

INDIGENOUS FOOD HABIT SYSTEM OF PADAM TRIBES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EAST SIANG DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract

This paper aims to concentrate on the native dietary habits of the Padams, a sub-tribe of the Adi people living in the East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. The present study is exclusively concentrated on the Padams of East Siang District. The paper also tries to analyze the traditional knowledge system related to the preservation and processing of their ethnic food system. Since ancient times, the Padams, one of the Adi group's sub-tribes, have lived in this region that is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species. Their extensive and long-standing traditional understanding of biological materials and resources is rooted in nature. They prepare and consume food in their civilization in a distinct manner. The terrain, climate, land type, and other factors that affect a community's eating and drinking habits are taken into account.

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. The Padams have reported the use of around forty species of wild edible plants. They consume roots, fruits, seeds, stems, leaves, and other plant materials. Whatever the type of food, it is not eaten raw, with the exception of a few green veggies, nuts, and roots. Apart from agriculture, the activities of fishing and hunting are always a supplementary part of food. The Padams consume some of the native plants that grow in the immediate vicinity as veggies. Some of them are even more effective than medications in curing the different illnesses that plague mankind.

*A few of the most often used native plants are Onger (*Zanthoxylum rhetsa*), Dhenkia saag (*Diplazium esculentum*), Marsang (*Spilanthus acmella*), Ongin (*Clerodendrum colebrookianum*), Rori (*Piper Cyslrestre*), Oyik (*Pougolia hirta*), Gaam (*Glochidion*), Nupuk (*Fagopyrum esenlentum*), Koyir (*Glochidion*), Tapar (Local Mushroom) (*Epicurius*), kopi (*Solanum melongene*), Anke (*Castonopsis hystrix*), Sirang (*Castonopsis indica*) etc. are seen to be a component of both diet and traditional treatments. The findings show that the Padam tribes are skilled at using their native biodiversity to create foods that are rich in culture, nutrition, and therapeutic properties.*

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

1. Introduction

One of the biogeographically richest areas in the Eastern Himalayas zone is Arunachal Pradesh, which is situated near the country's northeasternmost tip. The region's rich growth of diverse flora and fauna was primarily encouraged by the region's various topographical settings and climatic conditions. The variety in the physical characteristics is reflected by different tribes and sub-tribes with different dialects, religions, cultures,

and traditions. The physical environment's components, such as soils, climate, water, natural vegetation, and a variety of flora and animals, have a significant impact on the tribal people's patterns of subsistence.

The most active actors in the environment are humans. Since the beginning of his existence on Earth, he has derived all of his needs from the physical world. Since the beginning of time, man has had a deep-rooted

inclination toward food and drink in his daily routine and culture. He has been modifying his natural surroundings to fit his lifestyle and adapting to his surroundings. The developments of man's activities have a direct bearing on the environment. He has been contributing significantly to the environmental aspects of economic growth, social development, urbanization, and social-cultural life, among other processes. At all levels of development of man and his society, his attitude towards the environment has been different and thus, he maintains a mutual relationship with his surrounding environment in various ways to adjust or adapt himself to the environment.

One of the main Adis subgroups in the state of Arunachal Pradesh is the Padam tribe. They were formerly known as Bor Abors (**Mackenzie: 1979, p.33**). In order to preserve their ancient cultural legacy, they are primarily found living in the hills and valleys of East Siang District, Upper Siang, and Lower Dibang Valley Districts, as well as some isolated areas of Lohit District. 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. Every village has a Gam Bura, or village head, who oversees all Kebang (village meetings and discussions) activities. The purpose of

these kebangs is to resolve conflicts and other matters involving the nearby communities.

The Padams speak a gentle accent and are incredibly modest and lovely people. The Padams are rich in oral tradition and culture by virtue. They are renowned for defending their democratic society with great vigor. These are indigenous societies that have coexisted with biodiversity for thousands of years. They have an extremely sophisticated and specialized knowledge system for managing the region's resources. They employ a few traditional methods to safeguard the local plants and animals so that they can be used for a long time.

Damro Village in Upper Siang District is the ancestral place of the Padams where all the present Padams believed to have been migrated to other areas. Because many generations remember it as the area where their forefathers migrated, it is significant in oral recitation and everyday beliefs. In authentic Adi fashion, as is characteristic of Adi language usage, damro is composed of the two fundamental words 'Padam and Aro.' The group of people goes by Padam, and Aro signifies authenticity or uniqueness. Known for their ability to form strong communities and their formidable military strategies, the Padams were constantly searching for new territory to claim. (**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. For more than just meeting their fundamental necessities, the Padam people rely on the forest to support their way of life.

The Padams of Adis lead a distinct socio-cultural lifestyle that is in constant harmony with the natural world. Their community has developed a distinct set of eating and drinking customs that are influenced by various factors such as terrain, climate, land type, and other factors. They prepare and consume food in their society according to unique indigenous customs. With the exception of a few green vegetables, nuts, and roots, no food is consumed raw.

The primary source of all food and beverages in society has been agriculture. For the Padams, rice is the basic diet. It is extensively grown in plains, valleys, and hills. Other significant food items that are frequently consumed are green vegetables, almonds, bamboo shoots, maize, millet, tapioca, sweet potatoes, and meats from various fish and animals. You may make native drinks in the area with rice, tapioca, maize, and millet. There are several indigenous varieties of plants that are locally grown in the jhum field. Shifting cultivation, and rearing of pigs and poultry hold a very significant part of the traditional economic life in the society. Fishing hunting and gathering are other important activities of the Padams in the process of making their food. They also used plenty of indigenous wild plants as vegetables as well as medicines since time immemorial.

2. Study Area

The East Siang District has been selected as the study area for the present study. It is among the most picturesque areas of the state of Arunachal Pradesh, situated in the middle. The East Siang district office is located in Pasighat, one of the state's oldest towns. It is located in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, between 27030' and 29042' north latitude and 940 42' and 95035' east longitude, at 155 meters above mean sea level in the eastern foothills of the Himalayas. In June 2017, the Indian government incorporated Pasighat into the Smart Cities Mission Development program. The District is primarily rugged and hilly. However, it has plain areas at the foothills which form part of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam in the southern part.

The East Siang region spans a vast tract of alluvial land, approximately 15,484 sq. km (approximately), extending from the southern part of Namcha Barwa Peak up to the Brahmaputra Basins in the south, which border Assam. The region's total geographical area is approximately 4,005 sq. km (1546 sq miles). It is bordered, in that order, by the Lower Siang District on the south, the Dibang Valley District on the east, the Upper Siang District on the north, the West Siang District on the west, the Dhemaji and Dibrugarh Districts of Assam on the south-east.

According to the 2011 census, there were 99,214 people living in the District; 27,635 of them were urban and 71,579 were rural. The district contains roughly 19,107 homes (6,189 urban and 12,918 rural). As a result, it is ranked 615th in India. The population density of the district is 27 people per square kilometer. With 962

girls for every 1000 males, it had a 13.3% population growth rate between 2001 and 2011. For administrative purposes, the district is further divided into 15 Tehsils/Blocks/Community Development Blocks (C.D. Blocks). Essentially, it is made up of six circles—Mebo, Namsing, Sille-Oyan, Pasihat, Bilat, and Ruksin—and 75 settlements. The study area map is displayed in Figure No. 1. (Secured).

3. Discussion

3.1 Indigenous food habit items of Padams

The East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh is home to several sub-tribes of the ethnic Adi community, and it is a place rich in cultural legacy. These communities have practiced diverse dietary customs, festivals, dialects, religious activities, ceremonies, and rituals in this area since prehistoric times. Food habit patterns are one of the cultural identities of any tribal community in the world. The structure of the food system in tribal society is multifarious in form. Understanding the tribal food system is crucial to understanding how a community and its people are shaped. As a result, its study closes the knowledge gap regarding the tribe's customs, past, and evolving cultural practices. Food is one of the basic needs of every living being for their

ultimate survival on this earth's surface. Besides their biological importance, food habit is also a symbol of human cultural and social identity (Boro, Research Scholar P-69/-).

The Padams have some unique indigenous dishes that are prepared and consumed by the methods of their own traditional way. They prepare some special food items during different occasions and their daily diet as well as commonly taken items. The Padams love to eat some native leaves from a variety of plants as veggies. The native green leafy vegetables that grow in the Padam areas are also a good source of vitamins and proteins that are essential for healthy health. Some of them, which are preserved with extra care, are even more effective than medications at curing specific types of illnesses. With the exception of a few green vegetables, nuts, and roots, no food is consumed raw.

The Padams love to eat various green leafy vegetables and fruits which are grown wild in jungles and some of them are cultivated in their own home and field. They used to collect and gather various kinds of fruits, tubers, flowers, and leafy vegetables from the nearby surrounding environment. Table 1 lists a few native plants that are both utilized medicinally and as vegetables:

Table 1: a list of the native vegetation that the Padams consume.

| Sl. No | Name of items and Plants | Scientific Name | Utilizing 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 campetris</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. | Omir (Papaya) | <i>Carica papaya</i> | Fruits and flower | Boiled |
| 19. | Par(White Gourd) | <i>Benincasa hispida</i> | Fruits | Boiled |
| 20. | Makung(Cucumber) | <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

For the Padams, rice is the basic diet. It is extensively grown in plains, valleys, and hills. Rice being cultivated over the hills and valleys and jhum fields is 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), and 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 millet such as **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 a 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 with salt, chillis, ginger, and spices of bamboo shoots. Sometimes, lunch is taken lightly with rice cake (locally setting) wrapped in jungle leaves 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 prepared during local festivals and other special occasions like social gatherings, marriage ceremonies, ritual ceremonies, agricultural rituals birthday ceremonies, etc. In addition to rice, additional essential foods include green vegetables, almonds, bamboo shoots, seeds, maize, millet, tapioca, and sweet potatoes. You may make native drinks in the area with rice, tapioca, maize, and millet.

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 NGOTAR is very simple. It is made from raw fish. After fishing from the riverside, the selected fishes like *Sepung or Garyong* particularly white

small scads fishes are systematically wrapped and arranged in a traditional bamboo tray and dried over the sun's heat at least for a period of nearly two weeks or a month. After it is properly dried, it is stored in a platform near the fireplace for future use during a time of crisis. It is considered to be a good appetizer for diet and gives a delicious taste without which the Padams cannot eat food. Sometimes, it is boiled 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 are 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 used. So, NGOTAR is available in every house of the Padams throughout the season. Due to its good appetizer and delicious 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 in which these insects used to come and appear 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 costs 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 give 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 that is available in the riverside along the hilly region. It is one of the special food items of the Padams. It is black and brown in color. It is poisonous and acidic in its taste. The hot and acidic taste is the main crazy part of these insects. It is a good appetizer of food due to its hot and acidic 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 affect health.

The effect of its acid on human health is very dangerous and may cause the person epilepsy permanently once and for all. If the person is unlucky then he or she will consume the poisonous one and may face health problems. Not only that sometimes if the acid of these insects enters the eye of a person, it causes 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 shoots. It is seasonal in nature and found abundant during the 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 riverside. The rate of one handful of taari costs 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 animal of the Adis which has a social and economic value in the society. It is useful in every occasion like festivals, social gatherings, merry-making ceremonies, and ritual ceremonies. The meats of Mithun and pork are the favorite items of the 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, rats, rabbits, and wild pigeons through the 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

The Padams of Adi have their own customs for preparing and consuming food in their civilization, much like any other tribe. Methods of food preparation are varied according to time and season. During festivals and other special occasions, the process of food preparation is quite different from the normal way. With the exception of a few green vegetables, nuts, and roots, no food is consumed raw. Some of the traditional techniques that the Adis frequently employ for preparing and consuming food are listed below:

Boiling: For the Padams, it is the most typical way to prepare and eat meals. Typically, boiling foods include rice, corn, millet, veggies, meat, and fish. The curry ingredients are combined and then cooked in a pot with salt and chiles. To improve the flavor, native spices like ginger, black pepper, and bamboo shoots are occasionally used. Traditionally, there is no consumption of edible oils such as mustard oil.

Smoked: The Padams have been using these traditional methods since ancient times, and they are the greatest. Meats and seafood are typically the primary products to be smoked. The Padam people have a strong fondness for smoked fish and meats. In addition to being regarded as excellent cuisine, it also has a high economic value in the community. Typically, the smoked goods are stored in a basket that hangs from the house's roof or on a bamboo tray over the fireplace.

Hunting and fishing are two other sources of meat and fish in addition to farmed animals. In the society, both individual and communal hunting systems are still common.

Animals such as Mithun, Cow, Buffalo, pig, goat, dog, etc. are slaughtered during festivals and ceremonial performances. During festival occasions, people gather enormous amounts of meat and fish, smoke them over a fire for two or three days, and then store them for later use during a period of famine. Even the pigs' oily parts are stored for three to four years in order to be used as glycerine, medications, and other products.

Roasting: Another significant traditional way that the Padams prepare and consume food is roasting. Fish and meat, whether fresh or dried, can occasionally be eaten by simply roasting or burning them over a fire. Since the roasted item imparts a distinct flavor and distinctive delicacy, maize and other wild roots and shoots of some plants are typically consumed in the same manner. The roasted seafood and meats are typically consumed with regional beverages. To enhance the flavor of the roasted foods, salt, and chilies are also always added.

Porridge (Paste): The Padams have been using porridge or paste as a cooking method since ancient times. This method involves grinding some cereals into a powder and heating them with water until they form a thick paste or dough. It is occasionally wrapped in banana leaves and burned for a predetermined amount of time in ashes and charcoal. Sometimes the paste items are boiled with other foods like rice, meat, fish, vegetables, etc. before being consumed.

3.5. Food preparation during the Festivals

Food and other items preparation for the celebration is not all that different from regular preparation. The only distinction is in how it is quantified. A festival is an extremely unique occasion where a lot of food, including meats, seafood, and beverages, is consumed by the crowd. Typically, sacrifices are made of fish, pigs, cows, mithun, and other animals. Typically, meats are consumed with apongs or regional wines. Some are dried or smoked over the fire, and then they are kept for later use by hanging them from the house's roof in a basket known as a beyen.

Numerous festivals of the Padams of Adis are observed in accordance with customs and traditions, during which various animals are prepared and sacrificed. These festivals are either directly or indirectly related to agriculture, socioreligious, etc. These kinds of annual meat-related local festivities include Aran, Etor, and Solung. Prior to the arrival of this Aran and Etor celebration, the villagers would typically go hunting in groups and on their own, spending a week or longer in the jungle to get meat.

In order to keep everyone entertained, both participants and spectators are given food, meats, and beverages over the festival days. However, occasionally, people are also kept under taboo from consuming specific foods following particular household rituals, even when there is no such prohibition when participating. The Padams' socio-religious and cultural life revolves around the observance of taboos.

3.6. Preparation of Local recipes and drinks

The Padams make a wide range of dishes and beverages. They specialize in creating regional cocktails, especially for women. The Padam people's main food items are sweet potatoes, tapioca, maize, millet, and several types of rice. Additional untamed veggies, bamboo shoots, herbs, and shrubs serve as primary ingredients for cooking. In addition to the recipes for meals listed above, there are other types of drinks that can be classified as recipes when male groups gather together, two or three women are typically hired to prepare and serve the traditional drinks, which are made from rice and millets. Meating meat with regional beverages and meals is especially frequent among the Padams during the farming season or when they are engaged in communal chores. Typically, individuals pack prepared food in bags wrapped in wild leaves for their midday meal, which they occasionally consume with regional beverages.

Types of local drinks

Locally, the native beverages of the Padams are referred to as 'Apong.' With roasted and smoked meat and fish, it is the most popular and

delectable drink. There are two varieties of regional Apongs that Padams make. They are **poro apong** and **nokyin apong**.

The basic ingredients for **poro apong** are cooked rice and correctly burned paddy husk. **Siye (yeast)** is then added, and the mixture is stored in a plastic bucket or bamboo basket for a month or two to ferment. **Poro apong** is typically served as a sign of hospitality and respect at special events including festivals, social gatherings, house construction, house opening ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, or when guests arrive. It is also helpful when performing religious rites and ceremonies. For this reason, it is available in every home for use by the owner's family in addition to other uses. The pig can also benefit from the apongs' squeezing sections as food. It is especially helpful for woodland rat and squirrel hunting.

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

Table 2: Showing the pattern of Food Habits 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).

The Padam people continue to follow their traditional eating habits, as evidenced by above Table 2. Based on household surveys conducted among the Padam in both rural and urban areas, it is observed that the proportion of Padam people who consume non-vegetarian food is almost 100% in rural areas and 75% in urban areas. It is not common for the entire household as a whole for family members to be vegetarian, even when some of them are primarily because of religious prohibitions, taboos, or other health issues.

Wine and liquor usage were customary among the Padams of the Adi tribe in the past. Before the non-

availability of foreign wine or liquor, people consumed basically the local apong (wine) purely made from rice and paddy husks and millet beer. However, they have become less common consumers of both domestic and imported wine in recent years. 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, nowadays, it is seen that most people are found to use both local and foreign wine due to the easy availability of the resources.

3.7. Utensils used for cooking purposes

The Padams cook in a variety of ways using pots made of metal or non-metal. Padam employs a variety of tools for cooking, depending on the sort of area of habitation. In the past, cooking was typically done in clay or bamboo tubes, but in the present era, metal pots made of brass or aluminum are more popular. In addition to bamboo tubes, food is also frequently cooked using banana or wild leaf blends, which enhance the flavor of the food. It is still common for people who live in hilly areas to prepare food using bamboo tubes. Food cooked in bamboo tubes actually has a unique flavor. Traditional pots for gathering and storing river water are also made of bamboo tubes.

4. Objective of the Study

The present study has made an attempt to come up 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 interlink between the society and their economic pursuits in the region.
3. To understand people's perceptions about the environment in the region.
4. to investigate how modernization has affected the Adi people's traditional eating customs in the area.

5. Data Base and Methods

The primary source of data used in this study was generated at the home level using a well-structured questionnaire. The data relating to food habits have been collected randomly from different Padam villages under

East Siang District by interacting with the persons whose ages range 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.

Utilizing a variety of statistical approaches is part of the methodology, which adds credibility and science to the study. A basic percentage and sample design make up the approach. The sample design technique was utilized to generate the data from the field survey. 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 relating to secondary are obtained from government agencies, statistical handbooks, publications, newspapers, journals, magazines, periodicals, etc. For a logical interpretation, the data from primary and secondary sources have been processed and analyzed using a few statistical approaches. Based on the findings of the data analysis and firsthand knowledge acquired from field observations, conclusions are made about the research region.

6. Scope of the Study

Because this is the first study of its sort to attempt to emphasize the native eating habits of the Adi tribes of Padam, it is extremely relevant. The Padams, through centuries, developed a distinct pattern of socio-cultural and magico-religious life. The goal of this study is to discover the fundamental social ideals that influenced the social patterns of the Padams by exploring

their rich cultural heritage and traditional history.

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 schemes, particularly for the rural development in the district level and block level. The study can also facilitate in identifying such regions which having more economic viability in terms of their bio-cultural resources in the state.

Thus, the Padams of Adis have 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 the influence of the neighboring communities. In the course of time, it is seen that some of the traditional food items are becoming extinct gradually from the clutches of the society which shakes the identity of the Adi society.

7. 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 physical environment is the center of the Padams of Adi tribes' sociocultural existence. Since the beginning of time, the Padams have effectively been influenced by nature, living in the middle of a dense forest.

The preparation and consumption of meals within the Padam community follow a distinct pattern. Leafy vegetables are the most common form of indigenous food items amongst the Padams. Meats and fish 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 in a roasting and boiling manner with zinger, chili, and other leafy spices to make them more delicious in manner.

In the Padam community, agriculture is the primary source of all food commodities. Since the beginning of time, shifting cultivation has been an essential component of tribal culture, which is deeply ingrained in socio-cultural life. Hunting, fishing, and forest product collection are also vital components of the Padam of Adis region's traditional economy. Apart from agriculture, the activities of fishing and hunting are always been a supplementary part of food.

Certain native plants found in the immediate vicinity are utilized both as medicinal remedies and as veggies to treat a range of illnesses among the populace. However, they could now create more efficient methods of producing different foods and beverages for the population thanks to their improved mental abilities and increased productivity. The people's patterns of livelihood are heavily reliant on the natural resources. The value of researching the interaction between humans and the environment

has grown recently on a global scale. The economy & livelihood pattern of the tribal people is by and large based on bio-resources.

It has been noticed that some of the traditional food items are becoming extinct gradually from the clutches of the society which shakes the identity of the tribal society. At present, the effects of modernity, the education system, rapid development in communication and infrastructural facilities can clearly be seen in 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. The customary practices of food preparation and consumption in various communities have undergone significant transformations. The old dietary habit pattern is increasingly fading, especially for younger boys and girls. They really enjoy grabbing oil and spicy products from the market in place of regular meals.

People are now receiving extra attention about their eating habits in order to improve their health. As economic situations gradually improve, people are preserving their level of life and buying groceries and pulses from the market, disregarding the value and advantages of the traditional food system, which has led to a shift in people's traditional eating habits. The region's physical environment and cultural environment are intimately intertwined in many ways and have a significant impact on the quality of life for its residents. As a result, significant changes in the

Padam community's current dietary habits and way of life have been noted.

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