving as a business, have left both *sal gandwi* and *thath sal*. At present, three types of looms are found among them, like traditional, modern and most modern.

2.4.5.1. Traditional:

The traditional one is the fixed system which can't be shifted from one place to another. This system is slowly decreasing. The *sal gandwi* is used in this *isan sali*.

2.4.5.2. Modern:

The modern is mixed up with the traditional and new method. It is a little scientific and can be shifted from one place to another, which was developed from the initial stage of the 21st century. The *thath sal* is used in this *isan Sali*.

2.4.5.3. Most modern:

The third system of *isan sali* of the *Bodos* is most modern. It can be shifted from one place to another and clothes are woven in scientific method with the help of machines and tools. The flowers of clothes are woven using different

²⁰. Reinfeld, Marti Ann :Tourism and the Politics of Cultural Preservation: A Case Study of Bhutan, Journal of Public and International Affairs, Volume 14, 2003, p-4

plates and tools. The *Bodos* who are opening weaving centres are using this system.

2.4.6. Aijeng bahainai (tools use):

The tools, like the *gonsa*, *sewari*, *khuntha*, *rasw*, *makhu*, *boudangi*, *bangwja*, *gorkha*, *thath akhai*, *gusthi gala*, *sal khunthia*, *thaokri*, *thaokhri-laothi*, *pithwb thwrsi*, *gorai*, *gorkha khunthia*, *gorkha-khila*, *makhu gwlaol*, *swrkhi*, *phogai*, *phaneo*, *kherepha*, *danganatha*, *swrkhi gidir*, *swrkhi khunthia*, *khaitha*, *nw hasung*, *makhu nargra*, *phuthuli bwrla*, *phuthuli su*, *jenther*, *musra* and many are used by them.

The traditional *jenther* and *musra* setter are also made of wood-bamboo. Today, these are becoming fewer frequencies of use. The clothes wafting at *salgandwi* is very hard and takes a long time to produce a cloth. They have left this type of loom due to difficulties.

The economically stronger, who are opening weaving centres are using the power loom, *agor guna*, motor for *musra* and flower plates. In place of *swrkhi* they have used bobbins. The *khundung swngnai* is converted into *drumao swngnai*, *nw khonnai* into G.I. wire fixing. The *musra sanai* system is also converting into a motor and electric system.

2.4.7. Production:

The *Bodos* produce different kinds of clothes needed for their day to day life. They produced the *dokhona*, *jwmgra* and *phasra* of different colours and make different flowers at those clothes. The *endi ji* is most famous in the world since long time back. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, when he visited the Kamrup at 600 to 650 A.D. that time also, the local people welcome him by *endi ji*. Some example of trading of silk clothes is also obvious. Prafulla Chandra Rajbonchi opines, 'Chinese records dating as far back as 248 A.D. mention about the trade route from South China through the Shan states, the Brahmaputra River and Kamrupa to Pataliputra (present Patna) and through it, to the western part of

India. The trade in silk with Bhutan and Tibet through Udalguri in the Darrang district still exists.²¹

The clothes woven, at *sal gandwi* i.e. *salmatha* is abolished. In the *sal gandwi*, *musra* is not used. The *musras* are made with the help of banana leaves, mango leaves, reed or the some other. This system is completely relegated from them. The *thath sal* system was started among them before 8 decades of 20th century and later captured at the end of 20th century.

In tools, *sewari*, *gusthigala*, *khuntia*, *gorai* and *nw hasung* are fewer frequencies of use today. The use of *makhu gwla* (long shuttle) and *sal gandwi* is abolished. The modern systems are nesting in the process of weaving and in future, it will be purely modernized and machine system can be expected due to modern tools and techniques available in the market.

Their weaving and its related works, like the yarn production, spinning, stiffening, warping, making flowers, tools use, looms, woven and production are changing due to the development of science and technology and the men are also engaged in the woven clothes.

2.5. Janai huda (hood habit):

The food habits of the *Bodos* are related with seasons. Fieldhouse shows, 'food habits are parts of the dynamic process in that whereas they are basically stable and predictable they are, paradoxically, at the same time undergoing constant and continuous change. Change occurs over time because of ecological and economic changes leading to altered availability, discovery or innovation of foods and diffusion or borrowing of food habits from others. Notwithstanding this, every culture resists change; food habits, though far from fixed, are also far from easy to change.'²² The food habits of the tribal and non-tribal people of North East India are also changing. There are several factors regarding changes of food habits, like the migration, cooking chef, globalization, ecological factors.

²¹ . Rajbonshi, Prafulla Chandra : Thesis entitled, Change and Continuity Among the Bodos of Udalgui in Darrang District of Assam, G.U. (Unpublished), 1990, p-110

²² . Fieldhouse, Paul : Food and Nutrition: Customs and Culture, Chapman & Hall Ltd, 1995, p-2

The food habit of the Mising is also accepting the change. Regarding the changes of Mising food habit, Kumary and Dutta says, 'while Mising were in Arunachal Pradesh, they preferred mostly boiled food, but after migrating to various plain areas of Assam certain changes have been taken place.'²³

They had a technique of storing of the *bagsa* rice which they called *duli*. In the first time while rice is taken out from a *duli*, a ritual is observed, taking a glass of water, a branch of *tulsi*, a pair of betel nut & leaf. The offering is made in the name of *Mainao*. An eldest woman performs the rite, facing towards east and says-

*'Nwi bima dinwiniphrai duli dangjennai janwswi,
Gwrwnthi maophlang baiba nwnng bimaya
Nimaha hwnangwn, dohai bima.'*²⁴

(English rendering- Oh, God from today we have started to take out rice from a *duli* If, I have undone by mistake please forgive, forgive us, oh God.)

Then the rice is taken out from a *duli* and in subsequent period no ritual is observed. They produce rice both from boiled and non-boiled. The boiled rice is called *mairong runai* and un-boiled rice is called *alua*. The production of boiled rice and storing at *duli* is relegating. The common traditional food habits of the *Bodos* are- summer food and winter food.

2.5.1. Summer food:

In the summer, they take different kinds of foods and vegetables at the time of cultivation. At paddy field, in the morning they take rice with *banlu gwrwan bathwn* (pickle of dried chili). The common curry of the *Bodos* in summer season are *jwgnar* (pumpkin), *khumbra*, *jingka*, *nilaji*, *thaibeng*, *phwrla*, *sobaibima*, *bindi*, *thaso aithing*, *mewa*, *khangkhri khola*, *kherela*, *sobai*, *dali*, *khokhiling*, *olodor*, *mwitha*, *mwitha bangal*, *udasi*, *jwgnar bijou*, *phwrla bijou thaigir*, *carembola*, *usumwi*, *brinjal*, *potato*, *banana* and many more. Today, they

²³ . Kumari, Pratish & Dutta, S.K. : Changing Eating Pattern of Missing Food Culture, International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. ISSN 2250-3226 Volume 2, Number 2, 2012, p-214

²⁴ . Informant: Bimala Boro, age 45 years

are taking some non-summer vegetables, like the *potal*, *khunduli*, carrot, tomato, bean etc. available in the market. In summer also they take different foods prepared from rice and flour.

2.5.2. Winter food:

In the winter they take different kind of foods and vegetables made from rice. The *maibra* is cooked in different types, *maibra eonai*, *maibra homnai* and *sobaigwan*. *Maibra mairong* is soaked in water for about 2 to 3 hours and pick out at the *kherkha*. The soaked *maibra mairong* is fried with mustard oil or pork fat. But the use of pork fat is abolished. *Maibra homnai* is prepared vapouring at *kherkha*. The dry fried rice made from the soaked *maibra mairong* is known as *sobaigwan*.

The *wngkham eonai* is their favourite and usual snack for morning in winter. According to Khusti Daimari, 'the elder woman or head of the family are not in favour of fried rice and believes, if rice is fried the *Mainao* is annoyed with the family. While the *Mainao* is annoyed with the family, the family income decreases slowly.'²⁵

At present, they do not believe in annoying of the *Mainao*. Frequently they take *phitha*, *enthao*, *dwini sithao*, *laru*, *tha sumli*, *tha guna*, *jukham*. They take different morning snacks, like the *magi*, *chowmin*, *sewawee*, tea and biscuits, *roti-puri*, *guguni* etc. which are not their traditional food and influenced from other communities.

2.6. Curry:

The *Bodos* do not take *brinjal* and bottle gourd in *Push* and *Bwisag* months of *Bangla* calendar. They have a folk belief, if *brinjal* and bottle gourd is taken in these two months after rebirth people are born as cattle. Ananda Chandra Goyari says, 'the *Sanjari* and *Kamrupia Bodos* do not take bitter and sour curry in

²⁵ . Informant: Khusti Daimari, age 78 years

the night. Boiled and cooked with *kharwi* are their favourite dish.²⁶ They prepare *kharwi* from ashes of *besor*, *sibing*, *thalir bigur*, *narengkol bigur* etc.

They take vegetables collected from the jungles, like the *dousrem*, *lwnthi*, *laphasaikho*, *kheradabsini*, *gangamala*, *mwirathi*, *khunthainara* or *khungkha*, *sibru*, *burithakhan*, *tharai*, *raidwng bitho*, *nwrasing*, *elangsi*, *mande*, *ajinai*, *dingkhia*, *mwikhun*, *thaso aithing*, *thaso bibar*, *khiphi bendwng*, *udasi*, *onthaibajab*, *gwmbri*, *basikha bibar*, *thaigir*, *bombra*, *daophenda*, *bogoronda*, *jolonga banthu*, *usumwi*, *manimuni*. The curry collected from the jungle is decreasing due to the ecological factor. The deforestation is adversely effecting in these vegetables.

They also take curry, like the *onla*, *narji*, *sobai*, *wngkhri gwbab* or *sulabari*. The soaked rice pounded to the powder and cook in loose form adding alkali is known as *onla*. Purnima Daimari says, ‘they prepare *onla* curry with different items, like *onla-narji*, *onla-thaibeng bilai*, *onla-udasi*, *onla-gundru*, *onla-mwithrubibar*, *onla-basika bibar*, *onla-phul daodwi*, *onla-gogondo bibar*, *onla-gwmbri*, *onla-gorsi*, *onla-thaigir*, *onla-khoma bibar*, *onla-enkhur*, *onla-mewa*, *onla-narjwi engkhur* and *onla* with meat (except beef and mutton).’²⁷ The taking of *onla* curry with some other vegetables is decreased today. For example, *onla-thaibeng bilai*, *onla-udasi*, *onla-basikha bibar*, *onla-phul daodwi*, *onla-gogondo bibar*, *onla-gwmbri*, *onla-narjwi engkhur*. They take *napham* as well as cooked with *onla* and *narji*. The *nagwran bidwi* is their favourite curry.

The *narji* is a dry bitter jute leaf. It is boiled and cooked with the alkali. *Wngkhri gwbab* or *sulabari* is made from green *lapha* or *swrjina* or jute or *buthua* leaves. This is a slippery curry which is favorite for them. The influences of food habit of other communities are slightly effecting to these foods.

2.7. Non- vegetable items:

The *Bodos* prepare different non-vegetable items with different vegetables. The crab, fish, chicken, mutton, pork, buffalo, frog, rat, hare, deer,

²⁶ . Informant: Ananda Ch. Goayari, age 57 years

²⁷ . Informant: Purnima Daimari, age 70 years

hog, mongoose, pigeon, cocoon, *gangjema*, *bwrbila*, *napham*, *oma khaji*, *mwphwo* and other wild animals are their non-veg items. They do not eat dog, cow, vulture and other socially restricted foods of Hindu society. They prepared *mwitha bangal* with fish, chicken and pork as well as the *mwitha gwja* with pork, cocoon, fish, crab, *napham*, but not with another items. *Na bathwn* (dry and non-dry) and *napham* are their best pickle and the dry fish, dry pork, *oma khaji* are their best non vegetable items.

At present a few of them have given up eating of buffalo, fish, frog, rat, hare, *gangjema*, *bwrbila*, hog, mongoose, *mwphwo* and *pork*. A few of the *Bodos*, who are Christianise, take socially restricted non vegetables items, like the beef, fox, dog, crow, etc. The cooking of *onla engkhur* is relegating.

2.8. *Lwngra* (drinks):

The *jou* is their traditional beverage and is made out from rice. They offer to guest, in festivals and many other occasions celebrated by them. The *banlu bidwi* is their favourite drink. Rabiswari Brahma says regarding the taking of *banlubidwi*, ‘during the rainy day after working whole day in the field and feeling cold, take *banlu bidwi* to worm up.’²⁸ In hot evening, after working whole the day in field, both men and women shared the *jou gisi* or *jou bidwi* to relax their body.

The boil cook and use of alkali (*kharwi*) are their traditions of cooking. Regarding the use of *kharwi*, Benudhar Boro says, ‘the *kharwi* is most favourite drink of the *Kamrupia* and *Sanjari Bodos*. The aversion of milk was prevalent among them.’²⁹ In place of *kharwi* today a few of them use soda.

2.8.1. *Jou gisi* (rice beer):

They prepare *jou gisi* from various types of rice. The liquid coming out from *ophri* or *jumai* is known as *jou gisi*. The *jou gisi* of *maibra mairong* is very special for them. At present, a few of them prepare *jou gisi* from jackfruit.

²⁸. Informant: Rabiswari Brahma, age 60 years

²⁹. Informant: Benudhar Boro, age 68 years

2.8.2. *Jou gwan or sereb* (vapoured wine):

The *ophri* is mixed with water and boiled at the utensil. On the utensil *mwxhra khor* or a *dongkha* is kept and *inside dongkha* a small bowl is kept to store liquid. On the topmost part of utensil, a bowl is kept to put cold water and *ophri* is boiled. The *vapour* liquid coming out from *ophri* is known as *jou gwan* or *sereb*. This is known as *jou maonai*. Today, they use bamboo and plastic pipes to siphon wine.

2.8.3. *Wngkham maidi* (smash rice):

The stale cooked rice is soaked in water and squeezed out. The gravy liquid made from squeezed and broken cooked rice is known as *wngkham maidi*. The salt and chili are mixed with it and this is basically made for person suffering from fever or a person who is unable to take normal food. They use of such drink is decreased and use the drinks which are available in market.

The taking of brinjal and bottle-gourd in the month of *Baisakh* and *Push* month of *Bengali* calendar is very much restricted. Today, they take these vegetables in these months too. The aversion of milk was a hereditary character. But, they have given up it and use to take milk. The women folk of vegetable collections from the jungles are extinguishing. Moniram Boro opines regarding the taking of vegetables as, ‘they took different types of creepers, leafy branches collected from the forests and outside family touch. On the eve of marriage day, they went to the jungles taking bullock cart, to collect vegetables. Some of such vegetables are abolished due to ecological factor and it has also affected in their food habits.’³⁰ They did not take food prepared from milk, like the butter, curd, *paneer*, cheese, *rasgulla*, *kalakan* etc.

In the snacks, they took *wngkham homnai*, *maibra eonai*, *wngkham eonai*, *laru*, *pitha*, *enthao-sithao*, *tha runai*, *tha guna*, boiled green banana. The *Bodos* who are economically sounds are decreasing the use of these snacks. In this regard Bhadres Basumatary opines that ‘they take *magi*, *noodles*, *chips*, *pop-corn*,

³⁰. Informant: Moniram Boro, Age 71 years

momo, chow-chow, puri, roti, parata and any other items those are available in the present market.³¹ The tea is become a common snack for morning and evening for them. W.B. Smith had enumerated thirteen characteristics of *Mongoloids* or *Bodo* group. These are, '(i) Dwelling houses build on post and piles (ii) betel chewing, (iii) the aversion of milk as an article of diet, (iv) a simple loom for weaving clothes, they have large type of shield used in war and (v) they have often changing residences in isolated regions with a crude (primitive) form of agriculture.'³² This type of the *Bodo* society is changed. A few of them do not chew betel nut, take milk, do not have a loom and do not reside in isolated places today.

2.9. Cooking:

The traditional cooking system of the *Bodos* is only boiling and cooked with alkali. The *Bodo* women are expertise in the cooking of the different curry in different taste. There is a saying about it among them,

'Songnw rwngabla wngkhrwia jagwn

Swrlao swrthao

Songnw rwngbla

*Eseanw jagwn gwthao.*³³

(English rendering- If not have, technique of cooking, curry will be tasteless, if have, technique of cooking, will be tasty).

They cooked curries, in the eighteen different methods as per information handed down in society. Out of eighteen methods, some others are not available. The cooking methods of the *Bodo* food habits are, boil (*runai*), fry (*eonai*), dry fry (*gwranthar eophramnai*), gravy (*sithwb-sithwb*), loose gravy (*job-job*), liquid (*lao-lao*), sparkle putting (*menai*), baking (*hangnai*) etc.

They do not use spicy items, in curry and in place of spicy items, they used garlic and some other leaves, like the *nwrsing, onthai bajab, maisundri*,

³¹ . Informant: Bhadres Basumatary, age 50 years

³² . Chattarjee, S.K. : Kirata Jana Kriti, The Asiatic Society , 1951, p-57

³³ . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -23

buraud, bader, jedmao, jabrang, dunjia, guamuri, ginger leaf and edible jungle fragrance items. The use meat *masala, garam masala, punch puron, elachi, dalsini, jira, jira* powder and the spicy items which are available in market are found. A few educated women use to cook following information available in the internet, information received from T.V. and radio as well as master chef.

2.10. Hunting:

The community hunting is a common tradition among the *Bodo* as well as to the tribal. They hunt before festivals and ceremonies while they are free. They enjoyed by hunting wild animals and believed the wild animals, like the birds, insects, creatures etc. are under ownership and control of the God. Khanteswar Boro opines as '*Jwmwn Jwla and Jwmwn Buri* who are the follower of *Bathou Bwrai*. Before hunting in forest or jungle, the jungle God; *Jwmwn Jwla and Jwmwn Buri* is to be propitiated.'³⁴

The failure and success of hunting in a forest, by villagers are based on the favour of '*Jwmwn Jwla and Jwmwn Buri*'. If not happy, he lets tigers attack the people go for the hunt and also lets to lost directions in dense forest. Thus, a grand offering is made in the name of *Jwmwn Jwla and Jwmwn Buri* before going for a hunt. The villagers select a place in village field and plaster with mud. Rameswar Boro says, 'to the direction of east an altar is made and different items namely, betel nut-leaves, rice, fruits, flowers are kept at a *don*. The *tulsi and* holy water are also placed. The tools which are required for hunting, like the bow and arrow, *gondrai, sikha, rua* (axe), handmade gun, *jong, je, jakhra* are also placed.'³⁵ An elder person of the village or *oja* chants *mantras* in the name of *Jwmwn Jwla and Jwmwn Buri* and sacrifice a red cock. Then the glass of water is picked up and sprinkle to the people who will go for a hunt and to the hunting materials. On the same day or as per their convenience they go for hunt and take some betel nut-leaves, flowers with them and whatever the river they cross, they offer those items.

³⁴ . Informant: Khanteswar Boro, age 47 years

³⁵ . Informant: Rameswar Boro, age 65 years

Today, the tradition of hunting and offerings of the hunting materials are become obsolete. The responsible behind the change is due deforestation. 'Each village is having one or more famous hunters. The teenagers or women sing songs comparing or criticizing him in *bwisagu* or on other occasions. This satirical singing is vanishing from their society. The tradition of community knitting of hunting net, uses of bow and arrow, handmade gun as well as *jong* are not found.

2.11. Fishing:

They catch fish in river, stream, lake, agricultural field and use different fishing apparatus, like the *sen*, *khokha*, *khakhi*, *pholo*, *seren*, *belsa*, *jekhai* and *khobai*. Regarding fishing, Arun Swargiay says, 'in ancient times, they catch fish in dense forest and jungles for which they observe rites, related to fishing.'³⁶ There is a folk belief among them, like the *Khwina Santhi* (*Dwi Khuber* or *Khungri*) is owner of the water and *Bulli Buri* is owner of the fish or creatures of the water. While these Goddesses are not happy with people, the fishing is failed. This Goddess hides stock of fish and sometimes creates troubles to the fishermen.

A few *Bodos* used to catch fish, early in the morning and believe occurrences of favorable and un-favorable. If favourable occurs, the fishermen can have good fish and vice versa, the fishermen, cannot catch a single fish, even if caught, the devils steal from the *khobai*. They believe, 'the ghost is afraid of rusted iron, knife, sickle, fire etc. Out of these items if an item is kept inside a *khobai* or where fish are stored, the ghost cannot steal back. The believing of ghost and keeping of iron tools at the *khobai* is obsolete today

If the *Khwina Santhi* is not favour she causes to suffer skin diseases, like the allergy, ringworm, leprosy etc. According to Arun swargiary 'While the people, set for fishing an offering was made to the river bank. A small boat was made of banana plantain. Different types of red and white flowers are put on it and a pair of duck egg is offered. The plantain boat is flown to water saying as,

He iswr jwngnisayao raga dajwng

³⁶. Informant: Arun swargiary, Age 52 years

*Jwng dwiao na gurhwi/homhwinwswi.*³⁷

(Eng. rendering- Oh God, please do not angry on us, we are going to catch fish at river.)

Not only flowers and eggs, in some parts of the district, the offering of a pig, flowers and fruits are taken place. Today, community fishing is decreasing. The faith on *evil spirit* is decreasing. Male persons are expert in making and knitting different fishing instruments, like the *jekhai, khobai, sen, khokha, khakhi, pholo, seren, je*. This traditional knowledge, preparation of fishing materials handed down in the society is vanished among the young generation.

2.12. Cultivation:

Agriculture is the major occupation of the Indian and the villages help in strengthening social bonds and bringing stability to society in many ways. It is also occurring among the *Bodos*. They cultivated *sali* and *asu* paddies in two seasons. The *sali* is their main cultivation and starts from the month *Jeth* of Bangla calendar. The *sali* includes the *aghansali, khathisali* and *maisali*. Their livelihood is based on agriculture and this occupation is handed down to the society since the time immemorial.

On the other hand, in modern time, traditional time scheduled is not followed and they cultivate as they like using modern tools. The crops, like the paddy, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, reddish, chili, pulse, garlic, onion, ginger, *jwgnar, khumbra, jingkha, nelaji, dal*, tea, rubber etc are not cultivated for business. The traditional method of cropping pattern has certain time schedules based on *Begali* calendar.

The *baowa* cultivation at water logging fields and *maisali-aghansali* cultivation at highlands are common methods of cultivation. These cultivations are obsolete. A few of them cultivated different kinds of paddy irrespective of time.

³⁷ . Informant: Arun swargiary, Age 52 years

The time schedules followed by the *Bodos* and its variations in present are as given below,

Table No- 7

Sl No	Months of cultivation	Traditional crops cultivated	Present observances
1	Bwisag	Asu planting, jwgwnar, khumbra, mwitha, jingkha, nelaji etc.	Tea plantation, planting of different kinds of paddy by few people.
2	Jeth	Khathisali, maisali seedling and cultivation	Maima cultivation and vegetable cultivatons are also found
3	Ashar	Aghansali cultivation, maima seedling and transplanting	Maima cultivation reddish, chili, lai, etc
4	Saon	Maima cultivation	Found vegetable cultivation by a few people for business
5	Bhadra	Pulse (sobai) and sesame cultivation	Found vegetable cultivation by a few people for business
6	Asin	Reaping of aghansali	Vegetables cultivation starts by a few people
7	Kartik	Reaping of khathisali, cultivation of brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, knolkol, reddish, chili etc.	Cultivation of brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, knolkol, reddish, chili etc.
8	Aghan	Reaping of aghansali, mustard, potato, lai, lapha and vegetables	Mustard, potato, lai, lapha and vegetables
9	Push	Reaping of paddy, kesari dals	Jwgwnar, reaping of maisali
10	Magh	Reaping of paddy, sesame, mustard, pulse(sobai), maize etc.	Reaping of paddy, sesame, mustard, pulse, maize etc.
11	Phagun	Asu paddy and jute cultivation	Asu paddy and jute cultivation
12	Choitra	Jute sown, arum, sweet potato etc	Arum, sweet potato, a few tea and rubber plantations found

2.12.1. *Ali or jamphwi* (plotting or drainage):

They construct a small square plot of land, by an *ali* to keep water in their crops' field. In the siphon of water to the plot, they have a traditional method. This is done with a wooden drain and which is known as the '*naodra*'.³⁸ Another method of water conversion is known as *bhur jabnai*. The *bhur jabnai* is made with the help of *thuri*, *khasi hagra*, *goi bigur* and bamboo. The development in science and technology has influenced on the *ali* or *jamphwi* and they construct concreted sluice gate in their crops' field and use pumping machines.

2.12.2. *Haleo jennai* (plough beginning):

They plough land with ox and buffalo but not with the cows. The cultivation by the cow is profane by religion. They use new agricultural materials in beginning of cultivation. According to Bhaben Narji, 'they made a *lengra*, *suljuri*, new stick and start to plough on a good day like *phurnima* (fool moon) or other than 'Tuesday, Saturday and *omabwisa*'.³⁹ It is abolishing and they start to plough except Saturday and *omabwisa*. They do not use new rope and use only if ropes are not useable. While they stop the day's plough, they let cattle facing towards the east. The main purpose behind it is the sun rises in the east, in the same way; our cultivation should be started from that direction. In this regard, Ramesh Basumatary says, 'if we keep this direction, it is good if not, the workers or cultivators as well as cattle become idle. They do not plough after 12 noon too, which they called *dedennai*'.⁴⁰ They use power tiller and tractor to plough in modern time.

2.12.3. *Saori* (community work):

The *saori* is a common collective community work culture of the *Bodos*. They invite *saori* for the various works and in unearth *khwthia*, planting and in

³⁸ . Photograph and plates at page no 201, photograph no 43

³⁹ . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -51

⁴⁰ . Informant: Ramesh Basumatary, age 56 years

the *haleonai*. The *saori* invitee has to provide meat, fish, rice beer, rice, etc. who are attended in the *saori*. In some places in *saori*, nothing is needed to be provided but sharing of *saori* among each other is common. This system is slowly converting into payment system.

2.12.4. *Gosa lanai* (stuff taking):

On a favorable day, they unearth *khwthia* and start to plant. The first starting of planting is known as *gosa lanai*. In *gosa lanai* the female person of the family takes a lead role. According to Khusti Daimari, ‘a female head of family starts to plant the north east corner of their square plot of *ali*. They offer a small *puja* in the name of *Mainao* and *Song Raja*. Either a small banana tree or *thuri* or *jengsi* is planted.’⁴¹ A garland of flowers and cotton is prepared as well as put it on. The folk belief behind the planting of this item is the paddy bears just like a banana tree or *thuri* or *jengsi*.

A glass of water, a pair of betel nut & leaf, flowers, a top of banana leaf, a brass pot, *tulsi*, holy water and *prasad* are required for *gosa lanai*. An earthen lamp is set fire. Mustard oil is also smeared on the paddy plant and the woman starts to pray and according to Satish Ramsiary the woman says,

*‘Nwi bima nwngni nw swrjiphwrkhou nwn ai swrjigirinw baonaijabai, nwi bima, dinwi gaham barai.....(name of day) , khalar.....(name of date) ao jwngni gaigubwi gainaikhou jagai jennai janwswi. Nwn bimaya jwngni sayao bwrabnw mwnnai nonga. Gahamwi gaham abad jahwnangwn. Empou enla mohor lana khoha khalamnw mwnnai nonga. Nongabla phab nangwn. Dohai bima.’*⁴²

(English rendering, Oh Goddess, whatever we have, available with us, we have offered for you, Oh mother, to-day on , on date..... We are about to start our main plantation of the paddy. Kindly, do not angry on us. Kindly help us in reaping of good crops. On behalf of insects, rodents etc, please do not destroy our crops, otherwise you will be a sinner, oh Goddess.)

⁴¹ . Informant: Khusti Daimari, age 78 years

⁴² . Informant: Satish Ramsiary, age 58 years

Today, this offering is relegated and only a few people of the district are observing. The Christianise and other religious *Bodos* do not observe *gosa lanai*.

2.12.5. *Gaithainai* (plantation stopped):

They prefer mostly *hasia* system. The *hasia gainai* system is more repeated, like the *khwthia* is unearthed and planted, again and again. So, most of the *Bodos* have given up this system adopting more and more *leosia gainai*.

The *gaithanai* is followed in every plot of planting and finishing of day's plantation. The plantation finishing of each plot at a time is known as *gaithanai*. There is a belief among the *Bodos*, on which, Lobin Basumatary says, 'during *Asin* the Goddess of paddy *Mainao* asks *Kartik* (God) to visit the paddy field and take care of it. If paddy is not planted in this direction the *Kartik* loses his direction in the inspection of crops and he fails in taking care of it, while the *Kartik* fails, the cultivators will not reap good crops.'⁴³ The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* take it as, the insects which have come to destroy crops, let them to be jumped into the fire and committed suicide themselves. The planting is shared from the first *ali* to last *ali* with each other. The planter of the first *ali* is known as *khoro laigra*, person in between first *ali* and last *ali* known as *mwdwm jagra*. The last planter who finishes to the last *ali* is known as *ali jagra*. The *khoro laigra*, *mwdwm jagra* and *ali jagra* are decreasing and they plant as they like.

2.12.6. *Nangal jangkhra* (plantation finished):

The *Bodos*, at the time of finishing of year's plantation, a last rite, *nangal jangkhra* is celebrated. On this day, rice beer, dry fish pickle is taken to the field and given away to everybody who is attended in the occasion. They drink and have items provided to them. If plantations are about to finish, they enjoy putting mud to each other and thus finish year's plantation. Later, a grand feast is given to the people, who attended in *nangal jangkhra*.

⁴³ . Informant: Lobin Basumatary, age 65 years

But, the celebration of *nangal jangkhra* is minimizing from them. A few *Bathouarians* who are cultivated in family observed it. The Christianise and other religious *Bodos* do not observe it.

2.12.7. *Khati gasa saonai* (earthen lamp lighting):

The word *gasa* means a temporary lamp made of wood-apple or papaya, *saonai* means lighting fire. This festival is observed in the late evening, either on the last evening of *Bangla* month, *Ashin* or the first day of *Khati*. A pair of a small bowl made of *thaigir bikhong* or papaya is half pinched, put standing from the ground and lighted fire. According to Joya Boro a *sewari*, smeared of oil is moved over paddy plants and pray as,

'He Bima Mainao abadni bigwma
Jwngni nokhorni bwthwrni maikhou
Gahamwi gaham jahwnangwn
Gahamwinw wngkhar hwnangwn
Emphou enla da jahw
Bibar bithokhou gaham jahw.
Nwi nwngnw swrang hwnnswi
Nwi nwngkhou khulumnswi
Nailangdw jwthwn ladw nwngnw bigwma
*Dohai bima mainao.*⁴⁴

(English rendering-Oh God, *Mainao*, controller of crops, please help us to have good crops, do not let insects to destroy our crops, make the stem healthy. Oh God, we are lighting for you, we are going to bow down you, please take care and look after our crops. Oh God *Mainao*.)

According to Mahesh Narzary, 'a pair of earthen lamp is lighted at the *Bathou*, *bakhri*, *mwswo goli* and *Biswahari than* at *bari*⁴⁵'. But at present, the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* observed this festival on the first day of *Khati*. The

⁴⁴ . Informant: Jaya Boro, age 55 years

⁴⁵ . Informant: Mahesh Narzary, age 48 years

person, who sets fire, recites hymn facing towards east and hymn is not as earlier, *Dularai Bathou Gouthum* has accepted prayers as,

'Aham,
Wng hring khling phwd se
Wng hring khling phwd se
Wng hring khling phwd se
He ai bima Mainao
Jwngni dublini maikhou
Mwjangwi wngkhar hw
Arw jib junar
Emphou-enla, daoma-daosanw
Da jahw.
Bekhounw nwnng ai
Bima Mainaoni serao raisonnai jabai.
*Dohai, ai bima Mainao.*⁴⁶

(English rendering- (*Wng hring khling phwd se*), Oh Goddess, *Mainao*, let the paddy of our fields comes, Do not let insects, birds and others to destroy, we beg, blessings from you. Oh Goddess, *Mainao*, help us.)

However, in the *Phwsabnai Bathou* on this day, the *Bathou* is decorated by *on gundwi*, *dhup-dhuna* and flowers. After decorating, betel-nut leaf, earthen lamp, flowers are offered and everybody of the family bow downs at the *Bathou*. Earlier gathering of family members at *Bathou* was not available. Then villagers gathered at community *Bathou thansali* of the village, bringing flowers, rice, paddy, fruits, earthen lamp, oil, incense stick on a *sandri*, round covered by a *dona*. The whole day is enjoyed collectively reciting the prayers, singing and dancing. Every family of the village celebrates *Mainao borainai* in the late evening and they follows to the *douri's* family.

In the case of *Mainao borainai* to the *douri's* family, it is made accompanying with the community singing, dancing and slogan from the community *Bathou thansali* to the *douri's bakhri* taking the *sandri-dona* on the

⁴⁶ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go., 2014, p- 178

head by a *douri's* wife or daughter. Before putting the *Mainao* to the *douri's* *bakhri*, three or five times *Bathou gidingnai* is made and the paddy is kept at the *douri's* *bakhri*. The rice is kept at *maihendw* of *the douri*. But, the *Bodos* converted into other religions do not follow it.

2.12.8. *Ag lainai* (top bringing):

The *ag* or *mai bijou lainai* is celebrated, if the paddy is about to reap. A suitable day is set to do this rite and *bakhri* is prepared and plastered by mud (mixing with cow dung). An aged woman of the family takes bath in the morning and a pair of earthen lamp is set fire and offer a pair of betel nut and leaf at the *Bathou*, *bakhrinagan*, *Biswahari than*, *Mainao than* and bow downs at every place. Then a sickle, a pair of earthen lamp, unused matchbox, mustard oil, betel nut and leaf, top part of non-slit banana leaf, a glass of water, *gonsa* or *sewari* of bamboo and *tulsi* is taken along with a *don*. The earthen lamp is set fire and the *don* is carries on the head. As soon as, the family rites are finished, she goes to the field wearing new *dokhona*, new blouse (somebody not) and lets hair free. A comb is cleft at the hair by combing. On the way, from home to field vice versa, talking is restricted. If talks, *Mainao* annoys with her and does not come to the family. At field facing toward the east she says-

'Nwi ai bima Mainao

Dinwi nwnng bimakhou

Dikhw hwinai janwswi

Dhwanni bigwma nwnng bimakhou

Ising khona bakhri khonaiao

Daodwi dwise hwna dwnhwinwswi

Nwnng bimakhou boraibai

Dohai nwnng bimaya phwidw

*Gorseao gornwi khalam phwidw.*⁴⁷

⁴⁷ · Informant: Jyothi Basumatary, age 65 years

(English rendering- Oh Goddess *Mainao*, today I have come to take you to our family, you are the Goddess of property and we have made a place for you at *ising*, keeping an egg. I have welcomed you, Oh Goddess, please come with me.)

A *mutha* is cut and wraps it up with a top of banana leaf. An *ag laigra* moves anticlock wise east to west and back to home. The hands, legs are washed; a garland is made with white cotton yarn, *jatrasi* plant and *tulsi*. The *ag* is hung either *ising khona* or *bakhri khona* and says-

‘*Nwi Bima Mainao*
Dinwi jwngha noao
Nwng bimakhou dikhwbai
Nwng bimaya beyaonw thadw
Nokhorni dhwnkhon naidw.
Jwngnw gorsekhon gornwi
Gorthamkhon gorbrwi
*Erhwbai thadw.*⁴⁸

(English rendering- Oh Goddess *Mainao*, today we have given a place for you in our family. Oh Goddess please be here and take care for our property. Make the one into two, two into the three, three in to the four.)

On this day, the family does not share anything to anyone. If somebody shares the *Mainao* goes with them and the family faces the shortage of food for a year, they believe. In the *Phwsabnai Bathou* it has been fixed to observe in between 1st to 9th *Aghan*. In old system, only holy water is sprinkled, bow down and cut three stuffs of paddy only. But, in the *Phwsabnai Bathou*, a place is cleaned at the field, two banana leaves, two pairs of betel-nuts and leaves, two earthen lamps, flowers are offered. The five stuffs are cut, first one for *Bathou Bwrai*, second for flowers, third for guests, fourth for birds and insects and last one for family. They recited hymn as,

‘*Aham,*
Wng hring khling phwd se
Wng hring khling phwd se

⁴⁸. Informant: Jarwo Boro, age 55 years

Wng hring khling phwd se
Dohai ai bima Mainao
He ai bima Mainao
Nwi dinwi ang nwnghou dubiniphrai nosim
Langnw phwidwng ai bima Mainao
Nwnghou langnanwi jwng
Hasibjwng sibphlangwn I
Aithingjwng jwthrwdphlangwn I
Orao phanse dwiao phanse
Khalamphlangna japhlangwn II
Benithakhai nwngh ai bima Mainao
Khungkhilai baidi da birlang I
Bambur baidi da gwjaolang
Nwngh gorseanw gornwi jananwi
Jwngni maihendw, bakhriao
Oraibw onthaibadi
Gilir mohorwi jwngkgou onnanwi
*Nwngh ai bima Mainao.*⁴⁹

(English rendering- Oh Goddess *Mainao*, Oh *Mainao*, today I have come to take you from field to our family. Knowingly or unknowingly, we may fail in taking care of you, may be swiped by a broom, sometimes may be trampled, for that, please do not angry on us, do not fly way like a *khungkhilai*, flow like a *bambur*, you are the one and should turn into two or two into three. In granary and *maihendw* be stay just, like a rock and have a blessing for us.)

The *ag lainai* ceremony is obsolete among the *Bodos* who are not following *Bathou* and Brahma religion.

2.12.9. Types of crops:

The *Bodos* cultivate different types of crops and can be grouped into two, like paddy and non-paddy. Earlier the process of cultivation is not scientific, but

⁴⁹ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go, 2014, p- 178

at present, a few of them have adopted scientific methods. They use scientific manure, like the urea, *photus*, *sulphur*, HVY seeds, pesticide, hedge, *glycile*, and many more.

They cultivated different kinds of crops and they are very clever in the selection of soil. They cultivate dry crops in dry soil (*bwri ha*) and non-dry at wet soil (*dohla ha*). The non-paddy crops are cultivated in shifting cultivation. Their crops are paddy, bean, peanut, *arum*, *dal*, *lapha*, *lai*, *khokhling*, *mwitha*, *mwitha bangal*, *jingkha*, *danga*, *mwitha phathw*, onion, garlic, ginger, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, reddish, bottle gourd, lady's finger, jute, sesame, mustard, maize and betel nut.

Earlier every family cultivated it as per the domestic needed. Binanda Boro says, 'some of them follow the scientific methods of cultivation, taking help from agricultural scientists and taking suggestions from *krishan* toll free call centre too.'⁵⁰ A few of them are cultivating and giving attention in the cultivation of tea, rubber, betel nut in high dry land.

2.12.10. *Khasi sunai* (sickle washed):

The word *khasi* means sickle and *sunai* means wash. It is also known as *khasi duwa*. While cutting of paddy is about to finish, a *jou bidwi* is cook. The five to twelve persons are invited and cut together; they catch *guma gwthao* or rat and share rice beer in the field. In evening, the people attended in *khasi sunai* are provided grand feast with pork or chicken or other non-vegetable items and thus *khasi sunai* comes to an end.

The community sharing of work is decreasing among the *Bodos*, work and pay system is overlapping. The reaping paddy is given in contract and the *khasi sunai* ceremony is celebrated in fewer frequencies. The sharing of rice beers, feasts and foods in evening is decreasing. Other than a few *Bathouarians*, the *Bodos* converted into different religions, like the Christian, *Satsangi*, and *Vaishnav* do not observe this ceremony.

⁵⁰ . Informant: Binanda Boro, age 70 years

2.12.11. *Bakhri lirthenai* (granary closing):

The *bakhri lirthenai* is made as soon as, the trashing of paddy and storing at granary is finished. In *domasi*, a cow dung liquid, mixed with water is plastered like a strip on the middle part of the *bakhri* wall and from this day paddy is not taken out from *bakhri*. The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* put a coin, a rock and five times cotton yarn at *maihendw* before granary is closed. Earlier a coin and five times cotton yarn was not given and tied. If for the first time, the paddy is to be taken out from *bakhri*, a basket of paddy is taken and sprinkle with water, offering an egg and prays,

'Dinwi bakhrini maikhou

Dangjennai janwswi

Nwng bimani mungao

Daodwi dwise, goy jorase

*Phathwi jorase hwnai jabai.'*⁵¹

(English rendering- Oh *Mainao*, from today we have started to take out rice from granary and offered an egg, a pair of betel nut and leaf for you.)

Nowadays, in the *bakhri lirthenai* and *dangjennai* among the *Phwsabnai Bathouarians*, a woman of the family takes bath then offer at the *Bathou* and *maihendw* lighting *jewari bathi*, a pair of betel nut and leaf. She begs pardon at *bakhri nagan*, offering those items that they are going to take out paddy from the *bakhri* in subsequent period. The traditional way of storing paddy is extinguishing among them. Most of the people do not make *bakhri*; they keep at sack or *duli*.

2.12.12. *Wngkham gwrlwi janai* (new rice eating):

The *wngkham gwrlwi janai* is a traditional agricultural ceremony of the *Bodos*. It was celebrated on any one day of the month of *Aghan*. Until *wngkham gwrlwi janai* is celebrated, the head of family does not eat new rice or new betel nut.

⁵¹ . Informant: Bimala Boro, age 45 years

On this day the servants, who were engaged in cultivation are invited. A grand sharing of rice beer, chicken, pork and other non-vegetable items are taken place. The community hunting or fishing was a part of the *wngkham gwrlwi janai*.

The *Phwsabnai Bathouarians* have accepted this rite as their festival. It is celebrated in a befitting manner on 9th *Aghan* at community *Bathou thansali*. Earlier, on this day, different Gods and Goddesses are propitiated by offering with the help of an *oja*, which they called *salami*. Regarding today's *wngkham gwrlwi janai* Suren Boro has opined as, 'on the day, the community *Bathou thansai* is decorated, by new fencing, flowers, *on gundwi, jatrasi, tulsi, mayaje*. The *dhup-dhuna*, earthen lamp, incense stick are set fire and flowers are offered. The agenda, *tharnai-sungrinai, alaph, gibiaroj, mwnthina raisonnai, aroj methai, dwrwm bwswn bibungthi, mithisar aida, jwbtha aroj, gaobagao aroj, Mainao thikhangnai arw phirphila birhwnai* are taken.'⁵²

The *Gudi Bathou* followers, still offer *salami* in the *wngkham gwrlwi janai* and the *Phwsabnai Bathouarias* recite slogan at the community *Bathou thansali* as,

Jwi ai Bima Mainao-Jwi

Jwi Ihihui Bwrai-Burwini- Jwi.

Jwi Bhandari Kumarini – Jwi

*Jwi wngkham gwdan janaini- Jwi.*⁵³

(English rendering- Joy for Goddess *Mainao*, joy, joy for *Ihihui Bwrai-Burwini*, joy, joy for *Bhandari Kumarini*-Joy, Joy for new rice eating festival-joy.)

2.12.13. Aijeng baonai (tools offering):

Aijeng puja was a ceremonial offer of the *Bodos* living in the district of Udalguri or un-divided Kamrup. *Aijeng puja* is offered in the name of *Rojong Bwrai and Rojong Burwi*. The *Bodos* believe, the *Rojong Bwrai and Rojong Burwi* have created the tools for human beings and thus they have to be

⁵² . Informant: Suren Boro, age 55 years

⁵³ . Du. Ba. Go (Suju Afad) : Gwthar Mwikhun, Odalguri, District Committee, Du. Ba. Go, 2014, p- 195

propitiated. It is celebrated on the day of *wngkham gwrlwi janai*. The agricultural tools, like the plough, yoke, stick, *mwi*, *beda*, *khodal*, *sikha*, *khasi*, *songrai sandri* etc. are kept by the side of *Bathou* and animals are also sacrificed. The children who are attended in the ceremony are allowed to sit at the yard and dishes are made ready. The head of the family slowly beats the tools by a stick and as soon as beating is over children are asked to have the food. During, the eating an eldest cowboy is allowed to sit near tools and he says some sentences. The sentences are imitated by the people attended in *wngkham gwrlwi janai* like,

Eldest cowboy: *'Nwi sengraphwr, nwi gothophwr*
 Okha sija-raija hwnja
 Sandung dungja baidi khosthoni
 Phithaikhou boibw jadw.

(English rendering- Oh youth, oh children, we have cultivated in rain, in sun shine and have reaped paddy with very difficulties, let us enjoy it.)

Attended people: *Boibw jadw*
 (Let us enjoy.)

Eldest cowboy: *Nwi Rojong Bwrai-Rojong Burwi jwng nwnswrnw baobai*
 (Oh *Rojong Bwrai- Rojong Burwi* we have offered for
 you.)

Jwng baobai
 (We have offered for you.)

Eldest cowboy: *Abad maonaisomao, lewar, khansri jaosoplangbai*
 Benithakhai nimaha hwdw
 (In cultivation unknowingly, we have killed leech,
 earthworm, for those forgive us.)

Attended people: *Nimaha hwdw*
 (Forgive us.).⁵⁴

The *aijeng puja* is completely obsolete today. The ceremonial offering of iron tools, like the tractor, car, bicycle, bike, sickle, spade, axe, knife, etc are taken place in the *khathi phwrbw*. The wooden and bamboo's apparatus which

⁵⁴ . Informant: Arabinda Boro, age 47 years

offer earlier are not offered today. The reason is conversion of the people into different religion as well as reformation of the *Gudi Bathou* to different forms.

2.12.14. *Jwlwi dwnnai* (seed preservation):

The *jwlwi dwnnai* is another peculiar tradition of the *Bodo*. They preserved seeds in different methods. The various seeds of vegetable are preserved in bamboo pipes. The *mai jwlwi* is preserved in *kho*. A *kho* is made, its internal wall is covered by the *mai jigab* and in middle part of the *kho*, the *mai* is placed. Later, every side of *kho* is covered and packeted by *theul* in the form of football. The packed *khos* are kept at *bakhri agan*. This type of preservation of seeds or *jwlwi* is abolished from their society and preserve seeds putting at sack.

2.12.15. *Aijeng bahainai* (tools' use):

The *Bodos* used different kinds of traditional tools, made of iron, wood and bamboo for their cultivation. The iron tools, like the *ara* used for felling trees, *rua* for felling and cutting trees, *sikha* for cutting wood, jungle, *sikha khongkhai* and *hasini* for cleaning jungle, spade for digging soil, *khontha* (small spade) for cutting the hedge. Today, the use of *ara* and *rua* in the cultivation is minimized due to deforestation. The wooden and bamboo tools use in cultivation are, the *nangal*, *jungal*, *beda*, *hasini*, *hathura*, *mwi*, *sukhen*, *laothi*, *royna*, *don*, *khada*, *songrai*, *sandri*, *sandanga*. These tools are having different functions in cultivation, like the *nangal-jungal* for tilling soil, stick for beating ox or buffalo, *mwi* or *hathura* for breaking earthen ball, *beda* to comb *asu* and jute, *baokha* for caring *mai boja*, *singkhai-khada* for carrying manure.

The *asu* cultivation is abolished and use of *beda* as well as wooden *hasini* is not observed among them. The process of shifting cultivation is abolished and use of *rua* in agricultural objective is abolishing.

2.13. *Bon buthumnai* (firewood collection):

The *Bodso* cook using firewood and collected firewood from jungles. The bullock or buffalo cart is a means of transportation of firewood. They gathered

firewood in winter season either by bullock or buffalo cart or by *khando bhar* (*bangase*) *saori*. The *khando bhar* is one in which people collect firewood only up to the level of capability of shouldering. The villagers, who are not having bullock cart, invite for a *khando bhar saori*. Even sometimes villagers having bullock cart also invite for it if they don't get time to go to jungles. In this *saori*, people are provided rice beer and dry cook items with meat, like pork or chicken and rice is not provided. These systems, both carrying by bullock cart or buffalo and *khando bhar* are abolished from their society. The *Bodos* residing in towns and cities, even a few people of the village areas are also used gas, stoves and electric cooker.

2.14. Animal husbandry:

The *Bodos* rear chicken, pig, goat, duck, pigeon and some other domestic animals. A few of them also adopted fishery. There is a technique of rearing domestic animals, which Bhaben Narji opines,

*'Swnabha owa, sanjaha hangsw
Saha goi, khwlaha udang.'*⁵⁵

(English rendering- The bamboo towards the west, duck at the east, betel nut to the north, open place to the south.)

In the *Bodo* society women rear different domestic animals for sale it in the market and to solve financial crisis of the family. A few *Bodo* women who are financially weak are adopting animal husbandry. Earlier animals, like the cow and buffaloes are reared in huge manner, taking a cow boy in family. Nowadays it is not easy to get a cowboy, tending field and servant, so it is decreasing.

2.15. *Emphou phisinai* (sericulture):

The *emphou phisinai* is a major part of the *Bodo* society. By grouping the members of two, three or five persons, they reared cocoons and planted many *endi* trees for this purpose. In every village, there are for about ten to twenty

⁵⁵ . Narji, Bhaben : Boro Kacharini Samaj Arw Harimu, Chirang Publications (Translated), 2011, p -24

groups of coccon rearers. At present, this kind of rearing is not available among them. The development of women education and change in economic scenery of family are factor responsible for it.

2.16. Household item:

The *Bodos* have their different household items to use, in their day to day life, like the fishing, hunting, cultivation, weaving, cooking, musical instruments and other materials. They use different household items, like the *thobsi*, *thobsi-akhai*, *jantha*, *jatha*, *khadou*, *laothai*, *dumsu*, *sagong*, *thwrsi*, *lotha*, *thou*, *dwihi*, *songrai*, *sandri*, *songkhri dwngra*. The wooden *thobsi* is use for making pickle. At present some are using, steel, silver, brass *thobsi* or broken stone and electric mixer grinder. In the place of *thou* or *borthon*, a few of them use pressure cooker and electric cooker. The bamboo household materials, like the *khada*, *sandri*, *abwidangi*, they use plastic materials which are available in the present market. In lieu of wooden pitcher, they use water filter, aluminum, steel pots and in place of *songkhri dwngra* (*laoni donga*) they use plastic pot. In the case of fishing, *sen*, *khokha*, *khakhi*, *pholo*, *seren*, *belsa*, *jekhai*, *khobai*, *jakhra* etc are used. Out of those materials *khakhi*, *jakhra* is fewer frequencies of use. Today, they use *asra je*, *pasi je*, *je gwlaol*, *belsa*.

In the furniture, they used, the mat, *gisib*, *daokho*, *kho*, *gambari khamphlai*, *khamphlai*, *bwisang*, *hatha*, *siba*, *sibani gisib* and many more. The *siba* is used for keeping clothes and *danda* is used for drying clothes. The *dao kho* is used for laying and hatching eggs. The *bwisang* is made for sleeping. Now, a few economically sound *Bodo* people are using sofa, chair, armed chair, table, dining table, dressing glass, wreck, show case, trolley bag, box *phaleng* and some modern items which are available in the market.