



# Folk Medicine of the Bodos

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Natural elements like leaf of plants, flowers, fruits, stem, skin, roots animal feces (KHI), urine etc. which are used by forefathers in the form of edible and external use is called Folk medicine. Since ancient era, bodos have been applying roots, leafs vines when suffered from disease, wounds. Prior to discover of allopathic medicine, the Bodos could cure some diseases by applying leafs and roots which are found from nature. Folk medicine is a part of folklore. The folk medicine has been deriving orally since ancient age and the same have been learned from experiences. The relation of human beings and nature is such old that human have researched the nature very well and learnt to find good results from it. Generally, every people belonging to the Bodo society use the folk medicine in their daily life and they all have sufficient knowledge on it. The Bodos accept most of the medicines on the basis of belief. In this way, forefathers cured diseases with the help of folk medicine and thus, by following them, future generations have been using those as their folk belief.

The Bodo community is one of the important indigenous tribes of the North-East India. They belong to the Tibetan-Burmese family of Mongolian race. Bodo community has been living in this world since thousand and thousand years which even the history cannot reach it and folk Medicine is also coming along with them as their supreme power. Folk Medicine is a kind of social experience. It is believed and shared more or less by the folk society. As part of the folklore folk Medicine is also the result of social experiences which is transmitted from generation to generation orally.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY:

The topic entitled "Folk Medicine of the Bodos" is closely related to the research adopted in folklore studies. It is a field oriented study where related data have been gathered by conducting field works. Chiefly two kinds of data have been gathered; one is primary data collected from active informants and on the other hand secondary data collected from passive bearers and various published materials as found in printed books of culture and knowledge

based books. The researcher being a native speaker of this society has own intuition and information about folk medicine of the Bodo society. It helped me immensely when went to field for data collection and further analysis. To assess the data questionnaire method has also been adopted for cross-examination as far as required.

### 3.0 HYPOTHESIS:

- (i) It reflects culture and validates social folk-customs.
- (ii) It is the result of social experiences. Therefore folk medicine is accepted as knowledge of the society.
- (iii) It protects the bodo society from ancient times.

### 4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- (i) To know about folk life of the Bodos.
- (ii) To enlighten (focus) the folk medicine of the bodos.

### 5.0 CLASSIFICATION OF FOLK MEDICINE:

R.M Dorson in his book, “Folklore and Folk life An Introduction”, stated that “Folk medicine is related derivatively to the academic medicine of earlier generation. Certain ideas that were once circulating in academic medical circles and are now discarded have become part and parcel of the folk medical viewpoint.”<sup>1</sup>

He classified Folk medicines in to two branches;

- (i) **Natural folk medicine**
- (ii) **Magico-religious folk medicine.**

The Bodos use both the folk medicines. Besides collecting medicines from nature, the Bodos also cure some diseases by chanting mantras. These are beliefs of the Bodos. There is no proper evidence of complete recovery from disease due to chanting mantras but performed/executed in the form of belief. Some mantras are basically chanted by all when an object enters into the eyes of infant/baby or cries in pain due to falling down. They chant mantras as below;

*HOLDONG MOLDONG JARIDONG*

*DAOSA FISA GANG DONG*

*BARA JABLA ANG DONG.*

<sup>1</sup>Dorson, R. M.: Folklore and Folklife an Introduction. London: The University of Chicago. 1972.

Basically, everybody knows this mantra. Bodos do not think that chanting such mantra recovers the infant but performing such activity distracts the infant from pain. Generally, mantra is chanted by an old man of the village or OJA.

## 6.0 NATURAL FOLK MEDICINES:

Medicines collected from nature are being applied by bodos in three ways; eating, drinking and external apply. The Bodos have been using folk medicines as follows;

- (i) Leafs of plants are brought and grinded with the help of rock its juice is drunk.
- (ii) Some are consumed by making powder or by breaking into small pieces.
- (iii)Some are grinded with the help of rock and applied externally.
- (iv)Some are cleaned after collection and then eaten.

## 6.1 INTRODUCTON OF SOME MEDICINE IS GIVEN BELOW:

Figure-1



Thulungsi

Figure-2



Basikhi

Figure-3



Rwimali

Figure-4



Endi



Figure-5



Burilakhan

Figure-6



Genda

Figure- 7



Haldwi

Figure-8



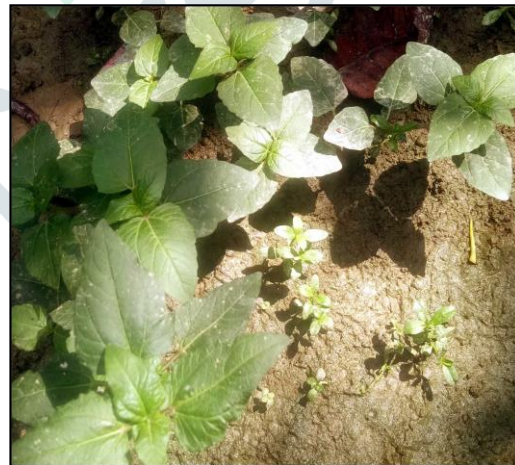
Gongar Mwitha

Figure-9



Haijeng

Figure-10



Usumwi





Figure-11

Khokhleng



Figure-12

Lewa

Figure-13

Figure-14



Manimuni



Mwxhwna

Figure-15

Figure-16



Neem



Nisthang





Figure-17

Khifibendwng



Figure-18

Patgaja

Figure-19

Figure-20



Somfrem



Sitana



Figure-21



Sijwo

Figure-22



Athia Thalir

Figure-23



Thaso Gwswm

## 6.2 Applications of natural folk medicine during their sufferings from disease are given below:

- 1) When they suffer from loose motion, they use medicines found in homely garden. As per bodos belief, drinking juice of ATHIYA THALIR (a seeded banana) plant adding a piece of salt cures loose motion.
- 2) The Bodos prepare medicine at home when suffers from fever due to cold. They make the mustard oil warmed by adding garlic apply it at nose, ear and neck. Also seen get recovered from fever when the whole body is rubbed by this oil.
- 3) The Bodos know that drinking fluid/juice of buds of guava, mwkhwna (a kind of plant) and pineapple recovers a child from warms. They steam the buds of guava, mwkhwna, pineapple, after that, extracted juice/fluid by crushing and given to child to drink.
- 4) If suffers from cough, the Bodos consume some homely medicine before taking doctors medicine. Consuming honey adding basil fluid/mixing basil fluid recovers one from cough. Eating smoked ginger also cures cough.



- 5) Some folk medicines are used in case of dysentery. Consuming a mixed curry of buffalo skin and singri mikhi (a kind of plant) cures dysentery soon. As per bodos' belief, gongar mwitha gwkha(a kind of roselle) also cures dysentery.
- 6) The Bodos apply fluid of black yam (thaso gwswm) in case of small pock. Applying fluid of black yam on the pock provides good result. If a mix of grinded pulse (SOBAI) and feces of pigeon is stuck surrounding the pock, one can get recovered from pock soon.
- 7) The Bodos has a custom of KHUGA FWRNAI. They do it for protecting themselves from evil eyes. They gather thorns of khunthai (solanum indicum), Leafs of jujube, dry leaf of jute, dry chili on Saturday or Tuesday and a piece of cinder and thrown into fire by chanting '*MONGOLBAR NI KHUGA SONIBAR NI KHUGA*'. As per their belief, doing such activity protects them from evil eyes.
- 8) BORI is given to eat if suffers from fever. The Bodos prepare BORI at home. Long pepper, black pepper, clove, cassia bark, ginger, cardamom, jabrang (a kind of spice), usumwi fithai (spilanthes acmella linn) BWRDWN BANLU (a kind of small silly), fenugreek etc. are grinded together on rock and given shape of small and then made dry. If one consumed this BORI, one gets recovered from fever.
- 9) Phati Gaja (Bryophyllum pinnatum) is consumed in empty stomach in the morning for treatment of kidney stone.
- 10) In case of bleeding due to cut or wound, burilakhan (a kind of leaf) is applied. We also see applying basil leaf and marigold leaf. Applying these leafs stop bleeding.
- 11) The Bodos use neem leafs for curing allergy and stomach problem. As per belief of the Bodos, if one consumes neem leaf daily for long in empty stomach in the morning, he/she is not attacked by poison even bitten by a snake.
- 12) The Bodos knows that if grinded roots of ENDI, leafs of jarman, leafs of onthai bajab is applied surrounding the wound, it is protected from infection.
- 13) Manimuni (Centella asiatica) is also as medicine by the Bodos, even consumed in the form of curry. We get good results if we consume Centella in empty stomach in the morning.
- 14) As per belief of the Bodos, one can get rid of stomach pain if juice of mwkhwna bud and guava bud is consumed.
- 15) If any part of our body is burnt, cactus is chopped and stuck at the burnt point like plaster to get relieved soon.
- 16) If Moss (Badamali) is fried and applied at burnt point of human body, one can get relieved soon.
- 17) If quantity of blood in our body reduces, one should consume manimuni (Centella asiatica) along with raw turmeric, jiggery in empty in the morning to increase blood up to required quantity.
- 18) In case of joint dislocation or hand and leg pain, if rubbed by mustard oil added smoked leaf of KHANARI (Crinum Asiaticum), one can get relieved.



- 19) The Bodos eat usumwi (*Spilanthus acmella* linn) leaf by cooking curry with chicken if appears DOBRA at tongue.
- 20) As per belief of the Bodos, if someone consumes poison unconsciously, he/she is fed cow dung mixed with water which results in vomiting. Due to vomiting, poison in the stomach is thrown out and she/he is saved.
- 21) The Bodos belief and use in case of nose bleeding Khangsingsa (*Leucus Aspara Br*) is crushed and its fluid is poured at the nostrils to stop bleeding.
- 22) If grinded skin of SITHANA tree is fed to a pig, the worm in the stomach of pig dies.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Folk medicines have been protecting life of bodos since ancient age. They have been using folk medicines when they faced with major and minor diseases in their livelihood. There are scientific results in folk medicines which are used by bodos to cure diseases. Roots, leafs, skin, fruits etc. of some trees are considered to be health benefiting. Use of folk medicines has been decreasing. Unable to identify and lack of articles written on use of folk medicine are the main reasons for decreasing in use of folk medicine. Besides curing diseases in their health with the help of folk medicines, bodos use folk medicines to cure diseases of domesticated animals. They know very well how and which medicines are if insects ruin the crop. Folk medicine has been playing a role of life protector.

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## BOTANICAL NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PLANTS

NAME OF BODO	NAME OF BOTANICAL
Thulungsi	Ocimum Basilicum Kinn
Basikhi	Phlogacanthus Thyrsiformis
Rwimali	Ananas Comosus
Endi	Ricinus Communis
Genda phul	Tagetes
Haldwi	Curcuma longa
Gongar Mwitha	Hibiscus acetosella
Haijeng	Zingiber officinale
Usumwi	Spilanthus acmella linn
Lewa	Mikania micrantha
Manimuni	Centella asiatica
Mwkhwna	Clerodendrum infortunatum
Neem	Azadirachta indica
Khifi Bendwng	Paederia Foetida
Patigaja	Bryophyllum pinnatum
Somfram	Psidium guajava
Sithana	Alstonia scholaris
Sijou	Euphorbia neriifolia
Athiya Thalir	Musa balbisiana colla
Thaso gwswm	Colocasia
Khanari	Crinum asiaticum
Singri Mwikhi	Oxalis corniculata
Khunthai	Solanum indicum
Narzi	Corchorus olitorius
Banlu Bwrdsn	Capsicum frutescens
Zarman Bilai	Mikania micrantha
Khangsingsa	Leucus Aspara
Badamali	Bryophyta