



Indigenous Food Habit System of PADAM Tribes With Special Reference to East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to focus on the Indigenous food habit system of the Padams, one of the sub-tribes of Adi groups in East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. The present study is exclusively concentrated on the Padams of East Siang District only. The paper also tries to analyze on the traditional knowledge system related to preservation and processing of their ethnic foods system. The Padams are one of the sub-tribes of Adi group and has been living in this area overlapping with high diversity of species of flora and fauna since its antiquity. Their traditional knowledge of the biological materials and resources is very vast and age old tradition in nature. They have a unique pattern of food preparation and consumption in the society. The pattern of food habits and drinks in the society is based on the places of their habitations, topography, climatic conditions, nature of the land etc.

The analysis reveals that there is an animistic conception associated with vegetation, animals, grooves and ritual ceremonies. The Padams used different items of meats and wild leafy differently in their own indigenous form. There are more than 40 species of wild edible plants used by the Padams and were documented. They use leaves, stem, fruits, seeds and roots as a part of their diet. Whatever may be the kind of foods is not taken in a raw form except some green vegetables, nuts and roots are consumed in raw forms. Apart from agriculture, the activities of fishing and hunting are always a supplementary part of foods. Some of the indigenous plants available in the nearby surrounding environment are used as vegetables by the Padams. Some of them are as good as medicinal purposes for healing of various ailments in the society.

Few most commonly consumed indigenous plants are Onger (*Zanthoxylum rhetsa*), Dhenkia saag (*Diplazium esculentum*), Marsang (*Spilanthus acmella*), Ongin (*Clerodendrum*

colebrookianum), Rori (*Piper Cyslrestre*), Oyik (*Pougolgia hirta*), Gaam (*Glochidion*), Nupuk (*Fagopyrum esenlentum*), Koyir (*Glochidion*), Tapar(Local Mushroom)(*Epicurius*), kopi (*Solanum melongene*), Anke (*Castonopsis hystrix*), Sirang (*Castonopsis indica*) etc. are observed as part of both food and ethno-medicines. Result reveals that Padam tribes are knowledgeable in accessing indigenous biodiversity to use in making culturally, nutritionally and medicinally rich foods.

Keywords: Food habits, diversity of bio-resources, Indigenous knowledge system, animistic concept, medicinal plants.

I. Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh, located in the north-eastern most tip of the country is identified to be one of the biogeographically richest regions in the Eastern Himalayas zone. The complex topographical settings and climatic conditions mostly favoured the luxuriant growth of varieties of flora and fauna in the region. The variety in the physical characteristics is reflected by different tribes and sub-tribes with different dialects, religions, cultures and traditions. The elements of the physical environment like landforms, soils, climate, water, natural vegetation and diverse flora and fauna have greatly influences the livelihood patterns of the tribal people.

Human being is the most active agents of the environment. He has been deriving all kinds of his requirements from the physical environment since his existence on the earth surface. Man's tendency for food and drink has been deep rooted in his daily habits and culture since the day man originated on this earth. He has been transforming the natural environment according to his life style and adjusts himself with the surrounding environment. The developments of man's activities have direct bearing on the environment. He has been playing a very significant role in the domain of environment in the process of economic gain, social development, social-cultural life and



urbanization etc. At all levels of development of man and his society, his attitude towards environment have been different and thus, he maintains mutual relationship with his surrounding environment in various ways to adjust or adapt himself with the environment.

The Padam tribe is one of the major sub-groups of the Adis in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. They were formerly known as Bor Abors (**Mackenzie: 1979, p.33**). They are mostly residing in the hills and the valleys of East Siang District, Upper Siang and Lower Dibang Valley Districts and some pockets of Lohit District preserving their age-old cultural heritage. The Padams are now one of the most populous indigenous groups of people covering the eastern part of the East Siang District. The important villages of Padams in East Siang District are Mebo, Silluk, Ngopok, Kiyit, Motum, Ayeng, Bodak, Borguly, New Borguli, Seram, Raling, Sigar and Namsing. The main surnames used by the Padam tribes are Yirang (my title), Pertin, Perme, Lego, Tayeng, Saring, Ratan, Borang, Perying, Damin and Doso. Each village has a village head (Gam Bura) under whom all the proceedings of the Kebangs (Village meetings and discussions) are held. These kebangs are held to settle the disputes and other cases among the local villagers.

The Padams are very simple and humble in nature with soft spoken dialect. The Padams are by virtue rich in cultural and oral tradition. They are well known for fiercely guarding their democratic society. They are an indigenous communities living for thousands of years overlapping with biodiversity have highly complex and very specific knowledge system of management of local resources. They practice certain traditional system for protecting the plants and animals for sustainable use in the region.

Damro Village in Upper Siang District is the ancestral places of the Padams where from all the present padams believed to have been migrated to other areas. Its important lies in oral recitation and daily beliefs are because many of the generations remember it as the place from where their fore fathers migrated. Damro in true Adi style (which is typical of Adi linguistic practices) stands or is made out of two basic words, 'Padam and Aro'. Padam is the name of the group of people and Aro means real or original. Famous for their community strength and feared for their war tactics, the Padams always looked for more land to occupy (**Borang 2013 p/-5**). Living in the midst of the vast magnificent forests and mountainous

regions, their lives are hard and struggle with the environment. The entire lives of the Padam tribes are highly influenced by the local ecology which is reflected through their social, customs, beliefs and practices. They have their own indigenous methods of conservation and management of biodiversity. The Padams not only use the forest as a resource for fulfilling their basic needs, but they also use it as a means of livelihood.

The Padams of Adis have a unique socio-cultural life which is always found to be inter-oven with the nature. They have a unique pattern of food habits and drinks in their society based on the nature of places of their habitations, topography, climatic conditions, nature of the land etc. They have their own indigenous methods of preparation and consumption of food items in the society. Whatever may be the kind of foods is not taken in a raw form except some green vegetables, nuts and roots.

Agriculture has been the main source of every food items and drinks in the society. Rice is the staple food of the Padams. It is widely cultivated over the hills, valleys and plain areas. Other important food items commonly used are Maize, Millet, tapioca, sweet potato, green vegetables, wild roots, nuts, bamboo shoots, herbs and meats of different animals and fishes etc. Rice, maize, millets and tapioca are useful for preparation of local indigenous drinks. There are several indigenous varieties of plants which are locally grown in the jhum field. Shifting cultivation, rearing of pigs and poultry holds a very significant part of the traditional economic life in the society. Fishing and hunting and gathering are other important activities of the Padams in the process of making their food. They also use plenty of indigenous wild plants as vegetables as well as medicines since time immemorial.

II. Study Area

The East Siang District has been selected as the study area for the present study. It is one of the most picturesque regions centrally located in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Pasighat, one of the oldest towns in the state is the headquarters of East Siang district. It is situated at the eastern foothills of the Himalayas at 155 meters above mean sea level and lies in between 27⁰30' and 29⁰42' north latitude and 94⁰42' and 95⁰35' East longitude in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The Government of India included Pasighat in the Smart Cities Mission Development scheme in June, 2017. The District is mostly hilly and mountainous. However, it has



plain areas at the foothills which form part of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam in the southern part.

The total geographical area of East Siang region is approximately about 4,005 sq.km(1546 sq miles) and covering a vast tract of an alluvial land of about 15,484 sq. km (appxly) stretching right from the southern part of the Namcha Barwa Peak up to the Brahmaputra Basins in the south adjoining the Assam. It is bounded by Upper Siang District on the extreme north, West Siang District on the West, Dibang Valley District on the East, Lower Siang on the south and the Dhemaji and Dibrugarh Districts of Assam on the south east respectively.

The total population of the District as per 2011 census is 99,214 peoples, out of which urban population is 27,635 while rural population is 71,579. There are about 19,107 houses in the district (6,189-urban/12,918-rural). This gives it a ranking of 615th in India. The district has a population density of 27 persons per sq. km. Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 is 13.3% with a sex ratio of 962 females per 1000 male population. The district is further divided into 15 Tehsils/Blocks/Community Development Blocks (C.D. Blocks) for administrative purposes. It is basically comprises of 75 villages and six circles namely, Mebo, Namsing, Sille-Oyan, Pasighat, Bilat and Ruksin. The Figure no. 1 showing the map of the study area. (Enclosed).

III. Discussion

3.1 Indigenous food habit items of Padams

East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh is a region of rich cultural heritage and homeland of various sub-tribes of ethnic Adi groups wherein varied food habits, festivals, dialects, religious activities, rites and rituals are practices since the

time immemorial. Food habit pattern is one of the cultural identities of any tribal community in the world. The structure of food system in tribal society is multifarious in form. The study of the tribal food system is very essential in shaping a community and its members. Consequently, its study fills the gap to understand the tradition, history, and changing cultural practices of the tribe. Food is one of the basic needs of every living being for their ultimate survival on this earth's surface. Besides the biological importanc, food habit is also a symbol of human cultural and social identity (**Boro, Research Scholar P-69/-**).

The Padams have some unique indigenous dishes which are prepared and consumed by the methods of its own traditional way. They prepare some special food items during different occasions and their daily diet as wells as commonly taken items. The Padams are very much fond of taking some indigenous leaves of various plants as vegetables. The indigenous green leafy vegetables available in the Padam areas are also the good source of proteins and vitamins for health. Some of them are as good as medicine for curing certain kinds of ailments also which they preserve it with special care. Whatever may be the kind of foods is not taken in a raw form except some green vegetables, nuts and roots.

The Padams love to eat various green leafy vegetables and its fruits which are grow wild in jungles and some of them are cultivated in their own home and filed. They used to collect and gather various kinds of fruits, tubers, flowers, leafy vegetables from the nearby surrounding environment. The table-1 showing some indigenous plants used as vegetables as well as medicinal purposes:

Table-1 List of the indigenous plants used as foodstuff by the Padams.

Sl. No.	Name of items and Plants	Scientific Name	Utilising parts	Mode of preparation and consumption
1.	Iting (Bamboo shoots)	<i>Bambosa</i>	Shoots/Buds	Both boiled and dried
2.	Ongin (Tita Patta)	<i>Clerodendrum colebrookianum</i>	Tender leaves and stems	Both boiled and dried
3.	Onger	<i>Zanthoxylum rhetsa</i>	Leaves and stems	Usually taken as boiled
4.	Marsang	<i>Spilanthes paniculata</i>	Leaves and flower	Usually taken as boiled
5.	Okomamang	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Whole parts	Boil and dried
6.	Petu(Mustard)	<i>Brassica campestris</i>	Whole parts	Boiled
7.	Nupuk	<i>Fagopyrum esenlentum</i>	Leaves and stems	Boiled
8.	Lori	<i>Piper sylvaticum</i>	Tender Leaves and stems	boiled
9.	Engin(sweet potato)	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Tuber and leaves	Boiled
10.	Asi Tapa(pumkin)	<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>	Leaves and fruits)	Boiled



11.	Bayom(Brinjal)	<i>Solanum melongena</i>	Fruits	Boiled
12.	Gam	<i>Glochidion</i>	leaves	Boiled
13.	Paput	<i>Not available</i>	leaves	Boiled
14.	Koyir	<i>Glochidion</i>	Fruits	Boiled and Chatoony
15.	Kopi	<i>Solanum melongene</i>	Fruits	Boiled
16.	Oyik	<i>Pou golgia bennetiana</i>	Leaves and stems	Boiled
17.	Tapar(Local Mushroom)	<i>Epicurius</i>	Stem and flower	Boiled
18.	Omira (Papaya)	<i>Carica papaya</i>	Fruits and flower	Boiled
19.	Par(White Gourd)	<i>Benincasa hispida</i>	Fruits	Boiled
20.	Makung(Cucumbar)	<i>Cucunus sativa</i>	Fruits	Raw and Boiled
21.	Mari Makung(local cucumber)	<i>Not available</i>	Fruits	Raw and boiled
22.	Belang(Jackfruit)	<i>Artocaraes heterophy</i>	Fruits and leaves	Raw and Boiled
23.	Silum	<i>Canarium Strictum</i>	Fruits	Raw
24.	Anke	<i>Castonopsis hystrix</i>	Fruits	Raw and boiled
25.	Sirang	<i>Castonopsis indica</i>	Seeds	Raw and Boiled
26.	Lirang	<i>Not available</i>	Tubers and barks	Raw
27.	Dorge	<i>Not available</i>	Fruits and leaves	Raw
28.	Rayil	<i>Not available</i>	Fruits	Raw and dried
29.	Ombe	<i>Not available</i>	Leaves	Raw and Boiled
30.	Tader	<i>Not available</i>	Fruits	Raw
31.	Talap(local onion)	<i>Allium chinensis</i>	Roots	Raw and Boiled
32.	Tapil (Mekai)	<i>Phoebe cookarianum</i>	Fruits	Raw and Porridge forms
33.	Takang	<i>Diplazium eseculentum</i>	Leaves and stems	Raw and boiled
34.	Oko Bere		leaves	Raw and Boiled
35.	Sayong	<i>Not available</i>	Leaves and stems	Raw and Boiled
36.	Namdung (til)		Seeds	Raw and Spices
37.	Obul	<i>Not available</i>	Leaves and stems	Raw and Boiled
38.	Sibol (Big Chillis)	<i>Capsicum chinensis</i>	Fruits	Raw and Boiled and Spices
39.	Aksap	<i>Not available</i>	Leaves	Raw and Boiled
40.	Paksum	<i>Musa Spike</i>	Fruit	Boiled
41.	Kodu	<i>Solanum torvum</i>	Fruit/seed	Raw and boiled
42.	Gaam	<i>Glochidion multilocure</i>	Tender leaves	Raw and boiled
43.	Oko Mamang	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Tender leaves and stems	boiled

Source: Data collected by the Investigator (Jan, 2022).

3.2 Rice used by the Padams

Rice is the staple food of the Padams. It is widely cultivated over the hills, valleys and plain areas. Rice being cultivated over the hills and valleys and jhum fields are different from the rice cultivated in the plain areas. Rice is cultivated in three different seasons. Amo-Arik (cultivated in April–May). Rice cultivated in Amo-Arik are Puniyang, Gijikong (amkel), amon shilling. Amne Arik (cultivated in May-June) and typical rice are ampu (white rice) and kamti (sticky and gummy in type and elongated). Amo-arik and Amne arik are mostly done in the jhum field over the plain areas and steep slope areas. Asi Arik (Wet rice field) is

cultivated in the month of July-August mainly in the plain areas. In the steep slope areas, rice is rarely grown. Millets are cultivated in place of rice over the hilly region. The varieties of Millets such **Job's tears or adlay** (locally called 'Anyat' and **Foxtail Millets** (locally called Ayak) are traditionally grown and consumed in lieu of rice in the hilly region.

Rice is taken as daily diet normally three times a day as breakfast, lunch and dinner in the evening. Generally, in the morning they used to take Ro-Pimpu which is usually taken with leafy vegetables, chillis, ginger and salt. Rice taken for lunch is prepared and wrapped in a jungle leaf



called Ekkam along salt, chillis, ginger and spices of bamboo shoot. Sometimes, a lunch is taken light with rice cake (locally etting) wrapped in a jungle leaf simply with chillis and salt. The rice for dinner is taken with certain vegetables collected from the field and other non-vegetarian items.

The Padams prepare a rice cake locally called Etting which is wrapped in a jungle leaf. Rice cake is mostly prepare during the local festivals and other special occasions like social gathering, marriage ceremony, ritual ceremony, agricultural rituals and birthday ceremony etc. Other important food items other than rice are Maize, Millet, tapioca, sweet potato, green vegetables, wild roots, nuts, bamboo shoots, and herbs etc. Rice, maize, millets and tapioca are useful for preparation of local indigenous drinks.

3.3 Other special Indigenous food habit Items of Padams

Ngotar – Ngotar is a special indigenous food item of the Padams. The Padams of the study area are well known and most famous for the Ngotar items. The process of making of NGOTAR is very simple. It is made from a raw fishes. After fishing from the river side, the selected fishes like *Sepung or Garyong* particularly white small scads fishes are systematically wrapped and arranged in a traditional bamboo tray and dried it over the sun heat at least for a period of nearly two weeks or a month. After it is properly dried, it is stored in a platform nearby the fire place for future use during the time of crisis. It is considered to be a good appetizer of diet and gives delicious in taste without which the Padams cannot eat food. Sometimes, it is boiling with bamboo dried spices. It is also made as chatony cutting with the help of dao till it becomes paste or soft over the local wooden tray or plate. At times, whenever, there is no eatable items of meat in the house, NGOTARS are served to the visitors or guests.

The Silluk village is the main area where NGOTARS are produced abundantly. Other Padam villages like Ngopok, Kiyit, Motum, Sigar, Raling and Borguli are also continuously use it. So, NGOTAR is available in every house of the Padams throughout the season. Due to its good appetizer and delicious in taste, it is now, highly demanded in the market. The rate of Ngotar per bamboo tray is Rs.200/- to Rs.300/- in the market.

Pumnger- It is locally called as PUMNGER. It is also one of the most popular items of food habits among the people in the region. It is an insect which is seasonal in nature. The month of March to May is the very season of

this insect. It is not commonly available in the region. There is a particular place or region which this insects used to come and appeared on the leaves of the Ombeng plant along the foothills and river valley side. It is taken either boiled or in raw form simply with the rice and also taken as chatony with the wine.

Due to its good appetizer, it is highly demanded in the local market at Pasighat, Mebo, Oyan and Ruksin. The one handful packet of it costing around Rs.100/- and during the time of crisis the price rises to Rs.200/- or more. The local women in the region collect this pumnger in the morning time and sell it in the local market in the evening or sometimes directly given it to the brokers. The brokers again give it to the retailer women in the local market modifying its contents.

Taari – It is a type of bug insect which is available in the river side along the hilly region. It is one of the special food items of the Padams. It is black and brown in colour. It is poisonous and acidic in its taste. The hot and acidic in taste is the main crazy part of these insects. It is a good appetizer of food due to its hot and acidic in nature. It is generally consumed in raw as well as boiled form along with ginger, garlic and spices of bamboo shot otherwise its poisonous acid may effect on health.

The effect of its acid on human health is very dangerous and may cause the person epilepsy permanently once for all. If the person is unlucky one then he or she will consume the poisonous one and may face health problem. Not only that sometimes if the acid of these insects enters the eye of a person, it caused swelling of the eyes for a month or so. There is no medicine to cure the suffering from these insects except the sugarcane, star fruits and bamboo shoot. It is seasonal in nature and found in abundant during winter season only. The month of November to March is the very season of this insect. During the winter season, all the rivers coming from the hilly regions are full of these insects. People collect it from beneath the stones and boulders along the river side. The rate of one handful of taari is costing around Rs.100/- to Rs.200/- in the market.

Meat (Adin/Engo): The Padams of Adis are very much fond of taking non-vegetarian items. They domesticated various animals like mithun (*Brosfrontalis*), buffalo, pig, cow, goat, fowl and others for the purpose of self consumption as well as for commercial purposes. Mithun (*Brosfrontalis*) is the most important animals of the Adis which has a social and economic value in the society. It is useful in every occasion like festival, social



gathering, merry making ceremony, and ritual ceremony. The meats of mithun and pork are the most favourite items of delicacy of the people. They also love to eat beef, chicken and fish.

Besides the domesticated animals, the Padams also loved to eat the meat of wild animals like deer, wild boar, civet, squirrel, birds, rat, rabbits, and wild pigeons through hunting process. The items of meat are generally consumed simply by boiling method along with ginger, bamboo spices, chilies and other leafy vegetables. Some of the meats are roasted and smoked on the fire and stored in a traditional bamboo basket for future use during the visit of guests and family.

3.4. Process of Food Preparation and consumption pattern

Like other tribal community, the Padams of Adi have their own traditional methods of preparation and consumption of food items in the society. Methods of food preparation are varied according to time and season. During the festivals and other special occasions, the process of food preparation is quite different from the normal way. Whatever may be the kind of foods is not taken in a raw form except some green vegetables, nuts and roots. The following are some of the traditional methods commonly used by the Adis in the process of food preparation and its consumption:

Boiling: It is the most common methods of food preparation and consumption by the Padams. The items like rice, maize, millets, vegetables, meat and fish are usually taken boiled. The curry items are mixed together and then boiled simply with salt and chilies in a pot. The local spices such as ginger, bamboo shoots, black pepper are also sometimes used to have a better taste. In traditional manner, taking of mustard oil or other edible oils are totally absent.

Smoked: It is the best traditional methods used by the Padams since its ancient times. The main smoked items are usually meats and fishes. Smoked meats and fishes are very popular among the Padams. It is considered as food of delicious kind, but also as property having a good economic value in the society. The smoked items are usually kept either on bamboo tray over the fire place or in a basket hanging down the roof of the house.

Besides the domesticated animals, the other source of meats and fishes are by hunting and fishing. Both community and individual hunting system are still prevalent in the society. During festivals and ritual performances animals like Mithun, Cow, Buffalo, pig, goat, dog, etc are sacrificed. People gather large amount of meats and

fishes during the occasions of festival and smoke it over the fire for two or three days and then store it for the days to come to take during the time of scarcity. Even, the oily parts of the pigs are kept and preserved for 3-4 years to be used as medicines and gelycirines etc.

Roasting: Roasting is another important indigenous method of preparation and consumption of food items by the Padams. Sometimes, Fresh or dry meat and fish are consumed simply by burning or roasting over the fire. Maize and other wild roots and shoots of some plants are usually taken in the same process as the roasted item gives a peculiar delicacy and unique taste. Normally, the roasted items of meats and fishes are usually taken along with the local drinks. The salt and chilies are also invariably used with the roasted items to have better taste.

Porridge (Paste): The method of Porridge or paste is very common among the Padams since the time immemorial. In this method, certain cereals are grinded to powder and then cooked by boiling with water till it turns into a thick paste or dough. Sometimes, it is wrapped with leaves of bananas and then burnt into the ashes and charcoal of a fire for certain time. Occasionally, items like rice, meat, fish, vegetable, etc are boiled together with the paste items and then eaten.

3.5. Food preparation during the Festivals

Preparation of food and other items during the festival is not that much different from the day-to-day preparation. The different is only in the manner of its quantity. A festival is a very special moment on which the people have large quantity of food items, meats, fishes, drinks etc. Animals like Mithun, pig, cow, fowl, fish, etc., are usually sacrificed. Meats are usually taken with apongs (local wines) etc. Some are smoked or dried over the fire place and then preserved in a local basket called *beyen* and hanging it over the roof of the house for future consumption.

There are numbers of festivals of the Padams of Adis which are directly or indirectly related to agriculture, socio-religious etc and celebrated according to customs and traditions during which animals of various kinds are sacrificed and prepared. Aran, Etor and Solung are such local festivals which are related to meat and celebrated every year. Before the coming of this Aran and Etor festival, the village people usually went out for community hunting and individual hunting and stayed in the jungle for nearly a week or more to collect meat.



During the festival days, the participants as well as the observers are served food, meats and drinks to entertain their best. But sometimes, people are also maintained under tabooed from taking certain food items after their certain individual ritualistic performances at home but in participation there is no as such tabooed existed. Such observation of taboos are the essential parts of socio-religious and cultural life of the Padams.

3.6. Preparation of Local recipes and drinks

The Padams have varieties of recipes and drinks. They are experts in making local drinks particularly the females. Rice of different varieties, maize, millets, tapioca and sweet potatoes are the primary recipes of the Padam people. Other wild vegetables, bamboo shoots, herbs and shrubs are also the main source of recipes. Apart from the above mentioned food recipes, the varieties of drinks are also considered as recipes. Whenever, there is a get together of male groups, in between them two or three females are normally employed in preparing and supplying the local drinks made from rice and millets. During the agricultural season or community work, taking of meat with local drinks and meals are most common among the Padams. For the mid-day-meal, people usually carry with them the prepared food in packed wrapped in the wild leaves and taken sometimes with the local drinks by the people.

Types of local drinks

The indigenous drinks of the Padams are locally called '*Apong*'. It is the most favourite and delicious drinks with the roasted and smoked items of meat and fish. There are two types of local Apongs prepared by Padams. They are **poro apong** and **nokyin apong**.

Poro apong is mainly prepared from the properly burnt paddy husk along with the cooked rice and then it is properly mixed with *Siye (Yeast)* and kept in a bamboo basket or plastic bucket for fermenting for one or two months. **Poro apong** is usually used during the special occasions like festival, social gathering, house construction, house opening ceremony, marriage ceremony or offer on the arrival of some guests as a gesture of hospitality and mark of respect. It is also useful during the religious and rituals performances. Therefore, it is available in every house for own family consumption as well as for other purposes. The squeezing parts of the apongs are also useful as food for the pig. It is also useful for hunting of rat and squirrel in the forests.

Nokyin Apong is brewed mainly from rice, millets and maize. There are special types of rice namely Amkel Ambin (red rice) and Ampu ambin (white rice) which are mainly used for preparation of Nokyin apong. Red rice is best for nokyin apong made from amkel rice is having more delicious and nutritious than that of the white one.

Table 2: Showing the pattern of Food Habit and Wine Consumption among the Padams as per the sample survey of Padam villages/Urban localities under East Siang District.

Sample Survey	No. of Sample Households	Food Habit (in %)		Wine Consumption (in %)			
		Veg.	Non-Veg.	Local	Foreign	Both	None
Bodak Village (rural)	15	-	15 (100)	-	-	15 (100)	15 (100)
Ayeng (rural)	15	3(20)	12(80)			15(100)	15(100)
Mebo (town)	10	2 (20)	08(80)			08(80)	02(20)
Ngopok (rural)	15	-	15(100)			12(80)	3(20)
Kiyit (rural)	15	-	15(100)			12(80)	3(20)
Borguli (rural)	10	01 (10)	09(90)			08(80)	02(20)
Motum (rural)	10	02 (20)	08(80)			08(80)	02(20)
Silluk (rural)	10	02 (20)	08(80)			08(80)	02(20)

Source: Field Survey (July, 2023).



From the above (Table.2) based on the household survey conducted in both rural and urban areas among the Padam, it is found that Padams are still maintaining their traditional food habits, It is noticed that the proportion of Padam people consuming non-vegetarian food is almost 100% in rural areas whereas it is 75% in urban areas. Although some of the family members in a particular household are found to be vegetarian mainly due to some religious restrictions/taboo or other ailments, it is not wide spread within the entire household as a whole.

In earlier days, the consumption of wine/liquor was a common practice among the Padams of Adi tribe. Before the non availability of the foreign wine or liquor, people were consumed basically the local apong (wine) purely made from rice and paddy husks and millets beer. But in the recent times they are hardly found to consume both the local and foreign wine. In certain cases, some people do not take wine mainly due to restriction of religious sanctity as some of the people have converted to Christianity. However, now days, it is seen that most of the people are found to use both the local and foreign wine due to easy availability of the resources.

3.7. Utensils used for cooking purposes

Cooking is done in many ways through pots of metals or non-metals by the Padams. Depending on the nature of places of habitations, Padam uses various types of utensils for cooking purposes. In early days, pots of clays or bamboo tubes were traditionally used for cooking purposes but in the modern day, metal pots or aluminum or brass are most common. Apart from the bamboo tubes, some banana leaves or wild leaves are also extensively used for cooking of food as it gives a very delicious taste of the food items. People living in the hilly regions are still practicing the bamboo tubes for cooking of food items. In fact, cooking of food in bamboo tubes gives a special kind of taste. Bamboo tubes are also used as the traditional pots for collecting and storing of water from the river.

IV. Objective of the Study

The present study has made an attempt to come with the following objectives:-

1. To study the existing food habit patterns and bio-cultural resources of the Padams in the region.
2. To assess the inter-link between the society and their economic pursuits in the region.

3. To understand people's perceptions about the environment in the region.
4. To examine the impact of modernisation on the traditional food habits culture of the Adi people in the region.

V. Data Base and Methods

The present study is solely based on primary source of data generated through household level with the help of a well structured questionnaire. The data related to food habit have been collected randomly from different Padam villages under East Siang District by interacting with the person's whose age is ranging from 40-50 years and above. A total of at least 30 respondents from different villages have been interviewed in order to collect the relevant information related to the present study.

Methodology involves the use of various statistical techniques to make the study more scientific and authentic. Sample design and simple percentage form the part of methodology. The data have been generated from the field survey with the help of sample design technique. As many as 8 villages have been randomly selected out of the 12 Padam villages to draw the required information related to the present study.

The data related to secondary are obtained from the government agencies, statistical hand book, publications, news papers, journals, magazines, periodicals etc. The data obtained from both primary and secondary sources have been processed and analysed using some statistical techniques for logical interpretation. Conclusions on the study area are drawn on the basis of the results derived from the data analysis and personal experience gathered through the observations during field study.

VI. Scope of the Study

The present study is of immense relevance as it is the first of its kind where the researcher attempts to highlight about the indigenous food habit patterns of Padam tribes of Adi. The Padams, through centuries, developed a distinct pattern of socio-cultural and magico-religious life. The present study is an exploration of the traditional history and rich cultural heritage of the Padams and identifying the basic social values that shaped the patterns of their social life.

It may also serve as feedback to planners, social scientists, researchers and administrators in the country in general and Arunachal Pradesh in particular for carrying out a model study in the field



of modern planning and developmental scheme particularly for the rural development in the district level and block level. The study can also facilitate in identifying such region which having more economic viability in terms of its bio-cultural resources in the state.

Thus, the Padams of Adis has a rich traditional food habits system in the society. As a matter of fact, in spite of the numerous traditional dishes in the Adi society, it is often seen that some new food items are made up by the people indigenously, and the reason may be due to modernization and influence of the neighbouring communities. In course of time, it is seen that some of the traditional food items are getting extinct gradually from the clutches of the society which shakes the identity of the Adi society.

VII. Conclusions

Every human society has a natural tendency to develop for its own comfort and security. In this process of development, the Padams in due course of time developed a distinct social behavior, both material and abstract. The socio-cultural lives of the Padams of Adi tribes are always revolving around the physical environment. Living amidst in the deep forest environment, nature has effectively been influenced the lifestyles of the Padams since the time immemorial.

The Padams have a unique pattern of food habits preparation and consumption in the society. Leafy vegetables are the most common form of indigenous food items amongst the Padams. Meats and fishes are also the most common forms of food items in the society. Most of the food items are not taken in raw form except certain items which are usually taken in raw form. Meat and fish items are usually taken either in roasting and boiling manner with zinger, chilli and other leafy spices to make more delicious in manner.

Agriculture is the main source of every food items in the Padam society. Shifting cultivation is the integral part of the tribal cultural life which has been deep rooted in the socio-cultural life since time immemorial. Collection of forest products, fishing and hunting are also an essential part of the traditional economy of the Padam of Adis in the region. Apart from agriculture, the activities of fishing and hunting are always been a supplementary part of foods.

Some of the indigenous plants available in the nearby surrounding environment are used as vegetables as well as medicinal purposes for healing of various ailments of people in the society.

But now, with increasing mental skills and more efficiency, they could develop more effective ways to produce various foods and drinks in the society. There is a high degree of dependence on the natural resources for the livelihood patterns of the people. Recently, the importance of the study on man and nature relationship has gained momentum globally. The economy and livelihood pattern of the tribal people is by and large based on the bio-resources.

It has been noticed that some of the traditional food items are getting extinct gradually from the clutches of the society which shakes the identity of the tribal society. At present, the effects of modernity, education system, rapid development in communication and infrastructural facilities can clearly be seen on their food habit system as they have started the use of modern edible oil, spices, onion, tea, sugar, and milk products etc in the society which were unknown to them earlier. There has been witnessed a vast changes in the traditional methods of food preparation and consumption in the societies. Particularly, the young boys and girls are gradually disappearing from the traditional food habit system. Instead of traditional food, they are very much fond of taking oil and spicy items from the market.

Now, people are getting special care about their dieting pattern for their better health. With the gradual improvements in economic conditions, peoples are maintaining their living standard and procuring foodstuffs and pulses from the market forgetting the importance and benefits of traditional food system and which resulted to change the traditional food habits of the people. Both the physical environment and cultural environment in the region are closely linked together in diverse ways and effectively influence the life of the people in the region. Thus, a tremendous impact and change have been observed in the present food habit patterns and lifestyle among the Padam in the society.

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