

FINAL REPORT

PROJECT TITLE

**STUDY ON PREPARATION-PRESERVATION AND
NUTRITIONAL ASPECT OF INDIGENOUS FOODS OF SOME
SELECTED ETHNIC GROUPS OF ASSAM.**

PROJECT SANCTION

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1:1 The life of each and every living being is food. “Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength, and intelligence are all established in food.” Food is one of the basic needs of the living beings including the human beings. Food is any substance, liquid or solid, that is or can be consumed by living organisms, especially by eating, in order to satisfy emotional as well as physical hunger and to sustain life. Food is the primary focus of much economic activity and the base of much cultural and social activity as well.

Foods are many, having relevance to varied culture across the globe. And these foods have diverse characteristics of texture, taste, colour, and smell, modes of preparation and on and on. Structuralists emphasized that the process of naming a wild product as food and transforming it into something edible involves the ‘culturizing’ of nature (Counihan, C. M,1999). Food has to surpass a way from wild fields and forest to the kitchen; from wild nature to a colorful culture through grammar of cooking.

Food & gender : “Food is an organizingly feminist issue.” – Sargeant, S. 1985 (cited in Counihan, C and Estrik, P. V.)

In a household both men and women have the primary responsibility in producing food. The males are assigned the task of ‘conquering nature’ for production and the female counterpart were directed to space of home and assigned the task of shaping productivity. (Sharma, R. 2010). In all kind of societies – foraging bands, horticultural tribes, peasant village and industrial cities – women have always had

primary responsibility for preparing and serving food to others. (D'Andrade, 1974, cited in Counihan, C. 1999). Feeding is culturally universal for women and it is the major component of female identity and the source of their authority. Hold of women over food is the ground of power for them. Women's regular control on food preparation and presentation gives them much power to influence. So, gender in food culture marks a distinctive grab in the field of food studies.

“An examination of food ways – behaviors and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food – reveals much about power relations and conceptions of sex and gender, for every coherent social group has its own unique food ways.” (Counihan, C. M, 1999). In the indigenous communities of north eastern region the women folk too perform almost all food related activities of her family. They not only help in production of food but also play the major role in the preparation, production, serving etc. In the changing behavior of human beings over the years, the women folk of the north east regoin have come out of their traditional role in food preparation by taking positive role in agricultural operations leading to food production and storage, food preparation, food marketing, seed preservation etc. As such providing their body as food for the infants they also equally take part with their male counterparts in production and marketing activities to generation of income.

Food & festival: “India is often called the land of feasts, fasts and festivals.”

Feasts or the festive foods enlarge the social group. It is a wonderful way to develop positive social relation. Rural India has a habit of observing seasonal and harvest festivals along with religious events and life transitions by feasting and fasting and in some cases doing the both. “In traditional India, what and how people ate was inseparable from their religion, life-cycle stage, town and region,

castes and or special status, family traditions, health concerns and spiritual beliefs.” Feast or the festive foods have a greater significance in the community life. Eating together is a sign of love, trust, friendship and merriment. In Assam, Magh Bihu is known as the festival of food and merrymaking.

Feast strengthens community solidarity through collective food consumption. In Mising villages, the practice of house building by the community is still prevailing. The owner of the house has to provide food and drink, especially pork and the rice beer.

Among the communities of Assam, food is regarded as a medium through which they can offer their gratitude towards their god. Offering food is a principal form of worshiping god in most communities of Assam. Offerings foods to the death ancestor are common cultural phenomena for maintain a good relation with them. Food offerings in feasts or festivals connect human and god, the living and the dead, neighbors and kin.

Food & culture: “Food is a prism that absorbs and reflects a host of cultural phenomena.” (Counihan, C. M, 1999). Cuisine of a community is a specific set of cooking tradition and practices. It reflects the culture of a specific society. Food can be marked as ‘a highly condensed social fact’ (Appadurai 1981:494). Food is a part of the material culture. Through producing, preparing, distributing and consuming food a community act out some of their most important cultural activities.

Food & environment: “Food systems are of course intimately related to the local environment....” (Counihan, C. M, 1999).

The food cultural of a society is primarily influenced by the ingredients that are easily available in the local environment. The biodiversity of the north eastern

states makes it a hot spot with many rare plants and herbs. So, *xaak* (leafy vegetable) forms an indispensable part of Assamese cuisine. The north-east Indian hill dwellers generally practice shifting cultivation called '*jhum*'. But in the both Brahmaputra and Barak valleys people cultivate the same kinds of food crops such as rice, pulses, maize etc. Rice is the staple food for all the inhabitants of this region. The ways of preparing rice may differ amongst the divers groups of people. Most of the ingredients for preparing other food items are common but the preparation procedure or style and the food grammar of each group of people is different and unique.

Food & identity: Ethnic groups are distinguished by their culture. Ethnic cuisines are one of the most distinct way through which group identities are recognized and reinforced. Foods and food preparation vary from community to community depending on their culture, custom and values. These specialties of food in terms of preparation, preservation and use play an important role in projecting the cultural identity of a particular community.

Keeping these views in mind, an investigation was carried out to study the preparation- preservation and nutritional aspects of indigenous foods of some selected ethnic groups of Assam.

1:2 Objectives of the project:

- Collection of the indigenous food items of the selected ethnic groups and documentation of their preparation procedures.
- To investigate the storage and preservation procedures of the indigenous food items.

- Social construction of culinary practices, beliefs and tradition of three ethnic groups.
- Impact of food Globalization.
- Food lore associated with ethnic food of selected groups of Assam.

1:3Methodology

The mode of collection of data has important bearings on a research projects. With regard to methodology, depending on the nature of the required data, different standard anthropological techniques were used in the time of field investigation. An investigation was carried out in some districts of Assam where the population of the Ahom, Karbi and Mising is high. The investigation was carried out regarding food ways in the arena of their culture, beliefs, customs and habits. Methodologically, in depth interviewing and observations is used to achieve more objective and overall understanding of their food habit, food preparation, preservation, production, food lore and food taboos. Random selection of the households in the villages was made for interviewing and discussion regarding food processes. Both men and women as well as young and aged were selected for interview. Photography and video were also done for visual documentation.

With regard to secondary data, information from various published and unpublished sources like, books, journals, reports, news paper etc. were collected and consulted in relevant phases of the study. The data generated have been systematically analyzed and conveniently presented in different chapters.

1:4 Field sites

During the period, Mishing villages, Ahom villages and Karbi Village were visited to collect data on preparation-preservation of indigenous food. An investigation was carried out in Dhemaji, Chilapathar, Jonai, Machkhuwa, Majuli, in the villages of Sibsagar and Golaghat district to gather information on both Mishing and Ahom food. Karbi villages such as Madhuram, Jeng gaon, Deopani, Ximolu-Chapori of Karbi Anglong district, the greater region of Pavoi of Sonitpur district and Bakrapara, Bongaon, Nalapara of Guwahati are surveyed to collect data regarding the Karbi food habit.

In the first phase some preliminary field work has done. One Mishing village named Baligaon, situated in Sonitpur district and one Karbi village Jeng gaon in Karbi-Anglong district and a weekly village market of the Karbis were visited to have a first hand idea about the village people and their necessary food stuffs.

Ahom villages of Sibsagar District are visited for field work to study on traditional Ahom food and drink. The field investigation has been carried out in some villages such as Bokota, Borgaon, Patsaku, Parijat, Hologuri, Karanga, Japisajia and Motakukura Tiniali of Sibsagar district to collect information on traditional Ahom food. Most of the priestly caste of Ahoms i.e *Mohon*, *Deodhai* and *Bailungs* inhabit in these villages of Sibsagar district.

CHAPTER-2

ETHNOGRAPHIC PRIFILE

The North-Eastern part of India, especially Assam is the paradise of geographical and cultural diversity. Assam is known as the land of Red River, blue hills and extensive green valleys. It has been the home-land of many ethnic groups rich in traditions and cultures including those of food culture. Assam is a land with diverse races mostly Mongoloids. The Mongoloids are the migrated group entered this region from the north and the east. In ancient Indian literature these Indo-mongoloid group is referred as *Kiratas*. Considering the topic of study, three ethnic groups are selected, the Misings, the Ahoms and the Karbis.

2:1 The Misings

The Misings or the Miris, ethnically belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Mongoloid group. Of this Mongoloid group The Misings (Miris) of Assam who are ethnically related to the many tribes inhabited the sprawling stretch of land in Arunachal between the Tirap region in the east and the the Kameng region in the west, especially the Adis, migrated to Assam from the northern hills over the last millennium.' (Taid, T, 2007) The population of the Mising in Assam, according to the 2001 census is 5,67,310, that is the 17.8 percent of the total population of Assam. Misings are scattered in the eight districts of the state, such as Dibrugarh, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Sonitpur and Tinsukia. Generally the Misings dwell in the river banks.

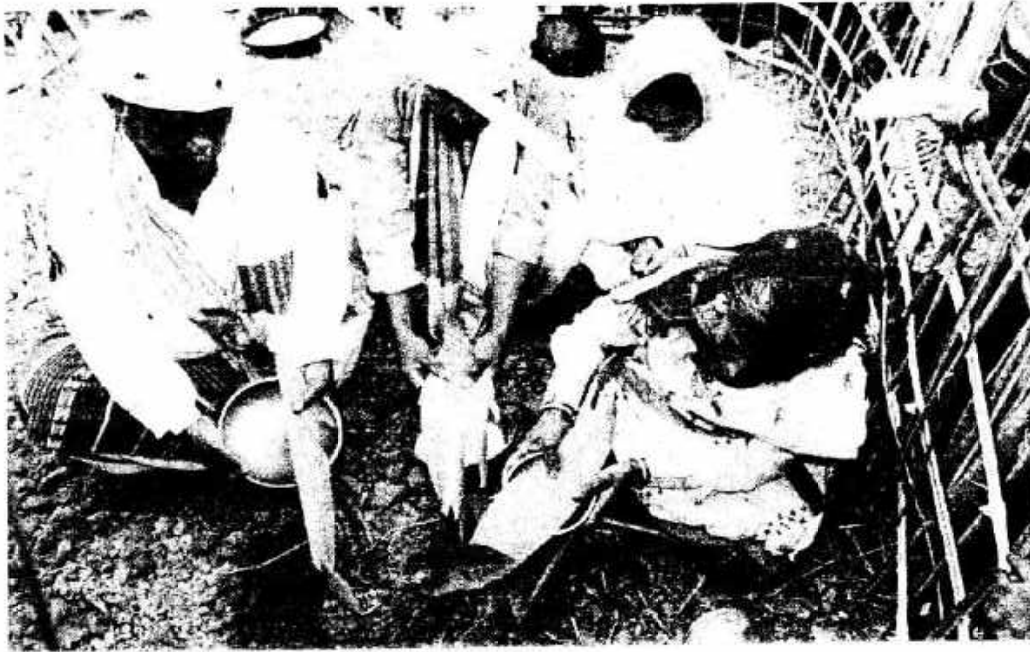
Physical Features: Like the other tribes of the Mongoloid race of the North-East, the Misings are not of the short stature. They are tall with a well-developed body. They possess wide chest and broad shoulders. They have flat nose and beardless cheeks.

Migration: The Misings or the Miris were originally a hill tribe within the ranges of the Abor, Miris and Mishmi hills in the North East Frontier Agency who came down to the plains before the reign of the Ahom kingdom. Since then they began to settle down in the riverine areas of the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri.

House-types: As the Misings are the riverine people, the Mising villages are established on the river banks. They made their houses facing to the river. The Mising houses are built on a platform five feet above from the ground. The roof is thatched and the walls are made of reeds or bamboos.

The most important feature of a Mising house is the fireplace *Meram*. It is the most sacred place. Besides cooking their daily meals, the household offerings are also performed in the fireplace.

Festivals: The Misings profess Hinduism, but they also observed their own traditional festivals. Besides observing the three Assamese *Bihus*, the Misings observed the *Ali-Aye-Ligang* on the first Wednesday in the month of *Fagun*. It is a harvest festival of socio-cultural significance. *Po:rag* is another important harvest festival, associated with *Ahu* rice cultivation. It is a festival of feast and merry making.



Ali-Aye-Ligang (in Bokakhat, Golaghat District)

2:2The Ahoms

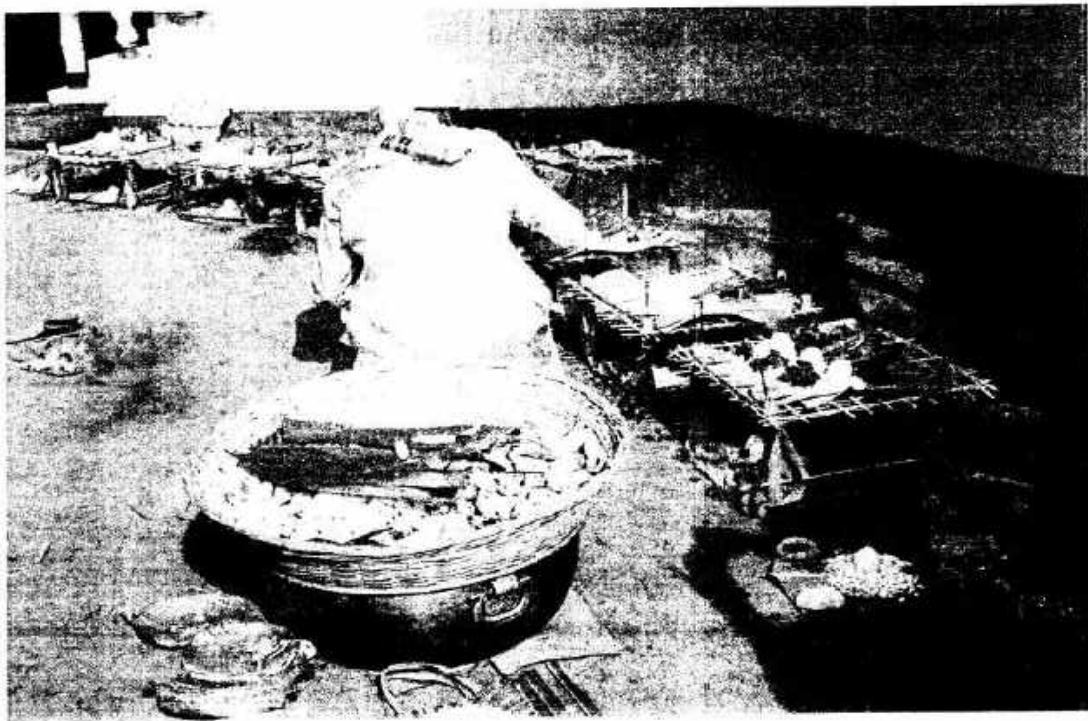
“An intelligent and courageous group of Mongoloid people belonging to the Shan tribe, later known as Ahoms, who had been inhabiting Maulung in northern Myanmar, wandered west under a brave leader Su-ka-pha, and reached the eastern bounds of present –day Assam in 1228 A.D.” (Taid,T. 2007).The Tai Ahoms are one of the greatest Tai ethnic groups of the South-East Asia settled mainly in the Brahmaputra valley of upper Assam. The Ahoms had mingled with the other ethnic groups of the valley, so they are scattered in all districts of Assam, basically in Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur etc. Total population of the Ahoms according to the 2011 Census is 24-25 lakhs.

Physical Feature: The Ahoms belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group having the physical feature of the Mongoloid race.

Migration: The Ahoms came to the Brahmaputra valley in 1228 AD under the leadership of Chaolung Seu-Ka-Pha. In the early 13th century Seu-Ka-Pha started his journey from Mong-Mao of Yunan to Assam crossing the Patkai hills through North Eastern side of India.

Religion: The Tai Ahom religious practices are entirely based on the system of ancestor worship. They have three priestly castes-Deodhai, Bailung and Mohon. In addition to the ancestor worship, different religious practices like 'Um-pha puja', 'Phura-lung', 'Rik-khan', 'Langkuri puja' etc. are prevalent among them. 'Me-dam-me-phi' is the major ritualistic festival of the Ahoms. In the major worship or the festivals of the Ahoms, animal sacrifice and feasts are organized by them. They are also the believers of supernatural beings. With the course of time they adopt the Hindu beliefs and practices without losing their own religious practices completely. After the entry of great Sankardeva in the religious saint of Assam, the Ahom Kings were attracted towards the Vaisnavism.

Festivals: 'Me-dam-me-phi' is the main festival of the Ahoms. Ritualistic practices, animal sacrifice and feasts are observed in this festival. It is a community feast and festival. Besides this Dam phi another private feast is observed which is called the 'Na-Khua'. It is observed after harvesting new crops. So this 'Na-Khua' related with the offering of food to the god and enjoyment of food by the human being. The three Bihus are also very important festivals of the Ahoms. It is the occasion of merriment and feasting.



'Me-dam-me-phi' festival of the Ahoms (31st January 2012)

2:3The Karbis

Locally, the Karbis are known as the Mikirs. Though the Karbis do not like themselves to be called as Mikirs, even today the term Mikir is used in great extent. The Karbis belong to the Indo-Mongoloid stock of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group. According to 2011 Census, the total population of the Karbis is 9,65,280 of which 4,93,482 are males and 4, 71,798 are females. Though they have their own territory, Karbi-Anglong, settlement of the Karbis are also found in parts of North Cachar, Nagaon, Kamrup, Golaghat and Sonitpur districts of Assam.

Physical Feature: The Karbis belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group having the physical feature of the Mongoloid race.

Migration: There are no any written documents on the migration of the Karbis to the main land of Assam.

Religion: Karbis can be regarded as the animists. The traditional Karbi religion has a belief on a supreme deity called '*Barithe*'. They also worship a number of other deities and spirits. Karbis very often equate their deities with that of Hindu pantheon. It is interesting to found the Ramayana in Karbi version which is called the '*Sabin-Alun*'.

House-types: Karbi people prefer to live on the hill tops; but some of them live in the plains also. A typical house of the Karbis is built on a bamboo platform raised several feet high above the ground with the help of timber posts. The materials used for construction of a Karbi house are bamboo, thatch, cane and wood. A Karbi house on the hills is built either on the hill tops or on the moderate slopes. The house is of rectangular shape and the main house is divided into two parts called '*kut*' and '*kam*'. The fireplace is in the '*kam*' part. The fireplace is called '*mehip*' in Karbi. Cattle are generally kept under the bamboo platform.

Festivals: Among the different festivals observed by the Karbis '*Rongkar*' and '*Hacha*' are important. '*Rongkar*' is the annual festival of the Karbis which is

observed once in a year without maintaining any specific time. During the '*Rongkar*' many taboos are observed and the women are not allowed to the worship arena.

'HachaKekan' is another festival which is observed after harvesting. It is a thanks giving festival and community feast and marry making are its striking feature.

CHAPTER-3

INDIGENOUS FOOD HABITS (RECIPES)

A very traditional cooking practice is prevailing among the various ethnic communities of Assam. Most of the food are boiled and steamed and some others are roasted on open fire. People use various edible wild leaves as vegetable collected from the jungle and the nearby places, fruits from the garden as well as from the jungles, meat, fish, various insects, rice beer etc. as a source of protein, fat and carbohydrate. Way of preparation of such indigenous food habits is discussed in the following pages.

3:1 Preparation Procedure of Mising Food

Indigenous way of Preparation of pork:

Always cutting of big portion of meat is a man's work and cooking is woman's work.



Dressing of pork in Mising Village

Preparation of 'Notke Khanji'(Pork prepared with *Notke* , a herb) :

Pork is cut into cubes. Pork is then fried in a cauldron blending turmeric, ginger, garlic, onions, chilli and salt. Turmeric, ginger, garlic and onion are smashed coarsely. Turmeric powder is not used but raw turmeric grown in the field is used. The fried pork becomes oily (not because of oil put for the purpose of frying but because of the fat content in pork). Depending on the quantity of pork, proportionate quantities of *Notke* (*Sarcochlamys pulcherrima gaud*) leaves are boiled. This boiled *Notke* is mixed with the fried pork. Stirring of both the fried pork and the boiled *Notke* produces the delicious item '*Notke Khanji*.'



Wild '*Notke*' Leaves



'Notke Khanji' – Pork with '*Notke*' Leaves

It is believed that the use of *Notke* in '*Notke Khanji*' reduces the fat content of pork. Synonym of '*Notke*' is '*Ombe*'. *Notke* is called in Baligaon in the Sonitpur district and the term '*Ombe*' is used in Dhemaji, Silapathar , Jonai , Machkhowa and Majuli in upper Assam.

Preparation of pork with '*Lai xaak*' (Mustard leaf):

Pork is boiled for half an hour. Smashed onion, ginger, garlic, chilli are mixed into it. Boiled pork, salt and turmeric are added to it. Frequent stirring is required until the meat is tender. '*Lai xaak*' is not chopped, it is torn with hands and it is added. Covering of the cauldron or saucepan is required for few minutes on low heat.



Mising Women, busy in cutting '*Lai xaak*'

Preparation of pork with '*outenga*' (Elephant apple):

Pork is fried and then '*outenga*' is mashed and mixed with a proportionate quantity of water so that the flavour of '*outenga*' and sour taste gets blended with the fried pork.



'*outenga*' or Elephant apple

Preparation of pork with '*mati dail*' (Black Lentil) and '*khar*' (Alkali)

Preparation of pork with '*mati dail*' (Black Lentil) and '*khar*' (Alkali) known as '*Peret oying*'. '*Mati dail*' is boiled with pork for a certain period of time adding garlic and ginger to it. Alkaline water is put to the curry according to amount. Another traditional way of cooking pork with '*mati dail*' is that first they roast the '*mati dail*' and then ground it in a traditional grinder. First they fry the pork with garlic and ginger then roasted '*mati dail*' is mixed along with it with water. After boiling, alkaline water is added to it. Turmeric is not used.

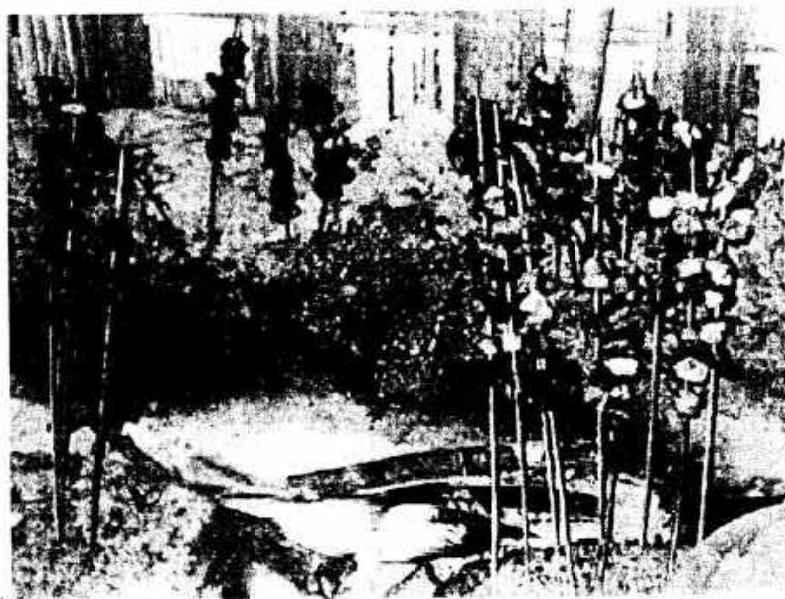


Preparation of Pork with Black Lentil in '*Po:rag*' of Misings

Roasted pork:

Cubes of pork are taken for the purpose of preparing roasted pork. Pork cubes are soaked with salt. Then cubes are stuck to '*kori*' (bamboo stick) and arranged atop fire. Depending on the quantity of pork cubes the number of '*kori*' increases. Pork

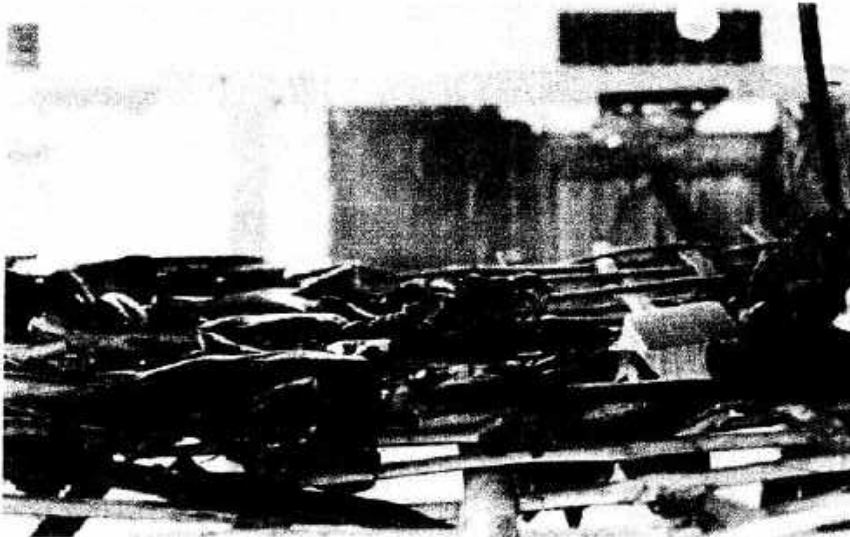
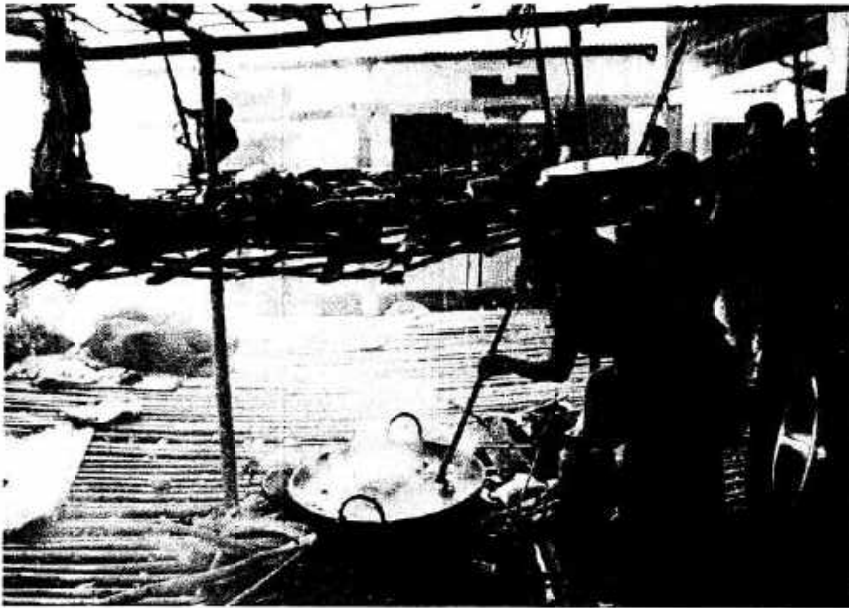
has its own fat content and in the time of roasting because of fat, oil comes out from the pork and drops down in the charcoal. Sometime pork cubes are thrown in the charcoal for few minutes to roast. Generally this roasted pork is consumed with *'apong'*



Roasted pork

Dried pork:

Large and small pieces of pork are dried on the '*perap*' atop the fireplace in a Mising '*Chang ghar*'. Raw pork is dried for four to five days. Then it is ready to eat with or without mixing other vegetables.



Pork dried over fire-place

'Zabor oying':

This item is prepared with pork and mixed herbs. Pork is boiled in a pan. Then '*notke*' or '*ombe*' is mixed with boiled pork. Along with this, '*pakkom*' leaves or '*nefafu*' leaves are added. It has to be stirred with '*kottang*' (ladle) until it gets boiled fully.

Indigenous way of preparation of Chicken:

'Porok Adin':

Chicken is cut into pieces. Any kind of rice is used for the preparation of this item. Rice is soaked in water for about a period of 4-5 hours. It is then grounded in a '*keepar*' (a traditional grinder) . Pieces of chicken are fried so that it gets dried. Less oil is put while frying or it can be done without putting oil also. Onion, garlic, ginger, turmeric are smashed and grounded in a '*keepar*'. These vegetables are grown in the fields and therefore the Mishing people need not buy these. The ground mixture is blended with chicken. As soon as chicken gets dried, water is added. Then, '*pitang*' (rice-powder) is sprinkled. While sprinkling '*pitang*', one has to keep on stirring with a ladle so that '*pitang*' gets blended easily. Depending on the season, herbs such as '*marsang*', '*bon jaluk*', '*pipoli*', '*kesa naharur pat*' (leaves of garlic) can be added .



Traditional grinder '*keeper*'

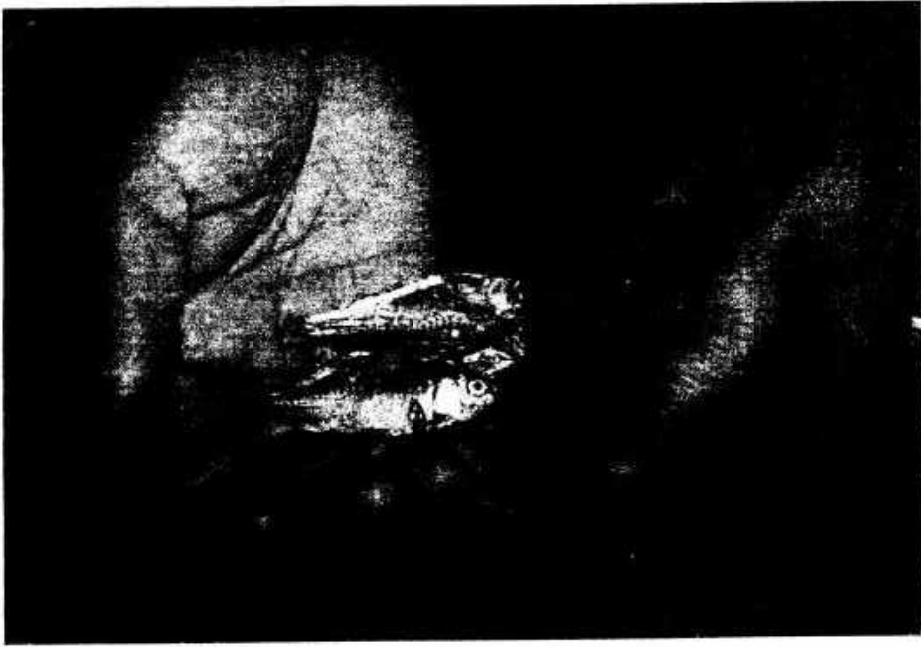
Indigenous way of preparation of Fish:

Dried fish is known as '*Sangna Ongo*' in Mising language. '*Asang ongo*' is the process of drying fish.

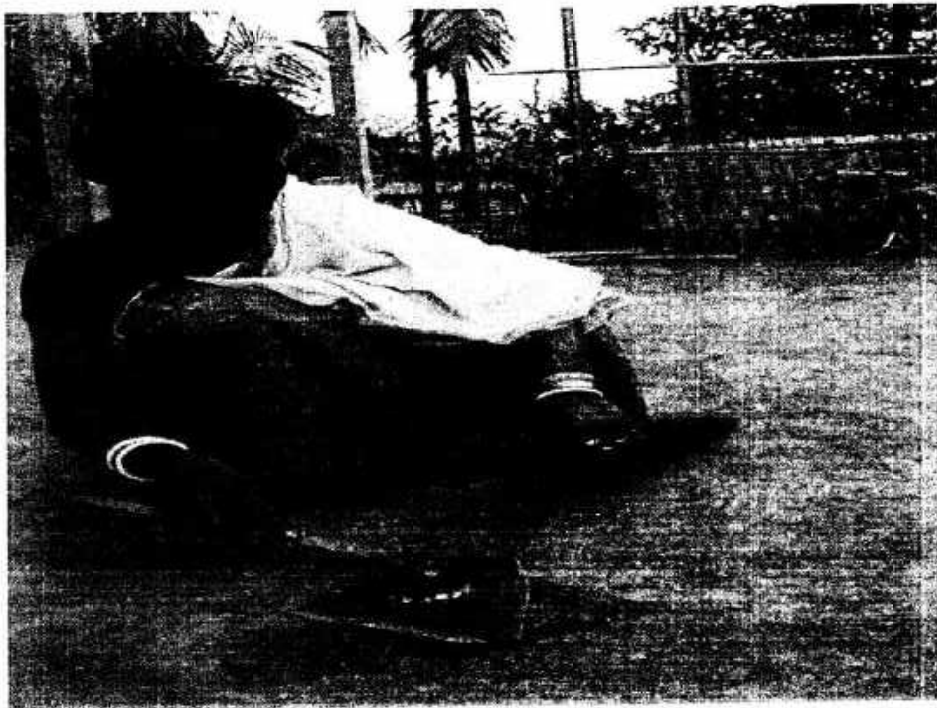
***Namsing* (Dried fish):**

Any kind of small or medium sized fish is used for the preparation of '*Namsing*'. To serve the purpose the entrails of fish is not taken out as the fish is of small and medium size. Fish is then dried out in the Sun or '*perap*' atop '*meram*', the fireplace and preserved in bamboo tube.

'*Namsing*' is mixed with '*kola kosur thur*' (tender colacasia), comprising of the leafy part and the tender stem. Grounded '*kola kosur thur*' is then mixed with dried powdered fish. Again this blended form is dried out in the Sun for few days to preserve it for future use in the time of lean period. This mixture is then put in a tightly closed '*etung*' (bamboo tube), which is an indigenous way of preservation of fish of Mising community.



Dry Fish '*Namsing*'



Dry Fish '*Namsing*' (powdered)

'Asang da' (Dried fish of big size):

Big fish is mainly used for the preparation of *'Asang da'*. As the fish used here is big, entrails are to be cleaned up. Then the big fish is stuck in *'kori'* (bamboo sticks) and kept on *'perap'*. *'Asang da'*, smoked fish is dipped in hot water so that soot gets cleaned. Soot stuck to *'asang da'* gets released as it is deepened in hot water. After cleaning it, pin bones are removed from fish. *'Khund chaul'* (broken rice) is mixed with *'asang da'*. *'Khund chaul'* is mixed a few minutes after boiling so that it gets boiled soon. Water is added and *'khund chaul'* is sprinkled and stirred with *'kottang'* (ladle) for boiling. Stirring is a must so that *'khund chaul'* gets blended gently. Salt is added according to taste. One very significant point here that *'dail'* (pulses) is not added to this item.

'Amen oying' (Mixture of fish and husk):

In Mishing *'Amen'* means husk. *'Oying'* in Mising means curry. Water is boiled in a pan and husk is mixed with boiled water. Then *'masur dail'* is added to it. As soon as *'masur dail'* is boiled, any kind of big or small fish is added. Garlic, ginger and turmeric are ground in a *'keepar'* and mixed. Adding salt, it is boiled for sometime. Then it gets ready to serve.

'Misa mach' (Prawn)

'Misa mach' is roasted by putting it atop fire. *'Misa mach'* gets baked and roasted in this way. It can be eaten with the traditional drink *'apong'* or it can be eaten with rice or can be eaten without any other food item.

'Misa mach' boiled with *'khund chaul'* (broken rice) and small fish:

'Misa mach' is boiled in water. Small fish is added. After a few minutes *'khund chaul'* is sprinkled to the boiled mixture. Stirring with a *'kottang'* (ladle) is

required during sprinkling of '*khund chaul*' so that it gets blended gently and gets boiled. Salt is added according to taste and sour vegetable '*kon bilahi*' (a small kind of tomato) or '*tengamora*' (a kind of plant bearing sour fruit) is added.

Indigenous way of preparation of Traditional Rice beer:

'*Apong*' is the traditional rice beer of the Mising community. There are mainly two types of '*Apong*', namely, '*Poro apong*' or '*Sai mod*' and '*Nogin apong*' or '*Noxin apong*'.

'*Apop*' is the main ingredient required for the preparation of both '*poro apong*' and '*nogin apong*'. '*Apop*' is a hard round ball that is prepared by mixing rice powder and 101 types of traditional herbs found in Assam. It has strong narcotic content and is essential for the preparation of '*apong*'.

Some of the names of the traditional herbs used to prepare '*apop*' as found during the time of field investigation are as follows:

1. '*Bihlangani*', 2. '*Kothalor paat*', 3. '*Kuhiar paat*', 4. '*Bon jaluk*', 5. '*Horu manimuni*', 6. '*Giding*', 7. '*Kurtuk kartak*', 8. '*Bon jolokia*', 9. '*Pipoli*', 10. '*Jom lakhuti*', 11. '*Bor manimuni*', 12. '*Porok taame*', 13. '*Dosipili*', 14. '*Dembuguli*', 15. '*Marsang*' 16. '*Butor kusere*', 17. '*Lirtere*', 18. '*Poroguttum*', 19. '*Gurbaan*'.

Preparation of '*Poro: apong*' or '*Sai mod*' (Rice Beer):

'*Poro apong*' is the identity marker of Misings due to the preparation procedure and taste. '*Bora Chaul*' (Sticky rice) and '*Sakuwa*' are the types of rice that is used for the preparation of '*Poro apong*'. First of all rice is boiled. Straw or paddy husk

is burnt. The ashes left after burning are spread out in two different bamboo trays known as *'dola'* for cooling. The *apong* extracted from *'Bora'* rice is more tasty and sweet. Then rice and ashes are mixed together. Then to this mixture already prepared 'yeast cake' known as *'apop'* (dried and hardened mixture of ground rice with a large varieties of medicinal herbs/plants found in the local area) is ground with the palms of the hands once again. The dusty contents are then mixed well with the mixture of rice and ashes. The *apop* contains the *Saccharomyces cerevisia* fungi. *'Apop'* or the yeast -cake play the significant role in the preparation of *'apong'*. The mixture produced from rice, ashes and *'apop'* are put in an earthen pot and is covered with banana leaves. It takes 7 to 10 days for fermentation of the *'apong'*. After fermentation, *'poro apong'* has to be percolated in a conical shape of bamboo basket which is known as *'Taasuk'* to make it ready for drinking. *'Poro apong'* is consumed the day itself when it is prepared.



'Opob', the yeast cake



Preparation of *Poro: apong*



'Apong' Stored in earthen pot



Mising women drinking '*Poro:apong*'

Preparation of '*Nogin apong*':

'*Bora chaul*' or '*khuwa chaul*' is used in the preparation of '*nogin apong*'. '*Bora chaul*' is preferred as it has a sweet taste and has narcotic content in it.

'Bora chaul' is half-boiled. It is boiled in such a manner that it remains a bit hard to touch. While boiling, less quantity of water is used and 'Bora chaul' becomes sticky. After boiling 'bora chaul' is spread out in a big 'dola' (a round bamboo sheet to spread food items) for cooling. As soon as 'bora chaul' gets cooled, 'apop' is mixed with it. The proportion of 'apop' depends on the quantity of 'bora chaul'. Nowadays, Mishing people mix 'apop' and 'bora chaul' in such way that if the quantity of 'bora chaul' is one kilogram, then they mix 2 'apop' balls but it depends on the size of 'apop'. 'Apop' may be of small size or it may be of medium size or big size.

After mixing 'bora chaul' and 'apop', the mixture is kept in an earthen pot covering the mouth of the pot with 'nora' (straw). It can be preserved for a period of seven days during summer and a period of ten to fifteen days during winter. It is kept on 'perap' in a 'Chang ghar' so that it does not fall and leak out due to shake caused due to walking inside the 'Chang ghar'. While keeping it in the earthen pot for the period mentioned earlier, fermentation takes place. Keeping the mixture for several days produces a hard smell. The people serve guests by pouring prepared 'nogin apong' from the earthen pot to a small 'bati' (bowl).



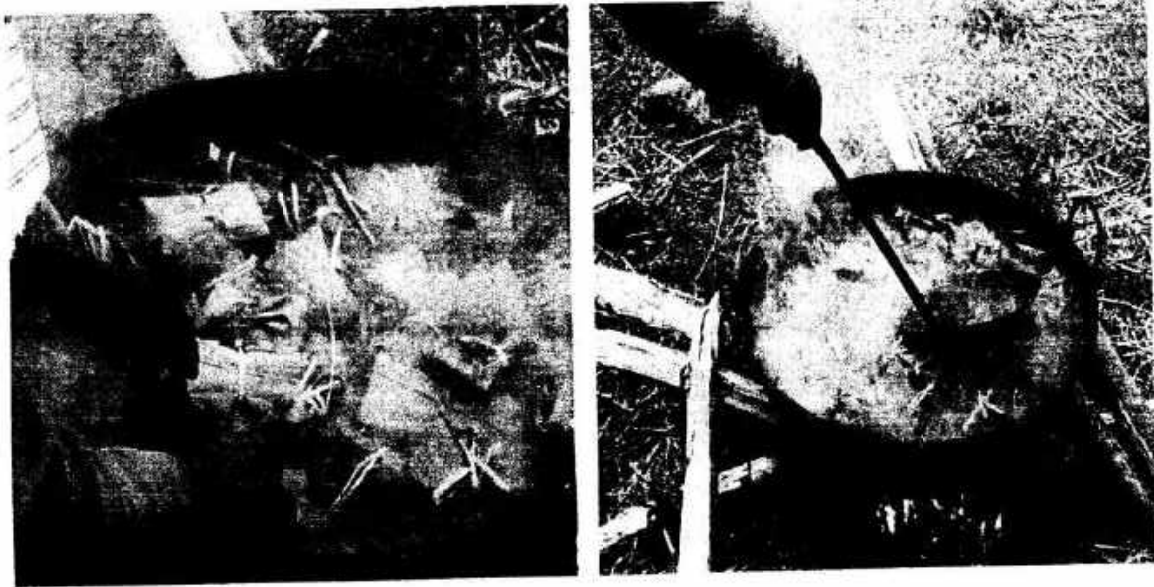
Pouring of 'nogin apong' from the earthen pot

Indigenous way of preparation of Packeted Rice (*Purang*):

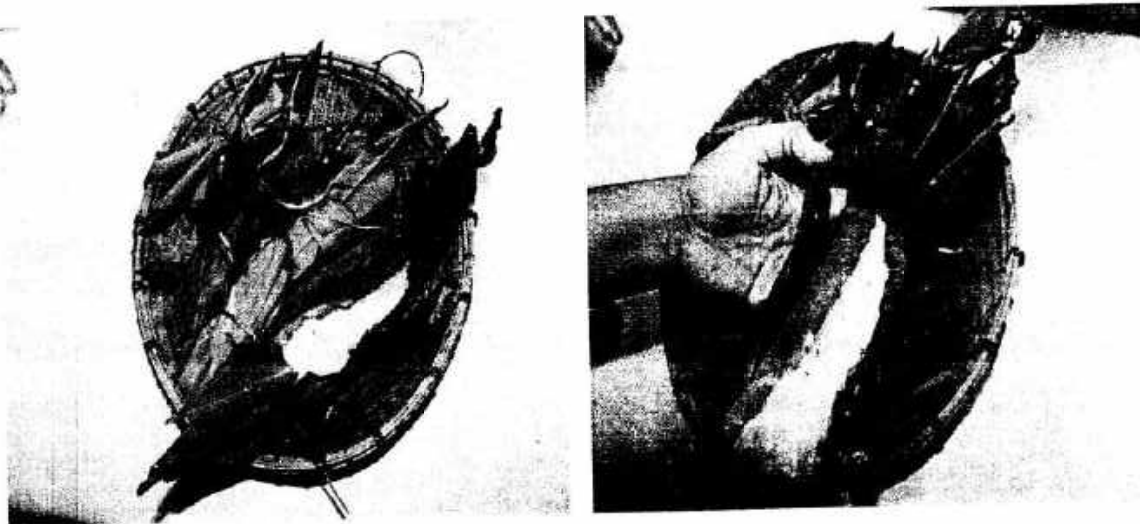
'*Bora Chaul*' (a kind of sticky rice) is soaked overnight in water. The very next day '*Bora Chaul*' is wrapped either with '*Kolpat*'(banana leaf) or with '*Torapat*'(leaf of a plant found in Assam). This wrapped '*Bora Chaul*' is then boiled in water in a big pan. The use of '*Torapat*' gives a very refreshing flavour and medicinal value to this item. '*Purang*' is called as such because '*Bora Chaul*' (rice) is wrapped up with banana leaf in a packet.



Making of '*Purang*'



'Purang' is boiled



'Purang' ready to eat

Preservation and preparation of bamboo shoot in indigenous way:

'Ikung' (Bamboo shoot preserved by soaking in water):

Bamboo shoot is first chopped and soaked in water and is preserved for more than a month. Thus, a smell or flavour gets produced out of it.

'*Tkung*' is cooked with fish. Size of fish depends on the choice. Water is drained from '*ikung*' while cooking. Less oil is applied to '*ikung*' which is preserved for a long time. Fresh '*ikung*' is cooked just by boiling with water.

Pork and '*ikung*' are fried together which gives very tempting taste and flavour. No oil is required for cooking this item because pork has its own fat content. But nowadays Mishing people put less oil to it due to modernization.

'*Iyug*' (Dried bamboo shoot):

Bamboo shoot is cut into small pieces. It is kept in the Sun to dry. It can be preserved for a year. It is cooked with '*masur dail*' or '*magu dail*'. '*Magu dail*' is preferred. Both '*magu dail*' is baked on a pan and then water is added to it to boil. After a few minutes '*iyug*' is added to the boiled '*magu dail*'. Adding of '*iyug*' gives a very tempting taste and flavour.

'*Iyug*' can be prepared by blending with pork. Pork is boiled and then '*iyug*' is added to it. The boiled mixture becomes very tasty and the flavour produced thus creates temptation.

'*Tayo*' (cane shoot):

Soft part of cane shoot is used. Cane shoot is chopped and then is used fresh to cook by frying with less oil. It is fried till dried. Salt is added according to taste. '*Tayo*' is eaten with other items like rice.

3:2 Preparation Procedure of Ahom food

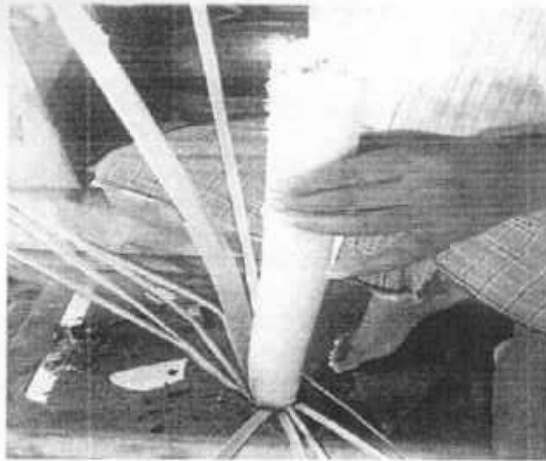
Indigenous way of preparation of Rice:

Chewa diya Bhat (Steamed rice):

Bora Chaul, a kind of sticky rice is soaked in water overnight. The very next day it is separated from water and then kept in a bamboo or Aluminum basket which has small holes. There must be a necked pot of boiling water on the fire. The face of the pot is then covered with the bark of Banana tree allowing a hole to come out the hot vapour. Then the basket containing rice is mounted on the hole of the Banana bark and the rice is covered with Banana leaf and then with a heavy plate. Thereafter the rice is cooked properly for not more than thirty minutes.

'Chunga Chaul' (Rice cooked in bamboo cylinder)

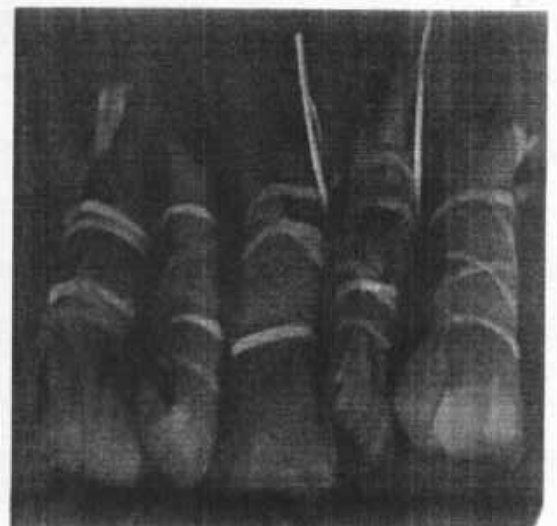
'Chunga Chaul' is a type of rice prepared within a bamboo cylinder. Generally 'chunga chaul' is made from a newly harvested paddy. Rice is soaked overnight and the next day it is put inside the bamboo cylinder with a little bit of water and then mouth is tightly closed with banana leaves. When three or four bamboo cylinders are ready to be cooked, the fire is lit and cylinders are in such a way that bamboos are not burnt out completely. After the roasting exercise is over, the cylinders are allowed to cool down. The bamboo tube is then gently cut and rice is taken out.



'Chunga Chaul', Rice cooked in bamboo cylinder

Tupula Bhat:

Bora Chaul (the rice) is soaked overnight in water and the very next day it is removed from water. The *bora chaul* is wrapped with *kolpat* (banana leaf) or *torapat*. The *bora chaul* is then put into a big pan which is full of fully boiled water. Then it is boiled in water for certain minutes. Both *kolpat* and *torapat* have their medicinal value, but the use of *torapat* gives a very refreshing flavour in this item.



Tupula Bhat

'Hurum' (Puffed rice)

To prepare '*hurum*' un-husked rice is soaked in water for two to four days. Then it is spread over a mat. The entire amount is gradually fried in small quantities at a time in a pan without using oil. After that it is pounded in a '*dheki*' (Traditional grinder) and dehusked. It is again fried in a pan when the rice begins to swell and it become transparent. It is called '*hurum*'. It is a very light food. Utmost care should be taken in the time of preparation; otherwise the rice will not swell up.



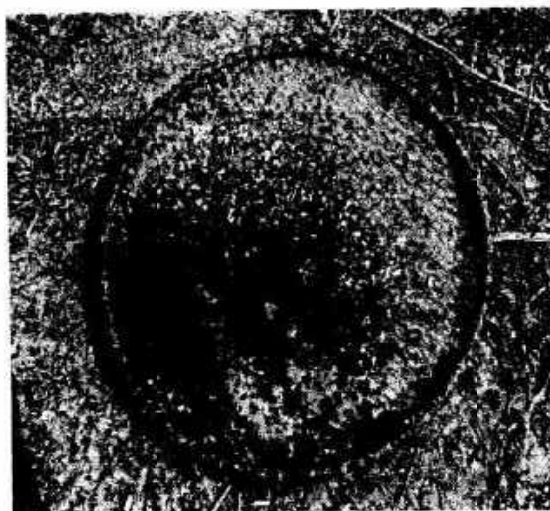
Hurum or puffed rice of Ahom Food

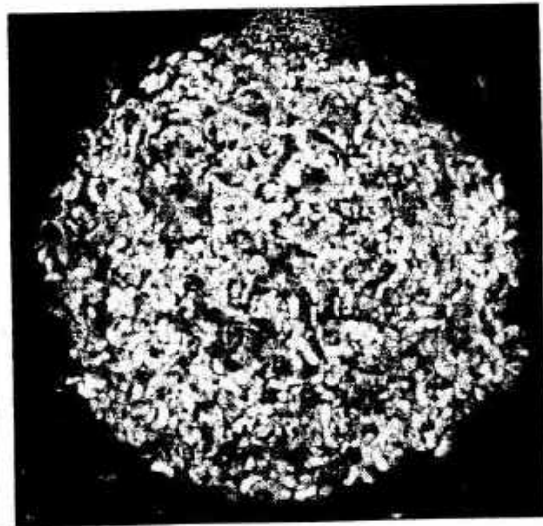
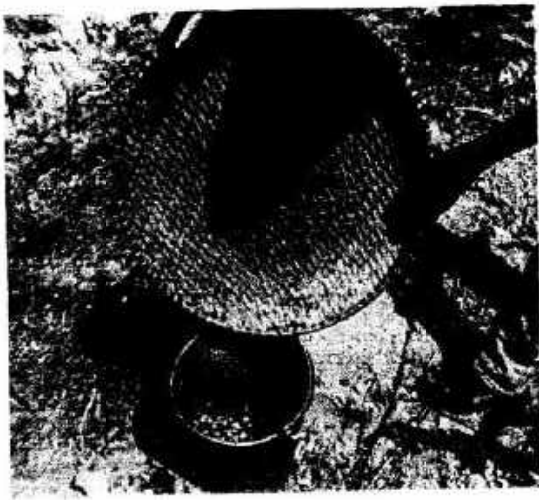
Poita Bhat:

Poita Bhat is the very favorite rice item of the peasant class Ahoms in the summer season. The *bhat* is soaked in water overnight for a little fermentation of the rice. A smooth smell indicates the fermentation. This rice is now ready to eat with potato smash or roasted fish and *khorisa* the bamboo shoot.

Indigenous way of preparation of '*Amroli tup*' (Ant's egg):

People first search for the ant's nest in the trees. When they find it they cut it and opened the nest in a '*dola*'. Whole thing is then dipped in a bucket of water where the ant's egg goes down and ants come up. Then the separated eggs are fried in oil and mixed with poultry eggs to have a dish to relish. According to an Ahom informant this tangy soft white ant's eggs are highly nutritious and full of protein.





Steps for preparation of '*Amroli Tup*'

Indigenous way of preparation of '*leta*' (Chrysalis)

'*Leta*' is one of the stages of the life cycle of a butterfly from which '*eri*', '*muga*', silk thread are derived. The worm inside the cocoon is '*leta*', a chrysalis. At first the cocoon is boiled and the '*leta*' is removed from it. Then it is cut into two halves or sometimes in full size fried in oil. It is also informed as a very nutritious food.



'Leta' or Chrysalis

Indigenous way of Preparation of Pork:

Kumbin (fats of pork with dry jute leaf):



Kumbin

Kumbin is very specific pork item popular among the Ahoms. In the preparation of *kumbin*, the fatty layer covering the entrails of the pig is used. The fats are fried

(without using oil) with the *xukuta* (dry jute leaf). Only ginger and garlic are used as spices. Salt is used for taste. This delicious *kumbin* is served in social feasts and the marriage feasts of the Ahoms.

Pork with rice powder:

This item is very popular in social feasts. Pork is fried with garlic and ginger. As soon as the pork is half fried, water is added to it and salt is used for taste. Thereafter baked rice powder is sprinkled for thick gravy. Blood of the pig is poured to the gravy for a delicious taste.

Pork with Mustard leaf:

Pork is boiled for half an hour. Smashed onion, ginger, garlic, chilli are mixed into it. Salt and turmeric are added to it. Frequent stirring is required until the meat is tender. 'Lai xaak' is not chopped, it is torn with hands and it is added. Covering of the cauldron or saucepan is required for few minutes on low heat.

Pork with *Outenga* or elephant apple:

This item is prepared without using any spices or oil. The pork is fried in a bowl then the bark of the smashed Elephant apple is mixed with it. Water is added to make it gravy. Salt is used for taste.

Pork with *Mati Dail* or Black lentil:

The traditional way of cooking pork with *mati dail* is that first they roast the *mati dail* and then ground it in a traditional grinder. First they fry the pork with garlic and ginger then roasted *mati dail* is mixed along with it with water. After boiling, alkaline water is added to it. Turmeric is not used. Another way of preparation of pork with *mati dail* (black lentil) and *khar* (alkali) is that *Mati dail* is boiled with pork for a

certain period of time adding garlic and ginger to it. Alkaline water is put to the curry according to amount.

Pork with Bamboo shoot:

Onion, ginger and garlic are fried in a bowl then the bamboo shoot is mixed in it. After that the boiled pork is added to it. Water is poured and the curry is ready. Salt and turmeric powder are used for taste and colour.

Pork prepared in Bamboo tube:

Pork pieces are smashed along with ground ginger, garlic paste, salt and curry leaf. Then the whole mixture is put into a bamboo tube and its face is tightly closed with *kolpat*. The bamboo tube is baked in the open fire such a way that bamboos are not burnt out completely. After the roasting exercise is over, the cylinders are allowed to cool down. The bamboo tube is then gently cut and the pork is taken out.



Pork in bamboo tube

Chikchak :

An item prepared with pork-liver and herbs. Pork liver is sorted out from the pork. Herbs such as *lai xaak* (Brassica juncea), *aloo* (potatoes) and *paaleng* or *spinach* (Spinacha Oleracea) are washed. *Lai xaak* and *paaleng* are chopped. Potatoes are peeled and cut into small cubes. Onion is chopped and fried in heated mustard oil in a wok. Pork liver is added and fried. Then *aloo*, *lai xaak* and *paaleng* are blended. Turmeric and salt are added and stirred. Thereafter *chikchak* is served with *xaaj* or bhat.

Indigenous way of preparation of fish:

***Maas aru Outenga* or fish and Elephant Apple (Dillenia Indica):**

Fish of both small and large size are used. In case of small fish, entrails are not removed and in case of large fish, entrails are removed and cleaned. Fish like *borali maas* and *goroi maas* are used. Fish is fried in a wok adding less quantity of oil. Fish is not deep fried. Deep frying leads to decrease in nutrition. Two to three *outenga* are cut into small pieces and boiled. Boiled *outenga* is then mashed. A less quantity of mustard oil is heated and mustard seed is added to it. Mustard seed starts sputtering. Then mashed *outenga* and the fish are added to it. Salt is added according to taste. A certain quantity of water is added to it and the whole mixture is boiled to produce a delicious item.

***Paatot dia maas* (Steamed fish):**

Small fish is required for the preparation of this item. A paste of ginger, garlic, turmeric and green chilli is prepared to marinate the fish. A little mustard oil is added. A portion of a banana leaf is cut and used to wrap up the fish. The banana

leaf is heated on fire on both sides to make it flexible. The marinated fish is wrapped up with it. The wrapped fish is put in the fireplace and covered under the ashes for a period of 10-15 minutes. Thereafter, fish is taken out from the ashes and then served with rice.

***Maas aru noroxingho paat* or curry leaves (*Murraya koenigii*):**

Small fish and curry leaves are the main ingredients. Fish is washed and the entrails are not removed. Curry leaves are ground to a smooth paste. A paste of ginger, garlic and pepper is prepared. Mustard oil is heated in a wok and small fish is fried and kept aside. Again mustard oil is heated on a pan and the paste of ginger, garlic and pepper is added to it. Turmeric and ground curry leaves are added. Thereafter fried fish is mixed and salt is added according to taste. It is fried for a few minutes and then water is added. The whole mixture is boiled and stirred for a period of about ten minutes. A delicious curry is ready.

***Manimuni Xaak aru maasor torkari*:-**

Manimuni xaak is considered to be a medicinal herb among the ethnic dwellers of Assam. It is very useful in diseases like diarrhea and dysentery. *Manimuni xaak* is ground to a smooth paste and then it is boiled with small fish. Salt is added according to taste. Thereafter mustard oil is heated in a pan. A paste of ginger, turmeric and garlic is added to it. It is fried for a few minutes. Boiled mixture of *manimuni* and fish is added and stirred for a few minutes.

***Maas aru Bhedailata* or Skunk vine (*Paederia foetida*):-**

Bhedailata is a typical herb found in Assam having curative property which has strong flavor which on cooking vanishes. *Bhedailata* is a useful herb during stomach disorders. Fish curry with *bhedailata* is a very common curry among the Ahom

people. To prepare this curry *bhedailata* leaves are ground to a smooth paste with ginger and garlic. Then the paste is boiled with a little water and fish for a few minutes. Oil is heated in a pan and turmeric is added. It is fried slightly and then the boiled *bhedailata* is added. Salt is added according to taste. The whole mixture is cooked for a few minutes producing a healthy diet.

Maas aru Dhekia Xaak (Diplazium Esculentum) :-

People collect fresh *dhekia xaak* from their neighbouring areas and cut them in small portions. Oil is heated in a pan and small fish like *puthi maas* is fried. The fried fish is kept aside and in that oil *dhekia xaak* is poured. Salt and turmeric are added. Fried fish is added and a little water is poured. The mixture is stirred till it becomes tender and a tasty curry is ready to serve.

Maas aru Kosu xaak ldaal kosu (Colacasia):

Kosu xaak is a kind of favourite herb of the Ahoms. A very typical characteristic of *kosu xaak* is that it creates a kind of itching. Some creates mild itching and some strong. *Kosu xaak* is cleaned and boiled adding salt. Water is drained in order to remove the itching element in it and boiled *kosu xaak* is kept aside. Paste of onion, garlic and ginger is prepared. Fish is fried putting less oil and kept aside. It is not deep fried. Again mustard oil is heated on a pan and the paste is added. Green chili is added to make it hot. Likewise, turmeric and salt are added. Then boiled *kosu xaak* is added to the paste. To make the curry more delicious, *kon bilahi* (Currant tomato) and a certain quantity of water is added. Fried fish is then added. Coarsely ground black pepper is blended which adds taste to the item. The blend is stirred and cooked producing a delicious curry.

***Maas aru khorisa/ baah gaaj* (Fish with bamboo shoot) :-**

Small fish is required for the preparation of this item. *Khorisa* or *baah gaaj* or bamboo shoot is a favorite item of the ethnic dwellers of Assam. *Baah gaaj* or bamboo shoot is mashed and grated in a traditional grinder *dheki* and kept in a glass bottle putting some mustard oil in it. People put *thekera tenga* (Mangostem), a typical sour fruit found in Assam. When certain food *items* are prepared, it is added to make certain items delicious. Mustard oil is heated in a wok and fish is fried. It is not deep fried. Then *Khorisa* or *baah gaaj* and turmeric is added. A certain quantity of water is poured in it and salt is added according to taste. It is stirred till it becomes tender. The admixture of fish and bamboo shoot gives a tempting curry.

***Khorikat dia maas* (Roasted fish):**

Any kind of fish is used for the preparation of roasted fish. Example may be cited of *Borali maas*, *puthi maas* and *kawoi maas*. Fish is marinated with ginger, garlic, onion paste for a few minutes adding salt and is stuck in bamboo sticks. It is then roasted by placing it over fire and by putting it in the ashes in the fireplace. This item is very tempting and is eaten with rice and *xaaj* (traditional rice- beer).

***Hukoti maas* (Dried fish)**

Any kind of small fish is required for the preparation of this item. Fish is dried and preserved by putting it on the Ahom traditional *dhuwa – chang*, which is a kind of shelf above the traditional fire-place found in typical Ahom kitchen. Fish is kept in a bamboo tube and the mouth of the bamboo tube is closed with a banana leaf.

***Paatot dia Hukoti maas* (Steaming dry fish)**

Hukoti maas is steamed by wrapping up with a banana leaf and kept on fire or the ashes of the fireplace. For this, a portion of a banana leaf is baked on fire so as to

make the leaf flexible for wrapping. *Hukoti maas* is then blended with potatoes and brinjal to make a simple but delicious item. Potatoes and brinjal are steamed by keeping in the ashes. As soon as *hukoti maas*, potatoes and brinjal gets tender, each of the ingredients are mashed and mixed together with salt, chopped onion, chillis and raw mustard oil. This item is eaten with *Rahi* (traditional Ahom rice-beer).

Boiled *hukoti Maas*:-

Hukoti maas or dried fish is taken out of the bamboo tube in which it is preserved on a *dhuwa-chang*. It is then boiled in a pan with water and salt. It is eaten with rice.

***Hukoti maas aru khorisa*:-**

Hukoti maas is taken out of the bamboo tube which is kept for its preservation on a traditional *dhuwa-chang*. *Khorisa* or bamboo shoot is taken out of a glass bottle in which it is preserved with *thekera tenga* (Mangostem) A wok is heated and mustard oil is poured . As soon as oil becomes hot, *hukoti maas* is added along with salt and turmeric.

***Maas aru noltenga* (a creeper-like herb which has sour taste):-**

Noltenga is a kind of traditional herb found in Assam and has a sour taste. Any small fish is required cooking with *noltenga*. Fish is washed and entrails are not removed. *Noltenga* is chopped. Mustard oil is heated on a pan and a less quantity of mustard seed is poured. As soon as mustard seed pops, fish and chopped *noltenga* is added. Salt and turmeric are added. A proportionate quantity of water is poured and boiled for some time. A delicious item is ready.

Indigenous way of preparation of chicken:

***Kukura mangxo aru chengmora , kath madhuri , dhekia ,tezmui, pithaguri* or chicken with wild herbs:**

Two cocks and a hen are required for the preparation of this item. The cocks and the hen are chopped into pieces and chicken is cleaned. First of all, ginger and raw turmeric are mashed. Mustard oil is heated in a pan and the mashed spices are fried. Chopped chicken is added and is fried together. Traditional herbs such as *chengmora, kathmadhuri, dhekia* and *tezmui* are added. Salt is added according to taste. The admixture is stirred so that it does not stick at the bottom of the pan. Water is added proportionately with the mixture of chicken and herbs. Thereafter, *pithaguri* or rice-powder is added by sprinkling and stirring so as to avoid the formation of clot of *pithaguri*. It is cooked till the chicken gets tender. This traditional item is served to the *Bhakats in Sumani Xakam* .It is eaten with *Rahi xaaj* (rice-beer).

***Kukura mangxo aru pasala* (Chicken with Banana shoot):-**

Pasala is the tender part of a banana tree or banana sapling. It is that part of the tree which is found by cutting the bark of a banana tree. It is tube-like and has juicy element in it. *Pasala* is washed and chopped finely. Pieces of chicken are washed. Onion, garlic, gingers and raw turmeric are mashed. Mustard oil is heated on a pan and mashed spices are fried. Pieces of chicken are added and fried together. Then *pasala* is added. A little water is added and stirred to produce a tasty item.

***Pithaguri dia kukura mangxo* (Chicken with rice-powder):-**

Pieces of chicken are washed. A paste of onion, garlic and ginger is prepared. Mustard oil is heated on a pan and the spices are fried till it becomes a bit sticky.

Salt, turmeric and pieces of chicken are added. It is stirred and water is added proportionately. As soon as chicken gets tender, *pithaguri* or rice-powder is added by sprinkling and stirring. When it gets blended completely, a cover is put so that the curry tenders well.

***Kukura pura* (Roasted chicken):-**

Medium sized pieces of chicken are marinated with salt, turmeric, garlic paste for a few minutes. Marinated pieces of chicken are then stuck in a *xola* or bamboo stick. Three to four pieces can be stuck in a *xola* at a time. Then *xola* is put on the *ju-haal* or fire-place so that chicken gets tender with the heat of fire.

Indigenous way of preparation of duck:

Duck meat with *boga kumura* or winter melon (*Benincasa hispida*):-

Kumura is cut into medium-sized cubes. Paste of ginger, garlic, onion, black pepper, coriander and cumin is made. Green chilli is cut. Pieces of duck are washed and cleaned. Much oil is required for cooking duck meat. Mustard oil is heated on a pan and then spices are added. It is then gently stirred. As soon as the spices get a bit sticky, pieces of *kumura* are added and fried. When *kumura* gets a bit tender, pieces of duck are added and stirred to mix. Salt and turmeric are added. A proportionate quantity of water is added thereafter and cooked till gets gravy.

***Hahor aag mangah* (Liver of the duck):-**

Liver of the duck is fried in oil and chopped onion is added to it. Turmeric and salt are added. To make it more delicious, black pepper is added. It is stirred and fried for some time. A tasty item is prepared.

Duck meat with *koldil* (Banana flower):

The layers of *koldil* or banana flower are peeled off. When two or three layers are removed, a ring of smaller white projections are found. The projections are slender and edible. Peeling should be continued till off-white part of the flower is found. And this part is needed for the preparation of duck curry. The white part is washed and chopped into fine pieces. A bit of salt is added to the chopped pieces. Water comes out of it and then is drained. Paste of ginger, garlic, onion, cumin and coriander is prepared. Oil is heated on a pan and the spices are added and stirred till it becomes a bit sticky. Then duck meat and turmeric are added. Salt is added according to taste. It is then stirred and fried. Then chopped *koldil* is added. It is again stirred and fried together. Then a proportionate quantity of water is added and stirred. A delicious curry gets ready to serve.

Indigenous way of preparation of mutton:

Mutton with *outenga* (*Dillenia indica*):-*Outenga* is peeled and cut into pieces. Pieces of mutton are cleaned and washed. Garlic is mashed to make a paste. Less quantity of mustard oil is poured and heated in a pan. Paste of garlic and mustard seed is added. Then mutton is added and stirred. Turmeric and salt are added. Pieces of *outenga* are added thereafter. A proportionate quantity of water is added and the mixture is stirred and cooked till mutton gets tender. This is a typical traditional Ahom item required in *Goxaayeni Puja*, a traditional ritual of the Ahoms.

Indigenous way of preparation of crab:

***Kekura pura* or roasted crab:-**

Crab is stuck in *xola* or bamboo stick and is kept on fire. When it becomes roasted, it is cleaned. The legs are removed after it is roasted. The shell of the crab is

removed. The crab meat is sorted out and mixed with salt, chilli and onion. *Kekura pura* is eaten with *poita bhat* (fermented rice) and *xaaj* (rice-beer).

***Kekura torkari* or Crab curry:-**

In order to prepare *kekurar jul* or crab curry, portion of crab such as legs and the shell are removed and crab meat is sorted out. Paste of garlic, onion, ginger, cumin and coriander is prepared and fried in heated mustard oil in a wok. Salt and turmeric are added. Green chilly is added and is stirred adding a proportionate quantity of water. The curry is covered by a lead so that it boils and gets ready to serve.

Indigenous way of preparation of frog:

***Maati kopou / Bhekula* or frog curry:**

Bhekula is a kind of large frog. The Ahoms call *bhekula* as *maati kopou*. It is found in muddy fields during the season of spring in the month of *Bohag* when the Assamese celebrate their New Year. The skin and the head are removed and the legs are extracted. The extracted meat is cleaned and kept aside for cooking. Paste of ginger, garlic, onion and green chillis is kept ready. Mustard oil is heated on a pan and then the spices are added and stirred till it becomes a bit sticky. Turmeric is then added. The frog meat is added and stirred adding salt according to taste. Water is added in proportion and is stirred sometime to give a tasty *maati kopou* curry.

Indigenous way of preparation of pigeon:

***Paro mangxo aru koldilor torkari* (Pigeon meat with banana flower):**

First of all, the layers of *koldil* or banana flower are peeled off. When two or three layers are removed, a ring of smaller white projections are found. The rejections are

slender and edible. Peeling should be continued till off-white part of the flower is found. And this part is needed for the preparation of pigeon curry. The white part is washed and chopped into fine pieces. A bit of salt is added to the chopped pieces. Onion, garlic, ginger, green chilli are mashed to paste. Black pepper is ground coarsely. *Paro mangxo* is cut into pieces and the entrails are removed. It is then washed. A wok is heated and mustard oil is poured. Much oil is needed. When oil becomes hot, paste of the spices and turmeric is added. Then *paro mangxo* is added and stirred. Chopped *koldil* is blended and stirred till the mixture becomes tender. To avoid burning at the bottom, water is added and stirred to give a delicious curry. *Paro mangxo* has a curative property as it gives warmth after it is eaten. Usually, it is preferred and prepared in winter and during the monsoon season when the weather becomes cold. A person catching cold or having cold allergy gets relief on eating *paro mangxo* or pigeon.

Indigenous way of preparation of *lingkoi* or *ningkori*:

Lingkoi or *ningkori* is a kind of edible insect trapped with fish while fishing. *Lingkoi* resembles cockroach but it is not the same.



Lingkoi or *Ningkori* fry

Lingkoi fry:

The wings and legs of *lingkoi* are removed and cleaned. The flesh is extracted from it. A pan is heated and oil is poured. When oil becomes hot, the flesh of *lingkoi* is added. The use of turmeric depends. Salt is added considering the number of *lingkoi*. It is stirred till it becomes a bit crispy. Fried *lingkoi* is very tasty and is eaten with *xaaj* (traditional Ahom rice-beer).

Hukuta Khar(Alkali) :

Titamora paat (a traditional herb) is dried out in the Sun. Then it is rubbed with palm so as to make powder out of it. Two to three tea-spoons of the powdered *titamora paat* is mixed with water. *Kola khar* is required for the preparation of *hukuta khar*. Banana skin is peeled off and dried (especially of *bhim kol*, a kind of large-sized banana found in Assam). The dried peeled portion is then burnt by putting it over fire. When it is burnt, the ashes are mixed with water which is a kind of alkali. Thereafter *khund chaul*, broken rice produced while grinding rice is boiled and the liquid mixture of *titamora* is added to it while boiling. Mashed garlic and salt is added to it according to taste. Then *kola khar* is added and boiled in a pan. The whole mixture is boiled for sometime producing a healthy diet.

Ahom Rice-beer:

Rice-beer has a traditional and ritualistic importance among the Ahoms. The rice-beer of the Ahoms is known by various terms – *Lao, Xaaj, Rahi, Rahila* etc. There are two types of rice-beer namely, *Luk-lao* and *Nam-lao*.

Preparation of 'Pitha' or 'Lao Dorob' (yeast cultured cake):

For the preparation of this 'Pitha' or 'Lao Dorob' some bark, leaf, twig, root and seed of some distinct medicinal trees are necessary. These are *Guti-Jaluk*, *Bon-Jaluk*, leaf of *Patixuta*, *Makhichat*, *Chapatita*, *Kukura thengia*, *Xura*, *Gorhpote*, *Biyoni-xabota*, *Achhari-lota*, *Kath-madhury*, *Manimuni*, *Boga-bahok*, *kothal*, *Keheraj*, *Dighloti*, *Bon-dhaniya*, *Khakhari*, *Bih-dhekiya*, *Pahari-pat*, *Dhapat-tita*, *Xuhoni* seed, bark of *Madak* etc. Appropriate amount of these should be sun dried to pound in traditional 'dheki'. Proper amount of rice powder is mixed with the mixed ground medicinal powder. An old yeast cultured cake should be mixed with it. Then with the help of water some balls are made for use and future preservation.

Preparation of Luk-lao:

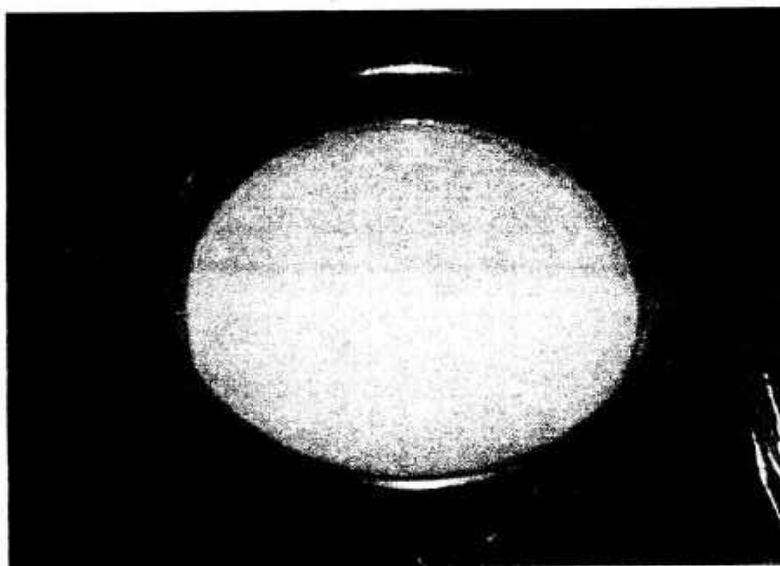
It is also known as Rahi. 'Bora-Chaul' is especially used for preparation of 'Luk-lao'. This 'Bora-Chaul' is steamed in a different manner which is called 'Chewa-diya'. The steamed rice or the 'Chewa-diya Bora Chaul' is spread out on bamboo leaf for cooling. As soon as it gets cooled, the 'Pitha' or the yeast cake is mixed with it which should be proportionate to the 'Bora Chaul'.

Then the mixture is kept in a bamboo basket covering it with banana leaf. The basket should be kept on a pot so that the thick rice-beer or the 'Rahi' leaking from the bamboo basket can gather in it. After three or four days the liquid can be offered to the gods and guests of special interest.

Preparation of Nam-lao:

Mixture of various kinds of rice is used in preparation of 'Nam-lao' or 'Xaaj'. The rice should be boiled half, so that rice remains a bit hard between two fingers. The

boiled rice is spread out in a 'dola' for cooling. After it gets cooled the yeast cake is mixed with it. The mixture is then kept in an earthen pot for fermentation. After five to ten days the rice-beer is ready to serve. For preparation as a drink, water is added covering the fermented rice in the earthen pot. Then it is ready to serve to the guests by pouring the liquid from the earthen pot.



Ahom Rice beer or '*Nam-lao*'

3:3 Preparation Procedure of Karbi food

Karbhis take rice as staple food. Vegetables, wild edible leaves, wild roots, seeds etc are generally taken with rice. Lentils and pulses are also taken with rice occasionally. Dry fish, pork, chicken and rice beer are the most important food and drink of the Karbis. These have some ritualistic values among the Karbis. Eating of

beef is strictly prohibited and eating of crab is also strictly prohibited among the elder members of the family (Informant: Jillat Teron, Pavo).

Indigenous way of Preparation of 'Phak-ok' or Pork:

'Phak-ok' or pork is very much traditional and popular among the Karbis. Basically they prepare 'phak-ok' with vegetables, edible wild leaves and with sesame seeds.

Pork with Sesame seed (*Sesamum indicum*, *Sesamum orientale*, *Sesamum trifoliatum*, *Sesamum luteum*):

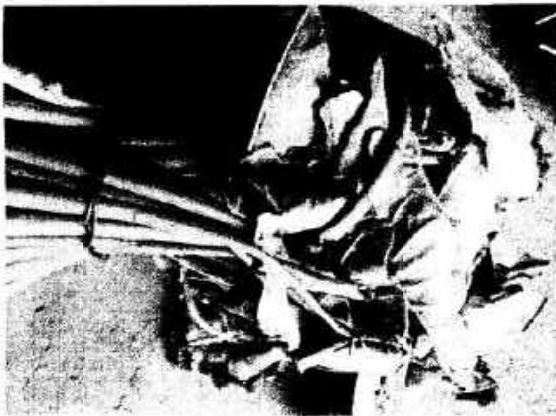
Pork is cut into cubical pieces. Water is boiled in a pan. Ground ginger and garlic is added to the boiled water. Then the pork is poured to the boiled water and stirred. After the pork is half boiled, ground sesame seed in right amount is added to it. Salt is used for taste and turmeric is not used by the Karbis.

Pork with Bamboo-shoot: ‘

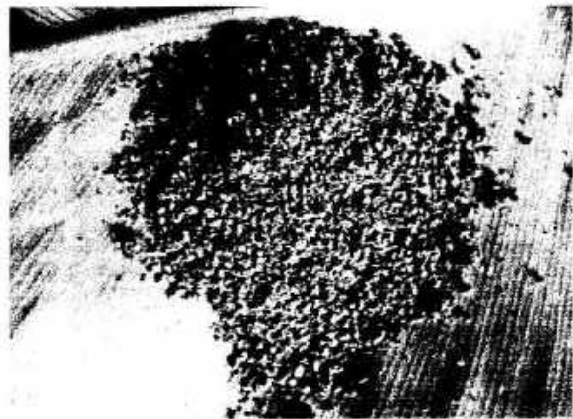
Henn-ooop (some of the Karbis pronounce it as *Henn-rup*) or bamboo-shoot is very popular among the Karbis. They prepare pork with bamboo-shoot which is very popular and delicious dish. To prepare this item the pork is boiled in water with a little amount of ground ginger and garlic. Salt and fermented or dried bamboo-shoot is added to the half boiled pork and stirred. Then it is ready to eat. It is a very popular pork item among the Karbis.

Pork with Colacasia:

'*Henn-ru*' (colacasia) is boiled in water first then the boiled '*Henn-ru*' is mixed with the help of a '*Han-takkri*'. In another pan pork (*Phak-ok*) is baked and stirred frequently adding salt. After two or three minutes ground sesame seed is added and stirred. When the pork is half backed bamboo shoot and the smashed '*henn-ru*' with water is added to it. Ground ginger and garlic is added to it and let it for boiling.



Wild Colacasia or '*Henn-ru*'



Ground Sesame seed or '*Nem-po*'



Bamboo shoot or '*Hend-rup*'



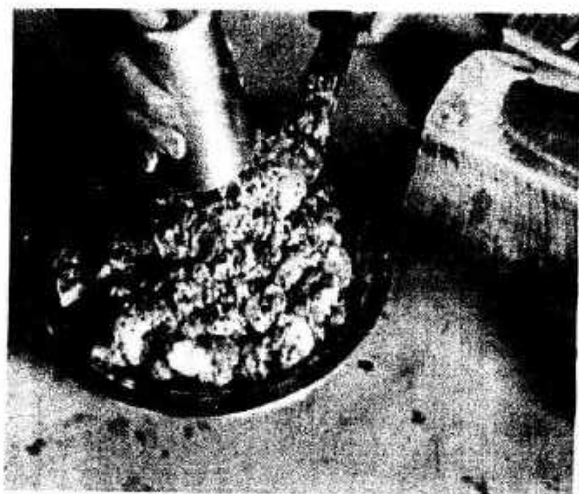
'*Phak-ok*' or Pork

Pork with 'Parohanthor':

'Parohanthor' is a kind of wild edible leaf. To prepare this item water is boiled in a pan adding ground ginger and garlic into it. Then the meat is added to it and salt for taste. After the meat is boiled the cut tender leaves of 'parohanthor' is added to it when the leaves and the pork are boiled fully it is ready to eat.

Pork in bamboo tube:

Ground sesame seed, ginger, garlic, chili and fresh ground turmeric, salt are mixed with the pork. A fresh bamboo tube is filled with this mixture then the hole of the bamboo is closed with any edible leaf. Then it is placed in the fire in such a way so that the bamboo tube is not burn out completely. Traditionally it is called '*Lang-pong Kimung*'.



Mixing ginger, garlic and turmeric paste



Filling of Pork into bamboo tube



Bamboo tube is on fire



Prepared Pork

Another wild leaf is used in pork preparation, which is called '*Hanchei*'. The preparation procedure is same to the preparation of '*Parohanthor*'.

Indigenous way of Preparation of '*Inki-ok*' (Chrysalis):

The '*Inki-ok*' is boiled with the tender '*Hancharang*' (Tengamora) leaves and ground sesame seeds. Salt is added for taste.

The '*Inki-ok*' is fried with the tender '*Hancharang*' (Tengamora) leaves after bubbles are coming from the boiled curry rice powder is added to it. (Urban Karbi)

Indigenous way of Preparation of '*Lang-dung*' or banana flower:

'*Lang-dung*' or banana flower is roasted or boiled first. Then it is mashed with salt, ground ginger, garlic and finally with ground sesame seeds. It is very tasty and delicious food item of the Karbis.

Indigenous way of Preparation of '*Dum-ke*' or *Diplazium esculentum*:

Salt, ground sesame seed is added to the boiled water then the '*Dum-ke*' leaves is added. Let it be boiled for sometime then the cut '*Bok-bok*' or tomato is added to it.



'*Dum-ke*' leaves



'*Dum-ke Hanthu*'

Indigenous way of preparation of Alkali (*Phe-lu*)

'*Henthu*, *Thi-ppek*, *Kurrweng* (these are some local edible leaves), *Henn* (root part of colacasia), *Hippi*(Brinjal), salt all are boiled in water in a pan then the lightly roasted '*Menthoo*'(dry fish) is added to it. Then all the ingredients are mixed with the help of a '*Han-takkri*' and the '*Nem-po*'(sesame seed) and '*Phe-lu*'(alkali) are added to it. After sometimes the dish is ready to serve. Karbis call it '*Peng-moi* (mix) *hanthu*'.

Indigenous way of Preparation of Fish (*Lang-ok*):

Salt, bamboo shoot, ground garlic; ginger and sesame seed is added to the boiled water. Then the fresh fish (small or piece of big one) is added to it. After cooking for sometimes the dish is ready to serve.



'Lang-ok' – Fish curry

Indigenous way of Preparation of chicken (*Vo-ok*)

'Henn'(root part of colacasia) is boiled in water. Chicken or *'vo'* is backed adding garlic, ginger, salt and bamboo shoot then water is added to it. After half boiled, boiled *'Henn'* is added to it.

Vo-ok is also can be prepared with *'Parohanthor'*(edible leaves).

Indigenous way of Preparation of rice:

Rice is put inside the bamboo tube with water and the face of the bamboo tube is tightly closed with banana leaf or such other leaves. Then it is put into the fire in such a way that the bamboos are not burnt out completely. After that the tubes are allowed to cool down. Rice is taken out from the bamboo tube cutting it carefully and it is ready to eat.

Karbi Rice beer:

The Karbis have an old tradition of preparing rice beer called '*Hor Alank*' or '*Horlank*' by fermenting cooked rice with locally prepared yeast cultured '*Thap*'. The distilled form of '*Horlank*' is called '*Arak*' or '*Hor Arak*'. *Horlank* is used in marriages and worship and *Arak* is used in all social occasions including death ceremonies; and *Arak* is used as respect to the guests. Normally both forms of beverages are consumed as refreshing drink.

Thap is the main ingredient essential for the preparation of *Hor*. *Thap* is a round flat cake that is prepared by mixing rice powder and the local medicinal herb '*marthu*' leaves (*Croton joufra*) with some amount of previously prepared *thap* called '*Thap Aphi*' (yeast spawn). Then these are sun dried for 2-5 days and kept near fire place for further use. Leaves of *Ku-eng* (*Amomum corynoslachyum* Wall) and bark of *themra* (*Acaciapennata* Willd)

Generally rice of inferior quality is used in preparation of *Horlank*. The rice should be boiled half. The boiled rice is spread on bamboo mat for cooling. After it gets cooled the *thap* is mixed with it. The mixture is then kept in an earthen pot for fermentation. After five to ten days the rice-beer is ready to serve. For preparation

as a drink, water is added covering the fermented rice in the earthen pot. Then it is ready to serve to the guests by pouring the liquid from the earthen pot.

For preparation of *Hor Arak* the 3-4 days fermentation is required. Water is added to the fermented rice and the pot (not earthen) is placed on fire. Then a holed earthen pot is mounted on it with a wooden tray inside. The tray is fixed from a hole with a bamboo pipe which is linked with another pot (here the distilled beer is gathered). A pot with water is mounted over it. As the fermented rice is boiled the vapor is gathered on the wooden tray. The gathered alcoholic vapor runs through the bamboo pipe to the pot fixed with it.



Traditional way of preparation of Rice beer of Karbis

CHAPTER-4

INDIGENOUS WAY OF FOOD PRESERVATION

Food preservation or food storage is an inherent tendency noticed almost in every living organism. Some of the living beings have the capacity to store food in them naturally; the Mother Nature gives them the function for food storage within. In the other cases the living beings have to employ skills for preserving their food for necessity. Human are the most skillful in food storage or food preservation. Food storage or food preservation is a traditional domestic skill and food is stored and preserved by every human society from the time immemorial.

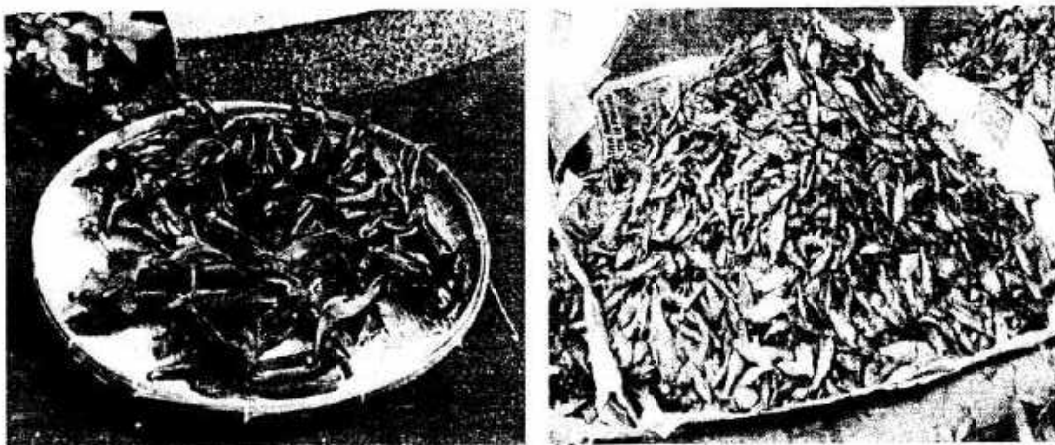
Food preservation is a process of maintaining food with its original quality, edibility and nutritional value and thus allow for a longer storage. Preservation of food usually includes preventive care from bacteria, yeasts, fungi and other micro-organisms. Maintaining nutritional value, texture and flavour is the important aspect of food preservation.

There are various reasons for food preservation among investigated ethnic groups- from which the following reasons are of basic importance.

1. Food is preserved for the time of necessity.
2. Seasonal food is preserved for the use throughout the year.
3. Food is also preserved to reduce kitchen waste.
4. Unused and uneaten abundant food is preserved for the days of scarcity.
5. To protect food from the organisms.
6. For religious purpose etc.

In traditional tribal societies, people practice many scientific technique and methods of food preservation unknowingly. From the kitchen of the Ahoms or Misings or the Karbis, it is observed that they follow some scientific method of food preservation, which are not only hygienic but also having the capacity of upholding the high food value. Some popular techniques of food preservation practiced by these three indigenous communities are unknowingly scientific. Most of the indigenous communities preserved food by drying, smoking and salting. Berries, roots and shoots were air dried for preservation. Meats, fishes are smoke dried and preserved in bamboo tubes, earthen pot and wrapped in leaves and buried under ground.

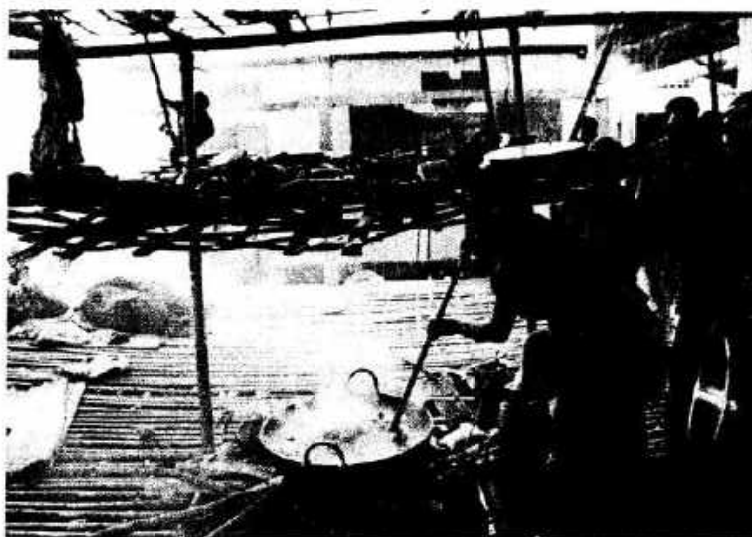
Drying:



Drying is one of the most primitive ways of food preservation. It reduces water activity to prevent bacterial growth. Fish, meat, vegetables and some sour fruits are generally preserved by drying by these communities of Assam.

Smoking:

Smoking is one of the oldest food preservation techniques followed by the primitive people probably after the development of cooking with fire. Fish, meat, vegetables, some medicinal herbs, yeast cultured cake used for preparation of rice beer, bark of banana for alkali preparation etc are noticed on a traditional '*dhuwachang*' of the indigenous people. These are placed over the fire place for the purpose of smoking.



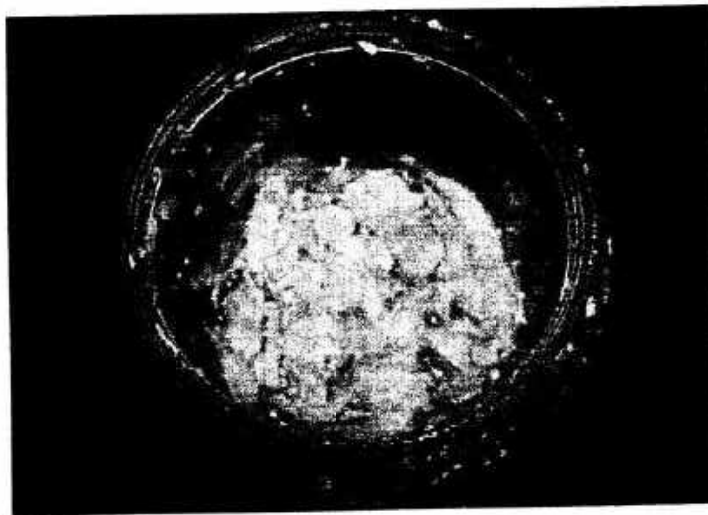
Smoking of pork

Fermentation: It is one of the oldest methods of food preservation. Fermentation is one of the common methods of food preservation. Fermentation is very popular and essential for the preparation of rice beer of all the three communities. These groups also preserve bamboo shoot and some other sour fruits by fermenting them.



Fermentation

Bamboo-shoot:



Karbis of Pavoï (Sonitpur) practice another method of preservation. They used to preserve fresh pork in fermented bamboo-shoot. They preserve it for a week. This pork tastes sour after preparation.

Salt:

Salting is one of the traditional ways of food preservation. It is specially used for meat fish preservation. Salt slows the oxidation process, effectively preventing the meat from growing rancid.

Buried under ground:

Burial of food and drink can preserve it due to variety of factors – lack of light, lack of oxygen, cool temperature etc. Burial may be added with other preservation method salting and fermentation. It is found in Gohain gaon of Dhakuwakhana, Ahom people used to preserve '*Luk-lao*' or '*Rahi*' in earthen pot of by buried underground. They use this '*Luk-lao*' as medicine of cholera.

The indigenous groups of north east India use their traditional rice beer as preservative of dry fish. They use rice beer to preserve ground dry fish. The dry fish is ground and mixed with proper amount of concentrated rice beer (such as '*Rahi/ Luk-lao*') or with fermented yeast cake (this is observed among the Misings) and preserve it in bamboo tubes.

To preserved the betel nut it is buried in a pit for a month and in the time of non productive time of betel nut it is used.

Utensils used for Preservation:

Storing food is a process in which foods are kept whether it is in a dry bamboo-cane or earthen pot. These traditional containers are the safe place of food preservation from insects and the other living organisms. Natural foods have a limited life. Most of the foods remain edible for only a brief period of time. The purpose of food preservation is to prevent food spoilage by preserving food until it can be used for eating and feeding.

Bamboo cylinder, earthen pot, banana leaf and *chung* over the fire place is used for preserving food items for future consumption. In every kitchen of investigated ethnic groups, a hanging over the fire place is seen.

4.1 Similarities and Differences

Assamese cuisine is significant for the cooking habits of both the hills and the plains that prefer fermentation and drying as mean of food preservation. The Mising, the Ahom and the Karbis, all of these are having their own tradition of food and drink which is characterized by the use of simple ingredients. The local environment provides fresh vegetables and plenty of fish from its water resources. Rice is their staple food and all the other foods are centered on it. As staple diet rice is eaten either steam boiled and dried (*Ukhuwa*) or sundried (*Aroi*). Traditionally, these communities cook their food in earthen pot on a wood fire which gives the food a unique flavor. Through the study on the food and recipes and preservation techniques of the Mising, Ahom and the Karbis, some characteristics are found in their food and drinks.

- Rice is the staple food. It is essential for both food and drink.
- Use of various herbs and plants found in the local environment is immense.
- Non vegetarian food items especially pork, chicken and dry fish are of good importance in their festive and ceremonial occasions.
- No use of oil is noticed in their traditional food; they prefer mostly boiled and roasted food.
- Fermented and dried food items are very popular among all these three tribes.
- They all have two kinds of rice beers – and these are very essential part of their life which projects their identity.

- The communities have their own traditionally prepared yeast cakes, which are prepared from various herbs available in the local environment.

Though the characteristics possess some kind of similarities but there are many differences regarding the food ingredients, preparation and preservation, grammar of food etc. After the analysis of collected data, two tables are made on the basis of similarities and differences on the food habits of the three communities.

Similarities

ITEM	SIMILARITY	REMARK
Rice	The staple food.	
Pork	The prestigious food traditionally used in festive and ritualistic occasions.	Not in marriage ceremony of the Ahom.
Bamboo shoot	Used in various food items as sour flavored ingredients.	Wet bamboo shoot is popular than the dry one
Dry fish	One of the popular traditionally preserved foods.	
Chrysalis Ant's Egg	It is taken with rice and rice-beer.	A side dish
Rice powder	Used in preparation of pork and chicken	To make it gravy and delicious
Yeast cake	Made from mixing selected medicinal dry herbs with rice powder	The herbs differ due to the availability in the locality

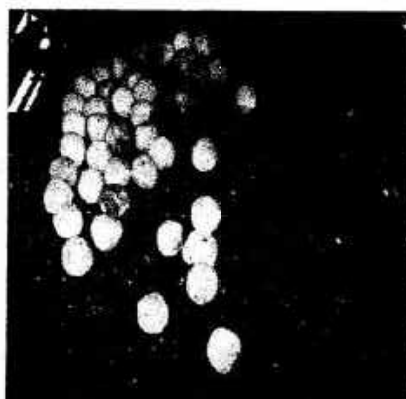
Rice beer	Each of the communities has two kinds of rice beer of their own. The use of rice beer is prestigious among these communities. Use of rice beer is observed in all the ritualistic practices.	
Herbs	Used as vegetable and for yeast culture for rice beer.	
	Food cooked in fire	Traditional kitchen

Differences

ITEM	MISING	AHOM	KARBI	REMARK
Rice	Cooked; fermented; steam boiled	Cooked; steamed; baked in bamboo tube; fermented	Cooked in bamboo tube (it is the most traditional way)	Difference regarding the preparation procedure
Pork	With 'notke' or 'ombe' a locally found herb;	With rice powder or 'xandoh' (roasted and ground rice)	With sesame seed	Favorite ingredient traditionally used
Dry Fish	'Namsing': prepared with tender leaves of Colacasia	'Xukati-mas': prepared with 'Tita-mora' (a kind of jute leaf with bitter taste)	'Menthoo': dried on traditional shelf atop the fire place.	Terminologies of dry fish & Popular ingredients used in preservation of dry fish

Yeast cake*	' <i>Opop</i> ' or ' <i>Opob</i> ' 1	' <i>Pitha</i> ' or ' <i>Dorob</i> ' 2	' <i>Thap</i> ' 3	Difference is made due to the selected herbs.
Rice beer	' <i>Por:Apong</i> ' ' <i>Nogin Apong</i> '	' <i>Luk-lao</i> ' ' <i>Nam-lao</i> '	' <i>Hor</i> ' ' <i>Arak</i> ' (distilled)	Preparation process is different.

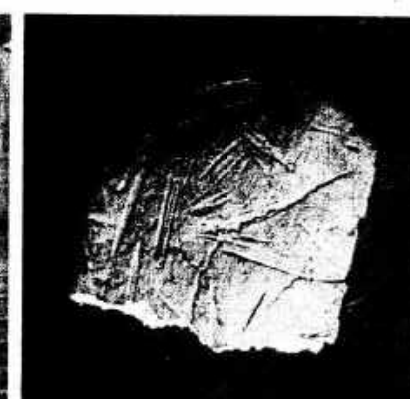
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Changing Trend:

Due to food Globalization, introduction of modern food items are also found in some villages. Sometime due to assimilation process new food items are introduced. Though modern foods are used people are conscious about their own ethnic food which projects their own identity. In religious festivals, ceremonies people cook their own traditional food for their families and guests. Due to the change of time and taste, some observable influences are noticed in use of utensils, dining space and also ingredients of food.

Changing trend in the use of utensils:

It is found in the time of field work that the Mising people now a days using aluminium wire *tasuk* (Basket) and aluminium sheet instead of bamboo *tasuk* and banana leaf or banana sheath to percolate rice beer. According to them the changes occurred due to long durability of utensils.



Bamboo *tasuk*



Aluminium wire *tasuk*

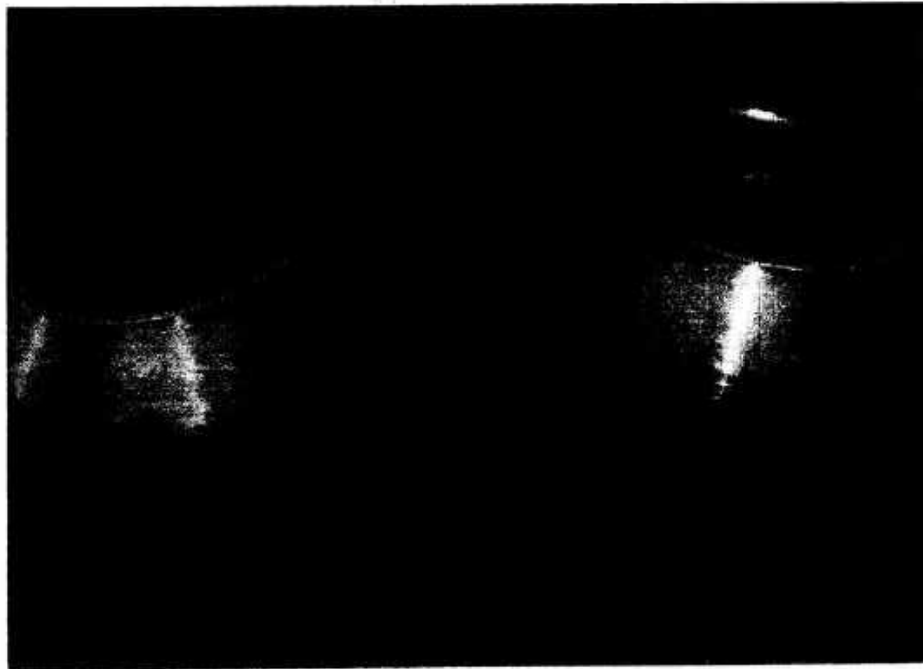


Aluminium sheet *tasuk* with iron stand

Changing trend in use of utensils:



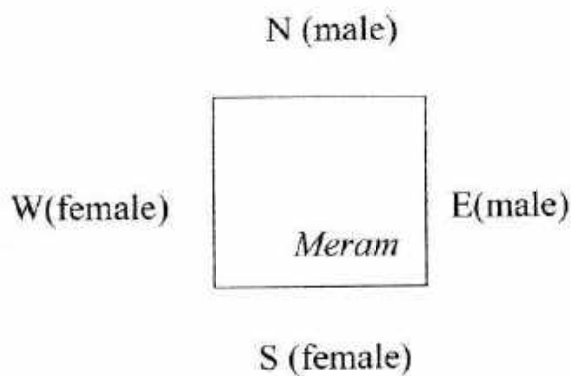
Earthen pot for preparation of rice beer



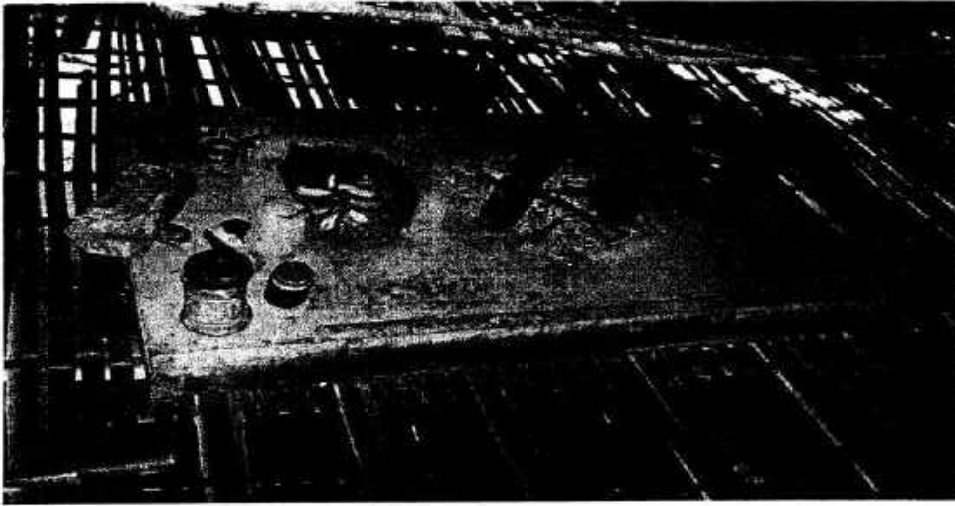
Aluminum pot for preparation of rice beer

Changes in Dining Space:

In every ethnic group they follow certain social norms in the time of dining. Likewise among Misings, while eating the head of the family sits in the direction of east and north; and the women and the children sits in the west and south direction around the *merum* as shown below:



But now a days some well to do families use dining table for their convenience. They do not follow any norm while sitting.



Traditional fire place or *merum* in *chang ghar*

CHAPTER-5

PEOPLES' PERCEPTION

5:1 Nutritional Value of Food

The North East Indian indigenous people are experts in judging food regarding its edibility and nutritious values. These people were originally jungle dwellers and have knowledge of edible food and drink, which has nutritional properties and medicinal values. They gathered knowledge of nutrition not from books but from Mother Nature through life experience. The Misings believe that banana flower or '*Phāpuk*' has the power to melt the hair that enters to the stomach accidentally. So they prefer to take it at least once in a year. To enhance the breast milk, black peeper is prescribed by the elderly Mising women (informant: Tunoi Mili, Baligaon); but among the Karbis there is a belief that Papaya is suitable to increase breast milk (informant: Kareng Teronpi, Pavoi). The Ahoms believe that a curry prepared with colacasia, pigeon meat and black peeper should be prescribed to the mother after delivery. Likewise they have traditional knowledge system for better adaptability in crucial time .

5:2 Ranking of Food

While interrogating about the ranking of food, it is found that all the three groups preferred pork in top. They like to consume pork at least three times in a month. Second favorite is chicken and then fish. Boil food is preferred by the Misings and the Karbis while the Ahoms preferred little oil in their food.

5:3 Foods in Special Occasions

The communities have their own food habits referring their identity. Besides these each community have some special food items for special occasions. In the Ahom

community there are many ritualistic practices where the food offered to the deity and devotee differs. For example, in the nine generation ancestor worship nine food items including pork is essential. In '*Na-Khua*' or in the feast after harvesting crops, roasted '*Kawoi*' fish and '*Rahi-xaj*' (rice beer) is necessary. In some other rituals different types of meat is required; for example, in '*Lengdon Puja*' beef, in '*Habi-Deo Puja*' dog meat and in '*Umpha-Puja*' pork, beef, mutton, chicken, buffalo meat etc. In *me-dam-me-phi* chicken is prepared with *Xukuta* or dry jute leaf.

The Karbis, in their rituals used to prepare meat and fish in bamboo tube. During '*So-jun*' there is a tradition of preparing boil and bamboo tube roasted food items. In this festival the people prepare the bone marrow, cerebrum of the sacrificed pig in bamboo tubes and the blood of the pig (after mixed with pound rice) is also prepared by roasting in bamboo tubes. Dry fish and alkali is essential in their rituals.

5:4 Food lore and Food Taboos

In Mising community there are some food taboos. In the time of preparation of *apong*, the womenfolk debarred from taking sour food and also do not allow anyone to enter with any sour food. They believe that the sour food pollutes the rice beer. The women of Baligaon reported some food taboos and prohibitions for the pregnant and for the mother after delivery. For example, the medical practitioners prescribe egg for the pregnant, but for the Misings egg is strictly prohibited during pregnancy as one of our informant Tunoi Mili (65 years, female) reported that taking egg in time of pregnancy causes egg like boil on the baby's body. The mother should not take dry food, such as dry fish, dry chili etc. at least for few month of neo-nate, otherwise the child will become very thin. Duck meat is

necessarily provided to the pregnant woman by her parents or the in laws otherwise, they have a belief that the child will born with physical disorder.

Some other food taboos are prevalent among the Misings. For example, if any member of the family dies, then meat is prohibited for the family until the purification ceremony is observed. Besides meat, fish, turmeric, spice, pumpkin, winter melon, gourd, *Dhekia* (*Diplazium esculentum*) etc. are prohibited till the lunar fortnight is over after the day of death. During river worship, taking fish as food is a taboo for the Misings of Baligaon. During the menstruation period, women should not take *ānārash* (pineapple), *amitā* (papaya), *īkhu* (bamboo-shoot), *apī* (egg), etc. It is believed that these cause painful menstrual period.

The Ahoms follow some taboos regarding preparation of the yeast cake or *lao-darab*. Thursday, Saturday, Tuesdays are prohibited by the Ahoms in case of preparing the yeast cake. Taboo regarding the sour things is also prevailing among the Ahoms in the preparation time of the rice beer.

The Karbis also have the taboo of prohibition of sour food in the time of rice beer preparation. They also have a taboo on crab eating by the elder people of the family. They have a belief that the crab has a relation with the god and eating crab by the elder people of the family may bring curse to the family (informant: Jillat Teron, Pavo). The Karbis practice a ritual called *Arnām-faro*, where the presence of the women is strictly prohibited. For this occasion even the rice beer is also prepared by the male person (informant : Kajong Rongpipi, Karbi Anglong).

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

On the basis of in depth investigation on preparation and preservation of food of three ethnic groups of Assam, following conclusion are drawn:

1. No sacred-profanity was observed related to woman with regard to cooking in feasts and festivals. Which is noticed after that the impact of Hinduization.
2. Food and drink are the most important part in every ceremonial, ritualistic occasions, feast and festivals.
3. It is observed that the priestly class of the Ahoms and the village people of the two other communities used to keep the social custom, cultural norms and values very strictly. On the other hand they are trying to accept the change causing by modernization while projecting their identity through food culture.
4. Change of ingredients (use of oil and spice), in dining space (use of dining table), in traditional utensils, of food habits (popularity of fast foods), change of the religion also brings change in food tradition, changes due to communication and mass media.
5. The growth of marketing centers and improvement of transportation have been playing an important role in changing food habits of these ethnic communities.

6. Ethnic foods of all the three groups have potential of food tourism. Ethnic Food perks can be established in airports, tourist spots as well as in other commercial ventures for promotion and popularization. This will create better employment prospect for the youth of the remote places of Assam.
7. Ethnic food exhibition of Self Help Groups of the remote areas of Assam could be strengthened with the support of District Authority as well as State and Central Governments.
8. Proper marketing strategy, publicity will contribute for the development of the socio- economic condition of the ethnic group of people of Assam.

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Appendix

Map of Assam showing field sites





Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi



Workshop on
Mid-term Appraisal of Research Projects on North Eastern Region
at
Tripura University, Suryamaninagar
19-21 DECEMBER 2011

TO WHOM SO EVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Dr. Jeni Gogoi Kemesar from Tezpur University
Tezpur (Assam) has attended and presented the progress report
on his / her project entitled "Study on Preparation, Preservation and Nutritional
Aspects of Indigenous Foods of some Selected Ethnic Groups ^{of Assam} sanctioned
by the ICSSR at the above noted workshop at Tripura University,

Suryamanagar, Agartala.


(K.L. Khera)

Director (Research Projects)
ICSSR, New Delhi

ICSSR, New Delhi funded project entitled, "Study on Preparation-Preservation and Nutritional Aspect of Indigenous Foods of Some Selected Ethnic Groups of Assam."

Award letter number and date: F. NO. RP 02/59/2009/RP DATED 22/03/2010.

Statement of Expenditure upto 5th Installment (31. 5. 2014)

Sl no	Head	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total
1.	Books	10045.00	9023.00				19068.00
2.	Equipment	40000.00					40000.00
3.	Fellowship	123500.00	78000.00	42500.00			244000.00
4.	Stationary	10042.00	5947.00	8300.00	4125.00		28414.00
5.	Travel	8400.00	24265.00	43470.00	3865.00		80000.00
6.	Data Processing				19564.00		19564.00
7.	Contingency				20000.00		20000.00
8.	Over Head					1446.00	1446.00
	Total	191987.00	117235.00	94270.00	47564.00	1446.00	452492.00

Fund Received: Rs 4, 52,492.00

Total Expenditure: Rs 4, 52,492.00

Grand Total: Rs 4, 52,492.00 + 32,604.00 (Over Head) = Rs 4, 85,096.00

Juri Gogoi Konwar
(Juri Gogoi Konwar)
Tezpur University

Juri Gogoi Konwar
(Internal Auditor)
Tezpur University
Internal Audit Officer
Tezpur University

B. Samanta
(Finance Officer)
Tezpur University
Finance Officer
Tezpur University

5. Statement of expenditure incurred during the period: The following expenditure was incurred during the period and review:

S. No.	Item	Amount approved in accordance with the sanction order	Expenditure incurred at during the period under review	Expenditure incurred during the period under review	Total expenditure at the end of the period under review	Balance of the grant still available
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Salary	2,44,000.00	2,44,000.00		2,44,000.00	-
2.	Stationary	30,000.00	24,289.00	4125	28414.00	
3.	Equipment	40,000.00	40,000.00		40,000.00	
4.	Books	20,000.00	19,068.00		19,068.00	
5.	Travel	80,000.00	76,135.00	3865.00	80,000.00	
6.	Data Processing	20,000.00	-	19564.00	19564.00	
7.	Contingency	20,000.00	-	20,000.00	20,000.00	
8.	Over head	34050.00		1446.00	(-) 32604.00	

Certified that the expenditure of the scheme has been incurred in accordance with the budget approved by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.

a) Total amount sanctioned for the project : 4,88,050/-

b) Amount received from the Council as at the beginning of the period under review: 1,95,000/-

c) Amount received from the Council during the period under review: 47,492/

d) Total amount received from the Council at the end of the period under review: 4,52,492/

S.No.	Item	Anticipated expenditure during the next period of six months
		Total

Amount now asked for from the Council Rs 32604.00

(7.5% Overhead charge)

Certified that no change has been made in the Project

Project as approved by the Council

Juni Gosai Karm

Signature of the Project Director

12/07/14

**Counter Signature of the Administrative
Head of the Institution/University
Registrar**

Tezpur University

Forms
GFR 19
GFR 19 - A

[See Rule 212 (1)]

Form of Utilization Certificate

Sl No.	Letter No. and Date	Amount Rs.
1.	30.3.2010	1,95,000/-
2.	28.3.2011	70,000/-
3.	22.2.2012	70,000/-
4.	18.10.2012	70,000/-
5.	11.12.2013	47,492/
	Total	4,52,492/

Certified that out of Rs. 47,492/ of grants-aid sanctioned during the year 2013 to 2014 in favour Tezpur University Under this Ministry/ Department Letter No. given in margin as Rs 1508/- on account of unspent balance of the previous year, a sum of Rs 49,000/- has been utilized for the purpose of Research Project for which it was sanctioned and that the balance is Nil.

2. Certified that I have satisfied myself that the conditions on which the grant-in-aid was sanctioned have been duly filled are being fulfilled and that I have exercised the following checks to see that money was actually utilized for purpose for which it was sanctioned.

Kinds of checks exercised

1. Payment has been released under the direct supervision of the Finance Office.
2. A/Cs is audited by the Internal Auditor.

Signature..... *Juri Gogoi Abowal*
Designation..... *Asstt. Professor*
Date..... *03.06.2014*

Signature..... *B. J. J. J.*
Finance Officer, Tezpur University
Date..... *20/6/14*
Finance Officer
Tezpur University