



# Traditional Knowledge System On Agriculture Of The Bodos

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## Abstract:

This paper tries to explore the traditional knowledge system of the Bodos. The Bodos have been maintaining their traditional knowledge system in their lives since the time immemorial. They are very rich in their traditional knowledge. This knowledge is the part and parcel of their lives. This knowledge helps them in their agriculture, food cuisine, economy, ornaments, and costumes, ecology, and bio-diversity. Most of their traditional knowledge is mingled with the natural resources and experiences the importance of the need of ecological balance. This knowledge signifies their distinct identity in our Indian multi-cultural context.

**Key words:** People, nature and culture.

## 1. Introduction:

The Bodos of Assam (India) is an important and largest ethnic group of Assam having their distinctive cultural and linguistic traits. They are also one of the largest groups of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. They are also earliest inhabitants of Indo-Mongoloid stock to settle in the Brahmaputra Valley. Racially they belong to the great Mongoloid stock and linguistically they belong to the Tibetan-Chinese speech family. They are the indigenous and sons of the soil in the Brahmaputra valley. The Bodos also considered themselves as the sons of Banasur, the mythological king of Sonitpur, the ancient city of blood.

Generally the Bodos of Assam have the deep relationship with their surrounding natural environment. Their indigenous knowledge system is not only to meet their day to day needs but helps their capacity for sustainable development. They know how they have close relationship with the sun, air; river, forest and land and its utilization in the way of traditional system.

The paper tries to explore about the traditional knowledge system of the Bodos. The use of traditional knowledge system contributed much more to the human society in the field of a traditionally scientific way of life. Their contribution is not only to the human society but also to the non-human life to a great extent. The present day world of science and technology has been trying to revive the traditional way of our future life. It is seen that the Indian New Education Policy, 2020, incorporating the traditional knowledge system in its new curriculum entitled as Indian Knowledge System. Through this policy it tries to popularize the importance of our traditional knowledge and practices. It is expected that the sustainable development might be made by means of our Indian Knowledge System. In this point of view, presently the traditional knowledge system is considered as the burning issue among us.

## 2. Methodology:

In this paper the descriptive method is used so that the ethnological information of the Bodos could be focus descriptively.

### 3.0 Discussion:

The traditional knowledge of the Bodos is a fascinating one. The exercise of their traditional knowledge is starts from cradle in every individual's life and then to the social life. Lastly it comes to an end at their grave. A series of events is involved in an individual and social life by using traditional knowledge among the Bodos. This event highlights the involvement of intellectuality and capacity of traditional knowledge of the Bodos.

### 3.1 Knowledge of agriculture:

The Bodos is an agricultural based community in Assam. They have a rich agrarian culture. The methods of their cultivation are still based on their traditional knowledge. Agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. Their agriculture includes cultivation, horticulture, fishery, and animal husbandry.

#### 3.1.1 Agricultural implements:

The preparation of necessary implements for agriculture is created by means of their vibrant traditional knowledge. This knowledge has been handed down to generation after generation from the time immemorial. The implement *naangwl*, *junggaal*, *mwi*, *laothi*, *dila*, *dangkhwr*, *kholbari*, *hukhen*, *roina*, *saandaangga*, *baokha*, *saandri*, *songgrai*, *khada*, *khofri*, *aowarwng* or *themal*, *hasib* etc. are used for their agricultural works. These are prepared very intellectual manner and looks very beautiful. The use of intellectually prepared implements accelerated their works of agriculture very smoothly. These are used during cultivation and its harvesting time. Each implement is used for different purposes. These implements are made of woods and bamboos which show their love of nature and have the close relationship of ecological importance.

#### 3.2 Selection of land:

As an agricultural society, the Bodos are very concerned with the selecting of proper land for agriculture. The selection of land has also been done on their traditional knowledge. They know the better land for better agricultural production. They divided their lands as low land, high land, wet land, riverine land etc. Different types of cultivation are done in accordance with the quality of land. A popular folk song is still found on the land selection among the Bodos.

The song is runs as-

*haa ladwngmwn agwni khona* (a piece of land was selected in south-east corner)

*mwsow baidwngmwn gong mena* (bought a pair of stout and horned bullock)

*gwdw dongmwn bakhria gongba sose* (once had five and half granary with full of rice)

*da gwilia maoji mase* (but now there is no even a cat)

*daao jalangbai, mwsow jalangbai, fari-fari* (the chicken, cow has eaten up all one by one)

*makhou jabaonwlwi aalongmwnha* (now what would be eaten by *aalong*)

#### 3.3 Selection of season:

The selection of season is also an important aspect in agricultural system among the Bodos. The Bodos as agriculturists examine the time factor or seasons that suitable for their agriculture. In accordance with their geographical experience and traditional knowledge, the Bodos divided into six seasons for their convenience. Different types of agricultural works are done in different season rotationally. Because all crops are not suit in all season. They know that the agricultural production depends on the suitable season. Traditionally *Dwilaang bwthwr* (monsoon or rainy), *Gwlwm bwthwr* (summer), *Gwjang bwthwr* (winter),

*Dufang bwthwr* (autumn), *Udang bwthwr* (Pre-spring), *Meseng bwthwr* (spring) are their important seasons for agriculture.

### 3.4 Selection of crops:

The Bodos are very conscious about the selection of quality crops for their cultivation. Their traditional knowledge assured them that the production is depends on the solid crops. They believed that the best crops mean best production. Generally the variety of paddy (*maai*), jute (*fathw*), mustard (*besor*), pulses (*sobai*), and sesame (*sibing*) is cultivated by them. These crops are cultivated in different season on different land.

The variety of vegetable is also cultivated by the Bodos based on the quality of land and crops. Mostly they cultivate the creeper and plant vegetables. Their popular and delicious vegetables are *laai* (leaf veg.), *lapha* (leaf veg.), *thaarun or thaaso* (arum), *mwitha* (leaf veg.), *haldwi* (termaric), *haijeng* (ginger), *besor* (mustard leaf), *mwitha sikhla* (leaf veg.), *laao* (gourd), *khumbra* (white gourd), *jwgnat* (pumpkin), *phanthao* (brijal), *banlu* (chilly) etc.

### 3.5 Irrigation System:

The Bodos of Assam made their cultivation with the help of traditional irrigation system not depending upon the rain and technological irrigation system. Their traditional irrigation system is completely rests on nature. The traditional irrigation system of the Bodos is called *dong* or *dongo* or *jumfwi*. The *dongo* or *jumfwi* means the earthen canals to divert water from rivers to their paddy field and other purposes. They also construct dams, small check dams, sluice gates for the purpose of irrigation. The dams and sluice gates are built at rivers with the natural resources like jungles or branches, boulders, stones. Dams are used for the diversion to the paddy field and the sluice gates are for the control of overflowed water. The traditional irrigation system of the Bodos is out and out on community governance. It brings togetherness and unity among them. On the other hand, their using natural objects in it bestowed the ecological relationship with the Bodos.

### 4.0 Conclusion:

The irrigation system of the Bodos is considered as very unique. Their artistic knowledge behind the system is not less than the techniques of present science and technology. The community governance makes the system very strong and long lasting. The water stocked in the dams and sluice gates are also useful to animals, birds, trees, and keep the healthy eco-friendly balance among them. Therefore, the beliefs as sacred forest, sacred river even the animal, birds, insects, trees are still found among the Bodos. These kinds of beliefs helped them in their traditional system of agriculture. They considered them as the resources for their agricultural system. This kind of traditional knowledge is very praiseworthy and other community must learn lesson from the traditional knowledge of the Bodos.

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