

CHAPTER-V

FOOD PRESERVATION AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

5.1 Introduction

Community customs believes and genres show their strong stabilizer systems. They are always in a peace-loving mode that they learnt from the behaviour of nature itself. A reflection of folk literature rendered in English is that they live in the country where the queues of areca nuts, jackfruit, mango, bamboo beside the cool streams beneath the line of hills visible to all sides, here are no strangeness all around and no death of this land. The nature of human behaviour is created with the geographical location that is set up and preserved for survival. Traditional puja of the Bodos has a number of plants animals, and other offering materials that are available in our nature.

The Deuris of the community offer their worshipping deities according to their tradition of folk beliefs, the pig, chicken, goat, egg, pigeon, banana, coconut, areca-nut and areca-leaf, husked rice, and rice beer. The offering materials are collected from the community households or otherwise available in their society. Food materials offered to their worshipped deities are specially preserved in the name of particular deities to be offered on the particular day and with age-old rituals.

There is a tradition of donayao maninanwi dwnnai among the community. The oja or during whom they believe them as a medicine man or village priest keeps a pair of areca-nut and leaf of its and flowers are kept in the name of the particular deity to offer in a day to come. It is done to get relief from the deity or evil spirit of different jungles, water spirits, etc. Mwdai raisongnai is such a type of tradition among the community. This means the deity whom they wish to offer is assured to pay or offer by telling with the help of chanting mantras.

Seasonal, as well as agricultural festivals have the use of different food plants and vegetables. Baisagu, Magw, Kati gasha these three major agricultural festivals have the use of different ritualistic food and edible plants acquired from homesteads or jungles near to them. Besides singing, dancing, and merry-making there is a great use of food items in taken with certain ritualistic manners.

A dish prepared with a minimum of fourteen herbal plants is eaten in Bodo households a day prior to Bwisagu in some places of the Bodo villages. They have habits of gwkha gwkhwi Janai or eating bitter and sour tasted wild vegetables on the day of Sankrantis

or the day before the first day of the New Year, Baisakh. In some places of Assam Bodos on the first day of the beginning year, they also consume one hundred and one vegetables in believe of strengthening their immune system. Sat tithi mwigong janai in Bodo families is an extensive meal on the seventh day of this seasonal festival.

Its observance breaks the boundary of family and now is in ceremonial habit and merriment in Bodo community. Women in search of these vegetables set out for forests taking baskets on their waists is an expression of culture. In such situation they express their anxieties and happiness in open forests by singing and dancing in groups. Such performances are parts of their folklore. They also recall the knowledge scattered in the flora and fauna available in the forest. Their preparation, vegetable combinations in cooking recipes is discussed amongst the women who go for plucking herbs and vegetables. Apart from the collection of vegetables they cultivate their own necessary vegetables in their fertile lands. Bodo women take vital role in preserving food and cultivating vegetables.

The Kati Bihu is celebrated without gorgeous feasting as the season lacks available food materials. Preservation of paddy crops by lighting earthen lamps on dillenia indica clove with mustard oil and white threads is widely current in the society. They believe that the lighting ceremony increases the paddy and from that day onwards new rice comes out of its buds. Besides the fruiting plants in the orchard, mwsu goli, and Bakhri are lighted with earthen lamps.

The Magh Bihu is another feasting festival celebrated immediately after the harvesting of their Maisali mai season. They bring their bundles of mwthi in locked up as danggri and preserve inside a tent or open in orderly. Those danggris are processed to separate seeds from straw by marahwnai and preserved in bakhri. They offer puja to the mother of prosperity Mainao wishing their paddy like white gourds, not the others unsteady fruitless paddy plants. They always try to make the paddy cultivation best of the best in comparison to others.

Amthisua a special occasion of holiness is observed from the seventh day of the Acar month of the Hindu Calendar and it lasts for a week. Digging soil, ploughing land, cutting down a fruiting tree, fishing for food and entrance into the granary are restricted in this week. The week is considered to be impure due to presumed menstruation of the Mother Earth.

The rituals observed in the time of birth, marriage, and death are connected with ritualistic plants. The use of khathimala, basil leaf, dubri hagra, awla mairong, khun, daodwi, thalir bilai, bibar, dhup khathi in the birth ritual are mentionable. The marriage and death rituals have the use of preserved food materials in its use.

Bodo food consumption habit relates always fresh and preserved for delicacy in their daily food. The preservation of food has a vital role to meet the scarcity as well as delicacy

food. Food preservation is an action or a method designed to maintain food at a desired level of quality. Safeguarding food is an act of processes through which its featured properties are saved for future use in its own level of assets without spoilage or damage. The community people preserve their surplus food for the future. Preserved food materials are used while they are not able to go for hunting and gathering or in procuring from agricultural works.

The cooked foods are those which are processed by heating or preparing materials to become edible. The cooked foods are preserved for a short period of time whenever surplus food is prepared. They preserve cooked food in containers on the water to freeze it. Sometimes it is also preserved in a winnowing place covered with a strained pot to have open-air and free from insects. These methods are temporarily made to save food spoilage in the family.

5.2 How they acquire raw food

Raw food materials are the food particles that are collected from environment; it may be from agriculture, hunting, fishing or other means of acquisitions. Seeds, cereals and pulses like besor (mustard seed), jukham (maize), khala dali (yellow pulse which is locally cultivated) mai (rice), mothor (pea/pisum sativum), mugu (mung bean/vigna radiate), musur dali (lentil), rohor (a kind of pulse), sobai (urad bean, vigna mungo) are acquired from the cultivation. Some of the vegetables are cultivated and collected from edible wild plant of the local jungles.

Meat consumed by the people are of wild animals like mwi, ssha, jahamalai, newlai, enjor, mwfwu, daomasar, and reared animals' pig, fowl, duck, pigeon, etc. They have a habit of community hunting and fishing in the nearby forests, lakes, and rivers. They prefer dwelling nearby jungles and lakes for easily collectible food materials.

Preservation

Food decomposition and spoilage occur after it has been produced for a variety of reasons. The deterioration of food due to microbial becomes unfit for use of human consumption. The food commodities have to be saved from insects, rodents, cockroaches, heat, and other normal causes.

Basically, insects are responsible for the damage and destruction of food grains, fruits, vegetables meat and fish. These food materials may get worsened due to over dryness, coldness, and humidity in a natural atmosphere. To keep these food materials for a long time some particular processes are employed to preserve them.

The preservation methods employed by the community people are as follows:

1. Asar banainai (Pickling), 2. Athal ao dwnthumnai 3. Balayao thinai 4. Fwrannai (Drying) 5. Hasungao dwnnai (Tubing) 6. Hayao phobnai (underground preservation) 7. Injurao Sithabnai (Pasting) 8. Kharwiao dwnnai (Preserve on Alkali) 9. Laikhong dwnthumnai (Preservation in leaf/split) 10. Songkhriao dwnnai (Salting) 11. Thofla bwnnai (Packaging) 12. Ukhundwi ao dwnnai (Smoking). The methods employed by the community people are discussed here in brief.

Asar banainai (Pickling)

The raw food materials are sliced or chopped into small pieces and then preserved on oil or without oil it is called acar banainai. This preservation method is employed to preserve sour tasted fruits.

Athal ao dwnthumnai

Athal is bamboo or wooden made ceiling over the oven in the Bodo kitchen to preserve dry leaves, meat, and other spices. This may be built under a roof and over the floor inside the room of a house.

Balayao dwnthumnai

Balayao dwnthumnai is a method of preservation of food. The food materials are dried for a day of sunlight then it is kept inside the dry sand for long days. Sometimes the materials are preserved in the straw for long days. Potatoes, sweet potatoes, the swmli are preserved in this method.

Fwrannai (Drying)

Fwrannai the word is used for the term drying in English. Drying food materials in sunlight or on fire-heat is a process of preservation that helps to keep materials for long days.

Hasungao dwnnai (Tubing)

The method of keeping inside a bamboo tube or wooden hole is a traditional preservation method of the community. It is used to preserve their food material keeping inside it and covered with natural additives without adding chemical substances.

Hayao phobnai (underground preservation)

The soil is dug underground making holes and food materials are placed covering with plant leaves and soil on the upper surface of it. This process is known as Hayao phobnai

or underground food preservation. This process is known as jail hwnai in Goalpara district on the south bank of the great river, the Brahmaputra.

Injurao Sithabnai (Pasting)

This method is applied to preserve seed food like pumpkin seed, bottle gourd seed for food, and cultivation as well. The seed of any fruit is pasted immediately on surfaces after it is taken out from its fruit cell.

Kharwiao dwnnai (Preserve on Alkali)

Kharwi means the alkali in English and dwnnai means preservation. The Kharwiao dwnnai means the preservation of alkali. The process needs the alkali first then a pot to keep the materials. The food materials are first added to alkali then it is put into an earthen pot or tube of bamboo then covered with a tight cover of plant leaves.

Laikhong dwnthumnai (Preservation in leaf/split)

The laikhongao dwnnai mean to denote to preserve inside plant bark or cell. Preservation of food inside the plant by keeping it inside the banana plant is a kind of preservation method. Betel-leaf is preserved in the banana split to keep it fresh for a long period.

Songkhriao dwnnai (Salting)

Songkhri ao dwnnai denotes mean salting preservation. The food materials are kept inside the salt and preserved for the future.

Thofla bwnnai (Packaging)

Where the food materials are preserved in the thofla or packaged form is called the thoflayao dwnnai. The dry leafy vegetables are preserved in thofla or packaged in clothes for long days.

Ukhundwi ao dwnnai (Smoking)

Ukhundwi ao dwnnai is a method of calling smoking preservation. In this preservation, food materials are kept over the fire and the smoke touches whenever fire has blown on the oven for cooking purposes.

5.3 Vegetable Preservation

The vegetable consumed by this community is commonly gathered from wild or acquired in the various seasons. They mostly gather vegetables as much as they need for the meals of the day. Excess collection is restricted and they think the collection of food materials from nature is a sin for the community. Bodos believe that the mother earth is disappointed with the misuse of natural plants it may harm their generation. Earlier they thought that everything should not be collected surplus from nature except their needs. They think that food plants are to be preserved in nature for the future.

For preservation, if such vegetables they preserve rare species plants in their homesteads. The plants fresh preserved in their homesteads are jwglauri, gonger dundia, podina, phosotia, dao mewa, ilashi, tezpat, nwrsing, burahud, haijeng, simphri, which are picked by them in immediate need as ingredients curry preparation. They hunt for food and sport in the jungle and nearby paddy fields. They acquire from animal hunting meat from rabbit, mongoose, rat, deer, jungle pig, and turtle

Every community has its own methods and kinds of vegetables especially consumed and preservation methods. These traditions are prevalent among them, the eating jute leaves father or narzi wngkhri, kharong khandai bibar, Shefali bibar, mula gwran, etc are peculiar to the Bodo community. The seasonal vegetables are save in off-seasons so those are used after long day preservation . The Bodos have a unique type of preservation system of vegetable. Followings are be mentioned :

Alu Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Potato)

Alu the potato is a tuber vegetable cultivated by the community people. This vegetable is preserved in three ways-(1) Athalao dwnnai (2) Bala Hayao dwnnai or sanding and (3) thumnai or packaging in Kho or bamboo split package. The unheard cleaned potatoes are separated and kept on the bamboo ceiling covering paddy strews method is called the athalao dwnthumnai. In this preservation, a ceiling is prepared to keep the vegetable preservation.

The second method of preservation needs sand and surface space for preservation. First, the dry sand is spread on the floor and then the tuber potatoes are poured to preserve in open. The last one thumnai method is preserved in a Kho (bamboo basket pot). Paddy straw is put in the bamboo pot then the potato tubers are poured inside and straws are covered and tighten the bundle. The bundle is kept in a safe dry place for preservation.

Banlu Dwnthumnai (Chilly preservation)

The chilly has pungent tasted spice frequently used as a food ingredient. The spice is of diverse variety though it is categorized into three (i) Banlu Bwddwn, (ii) Banlu deshi (iii) Banlu phagla/Bombra/thobra.

The preservation of these three greater varieties is of different methods. All these are preserved by drying and preserving in a bamboo tube or container. Another method is pickling in bottle by adding mustard oil and salt. And another method is packaging in dry cloth or sack.

Basikha Bibar Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Bashikha flower)

The Basikha bibar has two varieties-red and white. These two varieties of flowers have a good number of medicinal values. The root of basikha/ basigi is used to cure tuberculosis. Besides cough, cold, allergy, and general illness are curable with these flowers. Its parts like leaf, bark, and root all are used in different stomach diseases. The preservation of this flower is made by drying it in hot sunlight. Dried basikha flower is kept in a bamboo tube or in an earthen pot. It is used in scarcity of vegetables in rainy or summer seasons. The fresh flower is mostly available in the month of Fagun and Chaitra (February and March) of the Indian calendar.

Bwigri gwan Dwnthumnai

The dried bwigri is preserved in a bamboo pot hanging from a pole. A processed bwigri is preserved by adding molasses in a glass container. Molasses are boiled in a hot pan and when it comes into liquid form bwigri is added to it and preserved for the future.

Haldwi Dwnthumnai

The tuber haldwi turmeric preservation is made with a process. The tuber is first boiled and then cut into small pieces and dried up in sunlight. The dried turmeric is preserved in a sack or container. It is grounded to powder and used for cooking. The grounded powder is preserved in a bamboo tube or tube of dry bottle gourd fruit.

Jaluk dwnthumnai

Jaluk is a small round shaped green fruit when it is in young. It becomes yellow after ripe and black coloured after drying. It has a tongue-watering pungent taste when eaten. Its leaves are like betel-leaf climbing on areca-nut plants or other plants for creeping. The preservation of jaluk is preserved in two ways (a) soaking in hot water and (b) open drying. The soaking in hot water process of preservation needs a pan full of boiled hot water to soak

a few seconds. After soaking in the hot water the jaluk is lifted out from that and dried in sunlight until it is dried fully. Then those are kept in a dry pot or bamboo tube for its future use. Another method of preservation is dried directly without soaking in water. It is kept in a tube or vacuum pot of Bamboo for future use. Preservation of these spices has highly valuable with its medicinal values as it relieves from cough and cold. It is used in pneumonia medicine like sithorni bori and banlu bidwi/sopkha bidwi. In the winter season, it keeps our throat and body warm when eaten.

Jukham Dwnnai (Maize preservation)

Jukham (maize) is a corn food used for curry and as pop food. The full-grown maize is paired by fastening with its own lover and these are hanged over the kitchen or other free aired place.

Jwgwnar Dwnthumnai (Pumpkin Preservation)

Jwgwnar the pumpkin preservation needs some open dry place for its long day preservation. The only ripen pumpkins are preserved for long days. A dry and winnowing open place is selected to preserve this vegetable fruit. No spotted or wounded pumpkins are preserved for future use.

Khantal Begor dwnthumnai (Jack fruit seed preservation)

Seed of jack fruit is a kind of starchy food that forms delicious recipes as curry, roasted, and as fried item. This seed is just dried and preserved in the strained bamboo pot.

Kharong Khandai Bibar dwnthumnai

Kharong khandai (*Oroxylum Indium*) is a flower vegetable generally eaten preparing as curry or as dry fry. The Bodos of Darrang district call it thukhuna bibar or Kharo khandai bibar. Fresh flowers are collected and made a garland with a bamboo split or a string. Then the garland is dried to remove its water in the sunny light. Dried kharong khandai is preserved in the bamboo pot for future use.

Khiphi bendwng

Khiphi bendwng the creeper plant and its young leave are consumed. The Kamrupia dialectal area pronounces as Phadri Lewa. Phadri means the female gas bluster and the Lewa means the creeper plant. The leaves of this plant are dried and preserved in the

bamboo pot for future use. These leaves are mostly consumed in green, but in different places, it is preserved in dry for its scarcity in off season.

Khobi Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Cabbage)

The preservation of cabbage is easy and no additional material like pot is necessary. The matured cabbage is rooted out from the garden and these are fastened with rope on roots upside down and these are hanged on a bamboo pole in the cowshed or open place. Community people mostly preserved it in the cowsheds over the cows for long days.

Khumbra dwnnai (preservation of white gourd)

The preservation of khumbra (white gourd) may be preserved in two ways-one is in a row and another is by fermentation. It is preserved on the roof of the house or on the ceiling. The fully ripen white gourds are kept on the ceiling; they believe that if any crash or spot is made by hearing on the guard then it may spoil.

So these are kept one by one in an orderly manner. It can be preserved for three or more years, it depends on the care of the family.

On the other mode of preservation, its sponge of khumbra is sliced. Then the khumbra is dried till its moisture is dried up in hot sunlight. Then the slice of khumbra is preserved in a bamboo tube covering the mouth with tree leaves. This tubing preservation is also made in the fish fermentation process. The Khumbra Bwrai or matured old khumbra is very delicious with daola khasi or any fatty meat like duck or pork in the month of Magh and Fagun (January and February). They believe that the white gourd is not eaten in the month of the Bhadra Indian. According the Greogrian calendar, it falls under halves of August and September.

Khwma bibar dwnthumnai

Khwma bibar preservation is the same process as the preservation of sefali and basikha bibar. It is dried and preserved in a bamboo pot. The leaf of khwma bibar has strong itching power. Plucking this flower need carefulness as it has itching power.

Lai Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Lai)

The lai is a leafy vegetable acquired from cultivation. Its leaf is collected from the garden and dried up in sunlight till it is dry. Dry lai vegetables are kept in a bamboo tube or in the earthen pot for future use.

Mai dwnthumnai (rice preservation)

Mai rice is the principal food grain of the Bodo people. They live on rice. The ceremonial cutting of the first sheaf of paddy is done by the head male member the female members of the household take the main part informally invoking and installing the paddy stalk in the granary by prayer songs and offerings.¹³⁶ It is a sign of ritualistic preservation of the rice among the society. Welcoming prayer songs are symbolic preservation of wealth deities in their granary. Cultivator families build their bakhri in the east of the courtyards next to their Nomano.

The bakhri is made of bamboo or wood according to their availability of materials. Bakhri walls are pasted with cow dung to keep this clean and infection-free wall to preserve rice crops. The roof of the bakhri is made of there straw available in the paddy field. Harvested rice is processed into crops, which are dried in sunlight for one or two days according to need. The dried rice is preserved for future use. The rice preserved place is called bakhri the granary in English. Earlier every Bodo family had bakhri in their houses but with the minimization of cultivators, it is reducing in the society. There is also a popular custom of formally ascertain the deity of crops called Lakhimi to the granary.¹³⁷ Instead of Bakhri, now-a-days, they have been preserving in duli which is a traditional large bamboo pot.

Mairong dwnthumnai

Mairong is the form of the mai. The milled and husked rice is called the mairong. Mairong is preserved in every Bodo family. There is no household without preserved mairong. The pot where the mairong is preserved is the maihendw in Bodo society. Maihendw is preserved inside the ishing where they cook for their family. Ishing is one of the holy components of their house where they enter bare foot after washing their feet and hands. Outsiders and non-blood-related persons are not allowed to enter this part of cooking.

The preserved rice and other properties are treated as Mainao in the maihendw. Bodos offer nineteen types of Garzas¹³⁸ and the mairong sarnai is a ceremony to welcome Mainao the mother goddess mainao. The rice received from deuri is preserved in the maihendw on Mainao than is the process of Mainao Borainai.¹³⁹ They do not give away their rice from this pot to the bagger or other persons. There is no habit of giving rice at the

¹³⁶Sarma, S.N. *A Socio- Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam (1200 A.D. - 1800 A.D.)*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 2001.p.206.

¹³⁷ibid

¹³⁷ Sarala Basumatary. Female. Age.39 years. Vill: Dwimalu Nwgwr, P.O: Bijni, Dist: Chirang, Assam.

¹³⁸ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Guwahati, Bina Library, 2001.p.174.

¹³⁹Baglari, Malabika. *Bodo Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Sampriti Prakashan, 2016.p.63.

time of dark if it is compelled to do so a portion of rice is to be offered in the name of mother goddess Mainao.¹⁴⁰

Mula Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Dry Radish)

The preservation of mula (radish) is of two types as found in the context. These are dry preservation and fermented preservation. It is washed separating its soil and unnecessary particles in it. The washed radishes are chopped into small pieces and dried on hot sunny lights for five to seven days or till it dried up. When the radish is dried fully these are preserved inside the khobai or earthen pot. The khobai full of radish is hung over the oven inside the kitchen.

The second method of mula preservation is called the gundru. It is dried and chopped in to pieces then packaged in to leave then kept in underground. Mula is kept underground for a few days then dried and used as food. This method of The dry radish is used when scarcity of vegetables occurs. This fulfils the necessity of vegetables. Mula gwrans the dry radish root is prepared with onla in rainy season tha is called mula gwrans onla recipe.

Mwikhun dwnthumnai (mushroom preservation)

They collect wild mushrooms from the jungle and open reserved grazing fields. All mushrooms are not edible, only a few varieties of mushrooms are edible and these particular mushrooms are collected by them for food. Daodwi mwikhun, ashi mwikhun, biji mwikhun, mwikhun Nila, jigab mwikhun, gwbwr mwikhun, mwikhun thomla, thajjou mwikhun, hasingni mwikhun, daosen mwikhun are the diverse kind of mushrooms used as food and preserved for the future. The process of preservation starts with washing by adding water to it. After it is washed and separated its soil and unnecessary particles are dried in the sieve. Mushrooms are dried up and kept in large bottles or bamboo pots after winnowing for the future use.

Mwitha fithai gwrans Dwnthumnai

The sour leaf mwitha is a green vegetable. Its fruits are preserved for future consumption. The cover is separated from seeds then dried for sunlight till its dryness. Then the mwitha is preserved inside a winnowing pot or bamboo tube for future use. It is used in the off-season as an exquisite delicacy curry.

¹⁴⁰Thimfiri Boro. Female, 102 years. House wife, Village. No.1 Chaibari, P.O. Dhanbil, Baksa, Assam. Date 19/8/2015.

Narzi Dwnthumnai

Narzi is a kind of bitter leave produced or collected from jute plants and dried up. The processed dried form of jute leaves is called Narzi. For the preparation of Narzi jute leaves are collected from its plants by two separate methods. The methods are hand-plucking method and another method is storing plant method. The hand-plucking method is that the green leaves are plucked from jute plants directly for narzi preparation. The method of storing plants is that the plants or top of the plants are cut down and stored for two or three days in a clean place. When the leaves of the plants become yellowish they are separated from plants. Then only leaves are collected for its processing.

Preservation of narzi is very important in this community. It is used as ritualistic food in narzi orgarnai. Earlier, the family who has no narzi had no respect in the society. A family from the society boycotted is also being re-connected in the time of need of narzi for their ritual. A family who has no importance in society may feel the necessity of its importance when narzi required for the death ritual. So people believe narzi bridges a family with the society even at the time of funeral rites of death person. In Bodo proverbs narzi orgarnai means, the relation cut off with death person/serial. narzi Daise gwija rwngwi means having no social importance or no contributions to society. The dried narzi is preserved in the bamboo pot or by packaging with a piece of cloth. Preserved narzi is dried in sunlight from time to time. It prolongs the duration of the vegetable.

Nwrsing bilai Dwnthumnai

Nwrsing is a frequently used scented spice leaf. It is preserved by drying and packaging or keeping in Khobai. In some families, it is kept in open hanging from the wall or over the oven.

Owua Mewai Dwnthumnai (Bamboo shoot preservation)

Owua mewai (Bambusa tulda) is a shoot vegetable generally consumed in the month of June, July months in the young. mewai gwkhwi a bamboo product food is the preferred food item of the Bodos. For the preservation of this shoot chop the mewai into small pieces. The chopped mewai is preserved in a bottle or bamboo tube for long days. The mewai container is kept in dry a place. These are dried in sunny light from time to time. The preserved bamboo shoot is used as well as medicine for smallpox. Magur fish and fermented mewai cooked curry are given to pox patients as food to remove the scar mark of the pox.

Phosothia Dwnthumnai

Fresh phosothia leaves are separated from their branches. It is dried in sunlight for three to four days or till it dried up. The moisture from the leaf dried up and preserved in a container for long long days. This vegetable is used to get relief from problems of views and arteries internal wounds that occurred and from to them.

Sambram Dwnthumnai

Sambram the name is given to both onion and garlic in Bodo. And the identification of those for their suffixes gufur for garlic and gwja for onion are added to each of the names. But the community people use garlic most in their daily diets. They cultivate this spice for their own use. This is frequently used in meat curries, bathwn, etc to make the curry delicacy and other purposes that give medicinal values also. The garlic is preserved by fastening its top of the shoot and piercing each bundle in a bamboo pole and hung it over their oven. That is preserved for food as well as seed for the cultivation in the season.

Sefali Bibar Dwnthumnai (Preservation of Sewali Flower)

The sefali is a kind of small flower that blooms in the night. It falls down in the morning with dewdrops of the season. It is a bitter taste with scented white flower petals. The flower is collected and after getting washed dried in the hot sunlight for two to three days. The dried sefali bibar is kept inside the bottle or bamboo pot. It is opened and prepared as curry in the month of February with dry fish or potato to protect stomach or skin problems.

Tha sumli gwran Dwnthumnai

Tha swmli is a rhizome that gives starchy food. This food is edible by boiling or cooking as curry. The tuber bark is removed from its body. The part of the swmli is sliced into flat pieces. The sliced pieces are dried in sunlight till it got dried fully. Then the swmli preservation is made by grinding the tuber on uwal or dinghy to make it powder. The ground powder of the swmli is put into a bamboo tube or plastic container.

Thaso dwnthumnai

Thaso (arum) tuber is a kind of delicious vegetable found almost in all parts of the state are consumed in the form gravy, fried, chutney, and curry. Preservation of vegetables is preserved in two ways. The flower of thaso is separated from its unnecessary part and dried in sunlight for three to four days then preserved in the bamboo pot. It is consumed in the rainy season with pork or chicken. The other part tuber is preserved for long days. For preservation, the thaso is sliced in a flat shape and then dried in sunlight till it dried fully. Dried thaso are ground in uwal or dingkhi to powder. Then it is preserved in a bamboo tube or vacuumed container.

Tezpat bilai dwnnai (Preservation of bay leaf)

Tezpat (bay leaf) is a spicy leaf used for adding to the curries. They use this leaf for scent and as a health-supporting spice. The branch of the leaf is broken\cut down and those are dried for few days. Plucked or separated from the branches and kept inside the khobai or bottle pot. It can be preserved and use for long years.

Thunthini Dwnthumnai

Thunthini is a small creeper plant grown on cultivated fertile land. This small land vegetable is consumed as mwidru wngkhri with lapha, lai, khuduna vegetables. Apart from curry, the vegetable is useful for medical purposes. When a stomach problem occurs in man the thunthini soaked water is given to the patient. This vegetable is useful in liver problems, and heating of head in the illness of children are cured applying soaked water of dry thunthini.¹⁴¹

The process of preservation is that the vegetable is dried and packaged in a dry cloth or bamboo pot. A dry cloth is used to preserve so that the moisture in vegetables will be absorbed in the cloth.

Thaikha

Thaikha is a sour fruit gwkhwi or mikhi in Bodo vernacular language. Thaikha preservation is very important in the community as it is frequently needed traditional use in various health problems and comfortable drink preparation. Fruit of used as a vegetable for preparing curry recipes, it is also equally necessary in raw and processed consumptions. Its

¹⁴¹ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 2001.p.152.

soaked water is drunk on hot sunny days to cool the physique, general health and to get relief from the hotness of the weather. The preservation of thaikha is easy and simple with the ripen yellowish Chaika. Cut thaikha into flat finger-shaped. It can be dried in two methods garland making method and the open drying method. Garland making method needs young bamboo to make bamboo split that is called arung /thengol.

The sliced thaikha is stitched in the thengol/ arung and it is dried in open sunlight away from reach of rain and dust. Another open drying method is slender in comparison to the former one that it also needs the slice making and then it is dried on a flat bamboo mat or sandri (sieves) in open sunlight. The thaikha should be replaced from one place to another at a winnowing place to avoid fungal infections in it. When the thaikha is fully dried up and becomes deep red and black colored then it is kept in a khobai hanging from a wall top over the oven in the kitchen.

Khuji Thekhra

The khuji thekhra popularly known as themfwr is a sour fruit smaller to thaikha but the task of this fruit is greater than the thaikha. The shape of the thaikha is round and the khuji thekhra is banned back slightly. The word khuji means banned back so it may be named by the community as its physical appearance the khuji prefix before the thekhra fruit. It may also argue that the fruit is tightly small in shape. The word them far is to denote the thick small in size so the fruits name may be called the themfwr. There may be deep meaning in the name of origin of the name themfwr. It is like a pear in shape having a sour taste. Its inner seed is eaten raw when it rips. The preservation process of the khuji thekhra is the same as the thaikha. The chopped themfwr/ khuji thekhra is dried in the sunlight with the same methods of thaikha preservation. They have a strong belief in the old dried and preserved khuji thekhra that the fruit has good medicinal value in cooling down naval and dysenteric effects in the stomach. It is consumed with arum curries, fern fry and prepared as a drink with sugar in the summer season.

Simpri Preservation

For the preservation of simpri collection of matured fruits done in the season. The fruits are washed and strained to drain the water of the simpri fruits. Then the fruits are dried on the bamboo sieve till it is dried up fully. No reach of rain and fogs are allowed at the time of drying Simpri fruits. Then these are kept in khobai or vacuum pot for future use.

The semphri is used in herbal medicines¹⁴² to cure cold, cough, and weakness.

Jaluk dwnthumnai: Jaluk is a betel leaf like rounded small pungent tasted fruit that is locally cultivated spice. This is known as black pepper in general term. The spice has very good medicinal values. It is used in curry as well as the in medicines also. This spice is preserved by washing in hot water. It is dried after washing in hot water for a few days of sunlight. This spice is preserved in vacuum container after getting fully dried.

5.4 Fish preservation

Bodo family consume different varieties of fishes available in their local water bodies. Like meat fish is also the common food item of the community. This habit of consumption is transmitted to other Aryan communities of North east India. Fish eating is probably a pre-Aryan custom and in Assam it might have been borrowed from the Mongolian people.¹⁴³

They collect fish from water with the help of jongor, je (net), asra je, khawi langi, gwri langi, dahar langi, pholo, jekhai, sili, sen, khokha, sohra, bwrsi, and mushri. There was a tradition of community fishing of thousands of people called dahab hwnanwi na gurnai.¹⁴⁴ For the dahab hwnanwi na gurnai (fishing) they offer a number of materials (pig, chicken, pigeon and areca nut, betel-leaf, incense stick, and dhuna) in the advice of daudini.

Preparation of net for fishing and hunting

They start preparation of net on the Saturdays and Tuesdays and finish the fasten net on those two days. For the net of tiger, deer and hog they used fibre of odal a kind of fibred tree trunk in the jungles. The string of net is as a large as the string of cow fastened to keep them. Later the string of odal bigur is replaced with jute fibre in course of time. On the day of preparation of net they assure to pay jorase jumai (a pair of local rice beer full of earthen pot), a red cock to the jungle deities Jwmwn jwla and Jwmwn buri (the Bagh Raja and Bagh Rani) as bribe for hunting animals of their jungles.

With the change of the time and atmosphere the nylon string is used to prepare fishing net and jute for animal net. The length of the net is of eight bew to twelve bew and four bew to six bew in breath. (A bew is a Bodo Kachari traditional measuring unit of two steps is to one bew). In each bew a ghila fruit is fastened after making hole in it. The length may be counted on these fruits. There is a dwuwn measuring four haat (the traditional Bodo measuring unit that starts from elbow of the right hand to the end of the middle finger is one

¹⁴²Basumatary, P.C. & Chainary, S.P. *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakshi publisher & Distributor, 2017, p, 173.

¹⁴³Barua, B.K. *A Cultural History of Assam (Early period)*. Guwahati: Bina Library, Third Edition, Vol. I, 1986, p.137.

¹⁴⁴Narzi, Bhaben. *Baro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 2001.p.141-142.

haat) in two opposite ends and six thunis (posts) to keep standby the nets. After the completion of net preparation on the Saturday of Tuesday the assured pair of rice beer pots and red cock is offered to the mentioned jungle deities.

How the fishes are acquired from water bodies

Fishing is an age-old habit of the Bodo community people living in the state of Assam. They acquire fish food by fishing with different fishing traps prepared by them. How they catch fish, how community people behave with the nature, their beliefs on fishing, sayings in time of fishing are a matter of folkloristic behaviour. Fastening of nets, sen hebnaï (preparation of a kind of fishing trap) khakhi- sohra hebnaï have the large number of believes in the society. For instance the making of sen the bamboo fishing trap with gwthwi garnai auwa (bamboo used for carrying dead body) attracts more fish to enter the trap. Most of the fishing traps are prepared on the Saturdays and Tuesdays.

The fish foods are collected from water body with the help of various means of fishing equipments. They go for fishing in group and fish collected from fishing are shared in equal. Women are mostly skilled in fish collection activities. They go for fishing taking diverse fishing equipments in group in lakes, rivers and paddy fields. Their fishing has folkloristic value having different material cultural as well as folk literature discoursed by the men and women folk bearers.

They use different fishing equipments these are 1.jekhai, 2. Khobai, 3. Je, 4.sen, 5. Khokha, 6. Khakhi, 7. Pholo, 8. Sili, 9. Jong, 10. Jongor, 11. Sandri, 12. Hasung, 13. Suli, 14. Thepha, 15. Khodal, 16. Khasi, 17. Bwrsi, 18. Musri. 19. Guna haikhunthi to catch crabs.¹⁴⁵ They use different traditional means of catching technology in day-to-day life. They restrict themselves from the use of large net as those nets collect more fish from the water body. While a pond or canal is blocked for fishing all of the fishes are not caught. A few of the fresh fishes are set free to increase their species for future.

Fish species consumed by the Bodos

According to Gazetteer of India Assam state 1998, there are 18 nos. of commonly found fishes in Assam.

These are as follows:

Scientific Name	Local Name
1. Catla- Catla	1. Bahu
2. Labeo Rahita	2. Rahu

¹⁴⁵Ranjit Basumatary. Male, 56 years, Headmaster, Angardhawa High School, Vill. Angardhawa, P.O. Angardhawa, Dist. Baksa, Assam. Dated. 26/02/2016.

3. Labeo Mrigala	3.Mrigal
4. Labeo Goniis	4. Baghan
5. Selonia- Selondia	5.Selkoni
6. Mystus Seenghala	6. Gagal
7. Mystus Aar	7. Ari
8. Puntius Sarran	8. Puthi
9. Tar Putisara	9. Tora
10. Channa Maruruilioz	10.Good
11. Channa Striatus	11. Sole
12. Channa Stewalia	12. Sal
13.Channa Punctatus	13. Seng
14. Anabas Testudinus	14. Kawai
15. Clarius Sraeterieus	15. Magur
16. Mystus Fossilies	16. Singi
17. Wallago Attu	17. Barali
18. Tenga Tenga	18. Singara

The community people eat the traditional fish flesh locally available in water bodies. Bodo people get stimulating to have fished with their fishing traps communally in the water bodies. They consume the fishes availed from rearing and open water bodies.

These are locally known as follows- (1) Airi na (2) Bami na, (3) Barli, (4) BathaKhusia, (5) Bawish na, (6) Bengchifakhri (7)Bengchifisa, (8) Bengchigidir, (9) Bhangna, (10) Borkho nasrai (11) Bw (12) Bwdiasingra (13) Bwigira / gaura na, (14) Bwthia (15) Bwthia khodro (16) bhwuka /khathla na, (17) Darangi na , (18) dusumwi na (19)Elengna, (20) fabua na, (21)Fithikhri/Fithigri, (22) Futhla fithikhri (23) Gagla na, (24) Ganda gageb, (25) Ganga thophana, (26) Gwri na (spotted snakehead) (27) Hasumuthra/Mutra, (Bar-eyed-goby/ Glossogobius gutum) (28) Ilish (29) Jangia na, (30) Japanikhawi, (31) Khangkhla, (32)Khanlina (fwila na), (33) khawi (34) Khursa na (35)Khusia, (36) Khwthi/seni puthi(37) Khosh na (38) Khawi, (39) Khanthasi (40) Lao puthi (41) Magur Mawadangra (42)Mawaphakhri (43)Mawafisa (44) Mwdaokhana/Mwdlana, (45) Mirga (gohera na), (46) motiram na,(47) na futkaita (48) na gorsi, (49) Nathurjonai, (50) Nathurgidir,(51) Nangdor Bami, (52) Na daokha, (53) Nakhanda (54)Nakhodal, (55) Na mwdaokha, (56)Nasrai/Seng(Channa stewartii) na,(57) Pangas (58) Rou, (59)Sal na (60) Sanda na, (61) Senar na, (62)Selkini, (63)Singi, (64) Singikhetri, (65) Sithol na (66) Thengwna/Singrana, (67) Sitholnal na (68) Shol/Sol (Channa striatus)na, (69) Thotha na (70)

Thuri, (71) Thuri rakheb.

Methods deployed for the preservation of fish

They generally preserve fish foods into (a) Fwrannai (drying) and (b) Napham (the fermentation) in these two customary methods among the community. 5.2.3.1 (a) Fwrannai is a traditional method of fish preservation that has sundry sub-methods with sandungao fwrannai, athalao fwrannai, ukhundwiao fwrannai, etc. The preservation of na gwan is made after it has been fully dried first. For drying the fishes are scale and fins freed from the meat parts. In the case of small fishes the intestines are separated in clean and dried in sunlight then preserved. For the preservation of fish earthen pot or Khobai is preferred. The earthen pot preservation is very safe and free from insects and rodents covering its mouth tightly. Some of the Bodo families preserve fish step by step by adding little alkali in it. This fish is kept for long days till it is soft and scented. Its delicacy is just like the nafam. They call it dabkha na dwnthumnai in Bodo.

The khusia fish is a kind that lives on soil and insect habitat inside the soil. Khusia fish is a very strong cool blooded fish with very beautiful skin. It has a special power of surviving without food other than soil. They believe that the khusia gives strength and consumers of this fish is benefited from beautiful skin like the fish without any spot or marks. Bodos eat fresh meat as curry with maisundri (fish mint), dysentery this bendwng (stink vine), ram thulungshi (a kind of basil with a strong fragrance), mwithru (papaya), and potato. The dried khusia gwan is prepared with sobai (black pulse) kharwi a delicious Bodo recipe. For the preservation of this khusia, an iron stick is pierced inside its stomach and the body of the fish is cut into two flat parts then it is smoked in the fire for a while then it is dried in hot sun light till it dried up or kept over the oven.

The nasrai na, gwri na, are preserved after clearing their scale and intestines from its meats. The heads and tails of the fishes are separated and dried separately. Before drying the fish meats a little smoke of fire is touched on it keeping the fish on the strainer over a burning fire inside the strainer. The smoke gives a delicacy scent and protection of the fish meats from insects and moths.¹⁴⁶ The fresh nasrai na has a very strong immune power so they consume this fish to get relief from weakness after illness. Roasted nasrai and gwri na are consumed by adding a little alkali gives an appetizing taste and can have more food than they needed. Preservation of thuri na, bami na, singi na, bwthia na (loach) has a highly demanded precious dried fish of the Bodos. Bwthia gwan the dry loach fish is valuable delicacy dried fish. It is a flavoursome recipe ingredient with the sobai khari, thaso athing na

¹⁴⁶ Thaneswar Basumatary. Male, 76 years, Vill. Bhogpur, P.O. Narayanpur, District. Baksa, Assam. Dated 23/12/2015.

gwan, onla khari na gwan, thaso bibar bwthia gwan. Other curry recipes are also delicious in the midst of bwthia gwan. The scale less fishes are preserved by smoking and drying in sunlight and preserved in bamboo tube, khobai or earthen pots for long days. These foods have been cooked with sobai, thaso athing, thaso bibar, and onla khari.

A kind of strained dried system is made in a few places of Assam. The fishes are dried in sunlight then it is placed in a iron strainer then heated from beneath the strainer. When the fish scales are dried fully those are removed from the fish meat. Then the fish foods are lifted from the strainer than preserved in the bottles or in a container. This process is available Ghopa village of Nalbari district. This method is an alien preservation method that migrated from Manipur of North East India.

Nafam preservation

Nafam is most delicious fish made food of the community. It seems the ethnic identity of the community refers to this food. They know the art of preserving dry fish inside the bamboo pipe by plastering the mouth of bamboo pipe with mud.¹⁴⁷ Seemashree Daimary in her thesis *Folk Customs of the Bodos of Goalpara District: A Study* mentions about the preservation of the nafam that one special kind of preserving dry fish is called nafam by the Bodo people. For preparing nafam the dry fish is pounded in a uwal along with duddh kasu and bor kasu etc. and make a paste. Then the paste is put inside an owa hasung (bamboo pipe) turmeric powder is put at the top of the pipe than it is covered with plantain leave. (Daimary, Seemashree: 2014P.11-12)

Small fish is suitable for the nafam preservation. For the preservation of nafam dry fish matured white gourd (or can be use black arum plant, mwngambari an arum like plant) and alkaline powder is necessary. For the smooth mashing the dry fish is poured in owal or dingkhi for grinding and grinded the dry fish mixing white guord with fish. Then the grinded mixed fish powder with white guord, are put into bamboo tube tightly. A piece of plantain leaf is covered on the fish dust than kharwi khi the used alkaline powder is poured over the leaf and paste of mud on the top of the pounded fish and plastered on the mouth of the bamboo tube. The fish may be grinded with the mwngambari or black arum sticks instead of white gourd. The tube is put inside the soil for three or four months. It can be preserved for a year or more than two years.

¹⁴⁷ Brahma, Sekhar. *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition*. Guwahati: DVS Publishers, First Edition, 2006, 2nd Reprint, 2013.p.31.

5.5 Meat preservation

The Bodo have weakness in meat specially pig, and chicken. Besides they in like of the buffalo meat when the sacrifice it to deities, goats, and ducks. They have the habit of hunting pig, deer, sasha, mwfwu, and other jungle animals for their food. They catch those animals by trapping nets in the jungle. Their habit of hunting is the age old imitation of their primitive Mongolian Bodo society. The habit of hunting wild pigs and deer is avoided with the implementation of wild life protection Act, in the state as well as in the country.

They preserve the hunted meats inside the bamboo tube or khobai for future use. Sometimes the sacrificed buffalo, goat, and the extensive meat of pork are preserved for future use. They preserve dry meats for the family members as well guests to visit in the house. Shakta worship is one of the traditional worshipping modes of the community. Traditional Bodo families worship mother goddess Kamakhya, Lakshmi, Durga, Manasa etc. for their power and prosperity in life. They sacrifice fowl, goat, buffalo and pigeons. The buffalo meat and skin are the kinds of preserved meat for example. Skin of buffalo is stripe pieced into fingers then kept over the oven in kitchens. This preserved buffalo skin has the medicinal value to cure dysentery. Preparation of buffalo skin needs more time and energy with pounding on a rock with a hummer after burning. The burning and pounding of the skin produce a portion of dustless pure meats.

Pork is the highly valued rearing meat food availed from their households. Most of the village cultivator families have pig sty to keep pigs for their economic benefits. They earn their money from pig farming along with other activities of earning. The preservation of pork is made by drying in hot sunshine. Earlier they did not boil the pork before drying but at present few families try to boil the meat before drying and preservation. The meat of chicken, meat, rabbit, turtle, and mongoose are also preserved for future use. But the practice of hunting meat preservation is rare in the community.

5.6 Preservation of Kharwi (alkali)

Alkali is an important ingredient of Bodos' recipe for curry preparation. The preserved alkali can be seen mostly in every Bodo family. The matured banana shoot, stem of banana are the best alkali producing materials. Other plants are also used to prepare alkali in their day-to-day life. The methokha, mwithru bifang (papaya), bamboo, sobai bifang (black pulse), besor bifang (mustard seed plant), narengkhol bigur (coconut fruit bark), puni kharwi (a kind of water plant), and khuduna plants are used to produce kharwi.

Among all these materials banana plants are the best kharwi producing row material. The thalir daokha or that thalir is the most powerful alkali-producing banana plant. And the bird-eaten bark of fruit is very useful for medicinal purposes. Its alkali is used to cure

stomach problems. The plant of banana is pieced into small splits then dried in hot sunshine. No rainwater is to be touched in a time of drying that may wash away the banana gums or its water inside the plant.

To preserve kharwi the dried or halve dried raw materials are burnt into ashes. It can be preserved in two forms one is cake form and another is in powder form itself. The dried banana splits are burnt into ashes; the ashes are sprinkled with little water and mashed into cake form to preserve their alkaline value. Another form of preservation is made a little bit wet by sprinkling water and preserved in kho covering banana leaf or in an earthen pot for long days. It is preserved for years after years. The use of kharwi in Darrang, Udalguri, and Baksa is on a larger scale in comparison to the Kokrajhar area.¹⁴⁸ Bodos living in the districts of Baksa, Barpeta, Dhemaji, Kamrup, Karbi Anglong, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, and Sonitpur etc. use kharwi the alkali more or less in their day today life.

Goi phobnai

The preservation of areca-nut is another habit that is practiced among the community. A hole is dug for the preservation of the areca-nut. And leaves of the areca-nut are covered in the hole. Then the areca-nuts are poured into the hole the hole is covered with areca-nut leaves then plastered with soil or mud. The goi phobnai or areca-nut preservation is made for two to three months.

Fire preservation: The preservation of fire was made due to the lack of matchboxes in the area. The fire preservation is made in Buntha or jugundi that is made of straw of paddy. The straws are collected and prepared buntha by fastening the straws into a long straw buntha. In some places of the jungle areas, fire is preserved on firewood.

5.7 Preservation of Jou or Jumai

The tribal people cultivate the habit of drinking liquor from their childhood and it is a must in all social and religious gatherings, it is called jou by the Bodos. Most of the old and young village people always consume jou liquor fermented from rice. Besides rice other tribes of Assam brew liquor from different fruits locally available. Thalir jau (Banana beer), amlai jou (amla beer) are also preserved for their drink. They produce local liquor in two types these are jou gisi and jau gwan. The jau gisi is mostly prepared from cooked rice. For the preparation of rice beer, no much water is given in cooking rice. The cooked rice is spread on a mat or banana leaf for cooling. After cooling amao cakes are made into powder and

¹⁴⁸ 148 Baglari, Malabika. *Boro samaj aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Sampriti Prakashan, first edition, 2016.p.31.

mixed in adequate amount then it is put into an earthen pot and covered with plantain leaf for formation.¹⁴⁹

In southern Assam, the amao mixed rice is put into Jonga (big mud pot) and covered with plantain leaf for formation. The earthen pot for pouring rice is containable of three to four-kilogram jumai rice. But now a day only one kilogram to one and a half kilogram jumai rice is kept for rice beer. They preserve it for three to eight or nine nights and for the long-time preservation amao are added less to avoid sour taste in jumai. Sometimes it looks that some of the community people preserve after spreading on songrai, mat, or banana leaf for a night to winnowing after adding amao powder in it. This process of spreading and drying on a mat is called lamnai.

They believe that the lamnai jau is tastier than the general jau preparation. Another kind of jau is phothikha or jau gwrn made after the distillation method. In some places, this variety is also called serep¹⁵⁰. As the jau is made from water vapour rare people try to mean it the ukhundwi. The word ukhundwi is used to mean smoke. It seems that the speaker calls it ukhundwi for it has been produced through the evaporation method. The Bodos of Goalpara district in the south bank of the great river the Brahmaputra call these two types of local liquor as (1) Bokha jou or jou bidoi and (2) Phithikha jou or jou gwrn.

This variety of liquor though intoxicating is nutritious also. Deuri of the Bodos Bathwu puja fasts for day-long drinking jou gwthar¹⁵¹ in earlier days. The Bodos use rice beer in case of urine problem and Phithikha jou in case of dysentery and stomach problem.

Preparation of emao

Before preparation of jou or jumai the emaw is essential. The name for the same thing is called ermo and khurasi in Goalpara dialect of the district in the southern Assam.¹⁵² Emao /amao is a kind of medicine for preparing jau or jumai the Bodo traditional drink, country liquor or rice beer. According to Bhaben Narzi and Kameswar Brahma the same process of emao preparation is mentioned. Here the process of emao preparation is mentioned below. The ingredients for the medicine mentioned by Kameswar Brahma are (1) uncooked rice (2) twelve pieces of mokhna flowers (a kind of wild plant), (3) some leaves of khandal or jack fruit tree, (4) some leaves of pineapple plant, (5) roots of agarcitha (a kind of small plant), (6) some top leave of banana tree and (7) some roots or leaves of bongfang rakheb (a kind of small plant).(Kameswar Brahma: 1992.17) Bhaben Narzi has mentioned the ingredients

¹⁴⁹Daimary, Seemashree. Folk Customs of the Bodos of Goalpara District: A Study. Gauhati University: K.K. Handique Central Library, 2014.

¹⁵⁰Serep is a kind of wine produced traditional distillation method.

¹⁵² Tilu Basumatary. Female 69 years. Health worker, Dwimalu nwgwr, Guwahati, District, Kamrup (metro) Assam.

as follows: (1) Basuga mairong ser se (un-husked milled rice one kg) in the measurement of one kilogram rice mentioned ingredients to be added (2) kukha bon barota or Mwkhwna gang jinwi bilai (twelve leaves of mwkhwna), (3) Bisimao (a kind of medicinal plant) a piece in measure of a tola (4) agarcitha root in measure of a tola (5) banana leave or pineapple leaves about adha powa (means 125 gms.)(Narzi, Bhaben.2001. P.147-148).

The southern Goalpara district Bodos use the sugar cane leaf, mwkhwna, rice, and chilli to make the amao the medicine for preparing jumai.¹⁵³ The ingredients are grounded in owal or dingkhi and made it into powder. Before preparing or grinding the ingredients the rice should be soaked for three to four hour in water. The soaked rice is then lifted out from the water than kept in a strainer to drain the water. Then the tuber leaves, roots mixture is grinded in owal or dingkhi then the rice is added in it and grinded again to make it powder. Then the powder is poured in the dala/ songrai a flat bamboo pot to make it cake.

An adequate amount of water of water is added to make the powder sticky. Then some amount of previously prepared amao which is called Bima or amao mwkhang is powdered and mixed with the paste. Then small round shaped or flatten cakes are prepared from the paste and are put on a sandri (a porous utensil made of bamboo split) and covered with straw and cloth, and it is kept on winnowing place for three to four days then dried on sunlight for several days.

Jou or Jumai is the locally prepared rice beer traditional drink of the community. Almost all the cultivator families preserve this traditional local rice beer in the villages. This drink is consumed by the people working in the paddy field or other hard working people. They feel strong energetic in body and mind to speak freely without hesitation. The Bodos think that Mahadeva first taught them how to brew rice-beer as a means of protecting human life; and he naturally asked for the first offering of jumai to be made to himself. The traditional Bathwu worshipper offers holy jumai bidwi or rice beer to the Bathwu Bwrai.

Here is a myth relating to the creation of Jumai or jou prevalent among the community. There was an old man and woman in prehistoric. They lived on selling collected firewood from the nearby jungle. The old man was tired of long-distance walk with his collected bundles of firewood in the jungle. He prayed to God to get rid of his tiredness.

One day the old man in search of firewood set out for the distant place. He got tired and took a rest under a tree. Different kinds of birds were singing with joy on the branches of the tree. The old man was eager to know the cause of joyful singing on the branches. He starts to investigate that. Looking at the tree, the old man saw a kind of liquid in the wooden hole.

¹⁵³ Tilu Basumatary. Female 69 years. Health worker, Dwimalu Nwgr, Guwahati, District, Kamrup, Assam.

The old man climbed up the tree to know about the liquid inside the hole. Saw a little water in the hole. Birds are singing drinking the water in it. The old man wished to drink the water. Thinking after a while he drank a little water from the hole with one of his hands. Drinking a little of the water he came down of the tree to examine its reaction. The old man was asleep beside the tree sitting after a while. He was awake after a while and felt lighter than earlier. He forgot the fatigue feeling in his health. He returned home with more firewood and happiness than earlier. From that day onwards the old man was going to that place to have the water to drink.

After a few days look improvement in the health of the old man his wife asked the cause of that. The old man told about the fact of the tree whole water and the old woman requested to fetch the water for her also. The old man brought water in a bamboo tube to his old woman. The old woman liked the delicacy of the water and requested to bring it regularly. After a few days have passed Lord Shiva taught the old woman how to prepare jumai and keep it for the human being in the world. Lord Shiva in their dream asked the old couples to offer the jumai to Him first. The old couples did the same. And from that day onwards the jumai or jou started in the community. (Narzi, Bhaben, 2001: 146-147)

It can be mention that the use of jou or jumai basically the bokha jou was used more in the eighty and ninety decades and earlier periods. They used the jau or jumai in marriage functions, Phandra the funeral feasting, Saori-badali (sharing manual labour), Kherai puja, Garza puja, the agricultural festival the Bwisagu, Magw, Kati Gasa, Moho hwnai (festival of drawing mosquito), Bima bipha lingnai (making father and mother relation), bisukhe khanai, Bida gwdwi lingnai, bilw gw lingnai, bibiyai bibyani khanai, phak gyathi hwnai, mwdai raisongnai, rang Dahar langnai, hal Juri jennai, Gosa lanai, hal jangkhra, mai hajennai, aag lanai, wngkham gwrlwi Janai, adoption of a child and other social and religious gatherings.

To offer rice beer to the deities is a custom in Bodo society. In most of the religious functions, Bodo people offer rice beer to the Gods and Goddesses. Both men and women consume jou or jumai in agricultural and other communal work places. They feel fresh and energetic after drinking this liquor and have encouragement to work more in the paddy fields and other field related hard works. Dinking habit is and age old habit of the community people though some of the Bodo families have given up their habit of drinking due to integration culture and procedure made by their religious bindings.

Bodos are well equipped in preparing jou and Phatika from rice varieties.¹⁵⁴ They prepare this drink for their own use only. The traditional homemade is only hygienic

¹⁵⁴ Boro, Anil. *Axomia Jati Sanskriti: Boro Janagasthir Abodan*, in the book of *Asamiya Jati Aru Sanskriti* Edited by Rajbangshi, Paramananda. Guwahati: Pragjyotish College. 2003, 1st Ed.p.56.

nowadays. The commercial product of the jau may lose its traditionalistic and get fake lore for its economic benefit. The Bodo people consume rice beer and wine on every festive occasion. Alcohol is used not only for honouring distinguished guests but also for making guests feel welcomed.

Jonga preservation

Jonga is an earthen pot to preserve jou or jumai. The process of preservation or fermentation of rice beer in Jonga may be called Jonga preservation. The processes of cooking rice, spreading it on jumai dala or mat are similar to the other jumai producing methods. Putting jumai mairong in the jonga is not similar to that of other earthen pots. The cooked rice is dried on a mat or jumai dala for a few hours and then the rice is mixed with amao powder and put it in a jonga. The jengai¹⁵⁵ is placed in the middle of the jonga to filter the rice beer in it.

Dabkha preservation

Dabkha preservation is another rice beer preservation that is preserve in the earthen pot dabkha with the same preservation. Only the earthen pot variety is differing to jonga.

¹⁵⁵Jengai is a bamboo made round cylinder shaped small strainer pot to filter rice beer in jonga.