

**A STUDY ON FOOD HABITS AND TRADITIONAL
KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM OF THE BODOS**

**THE THESIS SUBMITTED TO BODOLAND UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BODO
UNDER THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGE**



SUBMITTED BY

MANESWAR BARO

Ph.D. Registration. No. Final/02BOD0024 of 2013-2014

**Bodoland University, Kokrajhar-783370, BTAD,
Assam, India
2021**

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

The topic Food Habits and Traditional Knowledge System of the Bodos is a study on food related traditional knowledge of the Bodo community. The study includes the traditional knowledge of food habits. Here the researcher tries to draw the brief description of the chapters described in the whole thesis. Chapter I discusses the concept of the traditional knowledge system. The traditional knowledge system has deep relation with human being and the culture of a community. It emerged with the evolution of human being so also the culture is formed with the member of community. Traditional knowledge has relation with the ecology of the human culture and the biodiversity. Human being has great deal with the biodiversity of a particular area where he resides. Searching of food hunting, gathering, collection of flora-fauna, aquatic insects or fishes have great deal of connection with human knowledge. These traditional knowledge is gathered from the ecology in requirement folk group of people.

The food habit of a community relates with the religious believe practices that are handed down from the generation of the ancestors. Local knowledge or folk knowledge are developed by the local people freely and exposed to the contemporary society where they endure. It is scattered in religion, traditional belief systems of a community. The chapter also discusses the some other writers definitions and their views on the topic. Traditional knowledge has been accepted by the tribal communities as sacred and secrete. They do not wish to share the knowledge with an unknown member to the community.

The characterization of the traditional knowledge is tried to sketch on this subdivision. It is identified as genetic, community based, a source of result making, ethnic identity, nature based and dynamic in character. A few lines on comparative study of traditional knowledge and intellectual property are conferred in the chapter.

The traditional medicines used by the community people is not codified like other codified herbal medicines i.e. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani etc. the traditional Bodo villagers use herbal medicines and the knowledge of using transferred to their disciples whom they call them Bej. The community people protect the knowledge through transfer of knowledge from one person to one another in the society. So also from one generation to another generation in course of time. Food collection, gathering and consumption are traditionally conveyed from the medicinal herbs they used. Food consumed by the community people are of medicinal values first of all they were in use of medicines then to food after domestication.

The study area contains the folkloristic and cultural anthropology based material hence the studies of culture and folklore and folklife are brought together. The food habit of the community has great deal with the ecological materials and the food consumed by them has medicinal values. The herbal food consumed by them is not yet scientifically analyzed if it is done so its importance will be globalised to human benefit.

The assumption of Bodo food habit is organic less spiced and oiled, ecosystem based, culture based, unique and scientifically modifiable inheritance of community based knowledge. Researcher had to approach door to door for the collection of data when there is no available information except few Bodo language articles on the subject of the research project. Direct and indirect collection of information was done by interrogating both active and passive bearers.

In the sub chapter 'Review of literature' a few authors' books have been reviewed. Book of Bhaben Narzi both Bodo and Assamese versions *Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti* and *Boro Kocharini Somaj Arw Harimu* are reviewed. The first and foremost Bodo food and culture related English book *The Kacharis* was written by Rev. S. Endle. Book of Dr. Kameswar Brahma *A Socio Religious Beliefs Practices and Ceremonies of the Bodos*, *Folk Literature of the Bodos* by Dr. Anil Boro, Monograph of the Bodos by Dr. Phukan Basumatary and Dr. Swarna Prabha Swinary, *An Introduction to Boro Language*, written by Phukan Chandra Basumatary, *Assamese version Asamiaya Loka Sanskritir Abhas* (1989) and *Loka Sanskriti* (1997) by Dr. Nabin Chandra Sarma. The books are most informative for the formulation of research work. Habit of foods, division of recipes of curry, incantation of mantras and different types of Bodo rituals related food habits are pointed out in these books. At the end of the chapter declaration of chapters are made in a nutshell.

Chapter II discusses the identification of Bodo food habits. It pointed out the different types of ritualistic food like birth ritual, marriage, and death ritual and other conventional food of the community. It discusses the five types of human rituals viz. Jwnwm Achar (the birth ritual) Dwisarnaini Achar (ritual of sprinkling water), Haba Achar (Marriage ritual), Gwthwi garnai Achar (Funeral ritual), Bandra Achar (Bandra Ritual). All of the above rituals have food presentations. The birth ritual is divided in to pre natal and post natal ceremony where the prenatal ceremony contains the pancha amrit jahwnai the mother feeding ceremony. Other post natal ceremonies are dwi sarnai, navel cutting ceremony, marriage ceremony, and death ritual.

Their food contains the natural elements and non vegetable items, domesticated animals, fish from the wetlands. The community has fascinating food acquisition techniques and they only collect needed portions of their food materials from the nature. Before collection of ecological food items they have a habit of taking acquiescence from the forest deity.

Tradition of offering food to ancestors, gods, and deities are distinguished behavior of the community. The Bwisagu, Magw, Kati gasa and other agricultural festivals have the food related ritual behaviors. They recall their ancestors in time of festivals, ceremonies, celebrated by them. In the Magw festival they offer food items to departed souls of their household. Offering ceremony is organized first of all before feasting. Baisagu is initiated with the new herb eating ritual with farewell to the old year. Tradition of seventh tithi vegetable eating on the seventh day of the festival is a kind of booster.

The chapter III contains the rice preparation and traditional knowledge system. Rice is the principal meal to meet the hunger of the people they think. They rice is consumed making varieties of delicacy items in day to day life. They prepare rice as the form of wngkham homnai, songnai, eonai, laru, on denai, akhai.etc. Here the researcher could find five kinds of Laddu pasted items. These are on laru, on narengkhol laru, on narengkhol laru, on jwng sibing laru, gur methai on laru, on gwthang laru. These are practiced in different occasions of the cultural contexts.

Chapter IV discusses the traditional curry recipes practiced in different sessions of the year. Ritual based curries are consumed with ecological materials available in diverse atmospheres. Their food acquisition habit is interesting that they acquire only the required portion from the forests and wet lands they have in the nearby..... For the gathering of food from nature they offer areca nut and betel leaf to the forest deity. They collect vegetables, fishes and other aquatic insects from wetlands of the area. Hunting is their sports and they love to hunt and gather food from forest animals like deer, pigs rabbits etc.

Preparing a curry recipe is a business of combining ingredients in truthful time to blend the mixtures. It is music like combinations where the song, dance and musical instruments are combined to form a melodious music. So also the delicious curry comes with the combination of food materials in a linear approach.

The preparation of curry has deep relation with human psychology. It can do delicious and mouth watering if the traditional cook is happy at the time of preparation. The recipe of curry is division of some divisions looking its size and shapes wngkhri, lao lao, bathwn, eonai, hangnai, menai, saonai etc are the form of curry recipes.

Like other tribal communities of India they consume non vegetable items. Pork, chicken, fishes and insects are added to their curries. Onla is a traditional curry recipe famous in the society. With the vegetables they mix the non veg items.

It is worth mentioning that the food plants are used for healing purposes and all the edible plant do fruitful to any healing purposes. Their knowledge is in the preparation of their curry and the eating habit keep them fit keeping away all ailments.

Chapter V discusses the preservation of food. The chapter confers the preservation habit of the community. They are habitually preserver of ecology by reducing abundance of

food collection from the nature. They preserve vegetables in the traditional way using materials of the biodiversity. Potting, canning, bottling, keeping inside bamboo tubes are the traditional way of preservations.

It is interesting to observe the fermented food and its process of fermentation. For the fermentation of food they do not use preservatives, pesticides or any chemical substances. For the preservation of the food they use the organic additives only to protect it from fungal and bacterial infections.

Last but not the least the country liquor of the Bodos is famous. The rice beer preservation which has great medicinal values has been made by the community since time immemorial. It is hoped and expected that the food habit and its related traditional knowledge in connection with collection, preparation and preservation with remain as significant feature of Bodo materials culture and folk customs.