

## Chapter-II

### Use of Ethno-plants as Traditional Food of the Bodos

In this chapter, an attempt has been done for observation on the ethno-plants and its uses in the context of the Bodo society. The cultural significance of edible plants, medicinal and ritual plants have been taken for observation in this analysis. How the ethno-plants are used as substance of traditional food has also been observed as a whole.

#### 2.1 Ethno-plants used as vegetable:

The village people used to collect vegetable from forest, wetland and homestead for their daily diet. This practice and traditional habit are constant since time immemorial. However, now a day, this practice is gradually becoming less due to changing of social habits and ecological impacts. But till today, the people of this community dwelling in remote villages are familiar to variety of wild edible plants. The names of ethno-plants are peculiar. They have own ethnic name to identify each ethno-plants. They cultivate variety of vegetables in different seasons. They collect leaves, flowers, and stems, rhizomes tubers etc. from different plant in different seasons and it is used as vegetable. In the following table the native name of non cultivated and cultivated plants with their ethnic names are given below. Besides, its uses in different context are also observed.

##### 2.1.1 Non Cultivated Vegetables:

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
1	t <sup>h</sup> arai	The pith is eaten, specially mixing with chicken and pork. It has an aromatic leaves, which is used to wrap the fishes in baking.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
2.	dau p <sup>h</sup> enda	Tender shoots & leaves are eaten.
3.	sibuŋ/sip <sup>h</sup> uŋ	Tender shoot is eaten as a vegetable. Basically it is found in a paddy field.
4.	duusrem	Tender shoots are eaten. It is a kind of creeper. It tastes slightly sour.
5.	samɔ laut <sup>h</sup> i	Young shoots are eaten cooked by giving <i>k<sup>h</sup>aruui</i> (a kind ingredient traditionally made with the bark of the banana tree)
6.	k <sup>h</sup> aruui k <sup>h</sup> andai	Young leaves and shoots are eaten as a vegetable. In addition, Its flower is commonly cooked with traditional cuisine <i>ɔnla</i> .
7.	ek <sup>h</sup> la bir	Flowers are eaten cooked. It tastes mild bitter.
8.	k <sup>h</sup> uŋk <sup>h</sup> la	Young leaves are eaten as a mixed vegetable at the time of ‘Sankranti’. It tastes bitter.
9.	ɔnt <sup>h</sup> ai bazab/burma dari	Basically, young shoot and leaves are eaten with mutton and snail meat. It has a kind of strong odor.
10.	muirat <sup>h</sup> ik <sup>h</sup> i	Tender leaves and shoots are eaten cooked by mixing other greens.
11.	zɔlɔŋga bant <sup>h</sup> u	Tender shoot is eaten as a vegetable. It has also medicinal value.
12.	daɔgaŋ zuula	Young shoots are eaten as a mixed vegetable. It is a kind medicinal plant.
13.	usumui	Tender twig is eaten as a vegetable.
14.	elaŋsi/helaŋsi	It is a semi-aquatic plant having a mildly bitter taste. Its tender shoots are eaten.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
15.	duuula	Tender shoot is eaten by mixing other greens.
16.	sibru	Petiole and tender leaves are eaten as a vegetable.
17.	mungambari	Petiole and young leaves are used in making chicken soup as a mixed vegetable. It contains aromatic property.
18.	t <sup>h</sup> aso guusum	The whole part of the plant is edible.
19.	dausri at <sup>h</sup> iŋ	Young twig and leaf are used as mixed vegetable. It is also considered medicinal plant.
20.	k <sup>h</sup> ip <sup>h</sup> i benduŋ	Tender twigs and leaves are eaten as vegetable. It is also considered as a medicinal plant.
21.	besor daba	Leaves are eaten cooked by giving <i>k<sup>h</sup>arui</i> . It has an aroma like mustard.
22.	duini besor	A kind of aquatic plant having a strong mustard-like odor when it crushed. Its tender twig is eaten as vegetable.
23.	burit <sup>h</sup> ɔk <sup>h</sup> ɔn/ zamalak <sup>h</sup> uti	Tender shoot is eaten as a vegetable. It is also consider as a medicinal plant.
24.	uŋk <sup>h</sup> am p <sup>h</sup> urum/uŋk <sup>h</sup> am k <sup>h</sup> alai	Young shoots are eaten as a vegetable. It is a creeper plant. It tastes sour.
25.	muisuŋk <sup>h</sup> a	Young shoots are eaten as a vegetable. It is taste mildly acidic
26.	muit <sup>h</sup> a sik <sup>h</sup> la	Young shoots and leaves are eaten. It is a kind of creeper having multiple thorns. It tastes slightly acidic.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
27.	gərai salai	A small quantity of young shoot and leaves are added with other greens. It tastes acidic and slightly bitter.
28.	maisundri	Young shoot and leaves are eaten as mixed vegetable. It also used in fish chutney.
29.	zuuglaori	The aromatic young leaves are used in making chicken soup. It also eaten raw.
30.	k <sup>h</sup> eradap <sup>h</sup> ini/ mat <sup>h</sup> i galdab	Young leaves are eaten as vegetable and also considered as a medicinal plant.
31.	k <sup>h</sup> ansiŋsa/d <sup>h</sup> ərəm p <sup>h</sup> ul	Young twig is eaten as vegetable and also contain medicinal properties.
32.	gambari bibar	Flowers are cooked with traditional cuisine onla. It is bitter in taste.
33.	zabsri/sanmiziŋ	Tender shoot is eaten as a mixed vegetable. It contains medicinal properties.
34.	t <sup>h</sup> unt <sup>h</sup> uni	Young shoot is eaten as mixed vegetable.
35.	hagrani p <sup>h</sup> at <sup>h</sup> u/ bōmbra/bōmōnda	Tender shoots and leaves are eaten as mixed vegetable.
36.	mande/k <sup>h</sup> ululum	Tender shoot is used as vegetable.
37.	k <sup>h</sup> uduna	Tender shoots are eaten as mixed vegetable.
38.	k <sup>h</sup> ana simla	Tender shoot is eaten by mixing other greens.
39.	ogra	Tender twig is eaten cooked with traditional cuisine onla.
40.	siŋgri muik <sup>h</sup> i	Young shoots are eaten. It is slightly acidic in taste.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
41.	k <sup>h</sup> uma bibar/k <sup>h</sup> oma bibar	Flowers are cooked with traditional cuisine like <i>ɔnla</i> , <i>eŋk<sup>h</sup>ur iŋk<sup>h</sup>ri</i> .
42.	muisuŋ	Tender shoot is eaten cooked.
43.	manimuni p <sup>h</sup> isa	Whole part of the plant is edible.
44.	manimuni gidir	Whole part of the plant is edible.
45.	sila asigur	Young leaves and shoots are eaten as a mixed vegetable. It has medicinal properties too.
46.	basik <sup>h</sup> i bibar	Flower is cooked with <i>ɔnla</i> . It is bitter in taste.
47.	sɔnap <sup>h</sup> uli	Whole part of the plant is eaten as mixed vegetable. It has medicinal properties too.
48.	rup <sup>h</sup> ap <sup>h</sup> uli	Whole part of the plant is eaten. It contains medicinal properties.
49.	k <sup>h</sup> unt <sup>h</sup> ai nara	It tastes bitter. Its green fresh fruit is eaten by making chutney and added into traditional cuisine <i>ɔnla</i> as an ingredient.
50.	zabraŋ/mezeŋga	The aromatic leaves are cooked with meat. Its fruits also used as a spice in traditional cuisine like <i>sɔbai</i> <i>k<sup>h</sup>arui</i> .
51.	diŋk <sup>h</sup> ija	Its young frond is circinate, which is eaten cooked.
53.	bugruŋ/bugreŋ	Tender twig is eaten as vegetable.
54.	aznaj/azinaj	It is a kind of aquatic plant. Its flower is eaten fried.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
55.	t <sup>h</sup> aigir	Fruit is eaten cooked as well as raw. It also used for medicinal purposes.
56.	k <sup>h</sup> ambrenḡa/k <sup>h</sup> ur dui	Fruit is eaten as vegetable and can be eaten raw.
57.	ḡoḡgar t <sup>h</sup> aisib	Fruit is eaten as vegetable.
58.	luunt <sup>h</sup> i/lont <sup>h</sup> i	Young shoot and leaves are eaten as mixed vegetable. It is also added into onla, a traditional dish. It tastes mildly bitter.
59.	k <sup>h</sup> aila	Its fruit is eaten as vegetable. It has a bitter taste.
60.	gunjri	Fruit is eaten as vegetable. It tastes slightly sour.
61.	k <sup>h</sup> unt <sup>h</sup> ainara	Fruit is eaten as vegetable. It tastes bitter.
62.	t <sup>h</sup> elḡoḡp <sup>h</sup> a	Tender shoots and leaves are eaten as a mixed vegetable. It is commonly found growing in a cultivated area.
63.	oḡoḡdor	Tender leaves and petioles are eaten as vegetable.
64.	but <sup>h</sup> ua	Tender twig is eaten as vegetable.
65.	lap <sup>h</sup> a Saik <sup>h</sup> o	Leaves are eaten as a vegetable. It tastes sour.
66.	k <sup>h</sup> ant <sup>h</sup> al	Young fruit is used as vegetable. Moreover, the seeds of ripe fruit are eaten by roasting, boiling and it is added to many dishes as a mixed vegetable.
67.	k <sup>h</sup> urdui/k <sup>h</sup> ambrenḡa/gereb	Fruit is eaten as a vegetable. It also eaten raw.
68.	hanḡsu ap <sup>h</sup> a	Tender shoots are eaten as vegetable.

### 2.1.2 Cultivated vegetables:

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
1.	muith <sup>h</sup> a	Its leaves and fruits are eaten as vegetable. It is sour in taste.
2.	muith <sup>h</sup> a guza	Leaves and fruits are eaten as vegetable. It tastes slightly sour.
3.	p <sup>h</sup> at <sup>h</sup> u	Tender shoot and leaves are eaten as vegetable. Moreover, it is preserved by drying, which is known as <i>narzi</i> in Bodo.
4.	lap <sup>h</sup> a	Tender shoots and leaves are eaten as vegetable.
5.	muip <sup>h</sup> rai	Young shoot and leaves are eaten as vegetable. It is a kind of creeper.
6.	lai	Leaves are eaten either cooked or raw.
7.	besor	Young leaves eaten as a vegetable.
8.	mula	The whole plant is edible.
9.	k <sup>h</sup> an <sup>k</sup> rik <sup>h</sup> ola	The tender twigs and fruits are eaten cooked as vegetable.
10.	lao	Young leaves, shoots, and fruits are eaten as vegetable. After the festival of <i>buisagu</i> , it is not consumed by the Bodos as it becomes salty in taste.
11.	k <sup>h</sup> umbra	The fruit is eaten as vegetable. In addition, In making of fermented fish a mature k <sup>h</sup> umbra can be used instead of taro.
12.	zuguunar	Tender leaf, shoot, and fruit are eaten as vegetable.
13.	t <sup>h</sup> aibeṅ	Fruits are eaten either cooked or raw. Young leaves are also cooked with onla.
14.	daṅa	The leaves and stems are used as vegetable.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
15.	p <sup>h</sup> ant <sup>h</sup> ao	Fruits are eaten as vegetable.
16.	t <sup>h</sup> alir daok <sup>h</sup> a	Unripe fruits are used as vegetable.
17.	at <sup>h</sup> iya t <sup>h</sup> alir	The innermost part of this species of banana trunk is eaten as a vegetable. The banana inflorescence which is called <i>t<sup>h</sup>alir muik<sup>h</sup>un</i> among the Bodos is edible as well. It is also used in making of <i>k<sup>h</sup>ardwi/k<sup>h</sup>arui</i> . Though it is a wild-type species of banana, it is cultivated in a large scale.
18.	mudump <sup>h</sup> ul/ muut <sup>h</sup> ru	Flowers and fruits are used as vegetable.
19.	sɔbai	One of the popular dishes among the Bodos is <i>sɔbai k<sup>h</sup>arui</i> . Mostly, it is cooked in a special occasions.
20.	sɔbai bima	Tender pods are eaten cooked and raw as well.
21.	dao meowai	Young twigs are eaten as a vegetable. It also used as veterinary medicine among the Bodos.
22.	udashi	Fruits are eaten cooked. Moreover, a small amount of tender leaves are added in traditional dish <i>ɔnla</i> to make it bitter in flavor.
24.	t <sup>h</sup> a guna	Young leaves and shoots are used as a leafy vegetable and its tuber is also eaten boiled.
25.	t <sup>h</sup> a ganda	It is a kind of root vegetable. Its bulbils also eaten either boiled or steamed.
26.	muut <sup>h</sup> a bangal	Leaves are eaten as a vegetable. It tastes mildly sour when it is young. But, the taste of mature leaves is mildly sour and bitter.



Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
27.	gonggar d <sup>h</sup> undiya/k <sup>h</sup> asi dara/k <sup>h</sup> asi hat <sup>h</sup> ai	Its aromatic leaves are added into many Bodo cuisines.

## 2.2 Ethno-plants used as traditional medicine:

Most of the edible plant used as vegetables contains medicinal property. In the Bodo society, there is a traditional practice of collecting one hundred and one plants on the day of *sankranti* and consumed as vegetable which is called *guk<sup>h</sup>a-guk<sup>h</sup>ui*. It is believed that, consuming this mixed vegetable helps to get rid of several diseases. From pre-historic era, the Bodos have been used many plants to prevent from many diseases, either it is for human or domesticated animal. It is natural to assume that the ancestor have been acquired the knowledge regarding the uses of plants with many trial and error processes and has been passed on from generation to generation by oral means. It is noteworthy to mention that, some of the plants used as medicine are confined with traditional beliefs. e.g. It is believed that, making friendship with the plant called *azinaj* can cured a stye(*azinaj*). Now a day, it is rare to see but older generation can recalled how they benefited by doing this practice. Here, in the following table, plants used for medicinal purposes are listed below with their ethnic name and their uses in different context.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
1.	th <sup>h</sup> aigir	Fruit is eaten either raw or by making soup as medicine for the treatment of common cold.
2.	daok <sup>h</sup> a k <sup>h</sup> amp <sup>h</sup> lai	Paste of steamed fruit is used for the treatment of cracked heels.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
3..	guma at <sup>h</sup> a/ hat <sup>h</sup> abagri/ raṇadaduli	Young shoot is eaten cooked with local koi fish as medicine for the lactation insufficiency. The quantity of the fish is varied depending on the gender of the infant. For the baby boy total five fishes are given. On the other hand, six fishes are given for the baby girl.
4.	burit <sup>h</sup> ok <sup>h</sup> on/jam alak <sup>h</sup> uti	Juice of stems is used to cure painful urination and stomach trouble. Moreover, the paste of stems is layered on the forehead to reduce the fever.
5.	k <sup>h</sup> ip <sup>h</sup> ibenduṅ	Tender shoot and leaves are eaten boiled to cure stomach trouble.
6.	t <sup>h</sup> aik <sup>h</sup> a	Sun-dried slices of fruit are used for the treatment of dysentery.
7.	nabik <sup>h</sup> i	Juice of whole plant is used as medicine to cure stomach trouble.
8.	daogaṅ zula	The paste of leaves is used for treating skin rash and swelling cause by insect stings. The paste also used to cure ringworms. The leaves are also directly rubbed on the infected area.
9.	adi diga	The paste of leaves is used for the treatment of pain and swelling cause by bee sting.
10.	ɔdal/ɔdla	The bark is useful for the treatment of skin diseases
11.	aso bilai	The boiled water with leaves is used in bathing to cure jaundice (amai munnai). It is also consumable.
12.	p <sup>h</sup> aruk <sup>h</sup> ia	Leaves are eaten cooked with fish to boost breast milk supply.

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Bodo Name</b>	<b>Uses</b>
13.	zəlɔŋga bant <sup>h</sup> u	Young shoots are eaten cooked to cure fever, cough and jaundice.
14.	t <sup>h</sup> aso gusum	The sap of t <sup>h</sup> aso gusum is used as an instant remedy to stop bleeding on fresh cuts.
15.	t <sup>h</sup> a guna	Young shoots and leaves are eaten cooked to increase breast milk supply.
16.	muusuo k <sup>h</sup> umun/ daok <sup>h</sup> i siliŋ	Leaves are used as remedy to stop bleeding on fresh cut.
17.	usumui/zari	Flower is used as remedy to cure mouth ulcer and toothache.
18.	dao mewai	The paste of leaves is used to fix the bone fracture of roaster/hen.
19.	zaik <sup>h</sup> lɔŋ	It is used to cure skin infection. The leaves are crushed along with saliva and applied on infected skin.
20.	gɔit <sup>h</sup> alu/sɔbsini	Juice of Rhizome is taken for the treatment of painful urination.
21.	muit <sup>h</sup> a baŋgal	Leaves are eaten as vegetable to beat the sun in summer season.
22.	sɔnap <sup>h</sup> uli	Juice of whole plant is consumed to cure headache. Moreover, to reduced headache the paste prepared from whole plant is layered on the forehead.
23.	t <sup>h</sup> ainasi	Extracted juice of rhizome is consumed as medicine to cure asthma.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
24.	daosa muuk <sup>h</sup> reb/muuk <sup>h</sup> -ra asi	It is useful for the treatment of wound. The paste of leaves is applied around the edges of wound for instant remedies. It should not be applied directly on infected skin. Apart from this, the root is also used as medicine to cure toothache. The roots are boiled in salted water and this boiled lukewarm water is taken in the mouth for a while for the treatment of the toothache. There is a belief that the plant should be uprooted in one breath.
25.	dumru k <sup>h</sup> aosa/t <sup>h</sup> aik <sup>h</sup> rao	Young leaves are eaten cooked with chicken and fish to increase breast milk supply.
26.	ɔrk <sup>h</sup> am/ɔr zumudui	Paste of leaves is applied on the burned skin.
27.	muider sundai	Its flower is used as remedy to stye (azinaj).It is sprinkled directly on infected area. However, few drops of flower extract are put into eye instead of sprinkling.
28.	bɔs bip <sup>h</sup> anɲ/ bis bip <sup>h</sup> anɲ	Its aromatic leaves are used in bathing an infant with lukewarm water. Along with this manimuni, daosri athinɲ t <sup>h</sup> uluɲsi and some raw milk also added. It helps to get rid of skin diseases. In addition, extract of rhizome is taken to get relieve from stomach trouble and garland made from a piece of rhizome is given to wear an infant to get relieved from fever and cough.
29.	t <sup>h</sup> iŋk <sup>h</sup> li k <sup>h</sup> alai	The soaked water from seeds is taken for the treatment of stomach trouble.
30.	maozi k <sup>h</sup> uuma/ rip <sup>h</sup> iuzi bip <sup>h</sup> anɲ	Young shoots are eaten cooked as a medicine to cure fever.

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
31.	sizwo	It is useful for paronchiya (abui k <sup>h</sup> orɔ zanaj). A piece of pith of stem is inserted in infected area to get rid of it.
32.	lunt <sup>hi</sup> /lont <sup>hi</sup>	Leaves are eaten for the treatment of chickenpox. Worth mentioning that, the term lunt <sup>hi</sup> /lont <sup>hi</sup> defines the meaning of chickenpox in Bodo.
33.	sanmiziq/zabsri	It is used to cure white patches on skin locally known as 'bogasrum'. Its leaves and stems are rubbed directly on the infected area.
34.	k <sup>h</sup> ansiŋsa/d <sup>h</sup> orɔ m p <sup>h</sup> ul	Leaves extract is used for the treatment of nosebleed.
35.	dɔmdɔmɔk <sup>h</sup> a	It is a wild variety of Balsam. The paste prepared from leaves is useful for the treatment of wound and cracked heels. It also reduced burning sensation.
37.	gɔŋgar t <sup>h</sup> isib	A piece of bark of k <sup>h</sup> arɔk <sup>h</sup> andaj, a piece of root of both gɔŋgar t <sup>h</sup> aisib and aguurs <sup>h</sup> it <sup>h</sup> a is inserted into cocoon of silkworm. Then, a garland is made from it and is given to put on neck to get relieve from jaundice.(amai mwnnai)
38.	k <sup>h</sup> arɔk <sup>h</sup> andaj	
39.	aguurs <sup>h</sup> it <sup>h</sup> a	
40.	saldaok <sup>h</sup> umi	It is used as insecticide.
41.	sɔmp <sup>h</sup> ari/sɔmp <sup>h</sup> reŋ	Fresh young leaves are eaten raw for dysentery.
42.	p <sup>h</sup> enail k <sup>h</sup> uga	It is used for the treatment of jaundice.(amai mwnnai)
43.	aznaj/azinaj	It is believe that, making friendship with this plant helps in getting rid of stye (azinaj).

Sl. No.	Bodo Name	Uses
44.	sit <sup>h</sup> aona	Paste prepared from leaves is given to pig for the treatment of cough.
45.	k <sup>h</sup> ariduoba bip <sup>h</sup> aŋ/laok <sup>h</sup> ar bip <sup>h</sup> aŋ	Bark is taken for the treatment of stomach trouble.

### 2.3 Ethno-plants used in the rituals:

The Bodo peoples are observed various rituals. In these rituals some ethno-plants have a vital role. It is observed during the religious ceremonies, rites and customs. Some ethno-plants are regarded sacred. A brief description and observation has been thrown into light through the following analysis.

#### 2.3.1 Ethno-plants used in bat<sup>h</sup>uuu religion:

The *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion is an ethnic religion of the Bodo community. The Bodos have been practicing the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion since the remote past. This religion is truly connected to the nature. There is a belief that *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu buurai*, the supreme God has created the world with the five elements i.e. *bar*(air), *ha*(earth), *dui*(water), *ɔr* (fire) and *ɔk<sup>h</sup>raŋ* (sky) which is considered as the five vital principle of the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion as well as the five power of the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu buurai*. The importance of ethno-plants in the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion is to be noticed. In *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion there is a belief, values in every used of ethno-plants. In the following the uses and beliefs of plants associated with *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion are given below with their ethnic name.

##### (a) *sizuuu*:

The *sizuuu* is regarded as holy plant. It plays an important role in the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion. This plant is considered as a symbol of *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu buurai* among the devotees of the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion. It is believed that the *sizuuu* plant is the first creation of *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu buurai*

among the plants. The *sizuu* plant is planted at the north-east corner of the courtyard. Worth mentioning that, the term */sizuu/* is composed with two lexical i.e. */si/(soul)* and */zuiu/ (high)* which means the supreme soul.

**(b) zatra-si:**

This plant is also considered as holy plant by the Bodos. In *bat<sup>h</sup>uu* religion the *zatra-si* plant is considered as a holy plant and as well as a Laxmi, a Goddess of wealth in many geographical area. The tender shoot of this plant is used to sprinkle the holy water. This plant is also planted towards left of the *sizuu* plant in *bat<sup>h</sup>uu bit<sup>h</sup>a* or near by the *bat<sup>h</sup>uusali*.

**(c) t<sup>h</sup>uluṅsi**

This plant is regarded as holy plant by the Bodos. It is also a most essential element used for the religious purposes among the Hindus. In *bat<sup>h</sup>uu* religion also, it is considered as a sacred plant. The tender shoot of this plant is used to sprinkle the holy water. It is planted towards the right side of the *sizuu* plant in *bat<sup>h</sup>uu bit<sup>h</sup>a*.

**(d) dubri hagra:**

This plant is also regarded as holy plant by the Bodos. In *bat<sup>h</sup>uu* religion its tender shoot is used to sprinkle the holy water instead of *t<sup>h</sup>uluṅsi*.

**(e) k<sup>h</sup>aṅk<sup>h</sup>la:**

This is a sacred grass as regarded by the Bodos. The *k<sup>h</sup>aṅk<sup>h</sup>la* plant is mostly used in establishment of *bat<sup>h</sup>uusali*, *k<sup>h</sup>erai hunai*, and traditional marriage of the Bodos. The eighteen pair of *khaṅkhla* plant is put towards the eastern edge of the *buisumut<sup>h</sup>ini ali* (*the way of the earth*) accordingly. It is to be mentioned that in some geographical area, only sixteen pair of *k<sup>h</sup>aṅk<sup>h</sup>la* is utilize in the same. This plant is used to symbolize the men and women bound by the complexities and mysteries of the world.

**(f) uuua:**

There is a massive use of *uuua* or bamboo plant in *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion. The *sizuuu* plant is fenced with eighteen pair of small bamboo post and it is fastened with five pair of bamboo strips which is called the *banduba*. Again, three small bamboo strips which are known as *sirin* are fastened at the top along with the five *bandu*. The eighteen pair of small bamboo post signifies the deities of the Bodos. They are respectively as - *munsin<sup>s</sup>in<sup>s</sup> burai-munsin<sup>s</sup>in<sup>s</sup> burui*, *si burai-si burui*, *aham burai-aham burui*, *ihiu burai- ihu burui*, *hap<sup>h</sup>ao burai-hap<sup>h</sup>ao burui*, *k<sup>h</sup>urija burai-ku<sup>h</sup>urija burui*, *m<sup>h</sup>ela burai-m<sup>h</sup>ela burui*, *bulli burai-bulli burui*, *s<sup>h</sup>ng burai-s<sup>h</sup>ng burui*, *k<sup>h</sup>uila burai-k<sup>h</sup>uila burui*, *agra<sup>h</sup> burai- agra<sup>h</sup> burui*, *zumun burai-zumun burui*, *hazu burai-hazu burui*, *g<sup>h</sup>ngar burai-g<sup>h</sup>ngar burui*, *r<sup>h</sup>z<sup>h</sup>ng burai-r<sup>h</sup>z<sup>h</sup>ng burui*, *hasu<sup>h</sup> burai hasu<sup>h</sup> burui*, *amao burai-amao burui*, and *mainao burai-mainao burui*. They all are worshipped along with the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu burai*.

By folding the three bamboo post of the front (signifying *munsin<sup>s</sup>in<sup>s</sup> burai-munsin<sup>s</sup>in<sup>s</sup> burui*, *si burai-si burui*, and *mainao burai-mainao burui*) a form of *daot<sup>h</sup>ub bik<sup>h</sup>a* has been made which is symbolized the soul of the human being.

The eighteen pair of *maya je*, which is put in the eastern edge of the *buisumut<sup>h</sup>ini ali* is also made by the small strips of the bamboo.

In fencing the the *sizuuu* plant only a piece of bamboo plant is used and the process should be accomplished within a day. The species of bamboo used in fencing is called *uuua gubui* or *mak<sup>h</sup>al uuua* in the Bodo language.

A small kind of bamboo called *uuua t<sup>h</sup>ere* has been used in the time of *k<sup>h</sup>erai*. The two upper portion of *uuua t<sup>h</sup>ere* is erected in front of the *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* alter which is considered as *s<sup>h</sup>nani za<sup>h</sup>kl<sup>h</sup>a* (golden ladder) among the devotees. It is believed that the supreme God *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu burai* descend from heaven through *s<sup>h</sup>nani za<sup>h</sup>kl<sup>h</sup>a* and occupied the place in *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* alter.



**(g) t<sup>h</sup>alir bip<sup>h</sup>aŋ:**

Most of the part of banana plant (*t<sup>h</sup>alir bip<sup>h</sup>aŋ*) is used for many purposes in *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion. The top side of the leaf (*laizuu*) is used for offering the prashad to *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu burai*. Moreover, the leaf of banana is cut in a particular shape which is called *laisi* is used to offer the prashad to the eighteen deities. The fruit is also used as a prashad in *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion.

In *garza p<sup>h</sup>uza*, there is a need of banana plant. A boat is made with the trunk of banana and small house also made over it with the bark of banana plant. The idol of evil god & goddess (*baherani mudaj*) made with the bark of banana plant is placed inside the house and letting them float away in the river or a stream. It is supposed that, by doing this practice the diseases may vanish from the village and good things will come to the villagers in near future.

**(h) gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui (areca catechu and piper betle):**

There is a significant role of *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* (*betel nut and betel leaf*) in the Bodo society. These have been used in social and rituals practices of the Bodos since the remote past. In the practice of *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* religion a pair of *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* is offered to *burai bat<sup>h</sup>uuu*. Moreover, it is offered in the name of eighteen deities by cutting it in small pieces.

**(i) t<sup>h</sup>aigir:**

The rind of *t<sup>h</sup>aigir* (*elephant apple*) is basically used in *k<sup>h</sup>ati-gasa* to light the lamp. In the last day of the Assamese Asin month, the Goddess of wealth, *Laxmi/Mainao* is worshipped for the betterment of the paddy field. On this day, in the very evening, earthen lamps are lit at the paddy field to get rid from the insects as well as the earthen lamps are light at the *bat<sup>h</sup>uusali*, the granary, the shed, and the backyard of the house(*bari*).

It is worth mentioning that, in explaining the five philosophy of *bat<sup>h</sup>uuu*, the five rinds

of *t<sup>h</sup>aigir* is mentioned in the *muunt<sup>h</sup>ur* (*mantra*). The following is given below-

*t<sup>h</sup>aigirni k<sup>h</sup>ɔŋga k<sup>h</sup>ɔŋba*  
*sizuuuni sirija siriba*  
*sip<sup>h</sup>uŋni guduŋa guduŋba*  
*bathuuuni bandua banduba*  
*borɔ buraini raoabu p<sup>h</sup>oŋba.*<sup>26</sup>

(*T<sup>h</sup>aigir has five rinds*  
*The sizuu has five ribs*  
*Sip<sup>h</sup>uŋ has five holes*  
*The bat<sup>h</sup>uuu has five knots*  
*The old borɔ man has also five holy words.*)

**(j) maj:**

The plant *maj* (Rice/Paddy) is regarded as a *mainao*, a Goddess of wealth in the Bodo community. *mainao* is kept in a pot, called *maiwendu* and it is placed in the north east corner of the kitchen. The place where *mainao* is placed and worshiped is called *mainao bindu* in the Bodo community. Moreover, a granary of paddy (*maibakhri*) also worshipped as a place of *mainao burui*. As a symbol of steadiness a piece of stone is kept in *maiwendu* and *maibakhri* so that *mainao burui*, a Goddess of wealth stays forever in the family.

**(k) muk<sup>h</sup>una/luk<sup>h</sup>una:**

In the Bodo society there is a tradition of offering *zuu* (a traditional rice beer) to *burai bat<sup>h</sup>uuu* and other deities. *amao*, a starter cake prepared with rice powder and leaves of the plants is a most essential ingredient in preparation of *zuu*. The leaves *muk<sup>h</sup>una/luk<sup>h</sup>una* is one of the ingredients used in the preparation *amao*.

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<sup>26</sup> . Basumatary, Rupnath and Hazowary, Mangalsingh. Eds. *Bandwba Bathou*. Kokrajhar,(Assam): Bodo Publication Board, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 1994.

**(l) dɔŋp<sup>h</sup>aŋ rak<sup>h</sup>eb:**

Its young leaves are also used in preparation of *amao*. It is sweet in taste. In India it is observed that a number of plants are considered as a sacred plant and utilized in many religious purposes. In terms of *bat<sup>h</sup>uu* religion also, the ethno-plants play a vital role. It has been used and given importance since the remote past. There is a value, beliefs, in every used of ethno-plants. The authenticity of the ethnic *bat<sup>h</sup>uu* religion of the Bodo will not be remained without those ethno-plants.

**2.3.2 Ethno-plants used in wedding rituals:****(a) t<sup>h</sup>alir bip<sup>h</sup>aŋ:**

This plant is considered as an auspicious plant among the Bodos. Its trunk is erected as a welcoming gate in the Bodo wedding. Its bark also used in serving the food in social ceremonies. Moreover, in the olden days, its leaves are used to make ceremonial pavilion.

**(b) gambari:**

*gambari k<sup>h</sup>amp<sup>h</sup>lai*, a kind of traditional stool without nail made with *gambari* wood is an essential part of the Bodo wedding. In welcoming the bride in bridegroom's house the bride is asked to stand on *gambari k<sup>h</sup>amp<sup>h</sup>lai* and her feet is washed with water by sister-in-law.

In traditional wedding of the Bodos, a custom called '*hat<sup>h</sup>asuni k<sup>h</sup>urnai*' have been observed where bride prepares a food consist of rice and traditional dish *ɔnla* without coloring agent and serves to the groom and the rest present in wedding ceremony. In this ceremony a pair of wooden ladles called *hat<sup>h</sup>a* is must to keep the food. It is basically made with *gambari* wood.

**(c) indi bip<sup>h</sup>aŋ:**

In Bodo wedding there is a ritual ceremony called *nirik<sup>h</sup> bəʂənai*. It is performed as a symbol of snapping the relationship of bride with their family. In this ceremony groom's father offer a pair of either *t<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>a zɔra* (a pair of coins) or *indi zɔra* (a pair of indi seeds) to bride's father. In some geographical area, the bride's father doesn't take the *t<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>a zɔra* or *indi zɔra* as it is supposed to mean selling their daughter. On the contrary, in some area the *indi zɔra* is given as a symbol of fertility as it is easy to germinate.

**(d) laihulai:**

It is a kind of wild plant having broad leaves. In the olden days, apart from banana leaf and bark of banana (*t<sup>h</sup>alir dənai k<sup>h</sup>əŋ*) *laihulai* was used in serving the food in social ceremonies like wedding, *uŋk<sup>h</sup>am guirlui zanai*(feasting new rice) etc. It is worth mentioning that the bowl made with *laihulai* or any other leafs is called *abuith<sup>h</sup>əna* in Bodo.

**(e) gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui:**

Besides being used in religious rituals, the *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* is immensely used in wedding rituals of the Bodos. In inviting the guest to the wedding ceremony *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* is used as a substitute for an invitation card. It is a traditional way of inviting a guest which is prevailing till today in the Bodo society. In Bodo, there is a pre wedding-ceremony called '*biban laŋnaj*' where bridegroom's side visits to the bride's home by carrying earthen pots full of rice beer and bundles of *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui*(betel nut and betel leaf). These substances are tie in two different sticks with thin slices of bamboo. One is called *zuu biban* and another is *gɔj p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>uini biban* respectively. In *gɔj-phat<sup>h</sup>uini biban* '*thaose goj*' (consist of a total of nine betel nuts) and *mut<sup>h</sup>ase p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* (consist of a total of twenty betel leafs) is tie up on a stick. These substances are brought to the bride's home carrying on shoulder by two men called *barɔlaŋp<sup>h</sup>a*. Along with them two married women also go to participate in this ceremony. These married women are called *buirat<sup>h</sup>i*. They pay respect to the bride's parents and relatives on behalf of

bridegroom's family by offering each of them *t<sup>h</sup>aose gɔj* and *mut<sup>h</sup>ase p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui*. Further, the *buirat<sup>h</sup>i* cut the *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* and distribute it to all the members participating in this ceremony. After the celebration, the back side of the *gɔj* (*gɔj k<sup>h</sup>it<sup>h</sup>uu*) is thrown to roof of *nɔma nɔ* (*main house*) and one of the sticks where *biban* was carried is left by the bridegroom's side in bride's home. On the day of wedding also *gɔj-p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ui* is offered to the guest.