

CHAPTER- II

IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF BODO FOOD HABITS

2.1 Introduction

The food habit of a community primarily depends on environment and ecology. It also has to depend on the availability of food products, soil conditions, and tradition of beliefs, practices, social structure, and religious bindings. Preparation, presentation and preservation of food themselves are the knowledge scattered among the people of the community after those have been accepted with fruitful result of experimentation in the nature. The food material selection habit of a community depends on the availability of food materials, based on the ecological site. Adoption of food material as their food habit comes from the acquisition of such things and frequent use makes the habit in human being.

The need of materials leads the man as gatherer or producer in situation of scarcity. Discovery of food flavor is the salient feature of human being that compels them to invent new knowledge on food. Man, the user of the food material collects directly from nature through various means identifies those and lets the knowledge pass order to other members of the community, neighbors and then society later on. Traditionally the society provides the specific code to know the material which is known afterward by that. The knowledge of food materials has not come up in a day without experimentations in generations. It is gathered spread among the group, and then operated the in society, and then it transmits as tradition in the community. Community people inherit the knowledge of food materials that is inseparable from a society which is also an ethnic identity.

The traditional way of food gathering method is transmitted from generation to generation. Bodos are a peace-loving community dwelling in the nature. A community who dwells in the beautiful nature acquires immense knowledge from its ecology. Bodos prefer to settle in nearby hills, jungle, wetland, lakes and rivers for collection of food, hunting, and fishing. Raw food collection in open fields consists of expression of feelings by songs, rhymes, riddles and sayings. Working people communicate their feeling by singing traditional songs, play diverse games and sports and always dwell upon riddles and proverbs. Such folklore materials having contents of lore and customs contain a vast repertoire of food, cuisine and cookery that require highlight in a study.

The tradition of fishing, hunting, collecting food materials like roots, stems, buds, tubers, young shoots, tenderness, land, and aquatic insects is in the community. Bodo women collect those food materials as their food from nearby forests or open fields free of any cost. The collection of fish food by men and women from wetland is fascinating. They set out for

fishing with traditional fishing equipment for fishing in the lake, open water bodies, river, stream, using traditional methods of fishing, like na gurnai¹⁴, silijwng sarnai¹⁵, sen sanai¹⁶ je sarnai¹⁷ etc.

Areca-nut and betel-leaf used as ritual fruit and leaf respectively play a vital role in fishing and hunting animal in the jungle. They have a belief in paying a pair of areca-nut and betel-leaf to the jungle deity as the price of collecting animal and fish foods from the jungle. Chewing betel-nut before going for fishing is the habit of a few community women.¹⁸ The habit of domestication of animals like chicken, cow, duck, goat, pig, pigeon, are related to the traditional food pattern of the community.

They cultivate food grains for whole the year to come in the near future. The men cultivators, gatherers as well women are depositors of plant vegetables and aquatic animals from nature for food. Their food habits, the tradition of food collection, gathering, preservation, preparation are partially alike to other North Eastern Indian tribes. There are some small Bodo pocket areas also outside India- those are in Burma, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan though they are in different climatic conditions their behavior of consuming food commodities, preparation of foods, fondness in livelihood are partially alike.¹⁹

The ancient Bodo people worshipped Bathwu with sacrificial and semi-magical rites. The act of animal sacrifice and offering blood was part and parcel of ritualistic worship.²⁰ They follow the Bathwu religion with five principles

Thaigirni Khonga Khongba,
Sijauni Siria Siriba,
Siphungni Gudunga Gudungba,
Bathwuni Bandwa Bandwba,
Boro bwraini bathrayabw Fongba.²¹

English rendering:

The cloves of wood apple are of five,
Lines of Sijou are of five,

¹⁴ Na gurnai is a combination of two words na and gurnai. The word na means fish and gurnai means fishing.

¹⁵ Silijwng sarnai is a traditional way of drying water out by sili traditional fishing equipment.

¹⁶ Sen Sanai is a traditional fishing method using bamboo trap the sen.

¹⁷ Fishing with net.

¹⁸ Narzi. Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj aru sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina library, 1964.p.87

¹⁹ Brahma, B.K. *Food habits of the Bodo people*. Bijni: Thengfakhri, Souvenir, the 44th BSS, Edited by Maneswar Basumatary, 2005.

²⁰ Basumatary, Phukan Chandra and Chainary, Swarna Prabha. *Monograph of the Bodos*. New Delhi: Lakshi Publishers and Distributors, First Edition, 2017.p.202.

²¹ Brahma Liladhar. *Boro Mwsanai*. Guwahati: Directorate of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Schedule Castes, 2011, p.56.

The holes of Siphung the flute are five,
Fastens off the Bathwu are of five,
And the holy speeches of old Bodo man are also of five.

These are the five thoughts of Bathwu religion. People living in this region always think of themselves to be the independent worshippers of Bathwu. Their diet mostly comprises varieties of unconventional foods, viz. meats, fishes, and insects, edible forms of flowers, fruits, leaves, roots, seeds, stems, tubers, and wild mushrooms. This food using up habit has immense traditional knowledge for which they have been keeping the tradition till date.

Vegetables used as food material

Bodo community people do collect wild vegetables and agriculturally produced food materials. These food materials are collected to prepare as food to get its medicinal and nutritional values equally. They have good knowledge in choosing and collecting food materials from the wild areas. The food materials they use have knowledge in those and so also the collections of those have separate knowledge. Acquisition of food materials are designed by the geographical seasons so also the vegetables have its value when it is consumed in proper time and seasons as they are naturally available. The edible plants taken as food are identified below.

/Alu/: Alu is a kind of cultivated root vegetable generally it is known as potato. This root vegetable is used to cook curry, gravy and dry fry. Its young buds are also used as a vegetable to prepare the curry. This vegetable is useful in kharwi wngkhri the alkaline curry. Use of potato in the Bodo community is common to all.

/Anarash/rwimali/: Rwimali or anarash is a kind of small fruiting plant that is known as pineapple. It is a beautiful juicy sweet fruit. The plant has swordlike long leaf with odd thorn in its ridge. The fruit of anarash helps in curing tumour, leprocy and godha deseases.²² It is sour in young and tastes sweet in ripen stage. Tube of the plant is used to prepare emao²³ to prepare local liquor. It adds the sweetness in jau in fermentation. Its young shoot is used for the treatment of philou the worm in children extracting its juice.^{24,25}

²² Das, Dilip Kumar. *Oushodhi udbhid aaru aami*. Gauhati: Angik prakashan, First Edition, 2016, pp.20.

²³ Emao is a kind of rice beer preparing medicinal cake that is mde from herbal plants i.e. mwkhwna, rakheb bifang, kxanthal bilai, anaras bilai, rice powder, old emao powder.

²⁴ Informant: Uday Sankar Kachari. Male, age 58 years, Chanbarikhuti, Baksa, 21/5/2019

²⁵ Nripen Boro, male, 39 years, Chanbarikhuti, Baksa. 26/2/2020.

/Bandha Kobi/: Cabbage is named as Bandha Kobi in Bodo vernacular language. This vegetable is consumed in boiled, alkaline and oil added curry in the present days. It is a kind of cultivated vegetable used less in the community.

/Basikha bibar/Basigi bibar/: Basikha bibar is a bitter tasted flower vegetable very useful for health. It is found in the month of March and April. It has two varieties known as basikha gwza (red variety) and basikha gufur (white variety) the red and white coloured accordingly. The red coloured basikha is mostly used in curry recipe. This flower is dried in sunlight and preserved for future use. It is prepared with small fish or dried fish adding alkaline in it. It helps to cure ailments like cough, allergy, and pneumonia. Fresh young buds are used to cure stomach problem with its extracted juice. Women of the community have basic knowledge of the plant that has enormous medicinal value.

/Brahmi/: Brahmi is a small herb found in all domestic homestead of Bodos. It is planted mostly in the courtyards of the community households. It generally grows in damp and wet place and in brackish conditions. It has small leaves and white flowers. The leaves of this plant are succulent, oblong and 4-6 cm long. The young shoots are fried and consumed. The Bodo people use it to improve memory, to cure debility, nerve and pox problems in them.²⁶ It is fried in oil and eaten with meals.

/Burahud/: This is a ginger-like stem found in the wild or planted in their garden for daily use. This is good for stomach problem. It is prepared as chutney with crab meat and other ingredients like chilli, garlic, and salt etc. It is also a kind of medicinal plant useful for the treatment of domestic cows in stomach problem. This spice is added in crab chutney to neutralise the surplus iron content in crab meat to digest easily. Khngkhrai burahud bathwn is a unique recipe among the Bodo community.

/Buri thokhon/ /Samlaothi/:

This weed is available in forest small in size. It grows in a dry land. This plant is used to prepare sithorni bori²⁷ and banlu bidwi²⁸ with small chicken meat to prevent illness. Buri in Bodo is meant to identify an old woman and the thokhon mean the stick, so it means the stick of an old woman. The plant looks like a plain stick without any branch on its trunk. The vernacular words thokhon and laothi denote the same, -- meaning a stick. It is observed

²⁶Baneswar Basumatary (Gurji) 56 Years, Chanbarikhuti, Haladala P.O. Barimukh, District, Baksa, Assam.

²⁷ Sithorni bori is kind of traditional medicine to cure pneumonia, illness. It has hundred and one ingredients those are from wild vegetables and spices.

²⁸ Banlu bidwi is a curry prepared from the very small chili and spices those are used in sithorni bori.

that the western or Kokrajharian Bodo dialect speakers say it samlaothi and eastern Bodo dialect speakers say it buri thokhon.

/Buthua/: This is a small vegetable plant grown in the cultivated land. This vegetable plant is good in Mwidru wngkhri or boiled mixed curry. It helps to keep the stomach cool and digestible. Bodos use the vegetable in alkaline curry the kharwi wngkhri mixing with other vegetables.

/Bwigri Mwigong/: This short and weak creeper plant is found in wild and barren damp land. It is known as Bwgrwng/ bwgrwn in another Bodo local dialect. It is good with bwthia (loach fish) na boil curry. This vegetable helps to increase the breast milk of lactating mothers.

/Daogang Jwla/: This small plant is found in the jungle of Assam. It is a wild plant especially grown in the barren land or homesteads. It is consumed by boiling as a curry supplement to a meal. It is also useful in curing scars or drying internal scars with its paste. They eat this vegetable as curry to cure the wound, and scars in human body.²⁹ Its extracted fresh juice is applicable to dry up cut scars and wounds in human being.

/Daosri athing/: The daosri athing is a small plant available nearby cultivated lands and in the jungles of Assam. This vegetable is collected to use in preparing sithorni bori or pneumonia traditional herbal medicine. It helps in drying scars.³⁰ This is added with other vegetables in preparing kharwi wngkhri.

/Datha/ /Dung Dunga/: this is a cultivated vegetable of the community. This vegetable is adopted in the community agriculture field lately. It is cultivated in the fertile land about three to five feet high smooth plants. It is cooked with water as mwidru wngkhri and labra³¹.

/Dharamful//khangsisa/: - Dharamful is a plant with a beautiful small white flower. The flower is so beautiful and pure that has no mark surrounded on the plant top. It has a bit of a bitter taste. Before it is fried or cooked as curry its bitterness is extracted by washing with water. It is used to cure the nose bleeding problem. The extracted juice of dharamful/ khangsisa extracted juice has a strong pungent to touch in wounds and nose to cure bleeding. This is edible by fry or cooking as wngkhri. It is community belief that the curry of dharamful/

²⁹ Baneswar Basumatary, 56 years, (Gurji), Male, traditional healer, Vill. Chanbarikhuti, Haladala, P.O. Barimukh.dist. Baksa, Assam

³⁰ Baneswar Basumatary (Gurji), 56 years, Male, Traditional healer Vill. Chanbarikhuti, Haladala, P.O. Barimukh.dist. Baksa, Assam

³¹ A recipe of curry that is prepared from mixed of vegetables that have no more water in its cooking.

khangsisa is helpful to cure a cold.

/Dingkhia mwigong/: Dingkhia is a small plant available in the jungle. It has diverse varieties but only a special kind of variety is consumed by the Bodo community. A kind of dingkhia named bish dingkhia or poisonous fern is used to cover emao at the time of preservation. The Placibo effect through wind therapy is being done with the help of the fern. This kind of plant is not consumed by the Bodos in the in winter season.³² The consumption of dingkhia is prohibited by the community in the winter as poisonous snakes lay eggs inside the roots.³³ Bodo people perform Kherai puja on the first day of the Baisagu festival. The Chatrali dengkhwa a special musical tune is played by Bangsial³⁴ on their puja on that occasion to welcome New Year. The eggs of snakes are believed to be damaged with this tune. The dingkhia vegetable is offered to deities and evil spirits in the month of Baisag. The dingkhia eating is started from this day onwards in the community. It is worth-mentioning that the offering ceremony is varied with the variation of their habitations. It has ritualistic use in the community. Dingkhia is not consumed in the appearance of the Maisali rice in the paddy field or if consumed the paddy plant curves from its tube.³⁵

/Dundia/: Dundia is a spice plant cultivated in fertile land. It is a small plant used to prepare chutney with domestic ingredients like chilli, zabrang, ginger, etc. It is used as a spice in different curries.

/Dwusrem/: This is a creeper plant that grows in the jungle. It is available in the jungle of Assam and its adjoining states. Its mature and tender, both varieties of leaves are consumable and are very brittle as the word /srem/ itself represents the meaning brittle in Boro. The meaning of other part /dwu/ has no meaning.³⁶ Dwusrem is prepared as roasted, curry, gravy, and chutney. It is so soft and can be blended with all sorts of vegetables, fish, meat and edible insects. Dwusrem nathur wngkhri, dwusrem thaso bithuri, dwusrem Na, dwusrem emphwu

³²Kamali Ramchiary (Molani). Female, 55 Years, House wife, Vill. Hatirtari, P.O.Athiabari, District. Baksa, Assam. 23/8/2016.

³³Promila Boro. Assistant Pofessor, Female, 49 years, Tangla college, Tangla, District Udalguri, Assam.dated 09/7/2016.

³⁴ Flute performer in the community is known as bangsial according to Leeladhar Brahma bangsial is also known as sifungdaria. He mentioned that there was no drum, bend of traditional musical instruments. Bangsial performed dance along with the flute blowing music. There were dance performance of bangsial in traditional Bodo marriage.in performance of bagsial flute bwirathi dorkhengnai mwsanai, daojrumsanai mwsanai are another dance performances. It is worth mention that in early Bodo marriage there was use of awuwa femfa the bamboo whistle it is learnt from field work.

³⁵ Sundari Kachari Female,56 years, house wife, Vill: Chanbarikhuti, Barimukh, P.O: Barimukh Dist: Baksa, 18/11/2018.

³⁶ Basumatary, P. C. and Chainary, S. P. *Monograph of the Boros*.New Delhi: Lakhsi Publishers & Distributors, First Edition, 2017, p.162.

Latha, are mentionable curries prepared with this plant. It is used or ate before the mwitha the sour leaf begins to grow in its season. It cools the stomach, helps to cure the indigestion and liver problems.

/Fathw/: It is a cultivated bitter tasted grass plant about seven to nine feet high and 3 cm to 6 cm. in the round. It is a ritualistic leaf very important in Bodo's death ritual the phandra³⁷. The English name for this word is Jute. Narzi is the dried form of the fathw bilai or jute leaf. Bodos believe that the family who has no narzi is dishonoured in the society. But such belief is now out of the modern Bodo society. Narzi the traditional Bodo vegetable is treated as an ideal food in the community. It is also used to bid farewell to the deceased soul from their lively world. The vegetable has ritualistic value with its ritualistic use in phandra, death rite, and narzi orgarnai³⁸. It is used to farewell the deceased soul from their lively world by society. Narzi oma bedor, narzi rudopnai, narzi latha, narzi dao, narzi oma bibu are recipe prepared from dry fathw or Narzi.³⁹

/Fulkobi/: Fulkobi known variety of cowliflower is consumed by the community people. They acquire this vegetable as agriculture product.

/Gandwula swulainai/: The name of this plant has interesting meaning. The first name Gandwula means the dragon fly and swulainai means fighting. So the meaning of ganwula swulainai means the dragon fly fighting. This plant is used to prepare ritualistic food item, namely, khungkha on the day of bwisagu the spring time festival. This plant is available in the forests and barren land nearby their homesteads.

/Gongar dundia/ /khasithara/: The plant is found in homesteads of the most of the Bodo households. It is a small grass plant used as a variety of spice in the community dishes. It is consumed by adding with Sobai wngkhri⁴⁰, Dali wngkhri, samo wngkhri and chutneys with other ingredients.

³⁷ Phandra is a ritual ceremony organized in the name of deceased to pay homage the departed soul offering edibles.

³⁸ Narzi orgarnai is a ritual performed after the cremation or burial communally. It has three phases of performance once immediate after the cremation and another at the time of fandra. The first one is bite on the row narzi after taking bath in flowing water than touches fish, stone and fire to believe to be purifying them after they farewell the deceased. The second performance is done on the tenth day after death. The process of performance on the day is done after the arrangement of land, agriculture, clothes, vessels, shelter (hut preparation for departed soul), and money to cross roads and river. They offer edibles, protection weapons and steps to approach swrgw the heaven for the departed soul. All these are arranged and narzi is bitten after that. The third step of performance is done before the feasting ceremony is began as a part of feasting. It is cooked with chicken or pig intestine fry as oma narzi eonai.

³⁹Santhali Kherkatary. Female, 58 years, house wife, Geruapara, P.O. Sarupeta, and District. Barpeta, Assam. Dated: 23/8/2015.

⁴⁰ Sobai wngkhri means the black pulse curry that is prepared adding alkaline in it.

/Gurkhia goi/: The word gurkhia is to mean cow keeper and the other word goi means the betel nut. It means the betel nut of cow keeper. But the plant does look like a betel nut at all. Gurkhia goi is a small plant generally grown nearby home. It is about one foot high or less than that. Leaves of this plant is beautifully extended from its stems from both sides. The tender leaves are consumed in mwidru and kharwi wngkhri respectively. It helps in curing liver problems and used to cure jaundese disease by the Bodo medicine men.^{41 42}

/Haijeng/: English name for this plant is ginger. Haijeng is a root and leaf spice used to add in any curry like rudopnai or boil curry, gravy, wngkhri and labra. The haijeng bilai gwrlwi or young leaf of the haijeng bilai is added in na rudopnai wngkhri, khesari dali, sobai wngkhri and khumbra jail wngkhri⁴³. It has medicinal value to cure diseases like cough, cold and pneumonaea.⁴⁴ Medicine men of this community use its tube to prevent eye disese.

/Helangshi/: This plant is found in waterbodies like lake, pond, river banks and other wetlands. It is partially a creeper plant grows on wet land and floats on water body. The stem of the plant is consumed as vegetables in supplement to meals. It is prepared as fried or boiled recipe without adding oil. They believed that if the vegetable is consumed at the time of night it become cause of head ache. They believe that the consumption of this vegetable is good for eyes, stomach and sexual diseases in men.⁴⁵ It is good in constipation too.

/Jabsri/: This vegetable is good in kharwi wngkhri the alkaline curry. This vegetable is also added in ritual vegetable eating in the month of Baisagu the spring time festival in Assam.

/Jolonganthu/: It is a kind of a little scented creeper found in the jungle. This wild vegetable is consumed to enrich breast milk of the lactating mothers. Besides it has power of drying cutlery wounds on human body. Its tender leaves are edible as kharwi and mwidru wngkhri.⁴⁶ This traditional knowledge of vegetable is scattered among the community.

/Jwглаori/: It is a scented leafy vegetable about three to seven feet high generally grown or

⁴¹ Rupan Brahma. Male, 51 years, Hindi Teacher, Bapujee High School, Barimukh. Baksa, Assam..

⁴² Ranjit Ramchiary. Male, 46 years, School Teacher, Vill. Puran Sripur, P.O. Medaghat, Dist. Baksa, Assam. Date: 20/12/14

⁴³ Young white guord curry.

⁴⁴ Lahit Ch.Brahma. Male, Age; 49 years, High School Teacher, Vill: Raumari P.O. Khagrabari, Dist: Chirang, Assam. Date: 23/4/2015.

⁴⁵ Debabrat Goyary. Male, 56 years, School Teacher, Bhutankhuti, P.O. No.1 Dihira, Baksa, Assam.

⁴⁶ Banewar Basumatary. Male, 56 years, Vill. Chanbarikhuti Haladala, District Baksa, Assam.5/12/2016.

planted in homesteads. Leaves of the plant is consumed with meat, fish or potato. It helps to cure cough, cold, stomach problems and other unknown diseases. It helps to cook the delicious pork curry and jwglauri with small chicken curry helps to remove illness and weakness in human.⁴⁷

/Jwgwnar/: jwgwnar the fruit vegetable is acquired from its creeper plant. The round shaped jwgwnar is good in both the winter and summer season. It is cooked with fish, meat in the form of curry, gravy with other ingredients. The seed of jwgwnar is useful in recovering debility problems. Flower of the jwgwnar is prepared with egg as jwgwnar bibar jwng daodwi eonai recipe.

/Khafal fotha/: This edible plant is available in the fertile lands. The small plant has fruits with seed and vacuum inside. This plant is used to mix with mwidru wngkri.

/Khaila/: This is a bitter tasted small fruit vegetable available from its creeper plants grown in jungle or homesteads. It is consumed as fried, roasted and curry supplement to morning and mid-day- meals.⁴⁸ It helps to get rid of worm and stomach problems. This can be consumed in the form of fried, roasted, burnt and curry. Khaila bathwn, khaila wngkhri, khaila menai are its recipes.⁴⁹

/Khamrenga/: This fruit is usually eaten in raw form. It is consumed in the form of roasted, fried, and curry. Khamrenga na wngkhri is a khamrenga recipe prepared with this fruit. Eating in the raw and cooked both have medicinal values. It helps in getting relieve from liver and jaundice problems. This fruit is not eaten in starvation or fastings.⁵⁰

/Khangkhrikhola/: The khangkhri Khola is a fruit vegetable grown before the rainy season start and lasts for whole the summer. It is a summer fruit that grown from its stem and seeds. This vegetable is consumed by boiling and frying recipes. Leaves of this plant are consumed with fish as alkaline curry.

/Khanthal/: The fruit is found in the homesteads of Bodo villages. Its fruit has thorn-like spotty on the whole of the body. The seed of khanthal is called khanthal begor and the partition

⁴⁷ Rupan Brahma. Male, 49 years, Vill Belguri pathar Nwlbwari, Hindi Teacher, dist. Baksa, Assam. Dated.12/6/2017.

⁴⁸Saneswar Wary. Male 47 years, Vill. No.1 Bogajuli, Mainaopara. Dist. Baksa, Assam. Dated. 14/9/2017.

⁴⁹Kanta Ram Boro. Male, 80 years, Cultivator, Vill. Daosa gami Kharua, P.O. Barkharua, district. Baksa, Assam.

⁵⁰ Upen Ramchiary. Male 67 years, male Barimukh, Baksa, Assam. Date: 23/6/2017.

making in between its seeds is called the kxanthal dabu in their vernacular language. Its seed is cooked with mwitha, thaso athing the long stretching arum root in its own season. Roasted, curry, burnt are its form of recipes. Its leaf is applied to prepare emao the jumay preparing medicine to make it sweet.

/Kharong khandai/: The plant is found in the jungle and nearby areas of their home in barren land. The only flowers of the kharongkhandai are consumed by the community people. Its flower is cooked with khangkhrai the crab and fishes. There is a belief in the community that the flower helps to cure jaundice problem.

/Kheradaphini/: This small plant grows in barren lands or available in forest areas. It has medicinal value and consumed for stomach problems. Its leaf is consumed with khusia and chicken as curry to get early strengthen after illness. In the present day community market it is a highly valued vegetable.

/Khoraisitha/: It is a cultivated leafy vegetable having taste of bitter.⁵¹The plant is not available in abundance. It is not cultivated and grown in homesteads of the villages of community people. It is cooked with alkali as alkaline curry. It gives a good taste to food items prepared with fish.

/Khuduna/: This plant is not cultivated. It is wildly grown in fertile land. The plant has two varieties-one is thorned khuduna and another one is without thorns. It is good with fish to cook delicious curry. It is also used to cook mwidru the Bodo mix vegetable curry.

/Khumbra/: This is a creeper plant white fruit vegetable. It is a fruit green in young and becomes white when matured. Its young fruit is delicious with seasonal fish in the rainy season. And white khumbra is tasty with chicken.

/Khunthai/: Khunthai has two varieties-one is khunthai phisa or khunthai Nara and another is khunthai gidir or khunthai raja. The first one is used as medicine for khugafwrnai⁵² drawing

⁵¹Basumatary, Phukan Ch., Chainary, Swarna Prabha. *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakhsi Publishers & Distributors, First Edition, 2017, pp.157.

⁵² Khugafwrnai is a placebo activity that performed by oja or old person to draw away the evil look that has jealous in children of their beauty, goodness in them. The performances need thorny plants bwigri (plum), khunthai (a bitter plant), nareng bijou (lemon thorny shoot), khun bibar (cotton flower), sewa besor (white mustard seed), hasib khathi (bloom sticks), khangkhla su (thorn of khankhla fish). An oja or old man set fire at a place to burn those materials. All these materials are taken a little of each on hand and says '*ahem nwi bi mongla bi mongli khuga nangnai fwra dininifrai bi orao saonai jabaide amwkha ni ao gajri nwjwr nangnai*

away evil sayings to man or child with broomsticks, dry chilly, yellow mustard seeds, cotton, three varieties of thorny branches by burning it on fire. The khunthai is prepared with dry fish and roasted chilly as chutney.

/Lai mwigong/: Lai is a small plant that is delicious itself or with others vegetables in mixed vegetable curry. It is also eaten raw by mashing with mustard oil chilly and salt. It is also consumed with nonvegetable items.

/Lao/: It is a creeper plant with long fruit vegetables with more water on it. The English name for this vegetable is bottleguord. The common curries with this vegetable are daojwng laojwng, singi najwng laojwng; laojwng oma bedor jwng. It is prepared delicious curries with fishes and chicken. It cools the stomach after eating. It is a ritualistic vegetable that is used to bath the cow at the time of mwswu bwisagu the cow festival.

/Lapha/: The leafy vegetable lapha is widely used by the community people. It is consumed in boiled curry. It is also cooked with non-vegetable items like fishes and meats.

Laphasaikho/: Laphasaikho is a plant with more green branches. The name of this plant is similar to a kind of migratory bird that comes in springtime.⁵³ It is of sour taste and its sour taste lasts till the migratory bird comes to the state in spring. It is a seasonal vegetable consumed by the community people.

/Lesra//sobai bima/: This is a small stick like long vegetable about one foot to one and half feet long. It is a creeper plant that is cultivated in winter and summer seasons. It has two seasonal varieties these are maisali and ashu and these two prefixes are added according to the seasonal variety. The nomenclature Maisali lesra for Maisali variety and Ashu lesra for Ashu seasonal variety.

/Maisundri/: This small kind of potherb plant is used as both curry and spice. It is cultivated in the homestead of Bodo families. It is consumed with crabs, fish curry, and chutney. It is the belief that the community people eat these soft tender leaves to relieve stomach pains. Its all parts i.e. leaves, roots, and stems are useful for consumption.⁵⁴

mani gaswibw thangdwdei' then the taken materials are thrown in to fire. Like these throws in fire seven times in case of girls and five times in case of boys.

⁵³ Basumatary, Phukan Ch., Chainary, Swarna Prabha. *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakhsi Publishers & Distributors, First Edition, 2017, pp.160.

⁵⁴ Basumatary, Phukan Ch., Chainary, Swarna Prabha. *Monograph of the Boros*. New Delhi: Lakhsi Publishers & Distributors, First Edition, 2017, pp.165.

/Mande/: The plant Mande is known as manjya mwigong and khwlwm mwigong in some Bodo pockets area. This plant creeps into the water body. Apart from it prepared solely. It is cooked as a fried recipe with other ingredients like salt, chilly.

/Manimuni/: The earth's small plant grows in the field or homestead. This plant is famous for its medicinal value. It is consumed to get relief from cold, cough, and illness. The plant is of two varieties one is small and another is of a large variety. The small one is called manimuni phisa and another one is manimuni gidir. Both of the varieties are used to consume as wet fry and boil curry.

/Methokha/: This plant is generally available in wetland or a fertile paddy field in the rainy season. It also available in paddy field grows along with paddy. The methokha flower and its stems are consumed. The community people belief that this flower is to be plucked before the ploughing is left. This flower has a bit of itching power but not felt. It is cooked with crabs or small fish and aquatic insects like engkhaori, nathur etc.

/Mewai/: It is a favourite community vegetable consumed in the rainy season. This mewai or bamboo shoot is consumed with rice powder curry that is known as mewai onla khardwi. Nonvegetarian families consum this young shoot of bamboo with fish or meats. This is preserved in utmsils made of bomboo and consumed in future.

/Mula/: The plant is vegetable cultivated in the homesteaded or fertile land. The whole part of this plant is used for preparing foot itemes. Its roots/tuber, leaf, lower andfruits are edible. It is preserved for future use. The only dry mula or mula gwan is cooked with onla kharwi in time of scarcity of vegetable. Its fermented form is called gundrup⁵⁵. Neighbouring Gorkha community people use it as their traditional food. Bodos of the adjacent villages know the knowledge of preservation.

/Mwifri/ Mwifrai/: It is a red vine creeper plant. Whole parts of the plant are eaten. The community people consumed this vegetable fits and starts. It has two varieties one is white and another is of red colour. They have a belief that the vegetable has good medicinal value in increasing blood.⁵⁶

/Mwisungkha/: It keeps the stomach in curing stomach problem after consumption. The soft

⁵⁵ Amarsing Boro. Male, 48 years, School teacher, Dhansripur, Nikashi, Baksa. 21/4/2015.

⁵⁶ Dule Basumatary. Female, 80 years, housewife, Vill. Betbari, Simla, District: Baksa, Assam.15/11/2015.

plant mwisungkha is available in the homestead or cultivated land. This plant is good in curing stomach problem. It keeps the stomach cool after consumption. It is cooked as boil curry added with lapha, lai, buthua, thunthini as mixed vegetables.⁵⁷

/Mwitha/: Mwitha has diverse varieties. Mwitha gwja, mwitha jathi, mwitha bangal, mwitha fathw, mwitha gufur, etc. are generally found in the community villages. The tastes of this mwitha are not the same. The mwitha gwja is generally consumed with fish and meat in Bodo villages as their tasty curry. Another kind of mwitha jathi the deep red colored mwitha is of strong sour that is useful in blood dysentery. This mwitha is not cultivated though some of the families preserved its species in their homesteads.

Another variety mwitha bangal is consumed with na thengwna or chicken cooking without oil. It helps in relieving jaundice and illness also increases digestion capacity. The mwitha fathw is taller than of those. It has bitter and sour added tastes.

Another variety mwitha gufur is of also strong sour taste with yellow flower with red in its middle. It is less consumed. But in scarcity of mwitha gwja, it is used instead of that.

/Nwrsing/: It is a spice plant that is used in all types of nonveg and vegetable curries that are made from pulses. Mwisw bedor, sesha bedor, Dao bedor, oma bedor are tasty in addition to this curry leaf the nwrsing. Nwrsing is also cooked as boil curry with fresh small fish. Bodos of western Assam call it nerswn⁵⁸.

/Olodor/: Olodor is an arum-like plant found in the jungle or high land of Assam. This plant is mostly available in the jungle. Its rhizome, young shoots are used as curry. It is delicious with chicken or pork as curry.⁵⁹

/Onthai bajab/ /Bwrma dari/: This plant has a sweet scent. It is used as a spice in curry. This plant is cooked with khusia, mutton, and buffalo meats in the community.

/Sibru/: Sibru is a smooth thorny arum-like plant grown in the wetland. This plant is now days used in huge. It has medicinal value. It is cooked with chicken and khusia the eil fish. The community people believe that it protects the health from smallpox and liver problem.

/Shefali bibar/: This is a night flower with decent and sweet flavour. This plant is planted in

⁵⁷ Arabinda Basumatary. Male, 51 years, Cultivator, Village. Barimakha, district Baksa, Assam. Date: 2/7/2019.

⁵⁸Prativa Brahma. Female, 50 years, teacher in School, Gwjwnfuri, Chirang, Assam. Date: 23/4/2015.

⁵⁹Bharat Boro. Male, 78 years Folk Medicine man Village. Sojonpara, Rani, Kamrup(R) Assam. 2/10/2016

the courtyard or nearby house. It is planted to get good scented flowers. The flower of safari is consumed with fish or itself by boiling to overcome cough and allergic problems.

/Sim/ /dwi ni besor/: It is a mustard green like water body or wetland vegetable. Earlier this was used to cure gynecological problems of women. Now it is used as curry nowadays. Fried and gravy curries are its recipes.⁶⁰

/Sobai/: Sobai the lentil is one of the pulses which is mostly used seed vegetable. This pulse is treated as prestigious among the Bodos. It is used to satisfy the invited guest of their houses. Dao jwng sobai recipe is one of the famous recipes of the Bodos.

/Sukha mwikhi/ /gwkhwi/: It is spinach-like leafy vegetable with strong sour taste cultivated in the homesteads of the Bodos. It is generally cooked with fish to make delicious curry in hot sunny days.

/Thaikha/: Thia is a round-shaped small ball-like seeding sour fruit. It is sliced and dried in solar heat and preserved. It is cooked as a boiled curry. And it is added to remove itching power and probable poisonous elements of dinkhia, the fern and mwikhun, the mushroom.

/Thaigir/: The thaigir or wood apple is a ritualistic food among the Bodos community. The clove of the thaigir is used to light alaribathi the mustard oil light on the day of the Kati Bihu festival. The cloves of thaigir are also used to draw away evil spirits by keeping their fruit on the door head. This fruit is used as boil curry. It is used both, vegetable and nonvegetable ingredients.

/Thalir/: The thalir which known as curry banana is of two types these are thalir daokha and Jahadi thalir. Both have also two varieties with small and large. On the other hand, the thorn of the banana is consumed in ritual as curry.

/Thaisuri/: The hog plum is known as thaisuri in the Bodo vernacular language. The fruit of hog plum is cooked as boil curry. Its flower and fruits are also added in onla. The community people believe that the consumption of thaisuri relieves from constipation problems, good in the antibiotic, liver and helps in stomach problems.

/Thaso/: The thaso known as yam is a whole part edible ritualistic plant. The plant is planted

⁶⁰ Debabrat Goyary. 55 Years, School Teacher, Vill. Bhutankhuti, Nikashi, District: Baksa, Assam.

at the end of paddy plantation or nangwl jangkra an agricultural ritual among the Bodos. Its young flowers, leaves, roots, shoots, stems are equally useful recipe among the community. Its flower has strong scent after cooking. Its sent flows through the sweating skin holes in hot summer and through urine in cold rainy season respectively. Bodos prepare it adding fish and meat recipes equally.

/Thunthini/: The thunthini plant is consumed on hot sunny days as mwidru wngkhri. The plant gives coolness to the stomach. It is dried and preserved for future use. It is available in cultivated fertile land.

/Usumwi/ /Jari/: This plant is also known as Jari. It is a small leafy vegetable cooked as alkaline curry with meat or fish to make it delicious. Banlu bidwi a pungent boil curry with chicken is prepared in addition to this vegetable. Woman eats a kind of special curry prepared with, small chicken, usumwi, chili, little black piper, little rice grains, and salt to taste as a post-natal food.

2.2 Ritualistic food prepared from the materials

/Dao/: Traditional Bodo society has a deep relation with the dao or chicken. Purification of mother after delivery needs a pair of small cock to be sacrificed for the purpose. The traditional worshipped deities Khwila the reporter of Bathwu Bwrai, Song raja, Song rani, Bhandari, Kumara Devi, Ranchandi, and Nabab Badshah take dao or chicken as their worshiped ritualistic food.⁶¹

/Daodwi/: Daodwi the egg of chicken is offered as food to gods and goddesses to get something or relief of doing something wrong on them. Egg the daodwi offering to mother Ganges to take bath and wash clothes in the water. Village Oja offer daodwi to get relief from their punishment for doing something wrong as they belief.⁶²

/Phanthau/: The fruit of phanthao is usually used as a vegetable to eat prepared as roasting, curry, and burning items. The vegetable is dropped on cows along with Lao, haldwi, tharai in drawing them bathing on the time of Mwsu Bwisagu. There is a ritualistic song related to mwsu Bwisagu the cow festival—

Lao Ja phanthau Ja

Bwsr bwsr er hanja hanja

⁶¹ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 2001(1966), pp.191-195.

⁶² Golak (Golo) Daimary. Medicineman, Vill. Chanbarikhuti P.O. Barimukh, Dist. Baksa, Assam.

Bimani khither Bifani khither
Nwngswr jagwn Halua gidir
English rendering - Eat bottle gourd, eat brinjal
Increase in herd year after year
You will be against your parents' shape
You will be the enormous bullocks.

(Narzi, Bhaben: 2001, pp.213.)

This vegetable is useful in Gurkhia biban in traditional Bodo Marriage. On the day of marriage a biban (bhar In Assamese) containing sugar, tea, or jau and phanthao, na (fish), are taken to the bride's house as gurkhia biban for the young cow keepers.

/Lao/: The fruit of the creeper plant Lao is used as a ritualistic vegetable by the community. It is used as the bride price to have got Married paying gurkhia biban along with fish betel nut, betel leaves, sugar, tea or jau. The mwswu Baisagu needs the vegetable to feed the cows by dropping on them at the time of letting them a bath.

/Na/: The na or fish in English rendering is a valuable food used by most of the people in nonveg etarian communities. A deceased person is cremated or buried after their death. Touching fish at the time of purification after the cremation of dead bodies is important to purify them. Na is also used for feasting ceremonies of marriage as well phandra and other social functions.

/Narzi/: The narzi is prepared from the processing of dry jute leaves. It is prepared with chicken or intestine of the pig as a fried item to distribute among the attended members. This fried narzi is offered to departed soul to cut off relation with the family and the dear and relatives of this world.

/Thaigir/: The clove of thaigir is used to light mustard oil lamps on the agricultural field on the evening of Kati Bihu.

/Jau/: Jau or jumay is a traditional drink made of rice and emao. It is ritually used by the Bodo villagers, to offer to the deities and gathered members in ritualistic functions like marriage, phandra, and Saori Janai.

/Khungkha/: A bitter flowering shrub that is found in the jungle is about seven to eight feet

tall. The tender leaf of this plant is cooked with chicken or pork on the first day of the Bwisagu, the springtime festival in Assam. The farewell ceremony of the old year is observed with this vegetable. It is believed that the bitter taste of this plant helps to relieve sensitivity for the whole the year to come. The khungkha Janai ritual in the Baisagu festival in the month of April is named after the name of this hedging plant.

/Khwjema bidwi/: Khwjema is a kind of red ant that built its nests on the green leaves of trees. It lays white eggs in its nest. The ant gathers different kinds of leaves, dead insects as their foods. Khwjema bidwi is also consumed on the first day of the Bwisagu. They believe that the egg has multi-type medicinal values so they collect these eggs before the Bwisagu and on that day of New Year beginning.

Daosa in ritual has great importance in the society. The chicken is used to the purification of humans for their impure activities done by them, it is believed.

/Pork/: Pork is popular among the Bodos. It has its wide used in the feast of a Bodo marriage, phandra, bisukhe lingnai, binanao lingnai, Bida gwdwi lingnai, bima bipha gwdwi lingnai ⁶³ and oma khaothang janai.⁶⁴

2.3 Bitter tasted vegetables

The community people also consume a large number of bitter vegetables available in the forest and the agricultural land of the area. These can be mentioned as follows (i) phathw , (ii) khaila, (iii) kharong khandai, (iv) Khunthai (v) Helangsi (vi)Mwitha fathw (vii) Mwithru bibar (viii) Posotia/Poisotia (ix) Sefali bibar (x) basikha bibar (xi) Basikha bibar gufur (xii) ekla bibar (xiii) neem.

There are a few bitter vegetables and of these vegetable fruits, flowers, leaves; young shoots, and whole parts are consumed. They eat those vegetables to get rid of cough, allergy, infections, and stomach pain. It can be guessed that at first the vegetables have been used as medicine, later on as habitual curry. The general curry prepared from the fruit vegetables.

1. Vegetable fruits: (i) Bilathi (tomato), (ii) Embuphantao (Small sized tomato), (iii) Fwrla (bitter gourd), (iv) Gorsu, (v) Gwmbri,⁶⁵ (vi) Jingkha,(ridge guord) (vii) Jwgnar (pumpkin)

⁶³Relation created by man or woman to have the persons mother and father in presence of community members paying a pair of areca nut, betel leaves, clothes, money and feasting arrangements.

⁶⁴Informant: Biseswar Basumatary. Male, 62 years, Rtd. Head master and Social worker, Central Bodo Sahitya Sabha worker, Karbi Anglong. Assam.

⁶⁵ Gwmbri is a creeper plant with small fruit that is used as vegetable. It is a kind of wild vegetable that is domesticated at present. This kind of vegetable is mostly available in dry land.

(viii)Khumbra (white guord), (ix) Khambenga (star fruit), (x) Khaila⁶⁶, (xi) Khangkhrikhola (i) Lao (bottleguord), (ii) bhindi (lady finger), (iii) Mwithru/mwiduful (papaya), (iv) Nilaji, (v) Phanthao (brinjal), (vi) Potal, (vii) Sojona, (viii) Thaisum,(ix) Thaigir, (xi) Thaisuri(hog plum) , (xii) Thaikha, (xiii) Thalir(banana) ,(xiv) Khuji thekhra, (xv) Udashibittergord), (xvi) Thaibeng, (xvii) thainasi (khunduli), (xviii) kxanthal (Jack fruit), (xix)khunthai nara, (xx)khunthai fisa (a kind of wild bitter fruit from a bush plant), (xxii) mothor (pea), (xxiii) khala (a kind of pulse),

2.4 Aquatic vegetable

The community has the habit of collecting aquatic vegetable that has good number of medicinal values. They eat these vegetables to get nutrition and medicines to prevent any probable disease in them. A few of the aquatic vgwtables are mentioned below :

- (i) Ajnai/methokha, (ii) Dwini besor/sim, (iii) Helangshi, (iv) Mande/manja/khwlmw,
- (v) Sibru mwigong, (vi) Thoblo bibar, Mewkha, (vii) Sibung/Siphung Mwigong.

2.5 Fruits Consumed by the Community People

Community people has a collection fruit those are culturally important in the society. Young or aged women and men have the habit of sharing fruit salad the khaji in leisure time at acommon field or household. These create the cultural creative folk literatures amomng the community people. Children from this community go for eating fruits in households, open field which are available in the villages for free eating. These are mentioned below-

- 1.Aithafal/Srifal, 2.Amlai (amla), 3. Anarash/Rwimali (pineapple), 4.Bakul fithai, 5. Bel fithai, 6. Bwigri (plum), 7. Bilathi bwigri (plum large), 8. Bon bwigri, 9.Bhaora/ Bhomora, 10. Dalim (pomegranate), 11.Daowa fithai, 12. Dumbru khausu, 13. Fwinal, 14. Gangar thaisib, 15. Goi (areca nut), 16. Goi sao (Small areca nut like fruit), 17. Gwmbri fithai, 18. Harphuli fithai, 19. Jambu gidir, 20. Jambu fisa, 21.Jambu khokhro, 22. Jalfi, 23. Kxanthal, 24. Khambrenga/ Kwrwdi fithai, 25. Khejur, 26. Lathekhu, 27. Laphasaikhofithai, 28.Lesu, 29.Mithamuri nareng, 30. Mousumi 30.Mwithru/Mudufum, 31. Nalengkhol, 32. Nareng biji, 33. Nareng Kamla, 34. Nareng kharji/lebu, 35.Nareng jumbra, 36. Nareng kontra, 37. Raidwng fithai, 38. Samfram/Sumfram/Safri/Samfreng, 39.Silikha, 40.Sikhilai fithai or local Strawberry, 41. Sum kxanthal, 42. Thajjou, 43.Thaisuri, 44. Thaigir, 45.Thengkhleng/ thinthlang/ thengkhleng, 46. Thaikha, 47. Themphwr, 48. Thalir, 49. Thaibeng, 50. Thaisum, 51. Tal fithai, 52. Thomokho, 53. Wngkham gwjang fithai.

⁶⁶Khaila is a small fruit vegetable that has bitter taste. It grows and creep in jungle. Blooming flower of this fruit is white in small that glitters like silver.

2.6 Fish Consumption

Fish food is the frequently used material among the Bodos. They consume traditional fish species available in the area. Fish is the major ritualistic food as well non conventional food of the community. The facts about the fish food is discussed in the chapter V the food preservation and traditional knowledge system.

2.7 The Meat of Animals

Bodos have habit of hunting in jungle and this habit of hunting was prevalent till the animal protection act. Domestication of animals in their family also was current among them at the same time.

(1) Badamali/ baadly (2) Dao, (3) Dura, (4) Embu (5) Enjor, (6) Farwu (7) Hapha, (8) Jahamalai, (9) Khaseo, (10) Mwdwi, (11) Mwfwu, (12) Mwi, (14) Mwisw, (15) Neulai, (16) oma, (17) Oma thaokhri, (18) Sessa, (17) Silwura.

2.8 Insect foods

They have acquired the habit of eating insects. They eat those because the insects have natural characters that are acquired from the nature. They survive with the power of these natural elements. Insects have the special power of their own and with these powers people gain the power of healing diseases and nutritions. They believe that insects teach them to live together organising society like insects have. Insects collect different herbal medicinal substances in their body to sustain in the diverse atmospheric situations. Those highly nutritious foods provide them good dietary composition.

(1) Amlaori, (2) Bere handilor (3) Bere jotha (red kind of bee), (4) Bere mwsu salai (bee), (5) Bere hayau thagra, (6) Bere mwu (honey bee), (7) Bere mwu gidir (honey bee large), (8) Burbulia gidir, (9) Burbulia fisa, (10) Emphwu Dable, (11) Emphwu latha, (12) Engkhaori, (13) Fedadangra, (14) Gala gunjer, (15) Gangjema, (16) Guma khuseb, (17) Guma daorai, (18) Guma godol, (19) Guma khofri (20) guma narzi (21) Guma narenga, (22) Guma goyong, (23) Guma gwthao, (24) Gusengra, (25) Jujema (26) Omabunda (27) Khangkhrai jamni, (28) Khangkhrai jathi, (29) Khangkhrai haranga, (30) khwjema bidwi (31) Nathur junai, (32) Nathur gidir, (33) Samu (34) Samu Khingkhiri/ Samu gwla, (33) Samu Ladai ⁶⁷

When the food is in short supply they depend upon various dried foods and wild

⁶⁷ Thaneswar Basumatary. Male, 81 years, occupation Cultivtion, Vill. Bhogpur, P.O. Narayanpur. District: Baksa 23/9/ 2015.

Bibari Basumatary. Female, 43 years, Fish vendor, Chanbarikhuti Haladala, District Baksa. 16/10/2015.

Nageswar Boro. Male, 63 years, Cultivator, Vill. Hajira, P.O. Geruapara, District. Baksa, Assam. 19/10/2015.

Sita Boro. Female, Age: 75 years, Address: W/O Mahindra Boro., Vill. Betbari, Simla, Dist. Baksa, Assam. 17/1/2014.

plants. However, food habits are greatly influenced by thoughts, beliefs, notions, traditions, and taboos of society. Apart from these socio-cultural barriers, geographical locations, religions, education, and economic factor do alter food behaviors. These factors are the determinants of the food pattern of the individuals in a given society but bound to vary from one society to another, one area to another, and so on. The tradition of food among the community imposed by its culture, religion, and tradition passed down from their forefathers. The habit of community members and their spontaneous expression on food habits are scattered as food folklore of the community.

The holy offering that is offered to Bathou is raw in nature. Mainly rice flour, sacrificial animals (pig, hen, and goat), jatras, jau, betel leaf, and areca nut are offered to the deities. Bhogo⁶⁸ is prepared with diverse vegetables. The slaughtered animals are cooked together in a separate pan and distributed to the community members in equal share. The different meats are cooked together which in normal cooking is not done. A portion of the meat is also roasted. This transference from nature to culture is also imbued with meaning and signifies group membership. The sacrificed animals are also roasted in a separate hearth and then mixed with the rice and lentil which is more in quantity and can be easily distributed. Food prepared by the community people is related to different contexts. One of the important basic needs is food without which no animate can survive.⁶⁹

2.9 Bodo Ritualistic food that offer to men and deities

The rituals that are related with human being consist of food preparation and presentation. Those rituals more or less have food preparation having good relation with social context. The Bodo community has belief in those rituals in their life cycle. Leading peaceful with prosperity in the life is possible in carry on such type of rituals in the society. The ritualistic ceremonies are beliefs considered as the sacred and secrete.

The human being in culture has to cross by three major rituals that a person has to overcome. These may discuss as follows:-

1. Jwnwm Achar (the birth ritual)
2. Haba Achar (Marriage ritual)
3. Thwinai Achar (Death ritual)

⁶⁸ Bhogo/Bhog is a kind of sacred food specially prepared by man or woman folk with utmost sacred to offer in the name of deities. Bhogo contains the ingredients of vegetables with special combination of sacrificed animal meat, arum bud, young banana plant, manimuni gidir-fisha, lai, mula, and young fern with added rice. It has two types gwthang and gwmwn bhog.

⁶⁹ Vidyarathi, L.P. Prasad, R.K. and Upadhyay, V.S. *Changing dietary patterns and habits. A Socio- Cultural Study of Bihar*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.1979.p.35.

Birth ritual and food preparation

The preparation of food at the time of the birth ritual can be divided into the following three divisions.

1. Pregnant women and food
2. Novel cutting and food preparation
3. Dwi sarnai ritual and food

Pregnant women and food

Human life is initiated with the obliged of God's gift of life. In this journey of life parents and other community members follow traditional folk performances. The birth rite of the Bodos can be divided into two the prenatal or ritual before birth and ritual after birth. In both of the rituals, food has played a vital role to build up a sound healthy baby. Performance of folk customs in one's life may acquire blessings of God.

Life is a process of change in its cycle. Bodos belief that the life of a human being is a part of God and it has no end only the body is changed in course of time. The life of any creature is immortal to their conception and they welcome their newborn baby with certain ritualistic traditions from time immemorial. A human being changes his body in different steps and sizes with different professions and activities for his survival in his world. The stage of tradition in human life has deep relations with food habits.

Every mother wishes to have her baby healthy and intelligent after his or her birth. Bodo women follow some traditional rules and parameter, food taboos to keep their child strong and fitted to bear all sorts of problems. Bodos feed the pregnant mother with rich nutritional foods. Bodos perform the mother feeding ceremony in the fifth, the seventh, and the ninth month of the pregnant periods. This ceremony is called the Jeura hwnai. The word Jeura is derived from the Assamese word jeura diya. People believe that this custom is observed for the protection of children from nutritional deficiency and other diseases.

Panchamrit jahwnai

The first stage of the feeding ceremony begins with the Pancha Amrit.⁷⁰ This ceremony begins in the fifth month of the baby take status in the mother's womb. This is celebrated in the first week or before the fifteenth day of its position taken a month. They believe that the soul of the baby positions in this month in the mother's womb. So the soul is satisfied with the Pancha Amrit and on gundwi, thalir gwmwn mixed paste. The Pancha Amrit contains gaikher (milk), seni (sugar), gihu (ghee), beremwdwi (honey), and gaikher dakha

⁷⁰ It is derived from Sanskrit origin panchamrit made of five ingredients ghee, honey, milk, sugerand curd in it from local varieties.

(curd). Besides these materials sweets of five varieties are also brought to feed the mother by her paternal house with the cook. They bring rice, vegetables, salt, turmeric, and other to be offered materials cloths, banana leaves, new eating utensils, an amount of money, and all necessary materials required for feeding. All feeding and feasting materials for participants who attend there, are to be brought in a time of the ceremony believed to be safe and comfortable after commemorating certain rituals in day-to-day life.⁷¹

The members of the family invite three numbers of deuris or priests by offering them a pair of areca nuts and betel leaves two to three weeks prior to the program. This shows the sign of respect to the soul of priests by offering such type of goods and in return, they assure to attend the programme. If they fail to attend the observe then they do not receive the offering and return it. Besides, neighbours and dear ones to participate in the programme by offering them a pair of areca-nut and betel-leaves. Besides neighbours and dear ones to participate in the programme by offering them a pair of areca-nut betel-leaves. Three numbers of deuris who are invited are fully satisfied with food, drinks and in time of farewell areca-nut, betel-leaves, cloths and a small amount of money.

Widows and childless persons are not invited to participate in this celebration. People from parent's families prepare food to feed the pregnant mother. There is no restriction on spices and oils in preparing the food. General foods are prepared but some rituals are followed in preparing it. Tasting of prepared food before being offered to the household deity and the pregnant mother is not allowed. In preparation of food, they pray the fire god and household deity by offering a pair of areca-nut and betel-leaf in front of the oven where they prepare different types of delicious curries. After preparing all the edible foods a place of worship in front of the Bathwu altar is prepared to offer the food. A plantain leaf is placed whole a pair of areca nuts and betel leaf is offered. An earthen lamp with mustard oil is lit upon it. All the prepared food items are offered to their household god and deity first. And all food items sweets, water, betel-nut, fruits are offered to the deity.

The pregnant mother and her husband both are requested to sit on a Gambari Khamflai separately on the southern side of the Bathwu alter faced towards the west. Then they are given all the delicious foods with sweets and other edible things. The mother is fed by her mother or elderly woman of her house or related to her. After feeding both of the couples their mouth and hands are washed and if they prefer, a silikha is given to eat for purification of the mouth. And all the elderly persons from both the houses are respected by touching their feet. Thus, the ceremony of Jeura hwnai ends. This ceremony is observed in the fifth, seventh, and months of the pregnant mother. This tradition of feeding is done by

⁷¹ Informant: Sabita Goyary. Female, 47 years, Vill. Santipur Bhelamari, Dist. Nalbari, Assam.

offering cock or chicken from parents' home to their son-in-law's house. With the impact of the Hindu society, the Bodos observe the ceremony under Hindu social custom.

Bodo people believe that if the pregnant mother is given food to her parent's the newborn baby will remain upon armed from evil elements. There is a belief in them that if the pregnant woman is not fed by her parent's family it might affect her. So this tradition has been running from time immemorial. A pregnant woman has to be careful in following some restrictions on their food and. They are restricted in their movement. They are not supposed to do hard work thos may be harmful to her baby. She is not allowed to eat the food prepared in the dead person's household. Woman in pregnant stage is not allowed to eat the food of fandra as it is believed to be impure food. She is also not allowed to ear any food having pungent and bitter taste. Eating sour food may come across as the hurdle in aelvance stage. Therefore it is protitted. However pragnont women are allowed to take food which they desire.

Novel Cutting and Food

A pregnant mother delivers her baby and immediately after the delivery naval of the newborn baby is fastened with aowa khundung and the naval is cut down with a sharp bamboo blade if the bamboo made is not available the scissors or blade is used. The naval-cutting woman should not be a widow. She should have a grandchild or children of her own blood relation. They have a tradition of engagement of the task to a sweet-handed person generally known to them. This is tasted in time of plucking vegetables and preparing rice beer.

When the plucked vegetable is not growing again then the hand of the person is treated as bitter-handed. On the other hand, if the rice beer prepared by a woman becomes sour then it is treated that the hand of the woman is bitter. On the contrary, the other types of women's hands are accepted to be sweet-handed. After the performance of this function, the women are offered drinks and edibles. The women performers are offered food and drinks on the day. After a few days purification of household is organized by offering an egg, cotton, rice and red flower to mother water. Dw garnai a cleanliness drive is organise by washing used clothes, cleaning boundary, pasting house with cowdung in the family.

A feasting ceremony is also organised on the day or day after to satisfy the women performers and community members. In it the family who can bear offers pairs of areca nut and leaf, cloth, a little money to them. This process of performance was prevevelent in the community in unorganised manner.

Lactating Mother and Food

The household is believed to be impure till one month and five days in case of male and one month seven days in case of a female baby. The naval cutting ceremony is followed

by dwisarnai or the adoption of the newborn baby by sprinkling holy water with holy basil branches, dew grasses, flowers, and golden materials to purify the baby.

The mother after delivery liquid foods like mung dal curry and rice soup in soft is given. She is not allowed to eat chilly and solid food till three days. Mother is provided the curry made of papaya or sibir (sesame) or thaso dudali (black arum) for the increase of breast milk. Soft rice with vegetable soup is given after three days. Banlu bwddwn⁷² (smallest chilly) is allowed to have with rice for mwdwm swranai⁷³. No meat is allowed to consume till fifteenth day except the roasted seng/ nasrai na a kind of fish. Mothers are not allowed to eat bitter curries as it reduces breast milk in consuming such food.

Bodo Traditional Marriage and Food

Recognition of conjugal life among the Bodo is made with the help of marriage institution traditionally arranged or other means of social systems. After the recognition of the marriage they begin co-habitation together to lead the life receiving the burden of economic co-operation and for the formation of nuclear family. They in search of peace in the family have to mix up with the society. They become socially bounded member and bear the social burden to construct peaceful society. Mongolians in India prefer matriarchal marriage institution. It seems that the Bodos used to perform the matriarchal marriage system in Assam. Their families structurally looked abt matriarchal, though both patriarchal and matriarchal marriage system is celebrated with the impact of Aryan culture.

The chief form of marriage in the Boro society is monogamy which some exceptional cases of polygamy.⁷⁴ The Bodos have different types of marriage system as stated by eminent Bodo scholar Bhaben Narzi in his book '*Boro Kacharir Somaj Aru Sanskriti*'. These are

- (i) Swngnai Haba or swngnanwi lainai haba (Arranged Marriage)
- (ii) Gwrjiya Lakhinai Haba (Obtaining girl by service),
- (iii) Kharsonnai Haba (Girl flee away)
- (iv) Bwnanwi Lainai Haba (Marriage by capture)
- (iv) Dwnkharnai Haba (Elopement)
- (V) Dongkha habnai Haba (Widow Remarriage)

The marriage system is not similar in all the areas of the states of Assam. There is a

⁷² Banlu bwddwn is a kind of chilly that is very small in its size and has strong pungent power but it does not affect the stomach. It draws away the unnecessary elements from its body by sweating or other means. It helps to relieve from cold, cough and illness with pneumonia.

⁷³ Mwdwm swranai is a kind of bodily comfort with alertness that is freed from all irritations in health that occurred from illness, delivery of baby etc.

⁷⁴ Brahma, Sekhar. *Religion of the Boros and their Socio-Cultural Transition*. Guwahati: DVS Publishers, First Published 2nd reprint, 2011, p.22.

process of traditional rule to bring four Biban or packages to the bride's house viz. (i) Gaodhan Biban, (ii) Dhwrwm Biban, (iii) Mainao Biban and, (iv) Gurkhia biban.

The materials contained in the Biban or packages are of food materials and an amount of money for the parents and society of the bridegroom's village.

(i) Gaodhan Biban: Two small earthen pots containing sugar and tea and in other pot there will be milk. There will be Goi thao 5 or Goi fathwi jora on the neck of the earthen pot. Beside these a pair of areca nut and betel-leaves or goi thao and a little rice and basil leaves. The earthen pots are drawn same as the figure of sun and the moon in the east and west sides respectively.

(ii) Dhwrwm Biban: Dhwrwm Biban contains two numbers. of earthen pots. The first earthen pot contains sugar and tea leaves and another pot contain milk. The pot will be drawn the figure of sun and moon respectively. Each pot would have the figure of sun in the east and figure of moon in the west. Both the pots will covered with banana leaves having a little rice and basil leaves.

(iii) Mainao Biban: Mainao Biban contains two handmade bamboo 'kho'. The 'kho' contains rice, basil leaves and goi thao or goi fathwi jora (a pair of betel nut and leaves). These three biban are brought to the house of bride in the name of marriage of the couples. These materials vary with the variations of villages and area though most of the edible materials are sugar, tea leaf, corn rice, biscuits, milk, areca nuts, betel leaves and an amount of money. Bima Bifa Ni Maan (Honour of parents). As a gift of honour parents are offered with some usable materials like areca nuts and betel leaves and an amount of money. The bridegroom party has to supply other edible materials to the villagers of bride as Maan (honour) 7. They present a dokhona, a blouse, a dhoti, a genji, pair of areca nut and betel leaves, and an amount of money to the bride's parents. 5 Goi thao is an amount of Goi and Fathwi, the areca nut and betel leaves where nine nos. of areca nut and 20 nos. of leaves are given to a respected person in respect of the ceremony.

(iv) Gurkhia biban: this biban contains an earthen pot of suger, tea, milk and Lao, phanthao and fish. Earlier this biban contained jau instead of suger tea and milk in the midst of Lao, phanthao and fish that could be hung from the stick of biban.

There was use of jau or jumai instead of suger, milk and tea leaf and all other materials are same to the present biban. This tradition is on the wane now due to reformation of society which vies for avoiding alcohol in the society.

Hathasuni Marriage

The word hathasuni is basically related with the traditional Bodo marriage system. All marriage systems have the food preparation and feasting ceremony with hatha suni khurnai haba in the traditional Bodo society. The general meaning of the hathasuni is derievation of two words 'hatha' and 'suni. The word hatha denotes a wooden pot for serving food items in rituals or ceremonies. Another word suni means the unfair. The food is prepared to have strength among the male and female for the unification on that special day.

Hatha generally made of Gambari tree available in their nearby forest or homesteads. It is like a ladle in shape but more times larger than a ladle. The wooden vassel is made in their own home. There is no available product to purchase from market or commercial points. Most of the villagers are adept in making the skillful product of this Hatha. This wooden equipment should be joint fru whiout any matelic substance. Ritual food more especially rich and curry is offered here as a mark of respect.

Meaning of Hatha

The Bodo women earlier used to cover their head in front of bewai (elder brother of her husband) in the time of immemorial. Bodo folk of ancient time told them to use Hatha as respected material. Hatha is inherited to the community people to honour the elders of the community members instead of uroni the uppermost covering cloth of women. It is thought to be the male the great Bishnu. The rounded part of the hatha is imagined as the body of the man and the handle as legs. So by touching the leg of the food is distributed to the briodegroom and other attended members. It is the gift of heart and is used as the instigation of the rice after conjugal life.⁷⁵ Hatha is also believed to be the *chakra* of Bishnu the creator. So no evil deed can be done by black magic performer in the family. Hatha khurnai gwmanai means the lose of tradition in society, lack of honour and this leads the society in eradication.⁷⁶

Food in Hathasuni marriage

The traditional marriage system follows different stage. The hathasuni traditional marriage system is performed after the bride is brought to the house of bridegroom. The couple of the marriage ceremony her to follow some traditional customs. They prostrate towards the parents of the bridegroom placing an earthen lamp pairs of areca-nut and betel-leaf on a plantain leaf in front of the Bathwu alter on the east separately. The bride will call the mother of the bridegroom as mother-in- law and the father as father-in-law from that day

⁷⁵ Sabita Goyary. Female, 47 years, Village Santipur Bhelamari, Baksa.Date. 22/10/2020.

⁷⁶Renu Brahma. Female, 80 years, house wife, Vill. Paschi Mahina, P.O. Dhamdhama, Dist. Nalbari, Assam.22/10/2020.

onwards. In the mean time mother in law presents her daughter-in-law clothes and other ornaments or any useful materials and receives her as household member in the family. She says

You are now a member of this family,
Though you have parents we are your parents from today onwards
You will be our daughter like daughter-in-law
From today onwards you will have to take the charge of cooking
And other house hold task to maintain the family.

Onla wngkhri recipe of Hathasuni

Onla is a traditional food items prepared in the name of bridegroom especially on the first day of their unification. The curry is prepared completely traditional and ritualistic methods on the occasion. For the preparation of the onla wngkhri rice is soaked for a few times in the water. Then drains the water on it then it is grinded on owal (wooden grinding pot) or dingkhi (traditional grinding and milling wooden equipment). The jobs of rice soaking, grinning is done by women of the family prior to the ceremony. The bride cooks the onla wngkhri with the help of other women (relating to be her sister in relation) of the family. Preparation of onla is seemed to be easy in look but many new cooks from the community feel tough to prepare this curry. The onla which generally used as curry is different to the ritualistic Onla wngkhri. The curry onla wngkhri is free from oil or alkali and turmeric powder in it.

Salt to taste is added on it. The good portion from female chicken meat is prepared garland with well cleaned thengol (bamboo split from immature bamboo). Two garlands of chicken are made one for the bridegroom and another for the mistrikhola (nuptial knot). The bride prepares the onla wngkhri with patience without spoiling the broth. Cooking onla wngkhri results her as traditionally efficient and good woman cook. In the community it is believed that the woman who knows to cook onla wngkhri can cook all the Bodo traditional curries used in their day today life. No taste of curry is examined at the time of cooking and after the cooking is allowed before it is offered to whom it is prepared.

Only the bride can have first when bride presents him the food formally. The bride is treated as god for the bridegroom at the same time she also prepares the rice in the kitchen. The head of the female member provides the rice taking from the maihendw (rice keeping pot treated as lakshmi) by paying salutation first. Another tasks are performed by married women or unmarried women nearby her. Before pouring the rice in the cooking vessel little rice is offered to the fire god. And the cooking process completes and edible foods are poured in the hatha. The hatha is of two shaped-one is small and another is big one. After pouring the rice

and onla wngkhri in the two hatha these are place on two plantain leaves in front of Bathou alter where the earthen lamp and areca nut and battle leaves are in the name of the great god Bathou bwrai the supreme god of the Bodos.

On the other side a public feasting food are prepared by the villagers to provide them the ritualistic food. When all are ready the bride and his mistrikhola the nuptial knot with traditional dress sits on two separate gambari khamphlai (low stool made of gambari tree without any iron knot). They are provided two separate dishes and bowls made of brass metals. The bride then prostrates the bride and mistrikhola then another woman who helps bride also do the same following the bride and begin to distribute the rice and onla wngkhri in clockwise round starting from the bridegroom respectively. The rice, onla wngkhri, garland of meat everything are given to the bride first then to the members attending to the marriage ceremony. Thus, the feasting-ritualistic food begins. People of the Bodo community believe that very day she is allowed to cook in the family. She gets the freedom of living, mixing as a member of the family thereafter.

Nwi dinwi omuk (date of the marriage) khalarao

Amuk (name of the village) gamini amwkha (name of father) amwkhi
(name of mother) ni fisajla amuk (name of son) jwng

Amuk (name of the village) gamini amwkha (name of father) amwkhi (name of
mother) ni fisajw amuk (name of daughter) jwng

Gwthar julini sano swrgwao thanai san (the Sun) okhafwr (the moon) khw Sakhi
khalamnanwi sanwikhwoubw haba hwnai jabai

It shows the importance of the Sun and the Moon as the witness of truth and symbol of longevity of the unification of the two couple.

English rendering: -

Hey today on this day (the date/ day/ year)

With Srimati (name of bride) Daughter of (name of parents) of the village (name of the village)

Sri (name of bride groom) son of (Parents name) of village (name of village) on this day of marriage day they have been married in the witness of the Sun and the Moon

Death rituals and food preparation

Tradition of food preparation in the name of death person is divided into three steps

1. Food preparation to deceased (gwthwinw wngkham songnai)
2. Daha garnaiyao gwthwinw wngkham baonai (food presentation in time of daha aritual)

3. *Saradu ao wngkham jahwnai* (feasting ritual in saradu).

These three steps of the ritual is to organized to satisfy the soul of the decease person and set him or her free from this world of human being to the unseen world of soul, to the mukti or moksha. They belief that if the soul of the death person is satisfied with good deeds of the alive family members, the soul of the person sprinkle bless to them.

Gwthwinw Wngkham Songnai (Food Preparation to Deceased)

The rite which is associated with death person is called the Gwthwi garnai (funeral rite). The rite has different steps along with the food preparation and feeding. The word gwthwi garnai is the portmanteau of the two words gwthwi (death) and garnai (dumping/throwing) so the etymological meaning of gwthwi garnai is to dispose of deceased persson or dumping the dead body of persson. In early periods dead body of persson were dumped away or those were buried in graveyards by the community people where he or she was living. But before the cremation or burial of dead body of persson is fed whatever he/she liked in his life time. The preparation of food has some processes.

The food preparation for death person is not alike with the living people. All the activities are done by left the hand to complete the death ritual. The death body is kept in the middle of the courtyard. They cut enda plant into three pieces measuring *Jolaise*⁷⁷ (measure with thumb finger one side and middle finger to another side). This plant pieces are posted on the cooking spot to place the earthen pot as utensil. The utensil of earthen pot is fastened with an aowa khundung (white coloured thread without having gum or colour on it) seven round in case if the dead person is female and five rounds in case of male.

The white coloured thread is used because departed soul has left the earth leaving his or her all *Kama, krodha, labha, maha* like a crystal so the sign of clearance white thread is used. The five round threads is fastened as the human body is made of five elements soil, water, air, fire and the zero. Then the pot is place on the three zetrova posts for cooking food. After having placement of the earthen pot on the posts a bunch of bamboo firewood is set on fire and starts heating. A little mastered oil is poured on it. Heats the oil and washed rice cereals are poured. It is stirred with a stick instead of a ladle.

Then a little turmeric and salt to taste is added. Taste can be made neither before nor after the symbolic feeding to the dead person. A little water is added to cook the rice then when it is cooked pot is lifted from the three posts. The cereals mixed cooked rice is poured on a banana leaf for feeding the dead body. It is placed near the body. Relatives and

⁷⁷ Jolaise means an amount of measured length with end point of thumb finger and middle finger end point at the another end. This is and traditional village folk measurement tool where only own fingers are used to measure length of an object.

community members take a little food with their fingers and moves three rounds from right to left anti clock round over the mouth of deceased person and keep the food in *Kho* (a bamboo split made large holed pot). This shows the symbol of feeding. And then gives a few drops of water on mouth. Washe the mouth and pays homage by touching feet or ground. In the moment Oza an whom they belief to be the holy man chants mantra like this.

Noi amwkhi/amwkha

Dinwi nong jwngni gezernifrai anjrai langbai

Nowng Lomjananwi eba bwrai burwinanwi thwibai.

Beram ajarao thwibai

Nwongnw amwkha/ amwkha Wngkham dwodwng

Nwong bikhou lamafwrao lwgw mwngflangba Sigi Sogo dakhalam

Bini Nokhorni raokhwbw ienai daakhalam dei

English rendering:

(Name of the deceased and relation to him) today you have departed from us

You have died of old age or of illness

Died of disease

Name of feeder has feed you rice

Do not be frighten him/her if you meet on roads cross by

Do not do any evil on his/her family members.

After nominal feeding the waste materials are collected on a dukhli a bamboo pot. And all things are thrown away on flowing water current or open field. Person who carries the waste materials of feeding can not look back as it is belief that the departed soul of the person may return with the person and may harm the family. He will have taken bath wetting his whole body from head to toe. Then can change his clothes afterward.⁷⁸

Daha ni wngkham baonai (offering food to deceased)

Daha is a ritual ceremony performed in the name of deceased person on the tenth day after the death. On the day slightly processes are made in sequence. On that day villagers from the deceased family come to the house of the family early in the morning and prepare for the daha gwthwinw baonai. They first collect necessary materials for the ritual performance at home.

⁷⁸ Sabita Goyary, Female, 47 years, Santipur Bhelamari, Dhamdhama. District. Baksa

2.10 Agricultural festivals and food

Agriculture is the principal means of food production of the community. For the wellness of their agricultural products they celebrate festivals. They recreate themselves to be fit for the agricultural works. Traditional Bodo villages observe two food related festivals The Bwisgu and the Magw Bwisagu is the greatest agricultural festival celebrated by the Bodos living in the North Eastern region of India. The festivals relates with the human being as well as the domesticated animals in their believes. It starts in the second week of the month of April and lasts for week long. Endle mentions that little or no work is done, the whole period being given up to merry making , dancing, feasting etc. ⁷⁹ in this festival eating, drinking and merry making is associated with ritualistic food consumptions. They consume verities of food for the protection of their bodies from different ailments for the whole year to come. Khwjema bidwi janai, khungkha janai, sat tithi mwigang janai are the examples of the same. The consumption of rice beer is mentionable in this occasion. The weasten and southern Assam Bodos have tradition of preservation of rice beer called fisinai jau for three to six months back for the festivals.

Bwisagu of the Bodo community is divided in to two (i) Mwsuou Bwisagu and (ii) Mansi Baisagu. The mwsuou Baisagu associated with the Cow and their well wish for increase in production of cow family. They are worshipped by human being by offering new ropes areca nuts betel leaf and earthen lamp in the evening after they have been bathed with guards, brinjals, turmeric, dighlati, tharai, pasting black spots of ashes and mustard oil on their bodies. Mansi Baisagu starts from the next day and they (1) worship to destroy the enemy of man and other animals the snakes. (2) Gods and deity worship (3) worship of departed souls, (4) farewell of old year, (5) Guru Worship, (6) showing the sign of harmony, (7) songs and dance performance, (8) worship wishing prosperity and increase in crops and (9) and farewell the Baisagu.⁸⁰

On the first day of the festival, Bodos blows chatrali denkhwa a kind of magical tune on their flute. The believe spoils the eggs of the snake. Bodo People offer puja in the name of Bathou Bwrai and Mother Goddess Kamakhya along with edible things as their prasadas.

On the same day in the southern part of the courtyard offer puja in the name of ancestors placing a pair of areca-nut and betel-leaf on a plantain leaf lighting an earthen lamp. They have a habit of offering jau homemade local liquor, fried chicken curry, cakes and whatever they liked to eat in their lifetimes.⁸¹ This activity is done for the peacefulness of family of the departed soul. The whole family members bow on their knees down to prostrate

⁷⁹ Endle, S. *The Kacharis*. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1911.p.50.

⁸⁰ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, third edition, 2001.p.212.

⁸¹ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, third edition, 2001. P.s215.

the departed souls that they should not be harmed any on their cultivated crops and request bless them in every development in the family.

After the end of the offering a kind of bitter vegetable with chicken curry is consumed by every one of the family members. It means the farewell of the old year for ever in life. They believe, to depart a person in life time eating bitter is identified. There is no use of rice beer before offering puja. Old age persons consume rice beer with the Khungkha and welcomes the New Year.

With the end of the offerings young one prostrate the aged one bowing down in front of them by presenting falai or aronai on their neck. Tradition of bagging egg starts on the first day of the Baisagu. Then the bagging by dancing door door in villages is done by villagers in groups. This process lasts for five days of the Baisakh month.⁸²

Tradition of blessings from the mwsagra the dance performer in the households is prevalent in the society. At the end of the festival people who bagged gathers in a place and have a gorgeous feasting party. On the same day sat tithi mwigong janai is also occurred.

Ritualistic food Khungkha Janai

Khungkha janai is a ritualistic food consumption of the Bodos residing in North India. The food has highly medicated herbs, shrubs, roots, shoots and local liquor partially. The belief of community people on this ritualistic food is strong to get relief from the probable any kind of diseases.

(1)Aznaibibar (Methokha), (2) Akhi Fithai, (3) Anarash bijou, (4)Auzar bijou, Agrang/Agra, (5) Awua Mewai, (6) Agjwla, (7)Basigi birab gwja, (8) Basigi bibar gufur,(9) Bisongali jwutham, (10) Buri thokhon/Samlaothi, (11)Daomewai, (12)Dingkhia mwigong, (13)Daogangjwla, (14)Dumbru Khousa bijou(Adumbra), (15) Fanthao bilathi, (16)Fanthao bijou, (17) Fathw, (18) Garla bijou, (19) Gurkhia goi, (20) Gongar dundia/ khasithara, (21) Gangar Thaisib bilai, (22)Gangamala, (23)Helangshi, (24) Haijeng, (25)Hangsw Afa, (26) Hasiu bifang, (27)Jerbao, (28)Jwglaoiri, (29) Jabsri, (30) Jolongabanthu, (31) Khafal fotha, (32) Khagri Fithai, (33) khaila, (34)Kharong khandai, (35)Khiphi Bendwng, (36) Khuduna, (37) Khum bijou, (38) Khungkha, (39) Kheradafini, (40) Khoraisitha, (41)Khortel, (42) Khumbra bijou, (43) Khunthai nara, (44) khunthai raja, (45)Khusra bijou, (46) Lao bijou, (47) Laphasaikho, (48) Lwnthi maigong, (49) Maha neem, (50) Maisundri, (51)Manimuni fisa, (52)Manimuni gidir, (53)Mande (54)Mwifrai, (55)Mwirathikhi (56)Mwisungkha (57) Mwitha, (58)Mwitha Gwja (59) mwitha sikhla (60) Mwitha Sikhla, (61) Mwkha bijou, (62) Mwingambari (Gandema), (63) Nabiki, (64) Nangal bhanga, (65) Neem, (66)Nilikhor, (67)

⁸² Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti*.Guwahati: Bina Library, third edition, 2001.p.221.

(68) Nwrsing, (69) Olodor bilai, (70) Onthai bajab, (71) Posotia, (72) Purna naba mwigong, (73) Raidwng gaja, (74) Ruphaphuli, (75) Seura bijou, (76) Sibru, (77) Sida bijou, (78) Simli bijou, (79) Singri, (80) Singsham, (81) siratha, (82) Sojana bilai, (83) Sonafuli, (84) Sonfera, (85) Thaisuri, (86) Thaijo, (87) Thalir Fasla, (88) Thunthini, (89) Tharai gaja, (90) Thema bifang/ rakheb, (91) Thash bithuri, (92) Usumwi (Jari), (93) Wngkham gwjang

Sat tithi mwigong janai

Sat tithi mwigong janai is vegetable consumption day of the seventh day of the Bwisagu or the spring time festival. The term has deep meant with the day and the kinds vegetables. The term sat means seven, tithi means day and mwigong means vegetables. The ritual is called the seventh day vegetable eating ritual. Very important tradition is to consume any seven wild vegetables on the seventh day of the festival.

Women of the community set out for collecting wild vegetables available nearby fields or forests. Bodo women with colourful traditional attire and bamboo baskets on their hands, sometimes sing folk songs and expressing their feeling with free minds. They collect in groups and prepare those in common places and consume with marry making. They do not go for any particular vegetables for this observance but special attention is given to select herbs having medicinal value.⁸³ They may be *daushrem*, *tharai gwrlwi*, *burwi thokhon*, *dingkhia*, *adumbra bijou*, *helangshi*, *khungkha*, or others. They believe that vegetables eating on the day give them great immunize value for whole the year to come. Now a day's community people celebrate it in households gathering of their family members.⁸⁴

Lwnthi mwigong is one of the wild vegetables. If the vegetable is used with onla khari then it provides medicinal value to immunize for both small and large pox. The vegetable is used with other vegetables on the same day of the ritual.⁸⁵

Bwr lanai and food

Bwr lanai is a process of receiving blessings from elder or god the Bathou bwrai. For taking blessing a plot of place is selected and pastes the place with mud or cowdung and purified the place sprinkling holy water. The holy water is prepared with pair of basil leafs, gold ring, unbroken rice, dew grass, and a pot of water.

A plantain leaf is placed and a pair of areca-nut and betel-leaf is kept on it. An earthen lamp with mustard oil is lighted on it. The offering is placed in the name Mahadev and mother goddess Kamakhya. The Bwisagu mwsagra team blesses wishing all fine to the

⁸³ Budhbari Basumatary. Female 17 years, Vendor Vill. Khamardwisa, Dist. Baksa, Assam

⁸⁴ Dipali Narzary, Female 27 years, tea Vendor, Vill. Khamardwisa, Dist. Baksa, Assam

⁸⁵ Ame Basumatary. Female 60 years, house wife Vill: Khamar Dwisa, Honthafara, and Dist. Baksa, Assam.

child less couple in loud. The dancers brings the plantain leaf keeping the earthen lamp aside and packs the materials in one then moves in round over the head of the couple and throw away that in distant place. It shows the throwing of evil fate of the couple from them.

Amthisua and food to the mother Earth

Amthisua is a ritual day observed by the Bodos of Assam. At the temple of Mother goddess Kamakhya, *Ambubasi* Mela begins. The amthisua starting day is called Prabriti⁸⁶ and ending is called Nibriti. People fast for the puja for the day long. These days are considered as impure for the mother Earth's menstruation. The ritual lasts for seven days. They avoid digging soil; keep away themselves from seeds and granary. Seeds are preserved on the top of the house or in ceiling. Process of offerings begins with the purification of mother earth by pasting cow dung and sprinkling holy water. At the end of this ritual they offer fruits and Prasad to *Bima Bwiswmuthi* the mother Earth. In mother earth Puja they says –

Nwi ai bima bwisumuthu
Nwngni bikhayao ganawinw be muluk khwo nubai
Nwngni bikhayaonw khigla hasugla khalambai
Hal eobai khodal jaobai
Mithi mwnwi dai dwfwn ni thakhai
Jwngkhwo nimaha hwdw
Nwngni mungao nwngninw swrjinai
Fithai samthai fwrkhwo nwngni mungaonw
Baonai jabai bekhwu nwng ajaoudw.

English rendering:

Hey mother earth
We have seen your world by putting our legs on your heart
We have passed our poop and urine on you
We have ploughed, spaded
Forgive us for our unknown faults
Forgive us
Receive our offerings fruits and nuts created by you in turn.
Then the mother Earth puja ends.

⁸⁶ Dipali Bala Boro, Female, 44 years, Lecturer at Baganpara jr. College, village Baganpara, Dist. Baksa, Assam.

Kati Bihu or Kati gasa saonai and food

This is a seasonal festival⁸⁷ observed in Assam. This festival is observed in last evening of Ahin. This festival is not so gorgeous one though it is observed with lights and offerings of Prasad to mother Lakshmi. Childless women perform Kati puja. So the puja has relation with reproduction. In the Hindu society this puja is offered by women only. It is a women ritual that peacock figure is worshipped posting four banana plant as the peacock.⁸⁸ But the puja is different from that of Kati bihu of bodo community. In time of offering first of all the Supreme God is remembered and then Mainao the deity of wealth and prosperity is offered with Prasad (soaked rice, grams, mug), a pair of areca-nut, betel-leaves on a thaigir bikhong (a clove of wooden apple). As sacrificial offerings, a cock is sacrificed on Bakhri or granary and a hen is sacrificed in ishing, the kitchen for the welfare of household and wealth and prosperity. They believe that if the house hold is pure and no any dai dwfwr (crime or guilt) on the eye of God then wealth of the house will increase and can live peacefully in the grace of Anan Gosai, the God.

So, they chant – Mantra

Ai Afa Anan Gosai

Ai mainaokhw nwngnw swrjidw

Bini Gwrbwao thanai Ai mainaokhw

Sro, sro, thab wngkharhw.

English rendering:

You have created Mother Minao (the Goddess of wealth and Prosperity) so, let mother maino come out from the heart without delay.

This chant is followed by lightning of mustard oil, white thread and prasada at evening time in paddy fields and households. The Supreme God Bathou Bwrai is offered with prasada and fruits on his alter Bathou and Mainao on the left of the Bathou alter is treasured by planting a basil plant on it. New betel-nut and leaves are offered to the God and Deity on that evening. From that day the new betel nuts can be consumed after offering.⁸⁹ This tradition is observed in Baksa and undivided Barpeta District of Assam. It can be mentioned that with the adoption of new Bathou, only a few villagers offer with the ritualistic sacrifice of cock and hen in the households and paddy fields. Sacrifice of cock and hen is prevalent in Dhamdhama, Dwarkushi of Kamrup rural district, Tamulpur area, Narengaon, Thangabari, Kharua, Puran Sripur in Barama of Baksa district are maintaining this tradition of Shakta

⁸⁷Brahma, Kameswar. *Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos*. Gossaigaon: Chiranjib Brahma, 1st Edition, 1989.pp. 57

⁸⁸Das, Biren. *Goalporia Loko Sanskriti aru Lokogit*. Guwahati: Chandra Prakash, First edition, 1994.pp.159

⁸⁹Parul Kherkatary, Female, 47 years, Housewife, Geruapara, Srupeta, Dist. Barpeta. Date-18/10/2019.

worship.

Most of the villagers offer puja by lightening Alari bathi (erthen lamp) at Bathou alter, granary, goli no (cow shed), orchard and household boundaries.

It helps to reduce insects and beetles on paddy field.⁹⁰ This festival is not observed with pomp and gaiety. It is observed to drive away insects and welcome new paddy to the paddy fields by offerings and sacrifices. The new betel-nut and betel-leaves are offered to Gods and deities and after that human being can consume betel nuts from that festival

There is a tradition of Kherai worship in the name of Mainao the Goddess of wealth. This Kherai is called the Darshan Kherai one of the four kinds of Kherais. These are (i) *Umrao Kherai*, (ii) *Phalo Kherai* and (iii) *Noaoni Kherai* (family kherai).⁹¹

Darshan Kherai needs the following materials these are as follows—

(1) a kilogram of rice powder (2) three nos. of auwa there bamboo with its top branches (3) a branch of Sijou (4) a basil plant (5) nineteen pair of khasi hagra (khangkhla grass), (6) nineteen pair of mwkhwna, (7) approximately four nos. of Jaothi wuwa (a kind of bamboo) (8) a branch of basil plant (9) Nine nos. of dew grass (10) a golden ring (11) plantain leaves 6 nos. (12) Two branches of banana (13) a poon of areca nuts nos. 80 (14) one biha betel leaves (one biha equals to 80 nos.) (15) *Sindur* (16) Dhup (incense sticks) (17) Dhuna (perfumed tree gum) (18) Thread awa (19) Mustard oil (20) Rice 5kg (21) two earthen pots of rice beer. These are the materials for the Darshan Kherai Puja.

Musical instruments are also played and dances are performed in the time of puja. Such musical instruments are (1) Kham a pair (2) Flute a pair (3) Jotha a pair.

For offering puja certain rituals are performed in establishing Kherai Mondap. Plantation of Sijou, Thulungsi (basil plant) materials are offered and sacrificed by starting Bathou Mantra by calling the eighteen number of Gods and deities along with the supreme God Bathou. They are Aileng khazi, Abbla kungm, Rajfuthur, Mwnashw, Bwrlu Buri, Raj Khandra, Song raja, Song rani, Alai khungri, Bilai khungri, Bandari, Kumari, Basmuthi, and Saudri etc.⁹²

They offer puja by installing four numbers of bijuli auwa with white cloth flag as a sign of peace. They worship Bathou the supreme God and deities and satisfy them with those materials mentioned in the form of cooked and uncooked or Gwmwn and Gwthang Bhogs. It is believed that every Gods and deities have their knowledge after having those offerings of the human.

⁹⁰Sanjiv Swargiary, Male, 40 Yers. Assistant Professor, Gyanpeeth Degree College, Vill&P.O. Pamupathar, District Baksa, Date-17/10/2020

⁹¹ Brahma, Kameswar. *Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos*. Gossaigaon: 2009.p.63

⁹² Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kachari Samaj Anu Sanskriti*, Guwahati: Bina Library. 2009 (1966). p.188.

Wngkham gwdan janai (new rice eating ceremony)

Angkham gwdan janai is also known as Newn janai ceremony has great importance for its agricultural ceremony amongst the community. The ceremony is mainly related with the agricultural crops the Ashu and Maisali. It has great cultural value with social gathering in that context. The host family calls their near and dear once to participate the ceremony to share the feasting ceremony. Every holy activities consists the dwgarnai the purification of household is seen in the community. Newn janai ritual has also the same process of purification among the cultivating families. Purification by swipping, cleaning and pasting their household with cowdung and soil mixing water on it is a cleanliness drive made by them. The deury of the village purifies the house dropping holy water on courtyard and household. The purification of holy water needs (i) a lotha full of water (ii) gold to soak in (iii) silver to soak in (iv) Unbroken rice five nos (v) five branches of thulungsi (vi) dubri hagra five nos, (vii) Jatراسي jwoba (five branches of jatراسي) (viii) Barsikhi five branches (ix) Saya maya five branches.

The five numbers of unbroken rice and gold silver are soaked in the water than all the rest elements are fasten with white thread five rounds and than chants the mwntwrr of preparing holy water.⁹³

Wang kling kling fwd se
Khwl khwl gwjwing dwi nwn
Nijra rijri hahkor dwikhorni
Jalaklhar bilakhar mansi dumsi
Hwkhar nwn silingkar
Bitha aotha, prosad mutha
Fwthardw jekhwoubw gwthar
Joale khangwn rejed dergwn
Khalai dwifwn anthwrjoyi
Mwher daoher khalam nwn
Doohai afa bwraibatwo – fu

English rendering:

Wng kling kling fwdse
Khwl khwl pure water you are
Stream – fountain, pond and well

⁹³ Baneswar Ramchiary. Male 54 years. Vill. Bhangrikuchi, Dist. Baksa, Assam.

People are in problem and struggle
Draw away the destruction
Bitha aotha Prasad bundle
Purify all things in pure state
The untiring impure and unholy
Draw away those you please
Hey! Father Bwrai Bathou – Fu

Then purifies all the area containing to homesteads of the family where the newn janai is organised.

Mwswonw baonai

Mwsonw baona is a ritual is that is performed the day by offering paddy the maimwthai a bundle of paddy plant. Mwthi the word came from mutha meaning a bunch of anything how much it catchable. From the word mutha it come as mwthi. It is particularly used in case of paddy. When the paddy is wrapped the wrapped calehes and tartans with the paddy feat that is call the mwthi , this mwthi of paddy plant is fed to cows specially for the first to bullock than other cows member in the family . The cow tending ceremony is alone become the cow is worker of the family to do cultivation work. Through then the family earns for the whole years. It the cow is satisfied their wealth and prosperity will exist in the family.

Agu Purushnw Puja

The cow feeding ceremony followed by agu purushnw hwnwi puja the ceremony of offerings to their ancestors. The family member prepares Jokhai/jau gwthar the holy rice beer along with other edibles. On this occasion a pair of betel nut and leave, rice, curry, frits, nuts, rice cake, sugar are offered on a plantain leaf.

The offering contains the following materials more or less in the family.

1. Alari bathi gongse (Earthen, lamp 1no.)
2. Dhup khathi gongba (5 nos.Insense sticks)
3. Diasolai bahase (Match box 1no)
4. Laijwolai gaigse (a plantain leaf)
5. Goi pathwi jorase (a pair of betel nut and betel leaf)
6. Lothase dwi gwthar (a pot of holy water)
7. Laihkar gangba (small banana leaves 5 nos)
8. Ji-gwthar (an unused holy cloth)
9. Bibar arw (flower)

10. prarad (Prasad)

11. Jagra mua (edible things as prepared by family member)

All these things are offered towards the southern side of the courtyard. For the first a white flower is offered to bima bwisumuthi, the mother Earth to have permission for offerings puja to their departed soul or ancestors who have died a timely or untimely death. They say---

Noi ai bwiswmuthi nwngni mungao
Be nwngninw swrjinaioa bibarkhwu
Nwngninw, mungao baonai jabai bekhwunw
Nwnng gwsu khusiwi ajaona ladw,
Nwngni bikhayaonw gananwi hal-kodal jaobai,
Emphwou enla buthar phlangbai
Bini thakhai nimaha hwnanwi nwnng
Jwngkhwou agu purushnw puja hwnw
Jaiga hwdw de aai.

English rendering:

Oh mother earth we have offered
Your created flowers are offered in your name in return
Please receive this offering in pleasure.
We have ploughed and spaded on your chest,
We've killed insects and creatures in fault,
Forgiving us for those faults
You please let us to offer puja to our ancestors.

Then the plaintain leaf is placed and a pair of betal-nut and leaf is offered. An earthen lamp is lit and pieces of banana leaves are placed in sequence. The edible things are presented one by one, the rice cake, curry (if possible) fruits, nuts and flowers are offered with the left hand. The Oja on behalf of the family chants requesting ancestors to receive the offerings. He prays to bless the family to be free from all sorts of ahxiitis. Then drops the holy water and removes all the food materials to throw them in water.

Gosa lanai or Gosa thujennai

Gosa lanai or gosa thujennai is an agricultural ritual that is organised by cultivator to plant the paddy on their own land by the woman head of the family. On that ritual the north eastern side of the plot is selected to plant paddy plant. on the next day, they offer Prasad, a pair of areca nut and betel leaf to the Jwmwn bwrai and Jwmwn Burwi for the protection of the paddy from insects and other diseases to be occurring in future.

Haljangkhra and Food

This agricultural ritual relates with the last paddy planting ceremony organised by particular cultivator family. Woman head of the family and other workers plant paddy for the last time for the season. After finishing the plantation of the paddy on the whole plot of the land a small plot is pasted with mud in the north eastern side and plants three bundles of paddy. This shows the finishing of the plantation of paddy for the season. There after they paste mud on the face and head of the family members and entertain themselves with mud by playing and dancing. The women is the head of the family brigs the mainao on her back in the procession and keep it on the bakhri. The faily arrange a feast with meat and local liquor which is called haljangkhra.

Offering to household deity

The Bodo traditional families worship two types of deity, one is nokhorni mwdai and another is hagrani mwdai. The Bod families receive their food materials as meal after offering to their worshipped deities twice in a day.⁹⁴ They believe that the great creator of this world is all in all and on the blessings of Him we are alive and the human being should eat their food after offering to the deities they worship. It is an age-old belief of the community.

2.11 Phuthli Haba and food Preparation

Phuthli Haba is a marriage system arranged in the name of Eng or Ehiu Bwrai and Burwi in doll figure. Eng or Ehiu Bwrai is a male and Eng or Ehiu Burwi is a female. In other places of the state they are worshipped as Beng Bwrai and Beng Burwi. In Nalbari and Baksa district this is known as Beng Bwrai and Beng Burwi.⁹⁵ People of undivided Darrang district have named the marriage system as Mwdai Abwou-Abwi kherai.⁹⁶ Tradition of Sarab Fwranai Phuthli Haba is prevalent among the northern part of Goalpara district. Folk beliefs of the Bodo society is current in the community that Raona and Raoni are the ascendants of first human being Mwnsing Sing Bwrai had organized marriage system by arranging marriage of the Male and the nature first. This is the resultant of Phuthuli Haba tradition among the Bodo society.⁹⁷ The participating people prepare a bhel or boat of banana split and a house on that bhel. Women folk of village participate by taking bath and cleaning their households. The village deuries purifies their village by sprinkling dwi gwthar the holy water.

⁹⁴ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, Third Edition, Reprint, 2001.p.35.

⁹⁵Sabita Daimary. Female, 38 years, Vill. Santipur, Bhelamari. Dhamdhama Dist. Baksa

⁹⁶Swargiary, Dhaneswar. Phuthuli Haba in the Book of *Darangni Rifinai Sethi Khwndw*. Guwahati: Published by Bodo Publication Board, BSS, 1st Edition, Boro, and Budheswar. 2009.

⁹⁷Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kachari Samaj Aru Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library. Reprint 2001, p. 207.

Deuries for Purification

Three numbers of Deuries are selected by community members. They are regarded as holy men who also maintain community as well Vedic rules in purification and self-purification.

- They are
- (i) Rajw thargra deuri
 - (ii) Abwi-Abouni deuri
 - (iii) Gopal than or Bathou tharnai deuri

Song of Phuthli Haba –

Dibi, He Dibi

Diba, He Diba

Diba Jangkhla, Dibi Jangkhli

Swrji jennai gahayao, wrwlai fao fuja najaodw gosa mwnsa dajaswi.

Puja fathal Najaona ladw. Nogkhai bakhai inai khalam bwnai maha
fab nangwn Dai dafwr, Maha dosh khalaijaiblabw nimaha hwnangwn.

He! Diba he! Dibi nwngswnrw khangdwng nwngswnrw badwng.⁹⁸

English rendering –

Dibi, Hey! Dibi

Diba, Hey! Diba

Diba Jangkhla Dibi Jangkhli

In the beginning of creations receive over offerings

Do not be unhappy, jealous on us

Receive our offerings.

If you do any evils on us it will be sin to you.

If crime or guilty is done by us without knowingly; you would be happy
enough to forgive us.

Hey! Diba!, Hey Dibi you have created and nourished us. Like this they sing songs of creation and leading life of persons. Celebration of this puja also is surrounded with dance performance and food presentation. The observance Corresponds to different knowledges useful in the present and future life. A newly participated person can have the knowledge of preparation of doll, ornaments, house, food, and also the art of speaking which are taught by

⁹⁸Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kachari Somaj Anu Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 3rd Edition Reprint, 2001. p. 209.

God rojong Bwrai of the god engineering of the Bodos.

Doll or the Phuthuli is made with the waste threads from the handlooms of village weavers. Male and Female figure of dolls are prepared by putting faori and dokhona respectively. All the parts of the bodies head, hand, leg, stomach, fingers, foot, toes and eyes are ornamented with Madli (locate), Medal asthma (ring), Sona (Gold made of herbs), Lu (chain), Keru (ear ring), spectacles etc. They believe that all the technologies are helped by Rojong Bwrai, the technology God according to the Bodo worshipers.

The place of festival is crowded with the villagers. The whole of the process is filled with songs and dance performances from beginning to the end with accompaniment of traditional musical instruments, the Kham, the Sifung, and the Jotha.⁹⁹

Gods and deities are offered food both cooked and raw. This is called bhog. They are also offered blood of sacrificed fowl.

The Kesai Khati takes two uncooked chickens, one by sacrificing and another's intestine by pulling out it from tail to head. The God and deity takes a pair of areca-nut and betel-leave, earthen lamp, incense stick, sindur, a pair of pigeons, a pair of duck's egg¹⁰⁰

The Abwi Abwou or Deba Bwrai-Debi Burwi does not take Kesha Bhog or uncooked material but their disciples take those. In time of Bhel Bhasainai or farewll of Banana boat with all the food materials, women from the participants catch fishes to offer her as kasha bhog.

Daoswrm janai or maifwrm janai

Daoswrm Janai or Maifwrm Janai is a feasting ceremony of this festival. People from the village collect suitable vegetables for the purpose. They collect vegetables like Dingkhia (fern), Maisundri (heart leaf/ fish mint), and Sonafuli (golden herb), and Rufafuli (silver herb), and Manimuni and thaso (yam). All these sorts of vegetables are available in the season. All these vegetables are mixed with rice and prepared as food and served for feasting. this feasting ceremony connected with the futhli haba.¹⁰¹

2.12 Folk literature relating to food

They have also another Khuga methai (folk songs), mwynthwr (mantras-chants), bathra bhao (proverbs), bathra fandai (riddles), bathra (speeches). Those narratives, genres provide recreational values to the community people.

Bodo folk song:

⁹⁹ Narzi, Bhaben. *Boro Kacharir Somaj Anu Sanskriti*. Guwahati: Bina Library, 3rd Edition Reprint, 2001. P.208

¹⁰⁰ Nagri Swargiary, Female, Age 56 years. Vill: Hati Namati PS & Dist.: Nalbari, Assam. Dated : 27/4/2019

¹⁰¹ Rukmini Basumatary, Female, 71 years, Vill. Paschim Mahina. District. Nalbari, Assam. Dated: 12/5/2019.

Fwi hai lwgwfwr
Halws Bilwaa helangsi meigong
Khanw thangni
Sukhu Dukhuni Khwthakhw
Fwrmailaini
Ay Afayabw Hora Hora
Ada Bajwiyabw Swiya Swiya
Jwngni Bwiswalai Bargolangbay
Jwnglai Gwjaolangbay.

English rendering:

Come friends, let's go
For plucking Helangsi (Leafy Vegetables)
In the halws lake
Let us share our Joy and sorrows,
Our parents do not pay attention to our marriage
Our brother and sister in law have no well wish on us.
We are over aged (Now)
We have floated now.

Lai hwba Lapha Khayw:-

English rendering:

If gives chance to pluck lai
Then pluck lapha
Literally: -If you give one chance then he takes more chances.
Jouni Phukhri, Ongkhamni Ali
Bedorni akhai'

English rendering:

Pond of wine
Heaps of rice
Pops of meat.

Emao denai methai

The song of emao denai methai is sung in the marriage ceremony of Raona Raoni. Be methaikhwo rwjabnai somao musukhakhwo giding giding gidalfwra akakhobw arw jotha dhayw.

.....
Emao denw langnangwn
Ma bilaidw denangwn
Mwkhna bilai nangwn
Ywi fiswo ejing debwla
Be Emaoa Janangwn
Bih Dingkha bilai hwnangwn
.....
Hori hori khafal ywi
Hori hori hwiya he hue.¹⁰²
.....
Faidw nwnngwla
Vog laru piya laru
Labnaia swr
Goijora fathwi jora langwn
Vogmuthini laijamao
Ayo hwnangwn faidw Ywi.¹⁰³

Uji sigang arw unni Khulitham eba jiuni bari gongthamsim dwidenw. Benikhainw sibraini gubun mwense mungaonw bari gongtham. Benikhainw rang-raji, mwithai haji arw bari gongtham jadwng bathwoni thandwi satham bormali (Brahma) laokhar gosai (Bishnu) arw Sibraiyanw Bathwokhwo jerwi mansifwra gubun gubun mungwi linghorw, bebdinw Bormali, Bishnu arw Sibraikhwo gubun gubun mung khonnanwi linghorw.

‘Maru dupsangni Olodot Olodot

Dum daoini oma bedot, Oma bedot’

(Bhaben Narzi, 1957: 22)

English rendering:

The olodot of high land

O you bridegroom!

You should have offered us pork from from the superior pig (daowi)

But what a contrast is!

¹⁰² Basumatary, Phukan. *Phuthli Haba*. Baganpara: Nilima Prakashani, 2011, p-26.

¹⁰³ Boro, Bihu Ram. *Gibi Bithai*. Baganpara: Nilima Prakashani, 2013. p.258.

You have given us pork from an inferior type.
Injur khonani gwmwthing
Aei hwoa mwjang nwngni habani
Jwualai khaithing'

English rendering:

The insect cockroach that dwells in the corner of a wall;
O you fair bridegroom!
The wine you are offering us in your wedding ceremony is
extreme sour. (Bhaben Narzi, 1957:22, 23)

Above the song depicts the social deconstruction and the cultural erosion among the Bodo community by drinking local liquor the jwu. It says the earlier family condition of Thafli Budrang had the granary of one and half, but he has no a single cat now a day. The domestication of cat and dogs are the primary habit of this community.

'Athiya gwdanni
Fanlou naydao
Khirkha janggrang grang lananwi
Khabay thathao thao
Swnbarini goy gwrlwijwng
Basa phathwi gwlwijng
Nwngkhw hornswi basa
Malay gamiyao
Bima thananwi
Bipha thananwi
Mwkhang nayaswi basa
Malai gamiyao
Hagra fithaini awnkham jananggwn
Oua hasungao dwi lwngnanggwn basa
Malay gamiyao'¹⁰⁴

English rendering:

Chilly with straight rising
Of newly soiled border line

¹⁰⁴ Jamini Boro, Female, 45 years, Bagribari, Dhamdhama, Baksa, Assam

Taking khirkha (bamboo pot) jengreng reng

It be pick able

With the unripe betel nut of barren land

Oh with the newly budding betel leaf

Oh you'll be married away

Having mother

Having father

Without looking your face

Oh in another village

You'll have to have rice of grass fruits

Oh you'll have to drink water in bamboo pot in another village.¹⁰⁵

Thing Thapha Thaphala

Bara masala

Na bedor mwnbwla

Kharwi ondwla

Hathaiyaon Thangdwng

Gangona gongtham labwdwng

Nwng dam ang dam

De burwi damdw dam

De burwi damdw de

Ang mwsani¹⁰⁶

English rendering:

Thing thafa thafa twelve spices

If fish and meat is available

Alkali and Onla (Alkali with rice powder)

Gone to market purchased three gongwna (small musical instrument made of bamboo herb)

You play, I play

Oh dear play (yet)

Wngkham gwrlwi jayabalanw narakhwu femfa damwbla Mainawa orw

English rendering:

The mother Mainao bites in blowing whistle by paddy straw without eating new

¹⁰⁵ Jamini Boro. Female 39 years, Dhamdhama, Baksa

¹⁰⁶ Basumatary. Birendragiri. *Rangjali Bwisagu, Boro Harimuni Mohar Mushri*. pp38)

rice.

This chapter has been devoted on the diverse and varied food materials of the community. It is observed that a section of food materials are gathered from the natural surroundings. It is also observed that Bodos have conventional and non-conventional food habits which are primarily concerned with time, season and ritualistic events. Bodo people are traditionally well-versed in medicinal properties of food materials. They primarily rely upon nutritional values of food materials. Money a food item does correspond to the various rituals of the society.