

## GRANDEUR OF FOOD IN AN ASSAMESE HINDU VILLAGE

**Monimugdha Bhuyan**<sup>1</sup> *Research Scholar, Department of North East India Studies, Assam Don Bosco University, Sonapur-782402, Assam, E-mail: monimugdbhuyan@gmail.com*

**Birinchi K. Medhi**<sup>2</sup>

*Formerly Professor, Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University, Gwahati-781014, Assam, E-mail: profbirinchimedhi@rediffmail.com*

### ABSTRACT

#### Article History

Received : 18 May 2020

Revised : 26 May 2020

Accepted : 16 July 2020

Published : 15 September 2020

#### Key words

Food habit, Assamese Hindus, Panbari, Assam, Rice Culture

Food is a basic requirement for human existence. Unlike other necessities the need of food consumption is recurrent. To acquire energy and nutrition for growth and continuation of life a person needs food several times a day. The capacity to consume food which has been provided by nature in wide varieties enabled man to survive even in uncongenial environments of this planet. The importance of food for human survival is more important than shelter and dress. Food is the alphabet of human's culture. Food habit of a society is indispensably related to its physical environment, mainstay, tradition, prescription and prohibition, beliefs and rituals and a number of culture traits which made it a culture complex in every society. Food habits should be studied from both psychological and socio-cultural standpoints. The present paper is based on the empirical data collected from an Assamese Hindu village, viz., Panbari of Lakhimpur district, Assam. The mainstay of these people is agriculture and they produce paddy as the principal crop. Rice is not only a food among them, but it is the expression of their life. Their culture can be termed as 'Rice Culture'. Rice is integrally related to their norms and values, material culture, crisis rites, folklore, beliefs and rituals and in almost all the dimensions of their life. In this paper a modest attempt has been made to depict the food habit of the Assamese Hindus of Panbari village and its rigid relation to some other dimensions of their culture.

Food is the basic requirement of man for existence. Food nourishes human body, ensures growth and accelerates reproduction providing energy for all human activities, for which it is more important than cloth or shelter in human life. Unlike the other

needs, necessity of food is recurrent, which man has to take again and again even in a single day. Food habit of a society is integrally related to a number of traits, and therefore, physical, economic, social, religious, psychological and intellectual dimensions of man are rigidly woven with food habit of a society. Norms and values of a community also play important role on the food habit of a population. Some varieties of plants and animals may be found in abundance in a particular area, but the inhabitants of the place may discard such flora and fauna from their list of food as the tradition of their society does not permit them to consume those. Food habit of a population always indispensably related to a number of cultural traits which invariably makes it a culture complex.

Anthropological study of food has a long history. The study of food got the attention of the anthropologists' right from the beginning of the discipline. Tylor (1865), (Morgan, 1877), Boas (1921), Firth (1934), Harris (1966, 1977, 1985, 1986) along with Ross (1978, 1987) provided many important contributions in the anthropological study of food. Rice has played a pivotal role in the cultural pattern of many societies from time immemorial. Many works has been done to trace the relation of rice and culture. *The Kheti* (1925), literally 'agriculture', is the first Assamese book written on agriculture. Some other noteworthy works among the tribes of North East India were done by Furer Haimendorf (1962, 1962), Majumdar (1980), Marak (2010, 2014). Studies on food among different communities of Assam were made by different scholars like Cantlie (1984), Medhi (1989), Gogoi (2006), Zaman (2011) and Gohain (2014).

Rice is the staple food for many cultures across the world. Ancient textual sources indicate that rice was a multipurpose food with a high social status and continues to be of value even today (Smith, 2006). Rice is not only staple food but also taken in different forms as luncheon by the innumerable people. To produce rice a particular physical environment is required and the people who are habituated to take rice as principal food, they invariably use rice in different contexts of life. The cultivation process of rice has shaped the landscape, culture and character of thousands of people all over the world (Gomez, 2011). In many of the Southeast Asian countries, rice is not only a food, but rice-centred agricultural life has given a deep influence on their society, economy, politics and ideological activities. Whenever rice is planted, festivals, traditions, rituals and languages celebrate its importance even those for whom rice is an everyday sight, and something magical, more spiritual, still radiates from depth of the green fields (Gomez, 2011). In North East India almost all the

communities produce rice as the principal crop and their cultures are mosaiced by the dimensions of rice. Nuclei of cultures of these communities including those of Assam are rice. In Assamese culture also one can see the aurora of rice which has depicted all the dimensions of life of this agriculturist community.

Assam is situated in the North East corner of India and it is the confluence of various races and tribes. The state is spread over an area of about 78438 sq km making it the 16<sup>th</sup> largest state in the country in terms of area. The state of Assam accounts for 31,205,576 persons as per the census of 2011, out of which 15,939,443 are male and 15,266,133 are female. Assam shares about 2.4 per cent of the country's total geographical area and provides shelter to 2.6 per cent population of India. Out of the total population of the state 86 per cent resides in rural areas and 14 per cent live in urban areas (The Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2014: 1).

Majority of the Assamese people are rural inhabitants and agriculture is their mainstay. The net cultivated area of Assam is 28.11 lakh hectares which is about 87.4 per cent of the total land available for agricultural cultivation. The soil, topography, rainfall and climate in general of the state are favourable for paddy cultivation which occupies 89 per cent of the net cropped areas (*The Economic Survey, Assam, 2014–15*: 3). As rice is the prime cultivated crop in Assam, the life ways of the Assamese people is also shaped by rice. The Assamese culture is sometimes called as '*Dhanya Sanskriti*' (Rice Culture) as the agriculture of Assam is overwhelmingly dominated by rice and finds reflections in all aspects of their culture (Bhagabati, 1990). Rice is intricately related to their social, economic, religious and other aspects of life. The maxims, folk tales, beliefs, rituals, taboo, status of a person and innumerable traits of the Assamese society are mosaiced by the various dimensions of paddy. Therefore rice is not only a crop or food for the Assamese people, but it stands for 'life' among them. Many festivals of Assam have been dedicated to rice and rice cultivation. The prime festival of Assam, Bihu, revolves around the whole cycle of rice cultivation. In modern era also rice has retained its pivotal importance in the Assamese society. Not only the culture of the peasants of Assam is dominated by rice, but the culture of non – agriculturist Assamese people is also shaped by paddy cultivation.

The present paper is based on the empirical data collected from one of very old and populous Assamese Hindu dominated village, viz., Panbari of Lakhimpur district,

which is situated on the North East corner of Assam. The village is located towards the western corner of the Lakhimpur district and falls under Narayanpur Development Block. The name of the Panbari village has a historic significance. During the Ahom kingdom, some villagers started cultivating betel vine leaf (*pan*), which was brought from Kamrup district. Around 1418 *saka* an official of Dihingia kingdom collected betel vine leaf from that village and offered it to the king. After taking the betel vine leaf the Dihingia king named that village as 'Panbaria' (Neog et al. 2013). With the changing time the name of the village also changed from Panbaria to Panbari, which literally means 'garden of betel vine'. The Panbari village is surrounded by various Assamese caste Hindu villages as well as tribal villages, principally inhabited by the Mishing and the Deori. The Sarjan village is situated towards its north while Bar-Deori village towards south. Eastern side is covered by Choudhapunia, Kamarbari and Tengapathar villages, while the western boundary is created by the Maridikrong River.

The inhabitants of Panbari village are Assamese caste Hindus. The Assamese castes found in the village are Brahman, Chutia, Hari, Kalita, Keot, and Koch. In the Census of India (Census, 1931: 211), Mullan opines: 'Caste in Assam Valley is not as elsewhere chiefly a functional division; it is really a racial division and functional castes are very few. This is due to the fact that many tasks, which in other parts of India are assigned to particular castes, are carried out in Assam by individual households. Men and women wash their own clothes without the help of a caste washer man. Excrement is lift on the ground so there is no need of a caste of sweepers. Men (except the Brahmans) shave themselves and cut their hair without the help of Barbers. Bamboo work is not caste bound and may be undertaken by anyone with the necessary skill. Both men and women can catch fish without objection for household consumption though not for sale. Further the specialist castes that exists (potters, blacksmiths, fishermen, weavers, silk rearers, etc.) are not tied as dependent serving families to individual land owning households but sell their wares, either at fixed price within the village or for what they can get in market. Most are part time cultivators'. In Assam, caste system is a flaccid system and untouchability is unheard here.

Agriculture in Assam is a common occupation which can be carried out by the members of any caste. Agriculture is the mainstay of the inhabitants of Panbari and they produce paddy as the principal crop. Rice is not only the principal food among them, but it is equivalent to their life. Their culture can be termed as 'Rice Culture'. Though some of the people of the villages are engaged in other occupations, they

are also directly or indirectly related to agricultural activities. The villagers cultivate only *Sali* (winter rice) rice and do not practice cultivation of *Abu* (autumn rice) or *Boro* (summer rice) rice. The inhabitants of Panbari are still depending on age old agricultural implements prevailing in the Assamese society from time immemorial. The chief implement used by the villagers for paddy cultivation is plough (*nangal*), which is made from wood adding an iron share. The *jumali* (yoke) is the integral implement of the plough which is placed in the shoulders of the bullocks and attached it to the plough. The leveller (*moi*) is another important agricultural implement which is used for levelling the agricultural fields after ploughing. The *kanchi* (sickle), the crescent shaped teethed blade which is made of iron, attached to a wooden handle, is used for reaping the fully grown crops. Except these some other implements like *biria* (carrying pole), *korona* (grain collector), hoe (*kor*), machete (*da*), *okhon* (separator), *jabaka* (garden rake), etc., are used to conduct different agricultural activities. Husking lever (*dhenki*) is part and parcel of day to day life among the inhabitants of rural Assamese society. In the husking lever mainly rice is husked and it is commonly found in every household of the village.

For rice cultivation animal, land, implements and man power are indispensable. Cattle play an important role in the rural Assamese society which is used in various agricultural activities like ploughing and leveling agricultural lands, to pull carts carrying paddy and for threshing paddy. In Panbari, ploughs are harnessed by the cattle which are the prime domesticated animal among them. In Assamese society, one's social status is often indicated by a proverb in terms of not owing cows. The proverb says, '*Jar nai garu, si sabatokoi saru*', which can be simply translated to 'He who does not possess cow is the lowest of all'.

Land is regarded as the most valuable object by the people of Panbari. According to the official records of Narayanpur Revenue Circle, the total land of Panbari is 2109 *bigha*, 19 *lecha*. Land can be divided into three principal categories, i.e., *Kheti mati*, *Bari mati* and *Jaladoba*. The land suitable for rice cultivation is called *Kheti mati*, the land for construction of residence is called *Bari mati* and the water logged low land not suitable for agriculture where community fishing is done is called *Jaladoba* (Bhuyan and Medhi, 2017). The measurement scale of land followed by the villagers of Panbari is as follows:

1 *nal* = 12 feet

1 *lecha* = 144 square feet or 1 square *nal*

20 *lecha* = 1 *katha* or 2880 square feet or 20 square *nal*

5 *katha* = 1 *bigha* or 14400 square feet or 100 square *nal*

4 *bigha* = 1 *pura* or 57600 square feet or 400 square *nal*

Among the Assamese in general the highest measurement of land is a *pura*. However, in practice they referred to the term *bigha* (1 acre = 3.025 *bigha*) to mean the size or possession of land.

Division of labour in the study society is based on gender and age. The adult males perform the hard works like sowing, ploughing, carrying the paddy, threshing, etc., while the women perform activities like transplanting and reaping. Small children helps their parents by proving them tea and luncheon in the agricultural fields, grazing the cattle, etc. Aged people are not actively involved in agricultural activities, but sometimes the old women also indirectly helps by cooking rice and preparing tea or luncheon for the family members working in the fields.

All the villagers of Panbari have direct or indirect relation to agriculture. At present many of the villagers are involved in various other occupations. Through they are directly not involved in active agricultural activities, they are indirectly involved in it. A person may do a job and gave his agricultural land to some fellow villagers to cultivate in *adhi* (share cropping), but he performs the agricultural rituals in his paddy fields and also at home. Agriculture is also related to prestige of a person. The person who has more agricultural land and gets more crops has higher social status than that of a person who has a small amount of agricultural land. A person who eats rice grown in his own lands throughout the year is considered prestigious than the others who has to buy it from others even for a small part of a year.

The Assamese people observe a good number of rites and rituals integral to paddy cultivation. As agriculture is the mainstay and paddy is the principal crop of the villagers of Panbari, they observe different rituals associated with rice cultivation. Each stage of rice production is started on an auspicious day which is followed by some specific rituals. Rituals are done on the first day of seed sowing (*guti sicha*), first day of transplantation (*goch lowa*), first harvesting of paddy (*ag lowa*), carrying the season's last crop to home (*lakhimi ana*) et al.

Rice cultivation is also integrally related to the house type and many other aspects of Assamese Hindu culture. An Assamese residential unit generally possesses a good number of houses used for different purposes. The courtyard (*chotal*) is an indispensable part of the dwelling unit and it is used for various agricultural activities.

The crops carried from the agricultural fields are kept in the courtyards for some days before storing it in proper place. The threshing of paddy is also done there and it is also used for drying the paddy. Making and repairing of agricultural implements are also done in the courtyard. The houses are built almost in the centre of the of the homestead compound keeping a front yard (*ag-chotal*) and a back yard (*pach-chotal*). The main house is known as *bar-ghar*, which is possessed more than one compartment where the household head and his children sleep and the valuable things are kept' (Medhi, 1989: 100). There is a popular Assamese proverb regarding the position of different section of a house, which is as follows: '*Pube bharal, pachime garal, uttare charu, dakbhine garu*'. This can be simply translated into English as 'To the East the granary, to the west the poultry cage, to the North the kitchen and to the South the cow-shed'.

The kitchen of the Assamese has a significant place in the socio-religious life. Locally it is known as *pak-ghar* or *randhani ghar*, which is not only considered as cooking space, but also a social space where entry of outsiders as well as distant relatives are forbidden. The concept of pollution is integrally related with the Assamese belief system and it is considered that if outsiders enter in to the *pak-ghar* the food becomes polluted (Zaman, 2011). No one enters the kitchen in the morning before bathing. A woman never enters the kitchen during her menstruation period. In such situations if she requires something from the kitchen then she sends young boys and girls who have not attained puberty because they are considered pure. The kitchen is divided into two parts: the cooking place (*akbalar caru*) and the dining room (*majiya ghar*). The term 'kitchen' (*pak-ghar*) is used in many contexts for the cooking place alone and the dining room is referred to as the 'fire room' (*jui sal*) or the tea room (*cah ghar*) by the virtue of the fire that is kept burning there so that the tea can be made during the day without the purification necessary for entry in to the cooking place' (Cantlie, 1984: 194). Kitchen in an Assamese society is generally built at the back of the house towards the northern direction.

A granary (*bharal*) is built in the front of the main dwelling house towards the east direction so that a person can have a look of his stored paddy when he wakes up in the morning. It is a pile house which is made on a raised platform of four to six feet high from the ground. The raised platform keeps the paddy dry without dampening and also saves from the rats and other pests. A granary is devoid of windows and possesses a single small front door. Almost in every household there is a cow-shed (*gohali*) which is also build in front of the main dwelling house. The villagers also

construct small houses as poultry-pen (*gara*), husking lever shed (*dhenki-sal*), shed for storing firewood (*kebari thowa ghar*) and a shed for weaving (*taatsalar ghar*).

Division of food among the Assamese can be made in to three classical categories on the basis of the mental effects they induce. These are *sattvik* (conducive to goodness), *rajasik* (conducive to passion) and *tamasik* (conducive to darkness and sloth). In general milk and milk products, rice, fruits, most vegetables, certain pulses (*magu* and *but*) and other cooling foods are *sattvik*, that is, they have property of inducing virtue and saintly habits; fish, meat, eggs, buffalo milk, onion, garlic, spices, certain pulses (*mati* and *masur*), honey and other hot foods are *rajasik*, that is they excite the system; alcohol, beef, pork, chilli and other very heating foods together with staple food are *tamasik*, that is, they tend to brutalize the character (Cantlie, 1984: 185).

Assamese food is also related with the concept of purity and pollution. 'The raw food is considered more pure than the cooked food whereas in general connotation of the term is that cooked food is aristocratic or higher order than the raw. In the rural context high caste people in Assam never accept cooked food from the persons below of his social hierarchical order and considered those foods as impure but there is no bar on acceptance of food if it is raw, though provided by lower social order' (Zaman, 2011).

Boiled rice (*bhat*) is the staple food of the Assamese Hindus of Panbari. 'The eating of boiled rice is considered a religious act and its preparation is carried out according to elaborate rules of purity' (Cantlie, 1984: 194). Boiled rice is generally taken with vegetable fries (*bhaji*), pulses (*dail*) or braised (*anja*). Fish is often eaten which is readily available in the ponds and nearby rivers. If a guest arrives then they are appeased with boiled rice along with fish or meat. Generally pigeons and duck meat are cooked which is readily available in their house.

Drinking tea is a part of the Assamese society. The Assamese Hindus of Panbari takes tea regularly at least three times a day. It is the next food item offered to the guest after areca nut with betel vine leaf. Tea is generally taken with homemade cakes or biscuits purchased from the village shops or nearby markets. Different types of cakes are prepared from rice flour by the villagers like *til pitha* (baked cake with sweetened sesame), *ghila pitha* – which is a small thick circular cake resembling a seed of *ghila* (*Entada pursaetha D.C.*), *tekeli mukhat dia* pitha (steamed cake with sugar,



pepper and coconut granules), *pani pitha* (thin circular cake), *chunga pitha* (rice cake made in bamboo stems), *narikal pitha* (baked cake with sweetened coconut granules), and *nimakhia pitha* (small thick salty circular cakes).

The inhabitants of Panbari also take different types of luncheon (*jalpan*) prepared from paddy in different time intervals. Generally an adult person takes boiled rice twice a day. In the morning luncheon prepared from paddy is taken as breakfast. During evening also luncheon is often eaten. If some guest arrives suddenly, they are also offered luncheon along with tea. Some of the luncheons prepared from paddy in the village are *chira* (flat rice), *muri* (puffed rice), *komal chaul* (soft rice), *bhaja chaul* (fried rice), *sandab* (flour of fried rice), *akhoi* (parched rice) *et al.* Sometimes *kecha pithaguri* (uncooked rice flour) and *bhoja pithaguri* (fried rice flour) are also taken. These luncheons are taken with hot milk or curd by adding jaggery or sugar in it.

Depiction of rice is conspicuous in Assamese folk literatures. If a person rebukes or scolds anyone saying ‘*Bhat* (rice) *ukali!*’, it means he/she will die soon. Scolding as ‘*Chuva khova*’ or ‘*Areba khova*’, means ‘a person who eats the remaining food after eating by anyone’. There are many Assamese proverbs where depiction of rice is remarkable. In a popular Assamese maxim ‘*Jar nai dhan, tar nai man*’, which means ‘he who has no paddy (produced in his own land) has no status in the society’ the importance of rice is prominent. Another common maxim is ‘*Bhat pale he mat*’, means ‘If you get rice (to eat), only then you can speak (you will get strength)’. ‘*Agate chaul katha, pachathe Hari katha*’, this proverb means, ‘Rice is the first priority, and then only you can utter the name of the god Hari’. It should be mentioned here that ‘*katha*’ in the first line of the maxim means a measurement of five kg of rice approximately, while the same word (with different spelling in Assamese language) in the second line means ‘tale’, integral to lord Hari. Again one proverb is ‘*Apadar bhat, nidanar mat*’, broadly means ‘Getting rice and sympathetic voice in distress (are always remarkable)’. ‘*Agyanik bhat dile chale bere chai, gyanijanakbhat dile talmurkoi khai*’, the meaning of the maxim is ‘A dull man observes wall and roof at the time of eating rice; but a wise man eats it putting his head downwards’.

There are a good number of Assamese folktales where different aspects of rice are attractively depicted. In the Bihu songs, the songs integral to the prime festival of the Assamese irrespective of caste and creed, we can trace the central place of rice. ‘*Tumi kari jaba rowani dawani, mai bai jam hal, tumi boi jaba phulamkoi gamocha, mai*

*pai dim sal*. The broad translation of the song is '(Oh beloved), you will transplant and reap (paddy), I will plough; you will weave decorative towel, I will install the handloom'.

From the foregoing discussion it is conspicuous that rice is indispensably related to numerous aspects of Assamese Hindu Culture. Land is the principal asset of Assamese Hindus and the land in which autumn rice (*sali* paddy) can be produced is the prized possession for them. In an Assamese proverb it is depicted like this: '*Mati kiniba maj khal, Chowali aniba mak bhal*' which means 'Buy a plot of land whose mid part is low, and marry a girl whose mother is good'. The significance of the proverb is that, a land whose middle part is low can keep water necessary for *Sali* cultivation; and if a mother is good in household and social duties, she can socialize her daughter into those activities.

Rice is not only a food but it is the carrying force of life. No ritual in the Assamese Hindu society is completed without the use of rice in different forms. All the Assamese rituals and festivals are adorned with different forms of rice. Some ritualistic drawings have to drawn in the rites like marriage, worshipping of some gods and goddesses with rice flour. The concept of fertility cult of the Assamese Hindus is invariably related to rice. When rice plant is standing with full grown seeds, it represents a woman; but when the seeds detach from the plant, it symbolize male persons. The Assamese Hindus propitiate goddess Lakshmi as the authority of rice and prosperity.

It has already been stated that rice is the integral part of the Assamese Hindus. Rice as food carries the meaning of happiness and hazards of the Assamese Hindu people. After the death of a person of the lineage a person has to avoid consuming rice for a certain period. A girl attending puberty also has to live in fasting for a few days during day time and only in evening she can take boiled rice with vegetables boiled with it. The *payasa*, i.e., soft (*lahi*) rice boiled in milk is a ritual food among them. It is also a sacred food offered in some of the rituals to the different deities. A hard sweet ball (*poka mithoi*) prepared by rice flour adding sugar, black pepper, etc., is also offered to some of the deities as sacred food. It should be noted here that most of the luncheon of the study people can be stored for a long period, even for one month or more. The Assamese women are part and parcel of paddy cultivation, and therefore to cope with the time, they prepare most of the luncheon which can be preserved for long period.

Assamese literatures, both folk and modern are mosaiced by the aspects of rice. There are plenty of maxims, folktales, folksongs, etc., which are mosaiced with innumerable dimensions of rice. The Assamese society has parity with the paddy cultivation. In the marriage the village women sings: *'Dhan pake Aghon, Biya pate Phagun; Kiya aideo kaichila, Biya nahao jivanat?* The broad meaning of this couplet is 'Paddy ripen in the month of *Aghon* (Mid November to Mid December), marriages are arranged in *Phagun* (Mid February to Mid March); why dear you told us that you will never marry? Due to the multifarious use of paddy fields, paddy, rice, implements and utensils integral to paddy in the socio cultural structure of the Assamese Hindus, their culture can be termed as rice culture.

### References

- Bhagabati, A. K. (1990). Social Structure and Agricultural Performance in Dolabari Irrigated Area of Sonipur District, Assam. *Geographical Review of India* 52(4): 71–79.
- Bhuyan, Monimugdha and Birinchi, K. Medhi. (2017). Aspects of Rice Culture among the Assamese Hindus in Two Rural Contexts of Assam. In Ranga Rajan Das ed. *Folklore in North East India*, 57–80. New Delhi: Lakshi Publishers & Distributors.
- Boas, Franz. (1921). *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl (Based on data collected by George Hunt)*, Thirty–Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1913 –1914 in two Parts– I and 2 1913–1914. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Cantlie, A. (1984). *The Assamese*. London and Dublin: Curzon Press.
- Das, Bharatchandra. (1925). *Kheti* (Agriculture), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Calcutta: Samya Press.
- Directorate of Census Operations Assam. (2014). *District Census Handbook – Lakhimpur*, 2014. Assam: Directorate of Census Operations Assam.
- Directorate of Economics and Statistics Guwahati. (2015). *Economic Survey Assam* (2014–15). Government of Assam: Planning and Development Department.
- Firth, Raymond. (1934). The Sociological Study of Native Diet. *Africa–Journal of the International African Institute* 7 (4).
- Furer–Haimendorf, C. Von. (1962). *The Apa Tanis and their Neighbours*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- . (1980). *A Himalayan Tribe: From Cattle to Cash*. California: University of California Press.
- Gogoi, N. K. (2006). *Continuity and Change among the Ahoms in Caste and Tribes of India Series – 9*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Gomez, K. A. (2001). *Rice the Grain of Culture in the Siam Society Lecture Series*. Bangkok: The Siam Society.

- Gohain, P. (2014). *Brahmaputra Upatyakar Sankritik Jibanat Dhan: Ati Adhyayan*. Ph.D. thesis [unpublished], Gauhati University.
- Harris, Marvin. (1966). The cultural ecology of India's sacred cattle *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 7.
- . (1977). *Cannibals and Kings*. United States: Random House.
- . (1985). *The Sacred Cow and the Abominable Pig: Riddles of Food and Culture*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Harris, M. and Eric B. Ross. (1978). How Beef Became King. *Psychology Today*. Vol. 12.
- . (1987). *Food and Evolution: Toward a theory of Human Food Habits*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Majumdar, D. N. (1980). *A Study of Culture Change in Two Garo Villages of Meghalaya*. Guwahati: Registrar, Gauhati University.
- Marak, Queenbala. (2010). *Food, Identity, and Difference— An Anthropological Study among the Garo*. Ph.D. thesis [unpublished], North Eastern Hill University, Shillong.
- . (2014). Much more than taste: The story of Kharchi and Its usage among the Garos. *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University 2014*: 53–66.
- Medhi, Birinchi, K. (1989). *The Assamese Sikhs: A Study on their Social Relations in a Rural Situation*. Ph.D. thesis [unpublished], Gauhati University.
- Morgan, L. H. (1877). *Ancient Society*. New York: Holt.
- Mullan. (1931). *The Census of India*, Vol.III, 113 (General).
- Neog, P., K. Saikia, H. Saikia, B. Bora, N. N. Goswami and Uma Kanta Bhuyan. (2013). Panbari Gaonar Itibritta. In Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan, ed. *Surujmukhi*, 29–32. Panbari: Panbari Nehru Samuhik Kendra.
- Smith, M.L. (2006). The Archaeology of Food Preference. *American Anthropologist*, 108(3): 480–493.
- Tylor, E.B. (1865). *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization*. London: John Murray.
- Zaman, A. (2011). Dimensions of the Assamese Food. *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University 2011*: 91–98.

**To cite this article:**

Monimugdha Bhuyan & Birinchi K. Medhi. Grandeur of Food an Assamese Hindu Village. *Man, Environment and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2020, pp. 57-68