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TRADITIONAL ORAL CULTURE OF INDIA: RELEVANCE OF ITS STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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Editor

Dr. Sajmina Akhtar

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Layout

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Kareng Offset Press

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Editorial

Oral traditions form an integral part of India's cultural legacy, serving as a dynamic medium through which history, folklore, customs, collective memory and values have been preserved and transmitted across generations. In a diverse land like India, oral culture manifests in myriad forms like epics, folktales, ballads, songs, proverbs, or indigenous rituals. From the epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which were orally transmitted for generations before being documented to the folk songs, ballads, proverbs, and myths passed down by rural communities, oral culture has been an enduring form of storytelling, education, and identity construction. These traditions not only reflect the socio-cultural fabric of the regions they emerge from, but also offer invaluable insights into the collective memory of people worldwide.

The National Seminar on *Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of Its Study in Contemporary Times*, organized by the Department of History and Department of English in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Khowang College, and sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), provided a meaningful platform for scholars, researchers, and academicians from across the country to engage in stimulating discussions on this vital subject. The Seminar held on the 11th and 12th of February 2025, fostered an enriching exchange of ideas, highlighting both the enduring significance of oral traditions and the challenges they face in the contemporary context.

The proceedings of this seminar present a collection of thought-provoking papers that explore the multifaceted dimensions of oral culture. The contributors have meticulously examined various forms of oral traditions, from folk songs and storytelling practices to indigenous knowledge systems and oral histories. The papers examine the role of oral culture in shaping regional identities, preserving endangered languages, and offering alternative perspectives on mainstream historical narratives. A recurring theme in the deliberations was the vulnerability of oral traditions in the face of globalization, digital transformation, and socio-cultural changes. Yet, the seminar also highlighted the resilience of these traditions, which continue to adapt and thrive in contemporary settings through new platforms such as digital archives, community-driven initiatives, and academic documentation.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to ICSSR for their generous support in making this seminar possible. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the esteemed Keynote Speaker, Resource Persons, Paper Presenters, and participants whose scholarly contributions enriched the discussions of four technical sessions. The dedication and hard work of the organizing committee, faculty members, and students of Khowang College deserve special mention for their whole coordination and commitment in ensuring the success of the event.

It is our hope that this volume of proceedings will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, academicians, and cultural enthusiasts, inspiring further exploration and preservation of India's rich oral heritage.

Dr. Sajmina Akhtar

Convener

Seminar Organizing Committee

Khowang College

Welcome Address

Good morning everybody. We deem it a great privilege to welcome you all to the ICSSR sponsored National Seminar on *Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of Its Study in Contemporary Times* being held at Khowang College. Though it is not an easy task to organise such a seminar, yet we try our utmost to please you.

The concept of culture refers to social components which include knowledge, belief, art, laws, customs and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. Culture is indispensable in understanding the nature of society. It is communicated from one generation to the next which is accumulating in nature. Oral culture means verbal communication among people and societies with dissimilar cultures. It involves intergenerational cultural transmission of values, attitudes and beliefs by word of mouth. Knowledge of our Indian culture has been hoarded and maintained in oral form long before print media was invented. This knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next through speech or song and may include folktales, ballads, chants, prose or poetry. Thus, it is possible for a society to transmit cultural traits across generations without a writing system.

Oral culture has been an integral part of Indian Society for centuries with stories, songs and legends passed down through generations by word of mouth. These traditions not only provide a window into India's rich cultural heritage, but also offer valuable insights into the traditional norms and values of society related to tools and techniques of agriculture, midwifery, ecological knowledge, traditional medicine, celestial navigation, craft skills, climate and many other subjects. The NEP

2020 has also given impetus on the inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a crucial element of Indian education with “a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions”. In the contemporary era characterized by rapid advancements in fields such as Nanotechnology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), the amalgamation of IKS with mainstream education is like infusing timeless wisdom into a modern package. In such a situation, we should organize seminars, workshops, research work and educational initiatives, community involvement, awareness programmes through which the oral cultures of India could be explored and documented for the benefit of the society.

In contemporary times, the study of traditional oral culture is more relevant than ever. As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world, we need to draw our ancestors to inform our decisions and shape our future.

The main objective of the proposed national seminar is to trace out the rich repository of oral cultures of diverse ethnic communities and to acquire and focus on a comprehensive knowledge of oral cultures of India. This seminar brings together scholars, researchers, and practitioners to share their expertise and perspectives on the importance of traditional oral culture in India. It is our sincere hope that your active participation, interaction and high level academic discussion during these two days, will definitely help in realizing the objectives of the Seminar and pave new ideas, new collaborations and renewed appreciations for the rich cultural heritage of India.

Once again, I on behalf of Khowang College family welcome you all to this national seminar in particular and Khowang College in general and look forward to engage with you in the discussions that follow. With these words I conclude my welcome speech.

Thank you,

Dr. Trailokya Dehingia
Principal & Chairperson
Seminar Organizing Committee
Khowang College

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– KEYNOTE –

TRADITIONAL ORAL CULTURE OF INDIA: RELEVANCE OF ITS STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

It's a great pleasure to have invitation from Hon'ble Principal for presenting a Keynote address at this ICSSR sponsored National Seminar on "Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of its study in contemporary times" –the topic choose by the seminar organiser is now found to have been accelerating torrential importance in New India which is basically characterised by connecting people along with technological interventions at length.

Prime interfacing issue is traditional oral culture and the modern culture –is it traditional oral culture wrapped with modern culture and both are persisting juxtaposely? Is it an event of continuity of traditional oral culture folded within modern culture? To get the answers we have to look back to history even pre-history in terms of palaeo-culture to see how continuity getting goes forward to comparatively advance culture in course of times.

At the onset, when pre-human became Human, *Homo erectus* started journey towards *Homo sapiens sapiens* in the Palaeolithic intervals (Gunj, Mindel, Riss, Worm) of Ice age in Europe and pluvial age in Asia and Africa started interfacing with the extreme situations for their survival, and stone age culture was born. At that time *Pithecanthropus*, *Sinanthropus* and *Dryopithecus* and such many others ruled over the globe, who were said to be the early ancestors of culture creators, the makers of lithic tools, by applying lithic techniques for their living habitable.

They made tools like Handaxe, Cleaver, Chopper, Knife etc by applying lithic technologies like block on block techniques,

flake techniques to convert wild stones or bones into workable tools to make the given situation comfortable. Thus, wrapping of primitive technology pushed culture forward to the advance era. And it was continued. As a result, same primitive stone tools or bone tools form was found in the advanced stages of culture like microliths of Mesolithic period or agriculture in Neolithic period and even Bronze tools of Chalcolithic period also. Lithic tools were also continued with different metal tools and techniques of the advance stages of culture.

At that time knowledge of making tools was disseminating by kinesics or gestures and transmitted orally with sounds only among the mates. No word was used as medium of communication. Later words came and added as a medium of propagation of knowledge, appeared as a verbal oral culture, but not in written form. The written transmission came when history was appeared in the scene.

Yes, the transmission of culture through different stages since the remote past is the rule. In fact Culture – non-verbal oral or verbal oral – whatever, don't have any existence by any chance without people. People without culture and culture without people are misnomer. In fact, people are the carrier of culture with time and space. And so, with people, culture moves forward and transgresses the boundary of era. As a result, one can find existence of yesteryears culture as the base culture of the present times culture. What is found is that base culture has been modified and goes forward to the modern culture of present times, wrapped with the advance culture after maximising modifications.

You see, for example - Agriculture. Agriculture is a lithic traditional base culture among others, of human civilisation, and its technology was transmitted orally to the next cultural stage. It is now highly mechanised after massive modifications of technology. ISRO plays an important role to disseminate hi-tech knowledge of agriculture by its satellite set-up. The satellite set-up also conducts now communication process at large which was once, at the remote dawn, only by non-verbal sounds, kinesics and cave art.

What is found is that songs and dances are now no longer only oral and Gurumukhi, instead, it is now scripted following structured notations, and involved in widely mechanised transmissions by improved means of communication system. My Ph.D and D.Litt research work on cultural communication. I observed how traditional oral culture of Bauls, an esoteric mendicant group of people living outskirts of rural habitats by begging with songs learnt from their Guru preceptors orally having no structured scripts or notation. But they become transformed into modern professional singer group with structured notations of music and songs. They are presenting their songs with modern instruments. But they still practice traditional dresses and ornaments, and other religious practices.

Again, if you have any interest in the audio-visual advertisements of commercial houses you will find how traditional oral cultural traits

in the form of music and tunes they use to cater their products through satellite based modern media of communication like Radio, TV, Cinema and Video clippings of varied social media. In Govt. level particularly health dept. takes this advantage of transmission of this traditional oral culture with high-tech technologies to cater their different programmes among mass, and their success rate is very high. And even in case of medical sciences it is, at the same time, also seen the modern form treatment tools like MT and others using satellite tech for rapid and successful transmission.

In this way, illustrations can be drawn more where one can see traditional oral culture exists in each and every steps of present way of life irrespective of society and culture across the globe, even after its massive modernisation by modern hi-techs means. And so it's obvious and essential to study traditional oral culture at length to trace out the base of present day high-tech culture, and also to understand continuity of tradition of civilisation.

And at last, I must say, not an exaggeration, it's a good topic for research to be done by meticulous trait analysis of culture – the products of man, at length, and see how traditional oral culture exists latently as base-culture of the culture at present times, and finally, of course, to trace out the continuity of tradition in the passage of glorious history of human civilisation .

Dr. Manas Ray, Ph.D., D.Litt.
Former Professor of Cultural
Anthropology,
Former Head, Department of
Anthropology & Mass Communications,
Visva Bharati University
Santiniketan

**POI DUNSI FESTIVAL:
A NEXUS OF IDENTITY, MEMORY AND CULTURAL
RESILIENCE AMONG TAI BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES IN ASSAM**

Anindita Das

Abstract

Poi Dunsì Festival is a fascinating celebration deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the Tai Buddhist communities living in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The five Tai Buddhist tribes living in Assam such as Phake, Man Tai (Aiton), Khamyang, Khamti and Turung celebrate this festival together at the Kaloni Buddhist monastery in Karbi Anglong district on the full moon of the month of March (Fagun). This study unveils how oral traditions surrounding the festival serve as vessels for cultural preservation and identity formation. Participants' narratives reveal the festival's evolution from its origins to its present-day celebration during the full moon day of the month of March (Phagun) highlighting its role in maintaining Buddhist spiritual practices and strengthening inter-tribal bonds. The study draws upon extensive oral testimonies supplemented by archival research, including monastery records and historical photographs, to document how stories about the monastery and its sacred Buddhist statues are transmitted across generations. Analysis of these oral accounts demonstrates that the Poi Dunsì Festival functions not merely as a religious observance but as a dynamic space where cultural memory is actively preserved and reconstructed through storytelling, ritual performance, and community gathering. This research contributes to our understanding of how oral traditions in the Tai Buddhist communities of Assam operate as mechanisms for cultural resilience and identity maintenance in contemporary Northeast India, while also providing valuable documentation of previously unrecorded oral histories related to this significant festival.

Keywords: *Tai, oral history, Buddhism, vihara, festival.*

Introduction

Poi Dunsì or *Poi Nunsì Tapang* is a festival celebrated by the Tai Buddhist communities of Assam. Assam, a land of diversity, home to numerous ethnic groups, tribes, and communities, each with their own distinct language, customs, and cultural traditions. The Tai people represent a significant indigenous community within Assam's diverse ethnic landscape, embodying a complex interplay between historical heritage and contemporary identity. Their presence in Assam demonstrates a continuity of cultural, where inherited traditions and communal belonging intersect with present-day social dynamics.

The historical narrative of Tai communities presents an intriguing epistemological challenge, particularly in understanding their migration patterns and cultural evolution. This complexity stems

from the considerable temporal and geographical gaps in their historical record, with oral traditions and collective memory serve as primary sources of historical knowledge. Their story illuminates the intricate relationship between historical documentation, cultural memory, and community identity formation in the context of indigenous populations in Northeast India. Oral history studies explore a continuum between memory, history and identity. Oral history studies explore a continuum between memory, history and identity. Communities attempt to establish identities between their physical settlement and cultural origins, by sharing knowledge of their past through collective memory. This phenomenon reveals how migration shapes socio-cultural-political narratives, allowing communities to

simultaneously inhabit new geographical spaces while also striving to maintain profound connections with their ancestral homelands, even if they are disconnected.

In Assam, six Tai communities found, including the Ahom, Aiton (man Tai speaking), Khamyang, Khamti, Phake and Turung. The majority these communities are located in the districts of Upper Assam such as Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Charaideu, Jorhat, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong etc. Each community arrived at a different period in time. There were two main Tai migration waves in Assam. The first wave of Ahoms migrated to Assam in 1228 for political reasons, led by Prince Suu-ka-faa of Mogaung, an old Tai Kingdom of the Tai Mao people, located near Ruili, which is now part of China's Yunnan Province¹. They entered Assam by crossing the Patkai Hills. The Ahoms arrived as conquerors and dominated the Brahmaputra Valley for six hundred years (1228–1826 AD) until Assam was annexed by the British alongside the Treaty of Yandaboo. The ongoing persecution by Alongphra, the monarch of the Burmese Konbong Dynasty, led several minor Tai populations to migrate in various batches into the Ahom Kingdom, forming the second migration wave². The Phake, Aiton, Khamyang, Khamti and Turung groups were part of this subsequent wave.

In 1891, E.T. Dalton(1872)³ and H.H. Risely(1891) both concluded that the Ahoms,

descendants of a proud Shans race, had degenerated into superstitious, backward and apathetic Assamese. Almost immediately, the colonial census makers, taking stock of the new outlook, deemed the Ahom as a 'Semi-Hinduaized aboriginal group of Assamese.'⁴ All of the Tai communities in Assam except Ahoms, adhere to the Theravada branch of Buddhism. Theravada is the form of Buddhism that dominates the religious life of many communities. The concept of Theravada as the religion of a community, ethnic group, or even nationality is a relatively recent development⁵. There are similarities in the customs and festivals of all the ethnic groups due to their following the same religion. Among all the celebrations *Poi Dun Si* is the most common.

To study the *Poi Dumsi* festival of Tai Buddhist people in Assam, both primary and secondary sources were collected. The Primary sources are primarily relied on the personal interviews, attending the festivals of Tai Buddhist people celebrated in their villages, try to know their day to day activities in different times, field visits and archival sources. For secondary sources different books about the Tai Buddhist communities, scholarly articles, different thesis related to the culture, history and religion of Tai people in Assam, newspapers, storybooks, souvenir, monastic records were used. This study employs an integrated approach that combines oral studies with historical analysis.

¹ Phukan J. N. and Phukan G. 2009. The tai and the Tais of North East India. *Indian Journal of Tai Studies*, Vol- IX, Institute of Tai Studies and Research Moranhat, Pp. 7-30.

2. Gohain N. 2001. The Tai Phakes of Assam. *Indian Journal of Tai studies*. Vol-1 Institute of the Tai studies and Research Moranhat. Pp. 30-33

3. Dalton. E. T. 1872. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Calcutta: Government Printing Office.

4. Hunter. W. W. 1879. *Statistical Account of Assam*. London: Trubner and Co.

5. Crosby. K., 2014. *Theravada Buddhism Continuity, Diversity and Identity*. Wiley Blackwell. Malden, UK. p.3

Origins of the festival

Festivals play a vital role in each community. The religious practices of the Tai Buddhist people are mostly based on the life story of Buddha. It is found that most of the major incidents in Buddha's life are related to the full moon days. However, in the early Buddhist texts, there is no continuous life of the Buddha, as they focus on his teachings. Only later, between 200 BCE and 200 CE, did a growing interest in the Buddha's person lead to various schools producing continuous 'biographies' (i.e. Lokattaravadin Mahavastu (Mvs.; first century CE), the Mahayanized Sarvastivadin Lalitavistara (Bays, 1983; from the first century CE), Ashvaghosa's poem, the Buddhacarita (Johnston, 1972, (557.34-66); second century CE), and the Theravadin Nidanakatha), which drew on scattered accounts in the existing Sutta and Vinaya collections, and floating oral traditions⁶.

In Buddha's life, he attained enlightenment. In the Pali canon, there are three *Sutta* (teaching) texts in *Sutta Pitaka*, the second division of the canon, which provide an account of the Gautama's enlightenment⁷. After attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya for seven years, Buddha travelled to Kapilavastu to meet his father Sudhodana, and demonstrating his spiritual transformation and offering teachings of compassion and detachment. On this occasion people celebrated the day as Buddha returned home. The story also shared by the villagers of the Tai Buddhist communities of Assam when they mentioned Poi Dunsu/ Poi Nunsu Tapang.

Celebrations of Poi Dunsu/ Poi Nunsu Tapang

By following the luni-solar calendar, the

Tai Buddhist people consider the full moon days to be very sacred to them. *Poi Dunsu* or *Poi Nunsu Tapang* is also a festival celebrated on the full moon day of the month of February/March (Phagun). The word *Poi* means festival and *Dunsu* means tithi or a lunar day using by the Tai Buddhist communities of Assam. On that auspicious day, every Vihara or *Kyong* in the Tai Buddhist villages celebrates the *Poi Dunsu* festival. *Kong Mu* – a sand Pagoda is made on the premises of every Vihara. It is made the day ahead of the full moon day and is offered to the visible statue of Buddha with flowers and some food. In every Vihara, we have found many old and new Buddha statue. On this day Vihara or *Kyong* of every Tai Buddhist village is cleaned using sand and water by the villagers. Apart from this, this particular day is celebrated more significantly at Kaliani Buddha Vihara in Karbi Anglong of Assam.

The History of Kaliani Village

On the auspicious festival day, a large crowd attends in Kaliani Village. The village is surrounded by the ever-flowing Kalani River and an evergreen natural environment. The village is small but has significant historical past history. It is bordered by the hill tribes, especially the Karbi people to the north and west, the Bogijan Tea Estate to the south and the Naharshala and Bakial Estates to the east. There are 22 Tai Aiton (Man Tai speaking) households in this village. The word Aiton has been derived from two words *ai* and *ton* which mean eldest and anger, respectively. They believe that most of their historical records were destroyed during Burmese invasions. When King Suu-Kham-Faa of Mogaung (northern Myanmar) came to learn that his nephew Prince Suu-Ka-Faa left Assam

6. Haevey, P., 1990, *An Introduction to Buddhism Teaching, History, and Practices*. CUP, New York. p.44

7. Crosby, K.op.cit. p. 18

because of his ignorance, he felt very sorry for his actions. So, he sent two groups of people to bring his nephew back to Mogaung. The members of these groups belonged to the Aiton community. It is said that Ai-Ton was one of the two districts along with Ai-Kham of the Khamti province of the Mogaung Nora Kingdom⁸.

There were two waves of Aiton migration in Assam. The first wave consisted of two groups. The first group consisted of all the important persons, but unfortunately, this group lost its way to the Ahom kingdom and settled somewhere in the Naga Hills. The second group could not find the first group, but suddenly they reached the Ahom kingdom. But because of the lack of a Ahom king, Suu-Kaa-Pha, they had no intentions of going back to their motherland. Thus, they settled in the Ahom kingdom permanently. Since then, they have been living near the tracts of Nambor forest in Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam. Thus, it can be said that the Aitons came to Assam somewhere during the 13th or 14th century after the Ahoms. They are thus the oldest Buddhist Tai inhabitants in Assam among the five⁹.

The second wave of Aiton migration started during the second half of the eighteenth century, a few years after the Khamti migration. With due permission from the Ahom King Rajeshwar Singha alias Suu-Rem-Faa (1751-1769), they were asked

to settle in Sadiya, along with the Khamtis. But they did not stay there for many years and they moved further west¹⁰. This group later merged with the other Aitons who were living in the Nambor area. However, the villagers have a different version to the story. According to Mr. Ganesh Singpho Lazom¹¹, the village head of Balipathar Shyam Village, after the Aitons entered Assam, they first settled somewhere near the Janji Hahsora area of present-day Jorhat District. After that, they settled at Morongi in Golaghat District. However, due to some misdeeds by the leader of the group and his family the villagers abandoned the family and moved towards the interior of Karbi Hills and established their village on the bank of the Kalioni River. This village is today called Bhitor Kaliani Shyam Gaon. Some of the villagers said that this village was founded around 1882. In 1922, the Vihara was established which known as *Ashoka Sutong Pe Fra Vihara*. The main idol of this Vihara is called *Sutong Pe Phra*, which means the one who grants blessings to fulfill one's dreams.

The legends and miraculous stories about the *Sutang Pe Phra* statue still attract thousands of pilgrims of all religions and backgrounds. It is said that, while at Nagora near Owating, the Man generals Mingimaha Tilwa and Pu Chanmeng, who had come from Man country (Burma) during the Man invasion of Assam, met the Buddhist people and recognized them as their relatives. They were

8. Gogoi, P., 1968, *Tai and the Tai Kingdom*, Gauhati University Publication, Guwahati-14.

9. Buragohain, K., 2018, *Ethnic Identity and Social Change: The case of Buddhist Tai communities in Assam*. Guwahati: Dept. of Geography, Gauhati University. p 72

10. Buragohain, J., 1991, *The Aitons in Transition*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Gauhati University.

11. Personal Interview. Ganesh Singph Lazom, 6th March, 2022. Balipathar, Borhula.

12. Shyam, D. (ed.), 2023, *Octagonal Chaity Kalioni*. Nalinipinters Barpathar. Pp. 2-3

13. Personal Interview, Chautewom Namsom. Age 67. 19th February, 2022. Barkhamti Village, Lakhimpur

offered to the villagers for worship. This was around 1775.

Once, while in Daigroung, the Buddhist monastery was completely destroyed by fire, and many Buddha statues, both large and small, were burnt down along with other items. But the Buddha, who had miraculous powers, was not harmed. A few days after the fire, the Buddha was recovered intact from a tree in the forest far from the monastery¹². Another story says that it was the Khamtis of Barkhamti who originally have the Sutang Pe Phra statue. Due to some conflicts between the Aiton and Khamti people in the early times, the Aitons took ownership of the statue¹³. During the time when the Burmese king Alamphra subjugated the Kingdom of Mung-Kong, and Mao Lung or Pong, the Bar Khamti country lost their unity and strength as well. At that time Phra-teka, Chao-Tang and Lung-King left their homeland, crossing the Patkai Ranges through the Chowkang pass and subsequently arrived in the Ahom kingdom probably in 1752. Phra-teka brought with him an image of Lord Buddha, and Khamties worshipped it. In later periods, the Lung-king were known as Namsoom in Assam¹⁴. This could be another version of the origin of the statue.

The Celebration at Kalioni Buddhist Monastery

The *Poi Dunsil/ Poi Nunsil Tapang* is celebrated for two to three days at Kalani Buddhist Monastery. Some rituals are observed differently in Kaliyani Vihar than in other Viharas. On the first day of celebrations, all the structures of the Viharas were cleaned with sand and water. After 12 noon, the main idol of this Vihara, *Sutang Pe Phra*, is taken out of the Vihara along with other smaller

idols and then rotated around the Vihara three times. Then, they make the cradle of *Sutang Pe Phra* with the idols circumambulatory around the *Chaitya* in the Vihara compound. They move the circumambulatory foot with only one step. The idols of other monasteries are not taken out, but the Vihara and the surrounding *chaityas* are cleaned with sand and water. The day is spent in charity at Kaliyani Vihara. *Patbek*, the chief of the villages, is invited to donate. Patheks also receive some donation. The statues are restored to their places under the monastery and offer the *Petessa* is offered¹⁵, which is an essential structure of the every religious celebration of Tai Buddhist people. Buddhist people believe that alms are a sacred act. Once, Buddha aforementioned to Suddhodana, after his awakening, that it was the custom of the Buddha lineage¹⁶. When it comes to donations or alms about, it's usually a statue of Buddha, some Pali canon texts that have been copied and donated to the monastery, scripts for health and well-being, study, marriage, flowers, scents, money, fruits and so on. All the Tai Buddhist communities participate in the offering rituals¹⁷. The Khamatis believe that the king of Kushal built eighty-four thousand stupas and donated them to the Buddha. Then Maharaja Ashoka made this donation. Following that tradition, Buddhists have been celebrating this ceremony. According to the Phakes, after the Buddha's Nirvana, Emperor Ashoka collected the Buddha's coffin metal and built eighty-four thousand temples in Jambudeep (India) to show the people the path to peace, merit, and liberation. For this purpose, the Phakes also build *Lu Cheti Pet Moun Chi Heing* (eighty-four thousand symbolic shrines) with sand on the banks of the river on this day to

17. Field Visit Ay Kaloni Village, Poi Dunsil Festival held in 15th March, 2022

18. Khawsom is a meal mostly offer to the Buddhist Monks of the Vihara in every day

wish the welfare and peace of the village and society.

On the second day, people who stay at Kaliani village prepare the food before dawn. This meal is prepared entirely vegetarian. They donate *khowsom*¹⁸ to the nearby Kaliani River. Mostly the females of the Tai Buddhist communities, who followed *Panchasheela* or *Asta Sheela*, have the right to prepare the meal. During the preparation they do not talk, using clay pots and new wooden ladles made from the jujube fruit tree. Then, they offer a small part of the meal to the nearest river, Kalioni, and the *Chaityas* of the Vihara. Again, the donations, discussions of religious books, and religious talks continue till evening. In the evening, they light candles in the Vihara compound and offers flowers. Other Buddhist followers known as Badowa, also come to the monastery from different places of Assam. They pour mustard oil on the structure of the Vihara. Wednesday holds special significance in Buddhism as the day Buddha gained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Tai Buddhist People of Assam also believe that when *Poi Dunsì* occurs on Wednesday, they feel fortunate to celebrate it. There are many beliefs and stories related to the *Sutang Pe Phra* Buddhist Monastery such as People never catch and eat fish in Kalioni river, some people still take off their shoes as soon as they see the Vihara from a distance, people consider the idol of the Vihara very auspicious to them¹⁹.

Conclusion

The *Poi Dunsì*/ *Poi Nunsì Tapang* Festival

stands as a vibrant manifestation of Tai Buddhist cultural heritage, particularly centered at the Kalioni Buddhist monastery. This celebration transcends mere religious observance, serving as a crucial mechanism for cultural preservation and community cohesion among the Tai Buddhist population. The festival's significance lies in its role in maintaining religious traditions while fostering social unity across diverse Tai subgroups. The celebration exemplifies Buddhism's remarkable adaptability, demonstrating how spiritual practices can harmoniously coexist with both major religions and indigenous folk traditions and memories. The festival's continued observance represents more than religious devotion; it embodies a living tradition that actively preserves and transmits Tai Buddhist cultural heritage. Through shared spiritual and cultural practices, it creates a powerful sense of collective identity among participants from various Tai subgroups, each maintaining their distinct linguistic and cultural characteristics. This unity in diversity showcases how religious festivals can serve as vital platforms for cultural preservation and community building in contemporary society.

Moreover, the celebration demonstrates the dynamic nature of cultural preservation, where traditional practices adapt to modern contexts while maintaining their essential spiritual and communal significance. This ongoing tradition exemplifies how religious and cultural practices can effectively bridge historical heritage with contemporary social needs.

19. Personal Interview. Dibyadhar Shyam. Age:64. 13th Nov, 2021. Ahomani Gaon, Karbi Anglang, Assam

A QUALITATIVE STUDY BASED ON HISTORICAL VALUES OF INDIAN SOCIETY AND EVOLUTION IN SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Ardra M. S.

Scaria, N.

Konwar, P.

Abstract

This study assesses how the historical values of Indian society have impacted the development of social work in India. Social reformers play a vital role in bringing up nationalism by promoting cultural inclusivity, social justice and equitable society. It aims to eliminate discrimination and oppressive practices. Some of the role of social reformers is to address issues such as caste discrimination, economic inequalities and eradication of social evils exists in the society. It empowers marginalized communities to advocate for their rights to abolish all the injustice exists in the society. Historical values help to understand about the past beliefs, charities, social reforms and social evils exists as a form of religious activities. The evolution of social work profession was mainly from charitable and voluntary organizations by helping people who are in need. The main objectives of the study are to identify the historical values of Indian society, to understand evolution of social work profession in India, and to evaluate the importance of historical values in social work profession. The analysis of the conducted study revealed that the historical values of India have been detrimental in the evolution of social work profession. The study helps to determine significance of historical values in the evolution of social work profession in India and this becomes instrumental in the modernization of social work profession in India.

Keywords: *Historical values, Indian society, Evolution, Social work, Profession, Social Reforms.*

Introduction

Indian society is formed by historical values which have wide varieties of cultures, traditions, religious activities and languages. Historical values have been protected by social reformers, freedom fighters and great social activist leaders. India's social work tradition is rooted in ancient spiritual and philosophical principles. Concepts like Dharma (duty) and Karma (actions have consequences) guide social workers' actions. A strong culture of selfless service, or Seva, exists in India. This tradition has inspired countless individuals to engage in voluntary work and charitable activities. After independence, Western social work ideas influenced Indian practices, leading to a more structured profession. Today, social workers tackle complex issues like caste, gender, and economic disparities. Despite challenges,

Indian social workers remain committed to creating a fairer society. They draw strength from indigenous values like compassion, social justice, and community solidarity. The Indian values system is rooted in a set of essential components that have evolved over thousands of years. At the heart of this system are six core values: Tyaga (renunciation), Dana (liberal giving), Nishtha (dedication), Satya (truth), Ahimsa (non-violence), and Upeksha (forbearance). These values form the foundation of the Indian ethical system and have played a significant role in shaping the country's culture and society. Various socio-religious movements have contributed to the sustenance and growth of human values in India. From the teachings of the Buddha to the reforms of the Bhakti movement, each of these movements has added depth and richness

to the Indian values system. Dharma provides a moral and ethical framework that guides individuals towards a life of purpose, values, and principles. It is this framework that has allowed the Indian values system to endure and thrive, even in the face of adversity (Chatterjee, C. 1995).

Social reforms help to address caste discrimination, gender inequality, and social injustice in India. Ahimsa is derived from the Sanskrit verb root *san*, which means to kill. Gandhi recognize that violence from its Sanskrit root, *himsa*, meaning injury. *Ahimsa*, or non-violence, is a cornerstone of Indian philosophy and culture, emphasizing the importance of avoiding harm to all living beings (Gandhi, 1927). This principle has profoundly impacted Indian society, shaping social and political movements, and inspiring leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. In Indian philosophy, *Ahimsa* is considered one of the highest virtues, encouraging individuals to cultivate compassion, empathy, and kindness towards all beings (Radhakrishnan, 1927). This introduces non-scientific elements in the evaluation of social change in India, elements of which are found in many studies. Authors of these studies evaluate change or non-change in India from their own moral or ideological view-points.

In earlier, social work existed in the form of charity. Some of the social evils like sati, child marriage, untouchability etc. Hinduism, one of the world's oldest religions, encompasses various sacred rites. Among them, *Sati* (or *Suttee*) is a highly debated and influential practice. In this ritual, a widow would sacrifice herself by immolating on her husband's funeral pyre, driven by a sense of duty and loyalty. The word profession or professional may be loosely or strictly used. A person is in this sense a professional if his entire time is devoted to an activity, as against one who is only transiently or provisionally

so engaged. Social work in India has a long history, but it became a recognized profession in 1936, influenced by Western ideas. Many Indian scholars and practitioners have contributed to the growth of social work in India through their research and writings. The National Journal of Professional Social Work, published by the Indian Society of Professional Social Work (ISPSW), plays a significant role in promoting social work knowledge and practice in India. According to the International Federation of Social Workers (2014), social work is a dynamic, practice-based profession that empowers individuals, families, and communities to overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential. It is promoting social change and development, social workers play a vital role in addressing the complex social issues that affect people's lives. the profession's commitment to empowering marginalized and vulnerable populations, promoting human rights and social justice, fostering community development and social cohesion, addressing the root causes of social problems, and advocating for policy changes and systemic reforms. It inspires social workers to strive for excellence in their practice, to advocate for social justice and human rights, and to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Research on short-term psychodynamic therapy has some gaps. Comparing short-term psychodynamic therapy to cognitive-behavioral therapy shows similar results. Both treatments seem to work equally well based on standard measures. To better understand how well short-term psychodynamic therapy works for depression, we need more high-quality studies. These studies should randomly assign participants to treatment groups. More research is needed to fully understand the benefits and limitations of short-term psychodynamic therapy. This will help us

make informed decisions about the best treatments for depression (O'Neal, P., Jackson, A., & McDermott, F. 2014). Social workers play an important role in promoting health and well-being. Research highlights the importance of addressing the social determinants of health, such as poverty, education, and housing (World Health Organization, 2011). Social workers can help prevent health problems and promote overall well-being (Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2008). One of the examples is poverty, for instance, is a major determinant of health. Social workers can help individuals and families access resources, such as food assistance and affordable housing, to alleviate poverty's negative effects. Another one is education, social workers can support individuals in accessing education and job training programs, which can improve health outcomes and overall well-being. This holistic approach to health care is essential for promoting health equity and improving overall well-being.

This study uses a descriptive approach drawing on secondary data from multiple sources. The findings will be analyzing to identify historical values of Indian society and evolution in social work profession.

Methods applied for study

For the study, researchers have applied qualitative research method. The data was collected through to understand the historical value of Indian society and the evolution of social work. This study focuses on understanding how Indian society's values have shaped the social work profession. Historical values shape Indian society for the evolution of the social work profession. It helps to eliminate caste discrimination that exists in the society. The data was collected through various articles and journals. The

study aimed to provide a better understanding of how Indian society's values have influenced the social work profession. The main focus of the study is to understand the historical values of Indian society and evolution in social work profession. The research showed how Indian society's values affect social work. This can guide future studies and practices.

Findings

Each of the historical values of Indian society is important. Indian culture shows respect towards their hierarchy and social order. Development of social work helps to maintain physical and emotional well-being of individuals. Social work is a practical based profession it's promote the social change and development, also empowerment and liberation of people. Evolution of the Social work profession helps to empower marginalized communities. Using historical values in social work helps people in many ways. It promotes fairness, equality, and positive change.

Suggestions

- Religious practices not needed to include in the historical values which help to avoid social evils exist in the society.
- Development of social work profession helps to empower and protect the rights of marginalized communities which decrease social injustice exist in the society.
- Social workers need government support, better job and salary in Indian society for professional career.
- Social workers need to provide the training, accessible education, and support individuals through a professional help for their mental health and better well-being while they experienced avoidance, social stigma.

Conclusion

The historical values of Indian society

have significantly influenced the evolution of social work as a profession. This study explored India's historical values, the evolution of social work, and the importance of these values in the profession. India's rich cultural heritage, philosophical traditions, and social reform movements have shaped the profession's growth. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru laid the groundwork for social work in India. Institutions like the Indian Association of Social Workers and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences further strengthened the profession. Now a days social work in India is a dynamic field addressing complex social issues. To create a more just and equitable society, social workers must blend traditional values with modern theories, methods, and technologies. The study concludes that social workers must appreciate and incorporate historical values into their work to create a more compassionate and effective social work profession in India.

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VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: A STUDY OF SLAVERY IN PRE-MODERN ASSAM THROUGH VERNACULAR SOURCES

Asish Sarma

Abstract

*The reconstruction of history depends heavily on the sources available and how they are interpreted. Traditional historiography, shaped by the empirical approach of Leopold von Ranke and Marxist historical materialism, has typically emphasized archival records, official documents, and quantifiable data. This focus on positivist evidence has led to the marginalization of vernacular sources, often dismissed as too subjective or unreliable for historical narratives. The historiography of Assam is no exception, with many important vernacular and literary materials remaining underutilized. This paper highlights the significance of vernacular sources—such as oral histories, regional manuscripts like *Katha Gurucharit*, chronicles like the *Buranjis*, *Vamsavalis*, and other indigenous records—in understanding the socio-economic history of pre-modern Assam. By focusing on the institution of slavery and labour relations, this study reveals how these sources provide a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic structures and the voices of marginalized communities that shaped Assam's historical trajectory. Incorporating these vernacular sources into historical research not only addresses gaps in traditional methodologies but also deepens our understanding of Assam's rich and complex past.*

Keywords: *Buranjis, Vamsavalis, Indigenous Records, Bonded Labour, Slavery*

The study of slavery has long been constrained by historiographical traditions predominantly shaped by European perspectives, which prioritize colonial records while marginalizing vernacular sources. This Eurocentric approach not only reinforces epistemic violence by systematically excluding non-European knowledge systems but also perpetuates a narrative that privileges colonial methodologies. Consequently, subaltern voices are often silenced, and history is predominantly framed through the lens of empire and elite perspectives¹. Colonial historians have frequently dismissed local narratives as unreliable or “mythological,” despite the fact that their own records are rife with biases and stereotypical portrayals of indigenous peoples and their practices. In the context of Assam, the study of slavery remains particularly underexplored, with existing research heavily reliant on colonial accounts and insufficient engagement with vernacular sources². To achieve a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding

of social institutions such as slavery, it is imperative to integrate indigenous sources, including oral histories, regional manuscripts like the *Katha Gurucharit*, chronicles such as the *Buranjis* and *Vamsavalis*, and other indigenous records. These sources offer invaluable insights into the lived experiences and socio-economic structures of pre-modern Assam, which are often obscured in colonial narratives. Against this background, this paper underscores the critical importance of vernacular sources in reconstructing Assam's socio-economic history, with a specific focus on labour systems, including slavery, in the pre-modern period.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part examines the role of vernacular sources in historiography, highlighting their significance as reliable tools for reconstructing history. The second part explores labour systems, particularly the institution of slavery, and how vernacular sources could provide fresh insights. The third and final part serves as the conclusion.

I

Historically, much of what we understand as “history” has been shaped by texts produced by educated elites. This creates a historiographical bias, privileging the perspectives of those in power while marginalizing voices from lower social strata. Vernacular sources, by contrast, democratize history, allowing historians to reconstruct the past through the eyes of common people. These sources include not only written documents, such as local chronicles, letters, and account books, but also oral traditions and folklore, which convey collective memories and cultural values. The engagement with vernacular sources becomes especially significant in the context of Renaissance humanism, the historiographical debates it sparked, and the theoretical frameworks proposed by scholars like Hayden White, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

During the Renaissance in medieval and early modern Europe, the revival of local languages fostered national literatures and enriched historical narratives. Humanists like Petrarca and Bruni championed local histories, shifting focus from divine providence and elite deeds to human experience, social dynamics, and cultural identities. This shift encouraged a more critical and inclusive approach to historiography³. The debate on Renaissance humanism revolves around the balance between reviving classical antiquity and valuing local vernacular traditions. While humanists preserved Greek and Latin texts, shaping education, philosophy, and the arts, this revival also influenced how ideas evolved across time. Scholars question whether humanism sidelined vernacular literature or laid the groundwork for its later appreciation. This tension between classical and local sources remains central to historiographical discussions⁴.

Twentieth-century theorists further reshaped historiographical approaches. Hayden White highlighted how history is not just a collection of facts but a narrative shaped by the way it is told. Vernacular sources, with their unique styles and cultural perspectives, offer alternative stories that challenge traditional historical accounts. By including these voices, historians create a more inclusive and diverse picture of the past⁵. Michel Foucault’s⁶ theories on discourse and power show how power shapes knowledge, truth, and historical narratives. He argues that literary and historical sources are embedded in power structures, influencing what can be known and who controls the narrative. Foucault’s approach emphasizes examining who controls the narrative and how this control shapes historical knowledge. Derrida’s *Archive Fever*⁷ reveals how archives are not neutral repositories but sites of power, shaping what is remembered and forgotten. He links this to Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis, suggesting that the desire to archive stems from both a need to remember and an unconscious urge to suppress or destroy certain histories. This applies directly to vernacular sources, which have often been excluded from official archives in favour of elite narratives. The suppression of local languages, oral traditions, and community histories reflects an archival bias that privileges dominant perspectives.

Vernacular sources capture local perspectives, cultural nuances, and community histories often overlooked in academic narratives. Folklore, oral traditions, and regional texts preserve “living history,” offering insights into social traditions and marginalized voices. In South Asia, vernacular histories, like the Ahom *buranjis* and Marathi *bakhars*, challenge colonial biases by integrating local narratives with broader events. These sources enrich historiography by incorporating diverse literary traditions and

providing a pluralistic view of the past. By engaging with them, historians construct more inclusive histories that honour the complexities of cultural memory and identity⁸. Similarly, in the study of slavery, a historically underexplored aspect of society, vernacular sources offer crucial insights. By challenging colonial historiography, many scholars have begun writing from the perspective of the marginalized, both in the global context and in India, uncovering indigenous narratives often overlooked in traditional accounts⁹.

II

The historiography of Assam is enriched by a diverse body of vernacular sources that capture the region's intricate socio-political, cultural, and economic history. These sources—spanning chronicles, hagiographies, oral traditions, genealogies, legal documents, and land records etc.—offer a localized perspective essential for reconstructing Assam's past from an indigenous standpoint. Unlike colonial or external accounts, which often interpret Assam's history through an outsider's lens, these vernacular sources capture how local communities understood, recorded, and preserved their history. They reflect the beliefs, values, and worldviews that helped shape Assam's identity. However, like all historical records, vernacular sources may contain biases, just as archival sources do. It becomes the historian's role to examine these sources carefully, uncover the facts, and minimize any biases. Since our focus is on labour systems, we will analyse specific sources such as the *Buranjis*, *Vamsavalis*, *Charit Puthis*, and other indigenous records to determine if they offer valuable insights into these aspects of Assam's history.

Originating with the Ahoms, the *Buranjis* were first compiled in the Tai-Ahom language in the 13th century and later expanded into Assamese. Initially, they

documented royal affairs, focusing on events like accession, coronation, military campaigns, administrative decisions, and interactions with foreign courts. One distinct aspect is their perspective and unique narrative style, shaped by the worldview of the priest-scribes who recorded them. They maintained an Ahom-centric focus, which, while rich in royal and administrative details, leaves out broader socio-economic aspects that modern historians might seek. Nevertheless, *Buranjis* are crucial for reconstructing history of Assam, capturing events and administrative decisions from the viewpoint of the Ahom court, and serving as a “storehouse of knowledge” for early Assamese historiography¹⁰. In addition to political and administrative insights, the *Buranjis* also provide references to labour practices, illustrating Assam's social fabric. For instance, the “Deodhai Asam Buranji” details a matrimonial alliance during the reign of Pratap Singha, where the Koch king's daughter was married into the Ahom royal family. Alongside her, a dowry was given, comprising twenty *bandi-beti* (slave families), twenty *pachani-beti* (maids-in-waiting), and various ornaments¹¹. Similarly, Harakanta Barua Sadar-Amin's “Assam Buranji” recounts King Jayadhwaj Singha sending his daughter, Ramani Gabharu, as a tribute to Emperor Aurangzeb, accompanied by a hundred male and female slaves, thirty elephants, two thousand gold coins, and twelve thousand silver coins¹². Furthermore, the “Tungkhungia Buranji” mentions that during Pratap Singha's reign, Nabab Abdul Islam presented twelve women slaves, among other items, to the Ahom king¹³. In another instance, Kasi Nath Tamuli Phukan's “Assam Buranji” notes a donation of land and servitors to the *Dergaon Dewalaya*, a temple, under Pratap Singha's rule¹⁴. Such instances of slave donations, grants of *paik* labour, and land are common themes in the

Buranjis, highlighting the importance of land and labour dynamics during the Ahom period.

The *Charit Puthis* of Assam are another important vernacular source with a significant place in Assamese literature and history. These works, emerging in the late sixteenth century, serve both religious and historical purposes. The term *Charit Puthis* translates to “biographies of celebrated figures,” focusing on spiritual leaders like Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva from the Bhakti movement. In addition to their religious focus, *Charit Puthis* offer a glimpse into Assamese society, addressing topics like caste distinctions, bonded labour, and professional classes, reflecting social norms of the time. For example, in the *Guru Charit Katha*, a passage states:

“...বৰাৰ টোলত গোলাম বহতা বান্ধা লঠৰিয়া
বাৰতে সৈতে আদ সাতকুৰি গিৰি”¹⁵

Translation: Harisingha Borah, an official who commanded around 130 workers, including *bandha* (bondsmen), *bahatiya* (slaves), and *rayots* (common peasants). This account dates to the reign of Koch King Naranarayan (1540-1585 A.D.), during the contemporary rule of Ahom King Sukhampha, also known as Khora Raja (1552-1603 A.D.).

In the same way, the *Guru Charit Katha* offers many accounts detailing bonded labour, slavery, and the socio-economic conditions of the period. Vernacular sources like this offers a unique window into Assam’s past, revealing not only religious and cultural life but also the complex social hierarchies and labour relations that characterized the period.

Another important category of vernacular sources in Assam comprises various indigenous records from the pre-modern period. During this time, people

maintained detailed documents related to the buying and selling of slaves. These records typically included essential information such as the thumb impression of the seller, the name and address of the sold slave, and the sale price. Additionally, the documents contained the names of both the buyer and seller, as well as the names of witnesses and the scribe who drafted the agreement¹⁶.

For example, I have included some examples of such deeds below:

১৬৮৩ শক। বৈশাখৰ ২০ দিন যাওঁতে শ্রী শ্রী
স্বৰ্গনাৰায়ণ মহাৰাজাধিৰাজ ৰাজেশ্বৰ সিংহ
দেৱতাৰ দিনত পত্ৰমিদং...।

শ্রীযুত চ’তাইঅলীয়া সলাল বৰগোহাঞিদেৱৰ
মিছামুখৰ কোঠাত সলালৰ ঢেকীয়াল শইকীয়া।
সতাইৰ পুতেক নৰহৰি - এই দুই বিকে ঘৰবনুৱা
ছোৱালী ফেদেলীক কুলত কেওঁট কাকতি।
ভোলানাথে মেলাই। তানমূল্য পকা ৰূপ চাৰিটা।
অত্ৰাৰ্থে আকেজনা সাখী... (ডেকা) মঞ্জয় বৰা,
ভোলাই বৰাৰ পুতেক ফেদেলা, সহনাথ, বিকো,
দয়াময়। গৰীয়াকণাৰ নিৰ্মল বৰা, ভিঞাৰী বায়ন,
হৰিবৰ ভূঞা, কাছমৰীয়া শায়েকৰ যদৈ দুলীয়া
ঘোঁৰাচোৱা ডেকা। সভাডিৰি তামোল-পাণ আৰু
কড়ি চাৰিপোন। নৰহৰিৰ অনামিকা আঙুলি
কটপা।¹⁷

Translation: The deed is dated 1683 Saka (1761 A.D.), on the 20th of *Bohag* (an Assamese month falling in April-May). It records the sale of a girl named Fedeli belongs to *Keot Kakati* caste by Dhekial Saikia and Narahari, purchased by Bholanath for four silver coins. She was sold as a household slave. Witnesses to the transaction included Manjoi Borah, Bholai Borah’s son Fedela, Sahanath, Biko, Dayamoy, Nirmal Borah, Viyari Bayon, Horibor Bhuyan, among others. As a customary gesture to the assembly, four *Pun*¹⁸, *Kori* and *Tamul-Pan* (Araca Nut and betel leaves) were offered. Narahari, one of the sellers, was required to give his fingerprint from his ring finger as authentication. This transaction occurred during the reign of

Ahom King Rajeswar Singha (1751–1769).

১৭২১ পুষৰ ৪ দিন থকাত কুজ বাৰে (বুধবাৰ?)।
শ্ৰী শ্ৰী কমলেশ্বৰ সীংগ মহাৰাজাৰ ৰাজ্যত মনুস্যৰ
ক্ৰয় বিক্ৰয় কৰে; সলগুৰিয়া সাধু আতা কিনে;
লেৰেলু সহকিয়া সিদ্ধি বৰা ইহতে সমনিতে কুৰি
গয়াই বেছে; মোহনক ৰূপ ছটকা।। অত্যাৰ্থে সাপি
টঙ্গচু ডেকা কলাই ১ ধুনিয়া টেকেলা ১ বৰফলিয়া
পিথু ১ টোপ ১ দুপৰিয়া সহকিয়া বহুদাস ১
চৰাছোৰা জীউৰাম ১ চৰাৰ দলই চাবৰ ২ নাথ ১
আৰু অনকো আছিল - অথ আঙ্গুলি কতপা।।

।।কতপা।।

সভাৰিৰ তামোল পান, বামৰথ কাকতিৰ তামোল
পান গামোচাখন।।¹⁹

Translation: The deed dates back to 1721 Saka (which corresponds to 1799 A.D.), specifically on the 26th of *Paush*, falling between December and January. A man named Mohan was sold as a slave by Lerelu Saikia, Siddhi Borah, and 20 other villagers for six silver coins. He was purchased by the *Gosain* (spiritual leader) of Salaguri Satra. The transaction was witnessed by individuals such as Tongsu Deka, Kolai, Dhunia Tekela, Borfolia Pithu, and others, and finger prints were taken as part of the customary process. As a traditional gesture during the assembly, *Tamul-Pan* (areca nut and betel leaves) and a *Gamocha* (a traditional Assamese cloth) were offered. This occurred during the reign of Ahom King Kamaleswar Singha (1795-1811).

Similar to these records, I have come across a good number of records documenting the sale and purchase of slaves.

During the Ahom rule, rulers granted paiks as servitors to temples and satras. This class of paiks can be compared to medieval European serfs, as they were bound to their roles but could not be bought or sold. However, they enjoyed more freedom than the serfs. The practice of donating servitors to religious institutions is well-documented in numerous inscriptions. For instance,

Sukhrungphaa or Swargadeo Rudra Singha (1696-1714 A.D.) donated servitors to the Umananda Temple, while Sunyeopha also Swargadeo Lakshmi Singha (1769-1780 A.D.) made similar grants to Bengena-Ati Satra²⁰. These indigenous records, often absent from colonial sources, provide valuable insights into the labour relations and economic structures of Assam during the period.

Another important category of vernacular sources in Assam's history is the genealogical records, or *Vamsawalis*. Noteworthy examples include the *Darrang Raj-Vamsavali*, the *Bhuyar Puthi*, and the *Mayamara Satrar Vamsavali*. These genealogies not only trace royal lineages but also document significant events related to labour systems. For instance, the *Darrang Raj-Vamsavali* has mentioned the donation of 140 Paik by the Koch king Naranaryan to the Kamakhya Temple during its reconstruction, described with the phrase:

তিনি লক্ষ হোম দিলা এক লক্ষ বলি

সাত কুড়ি পাইক দিলা কৰি তাম্রফলি।।৫৪৮।।²¹

III

History, far from being a static archive of bygone eras, emerges as a contested terrain where narratives of power, memory, and identity intersect and collide. This study underscores the imperative to reposition vernacular sources as central to reconstructing the socio-economic fabric of pre-modern Assam. These sources, long overshadowed by colonial historiography, offer a counter-narrative that dismantles homogenized frameworks of the past. Through their granular accounts of slave transactions, labour hierarchies, and localized economic systems, they expose a complex societal tapestry that colonial archives systematically

simplified or obscured. While the proliferation of vernacular materials presents immense potential for deepening our understanding of marginalized perspectives, their integration demands rigorous methodological scrutiny. Mythological interpolations and hyperbolic elements within these sources are not obstacles but rather invitations for critical analysis. Historians must employ interdisciplinary tools—combining philological rigor, comparative ethnography, and material culture studies—to disentangle symbolic representation from socio-historical reality. Importantly, interpreting system like slavery under the Ahoms through colonial frameworks risks misrepresentation, as its structures align more closely with South Asian patterns than Greco-Roman models, where slavery intersected with caste, kinship, and tributary practices. A localized analytical lens is thus imperative to avoid universalizing assumptions and to capture the region's distinct socio-historical fabric. This approach not only enriches our understanding of Assam's past but also underscores the urgency of further research into vernacular archives, promising new avenues to decolonize historical discourse and recover subaltern voices.

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ORAL NARRATIVES OF LABOUR AND LOSS IN UMRANGSO RAT HOLE MINING

Bijoy Langtang

Abstract

This article explores the oral narratives of labour and loss in rat-hole mining, focusing on the economic repercussions following the closure of coal mines in Assam. The flooding of Coal Mine No. 19, which trapped 10-15 miners, and the tragic Umrangso coal mine disaster on 6th January 2025 prompted a governmental crackdown on rat-hole mining, leaving thousands without livelihoods. The shutdown of these mines, considered both hazardous and a vital source of employment, led to a profound economic downturn in mining-dependent communities such as Umrangso, Three Kilo, and Green Market.

The forced cessation of mining altered the very fabric of these communities. Once-thriving market hubs, such as Three Kilo and Green Market, witnessed a sharp decline in commerce, as businesses that relied on the miners' spending power faced severe losses. The Assam quarry, once emblematic of the region's industrial strength, now stands in eerie silence, symbolizing the devastation wrought by deindustrialisation. Families, long reliant on mining, found themselves adrift, struggling to envision a secure future amidst the economic uncertainty.

Through oral history methodology, this research delves into the lived experiences of affected individuals, capturing their voices and the emotional depth of their losses. It highlights the necessity of acknowledging these narratives to understand the broader implications of industrial shutdowns. The study also examines the demands of local residents, who advocate for the closure of illegal mines while urging the continuation of regulated mining to sustain livelihoods. By amplifying these testimonies, the research contributes to a more nuanced discourse on the human cost of deindustrialisation in Assam's mining sector.

Keywords: Narratives, Rat-hole mining, Economic condition, labour, oral narratives.

Introduction

Rat-hole mining, an informal and hazardous method of coal extraction, has long been a dominant industry in the north-eastern states of India, particularly in Assam and Meghalaya. This practice involves digging small vertical shafts and narrow tunnels, forcing miners to crawl into confined spaces to extract coal. Despite its ban by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2014, it continues illegally, driven by economic necessity, political patronage, and weak enforcement of regulations. While rat-hole mining provides livelihoods to thousands of workers, traders, and local businesses, it also brings grave risks, including frequent mine collapses, health hazards, and exploitation of labourers, including women and children.

Dima Hasao, known as the “Switzerland

of the East,” is a picturesque district in Assam, rich in ethnic diversity and cultural heritage. The region, home to communities like the Dimasas, Zeme Naga, Hmar, Karbi, and Pnar, has seen a sharp decline in economic stability following the government's crackdown on rat-hole mines. The town of Umrangso, once a thriving industrial hub, now struggles with widespread unemployment and declining local businesses, leaving families uncertain about their future.

Amid these economic transformations, the oral narratives of the Khasi community, known as “Khna porom Ukhi Mou Yng” (Stories of Mine Workers), have become significant in understanding the changing conditions of mine labourers over time. These traditional stories, passed down by Khasi

elders, often depict miners facing tragic deaths, their bodies never recovered, while mine owners remain untouched by law, shielded by political and economic power. Today, these tales resonate deeply with the reality of modern-day mine workers, who continue to endure financial insecurity, hazardous working conditions, and lack of government support.

This paper explores the economic transformation of mine workers from the early 2000s to the present, using oral histories and first-hand accounts to analyse how their livelihoods, wages, and social conditions have evolved. By engaging with the lived experiences of workers and the folklore of the Khasi community, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the intersection between history, economy, and labour struggles in the context of rat-hole mining in Assam and Meghalaya.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to explore the economic significance of mine workers from the early 2000s to the present, focusing on their evolving livelihood patterns, wages, and financial stability in the wake of government crackdowns and industry shifts. By drawing insights from both oral narratives, such as the Khasi community's "Khna porom Ukhi Mou Yng" (Stories of Mine Workers), and first-hand accounts of labourers, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic transformation of mine-dependent communities.

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the economic importance of mine workers by examining how rat-hole mining has shaped their livelihoods over the past two decades, including income trends, job availability, and financial security.
2. To study the challenges and problems

faced by miners in their pursuit of livelihood, such as unsafe working conditions, health hazards, wage insecurities, and the impact of mine closures on their families and local businesses.

Methodology

This research primarily adopts a qualitative research approach, utilizing interviews as the primary method of data collection. The study is based on one-on-one interactions with mine workers (both current and former) and elderly members of the Khasi community, particularly from the regions of Three Kilo, Green Market, Kalamati, and Umrangso. These locations have been historically significant in the practice of rat-hole mining and provide crucial insights into the economic and social transformations of mining-dependent communities.

The interview process followed an unstructured format, allowing for open-ended and flexible conversations. This approach enabled participants to narrate their experiences freely, providing a deeper understanding of their economic struggles, livelihood challenges, and perspectives on the changing mining landscape. Special attention was given to oral narratives like "Khna porom Ukhi Mou Yng" to contextualize the historical significance of mine labour in the region and its present-day realities.

Narrating Mining Lives

The elders of the Khasi community recall a time when education was a distant dream for many families, forcing children as young as 13 years old to work in rat-hole mines to support their large families, often consisting of 12 to 13 siblings. Due to extreme poverty and lack of educational opportunities, young boys and girls left their homes and lived in dangerous mining sites, far from their parents,

enduring hazardous working conditions. In the early 2000s, these child labourers earned a meager weekly salary of ₹500-800, an amount that, despite being low, was often necessary for survival.

The implementation of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act led to a decline in the employment of children in the mines. However, the vulnerability of adult workers remained high, as they continued to face unsafe working conditions, health risks, and economic exploitation. The gradual elimination of child labour did not significantly improve the overall condition of mining families, as the root causes—poverty, illiteracy, and lack of alternative job opportunities—remained unaddressed.

For decades, the deaths of mine workers have been a grim reality in rat-hole mining. However, families of deceased workers rarely received their bodies. In most cases, the bodies were never handed over, as they could serve as evidence for police investigations. Instead, coal mine owners, backed by political patronage, silenced the grieving families by offering them large sums of money, ensuring that no legal action was taken. This exploitative system protected those at the top while leaving the workers and their families powerless and without justice.

Despite these risks, people continued to opt for mining jobs because of the substantial income it provided compared to other daily-wage jobs. A worker in agriculture or manual labour might earn ₹400 per day, whereas a miner could make as much as ₹3,000 per day. This stark contrast in earnings forced many to prioritize immediate financial gain over long-term safety and well-being.

The real beneficiaries of the mining industry are not the workers but the mine

owners, who make enormous profits from selling coal to corporates and industrial buyers. These powerful individuals provide only a fraction of their wealth to labourers, ensuring that the workers remain trapped in a cycle of economic dependency and hazardous employment. The major reasons why workers continue to engage in mining include:

- Low levels of education, making them ineligible for skilled jobs.
- Extreme poverty, which forces them to take up immediate wage-based work.
- Large family sizes, where multiple siblings must contribute financially.
- Lack of access to other employment opportunities, especially in remote areas.
- Failure of government welfare schemes to reach the intended beneficiaries.
- Limited awareness about education as a path out of poverty.

Many workers lack financial literacy and long-term planning. Instead of saving their earnings or investing in their children's education, a significant portion of their income is spent on materialistic goods such as expensive mobile phones, branded clothes, and luxury items. This short-term financial mind-set prevents them from improving their socioeconomic conditions, further cementing the cycle of poverty.

Today, the economic struggles of mine workers remain unchanged, if not worse. While the ban on rat-hole mining has led to a decline in illegal operations, many workers still find ways to engage in underground mining, earning lower wages than before. Their living conditions remain poor, and despite decades of hard labour, most mining families have seen little to no improvement in their economic status.

At the same time, coal mafias and mine

owners continue to amass wealth, strengthening their political and economic dominance. The exploitation of workers has merely evolved, with the same patterns of labour abuse, income disparity, and legal loopholes ensuring that miners remain at the bottom of the economic hierarchy.

Conclusion

The oral narratives and lived experiences of mine workers in Assam's rat-hole mining industry highlight a deeply entrenched cycle of economic dependency, labour exploitation, and social neglect. Despite the hazardous nature of their work, miners continue to engage in coal extraction due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities, poverty, and the historical absence of education within their communities. The stories passed down by the Khasi elders, such as "Khna porom Ukhi Mou Yng," reveal a legacy of generational struggle where children as young as thirteen once worked in mines to support their large families. Though the enforcement of child labour laws has reduced their presence in the workforce, the overall working conditions remain perilous, with frequent accidents and deaths often hidden from public scrutiny. The economic reliance on mining has made the workers vulnerable to the whims of powerful coal mafias and mine owners, who continue to profit immensely while offering minimal wages and no security to the labourers who risk their lives daily.

The economic impact of rat-hole mining extends beyond the workers themselves, affecting the businesses and communities surrounding the mining areas. Markets like Three Kilo, Green Market, and Kalamati once thrived due to the miners' earnings, but the decline in mining activity following the government crackdown has led to economic stagnation. While the closure of illegal mines was a necessary step for environmental and

safety reasons, it has left thousands without livelihood alternatives, pushing them deeper into uncertainty. Even when mining flourished, the wealth it generated remained concentrated at the top, with mine owners enjoying political patronage and financial gains while workers remained trapped in poverty. The wages, although significantly higher than in agricultural work, failed to translate into long-term financial stability, as many miners spent their earnings on short-term luxuries rather than investing in education or economic mobility.

The findings of this study emphasize the urgent need for a structured approach to address the economic and social conditions of mining communities. Mere bans and regulatory actions are insufficient unless they are accompanied by sustainable alternative employment opportunities, educational reforms, and financial literacy programs. Without intervention, the cycle of poverty will persist, and miners will continue to seek work in hazardous conditions despite the risks. The economic disparity between the workers and mine owners highlights the systemic exploitation within the industry, which must be challenged through stronger governance and worker protection laws. The stories of the mine workers are not just narratives of labour and loss but also a reflection of a community striving for dignity amidst a system that has long ignored their struggles.

This study, based on qualitative interviews and oral narratives, emphasizes the need for sustainable economic alternatives and education-driven interventions to break the generational dependency on coal mining. Without structured employment policies, skill development programs, and stronger government oversight, mining communities will continue to face cycles of poverty and exploitation. The findings of this research

contribute to the broader understanding of the socio-economic conditions of mining labourers, making it evident that coal mining in Assam is not just an environmental and regulatory issue but a human rights concern. While this study provides an in-depth look into the economic conditions of mine workers through personal interviews and field research, it remains a micro research project that captures only a fraction of the larger, complex reality surrounding mining-dependent communities. Further extensive research is needed to develop long-term solutions for these workers and their families.

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**PRESERVING THE ANCIENT WISDOM:
AN EXPLORATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL
PRACTICES AMONG THE MISHING COMMUNITY IN
NONGKHON, NAMSAI DISTRICT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

Bipul Bez

Prof. (Dr.) Sumita Sarkar

Abstract

Traditional medicine refers to the knowledge, practices and skills developed over generations within various cultures to prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illnesses. Traditional medicinal practices are a cornerstone of indigenous knowledge systems, reflecting a deep understanding of nature and health passed down through generations. This research aims to explore the traditional medicinal knowledge and practice of the Mishing people focusing on the identification of medicinal plants, preparation methods and therapeutic uses. The Mishing community of Nongkhon in Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, has a profound legacy of traditional medicinal practices that are deeply intertwined with their cultural and ecological heritage. Drawing from ethnographic methods, interviews with community healers and field observations, the research highlights the pivotal role of plant-based remedies, rituals and spiritual beliefs in the community's approach to health and well-being. The findings reveal the profound ecological knowledge embedded in these practices and their reliance on local biodiversity. However, the study also uncovers challenges posed by globalization, deforestation and the waning interest of younger generations. The article emphasizes the need for documentation and preservation of this ancient wisdom, advocating for collaborative efforts between the community, researchers and policymakers to integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary healthcare systems. This research contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation, sustainable healthcare and biodiversity conservation.

Keywords: *Traditional medicine, Mishing community, Indigenous knowledge, Medicinal plants and Cultural preservation.*

Introduction

The Mishing community, one of the indigenous tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, has long been custodians of extensive ethnobotanical knowledge. Their traditional medicinal practices, passed down through generations are rooted in a deep understanding of the local flora and its therapeutic potentials. However, modernization and the advent of allopathic medicine have led to the gradual erosion of this knowledge. This study focuses on the Mishing community in Nongkhon, Lekang Circle, Namsai district, aiming to document their medicinal practices and evaluate their relevance in the context of contemporary healthcare.

Objectives

1. To document the traditional medicinal practices of the Mishing community in Lekang Circle.
2. To identify and catalogue the medicinal plants used by the community.
3. To analyse the methods of preparation and application of traditional medicines.

Review of Literature

Traditional medicinal practices have long played a crucial role in the healthcare systems of indigenous communities, including the Mishing tribe. Numerous scholars have documented the significance of traditional knowledge in treating various ailments and

maintaining holistic well-being. This review aims to explore the existing body of literature on the preservation of traditional medicinal practices among indigenous communities, with a specific focus on the Mishing tribe.

Indigenous knowledge systems are deeply rooted in the cultural and environmental contexts of local communities (Berkes, 2012). Traditional medicine, which relies on herbal remedies, spiritual healing and community-based knowledge has been extensively studied in various tribal societies (Shankar & Unnikrishnan, 2004). Scholars emphasize that indigenous medicinal practices are dynamic and evolve through generations based on experiential learning and oral transmission (Kumar et al., 2017).

Several studies have highlighted the rich ethnobotanical knowledge of the Mishing community, particularly in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Researchers like Doley (2015) and Pegu (2018) have documented the use of medicinal plants such as *Centella asiatica*, *Ocimum sanctum* and *Curcuma longa* for treating ailments ranging from digestive disorders to respiratory infections. The role of traditional healers, known as Bej among the Mishing has also been a subject of academic inquiry, with studies noting their reliance on both medicinal plants and ritualistic healing methods (Gogoi & Baruah, 2020).

Despite its effectiveness, traditional medicine faces significant challenges due to modernization, deforestation and declining interest among younger generations. Studies by Das and Bhuyan (2021) indicate that rapid socio-economic changes have led to the erosion of indigenous knowledge as younger community members increasingly depend on allopathic medicine. Additionally, issues of intellectual property rights and the commercialization of traditional knowledge

by pharmaceutical companies have raised concerns over biopiracy and ethical research practices (Posey, 1990).

Efforts to preserve traditional medicinal practices have been documented in various studies. Community-based conservation initiatives, such as the establishment of ethnobotanical gardens and documentation of indigenous knowledge, have been effective in maintaining traditional practices (Singh et al., 2019). Furthermore, collaborations between indigenous communities, researchers and policymakers have been advocated as a means to ensure the sustainable use of medicinal plants while respecting cultural heritage (Balick & Cox, 1996).

The existing literature highlights the importance of traditional medicinal practices among the Mishing tribe and other indigenous communities. While these practices continue to be valuable for community healthcare, they face multiple threats that necessitate preservation efforts. Future research should focus on integrating indigenous knowledge with modern healthcare systems while ensuring ethical considerations and the protection of intellectual property rights.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Field study was conducted in Nongkhon village under Lekang Circle. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with traditional healers, elderly community members and local practitioners. Focus group discussions were organized to gain collective insights into the community's medicinal practices, beliefs and the transmission of knowledge.

Results

The Mishing tribe, indigenous to the northeastern part of India, has a rich tradition of using natural resources for healing and medicinal purposes. They have a deep connection with nature, relying on various natural herbs and shrubs for traditional medicinal purposes. Their knowledge of the local flora is deeply intertwined with their culture and way of life, passed down through generations, allowing them to harness the healing properties of various plants found in their environment. Some of the edible herbs and shrubs used by the Mishing tribe and their associated health benefits:

Bhedailota

- “Gotu Kola”, is another significant plant in the Mishing community’s traditional medicine. It is commonly used to treat skin disorders, wounds, and burns. The leaves are consumed either raw or in a decoction to enhance memory and cognitive abilities. For skin healing, a paste made from the leaves is applied to wounds and burns, promoting faster recovery.
- Healers extract the juice from fresh Gotu Kola leaves and apply it directly to wounds or skin lesions. The plant’s leaves are also used in making a poultice that is applied to burns and cuts. The Mishing community believes that Gotu Kola accelerates healing and reduces scarring.
- **Health Benefits:** Commonly known as Gotu Kola, this herb is used for its revitalizing properties. It is believed to enhance memory, promote longevity and improve overall mental clarity. The Mishing tribe uses it to treat wounds, skin conditions, gastric and as a general tonic for improving health.
- **Usage:** The leaves are consumed raw, often added to salads or made into a paste for

topical application on wounds and skin ailments.

Manimuni

- **Health Benefits:** Known as Brahmi, this herb is revered in Ayurvedic medicine for its cognitive-enhancing properties. It is used to treat anxiety, improve memory and boost overall brain function. It is also believed to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects.
- **Usage:** The leaves are either eaten raw or cooked. They are also sometimes ground into a paste and applied to wounds or taken as a tonic.

Modhuxuleng

- **Health Benefits:** This plant is traditionally used to treat bone fractures and joint pain. It is believed to promote bone health and speed up the healing process for fractures. It helps in digestion and improves appetite too.
- **Usage:** The stems are typically chewed or boiled to make a decoction that is consumed for its medicinal properties.

Hoom Dhekia

- **Health Benefits:** This climbing shrub is used for its anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties. The Mishing tribe uses it to treat joint pain, arthritis and other inflammatory conditions.
- **Usage:** The leaves are boiled to make a decoction that is consumed or used for bathing inflamed joints.

Laijabori

- **Health Benefits:** This herb is known for its wound-healing properties and is often used to treat cuts, abrasions and other skin injuries. It also has sedative properties and is used to treat insomnia and anxiety.
- **Usage:** The leaves are crushed to extract the juice, which is applied directly to wounds. It is also used in teas for its calming effects.

Noroxingha

- **Health Benefits:** Commonly known as curry leaves, this herb is packed with antioxidants and is known for its ability to regulate blood sugar levels, improve digestion and reduce oxidative stress.

- **Usage:** The leaves are typically used in cooking, added to curries, soups and chutneys for both flavour and medicinal benefits.

Jilmil xaak

- **Health Benefits:** This leafy green is rich in iron, calcium and other essential nutrients. It is used to treat anemia, improve digestion and promote overall health.

- **Usage:** The leaves are cooked as a vegetable, often stir-fried or added to soups.

Pohor xaak

- **Health Benefits:** This herb is used to treat colds, coughs and fevers. It is believed to have antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties.

- **Usage:** The leaves are boiled to make a decoction, which is consumed to relieve respiratory ailments.

Bihlongoni

- **Health Benefits:** Known for its digestive and anti-inflammatory properties, this herb is used to treat stomach ailments, including indigestion and gastric issues. It is also used for its diuretic effects.

- **Usage:** The leaves and young stems are consumed as a vegetable, often cooked with fish or meat or made into herbal tea.

Mugwort

- **Health Benefits:** The plant is known for its antipyretic (fever-reducing) and anti-malarial properties. It has antibacterial and antifungal effects. It contains compounds that reduce inflammation.

- **Usages:** Treatment for Malaria and Fever- The Mishing people use the leaves of Artemisia, a common herb, to treat malaria and fever. The leaves are boiled to make a decoction which is then consumed to reduce fever and alleviate the symptoms of malaria. The leaves are also used to alleviate digestive problems like indigestion and bloating.

Neem Leaves

- **Health Benefits:** Neem is a versatile shrub used extensively by the Mishing tribe. The leaves of the neem plant are known for their antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.

- **Usage:** Malaria, Skin and Antimalarial Treatment- They are used to treat skin infections, wounds and rashes. Additionally, a decoction made from neem leaves is consumed to prevent and treat malaria, reflecting the plant's antimalarial properties.

Bharangi

- **Health Benefits:** It is a medicinal herb widely used for its various health benefits. It is known for its anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties. It contains antioxidants that promote healthy skin.

- **Usage:** Anti-inflammatory and Respiratory Treatment- The Mishing tribe uses the leaves of Bharangi to treat respiratory conditions like asthma and bronchitis. The plant is also used for its anti-inflammatory properties to reduce pain and inflammation in conditions such as arthritis.

Haritaki

- **Uses:** Digestive Health, Detoxification

- **Description:** Haritaki is a tree whose fruits are used to improve digestion and detoxify the body. The Mishing tribe values it for its ability to treat constipation and promote overall gut health.

- ***Digestive Health and Detoxification:*** Haritaki is used by the Mishing tribe to promote digestive health. The fruit is consumed in powdered form to treat constipation, indigestion and other digestive issues. The dried fruits are powdered and taken with warm water or honey to aid digestion. It is also used in traditional detoxification practices to cleanse the body.

Turmeric

- ***Uses:*** Anti-inflammatory, Antiseptic, Skin Conditions

- ***Description:*** Turmeric is a common spice with powerful medicinal properties. The Mishing tribe uses it as an anti-inflammatory agent and an antiseptic for wounds and skin conditions.

- ***Preparation:*** The root is dried and ground into a powder which is then applied to wounds or mixed with water to form a paste for skin treatment.

Guava Leaves

- ***Uses:*** Diarrhea

- ***Remedy:*** Fresh guava leaves are boiled in water and the strained liquid is consumed to treat diarrhea.

Tulsi

- The Mishing community holds the Tulsi plant in high regard, not only for its religious significance but also for its use in traditional medicine. Tulsi is commonly used in rituals and as a remedy for mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

- Tulsi leaves are consumed in various forms—raw, in teas, or as a part of a ritualistic practice where the leaves are burned, and the smoke is inhaled. This practice is believed to calm the mind, reduce stress and provide spiritual protection.

- ***Use:*** Fever

- ***Remedy:*** Tulsi leaves are boiled in water and the decoction is consumed to reduce fever. Sometimes, it's mixed with black pepper for added effect.

- ***Immunity and Respiratory Disorders:*** Tulsi is revered for its medicinal properties. The Mishing tribe uses Tulsi leaves to boost immunity and combat infections. A decoction made from Tulsi leaves is consumed to treat respiratory conditions like colds, flu and bronchitis. Tulsi is also used as a general tonic to improve overall health.

Ginger and Honey

- ***Use:*** Cough and Cold

- ***Remedy:*** Fresh ginger juice mixed with honey is taken to soothe sore throats and relieve coughs.

- ***Respiratory and Digestive Health:*** Ginger is a widely used herb among the Mishing tribe. It is commonly used to treat colds, coughs and sore throats. Fresh ginger juice mixed with honey is a popular remedy for these conditions. Additionally, ginger is used to alleviate digestive issues such as nausea, indigestion and stomach cramps.

Garlic

- ***Use:*** Snake Bite

- ***Remedy:*** Crushed garlic is applied to the bite area and a garlic-infused drink is consumed as a first aid measure.

Clove

- ***Use:*** Toothache

- ***Remedy:*** Clove oil or crushed cloves are applied directly to the aching tooth for pain relief.

Black Pepper

- ***Uses:*** Cold, indigestion and gas

- ***Digestive Health and Respiratory Disorders:*** Black pepper is used as a remedy for digestive issues, including indigestion and gas. It is also used to treat colds and

respiratory congestion when mixed with other herbs like ginger.

Discussion

These plants are integral to the Mishng tribe's traditional medicine, reflecting their deep knowledge of the natural world and its healing properties.

1. Documentation of Medicinal Plants:

The study identified over 30 medicinal plant species used by the Mishng community, with detailed descriptions of their therapeutic uses. Commonly used plants include Brahmi (Manimuni) for memory enhancement, Ginger for digestive issues and Tulsi for respiratory ailments.

2. Traditional Healing Practices:

The Mishng healers employ various methods such as decoctions, bandages and infusions to treat ailments ranging from common colds to chronic diseases. The preparation of these medicines is often accompanied by rituals and prayers, reflecting the spiritual dimension of their healing practices.

3. Relevance in Contemporary Healthcare:

The study found that many of the Mishng medicinal practices have potential applications in modern healthcare, particularly in areas such as herbal medicine and preventive care. However, challenges such as the lack of scientific validation and the risk of overexploitation of medicinal plants need to be addressed.

The research highlights the importance of preserving the Mishng community's medicinal knowledge, not only for its cultural value but also for its potential contributions to sustainable healthcare. The integration of this knowledge into modern medicine requires a multidisciplinary approach,

involving ethnobotanists, pharmacologists and healthcare professionals. Efforts should also be made to document and validate these practices scientifically, ensuring that they are recognized and respected within the broader healthcare system.

Recommendations:

1. Establishment of a Community-Based Knowledge Repository:

Create a digital and physical repository of the documented medicinal practices, accessible to both the Mishng community and researchers.

2. Collaborative Research and Validation:

Encourage collaboration between traditional healers and scientific researchers to validate the efficacy of traditional medicines and explore their integration into modern healthcare.

3. Conservation of Medicinal Plants:

Implement conservation programs to protect the medicinal plant species identified in this study, ensuring their sustainable use.

4. Awareness and Education:

Organize workshops and educational programs within the community to promote the transmission of traditional knowledge to younger generations and raise awareness about its importance.

Conclusion:

The Mishng tribe's use of these herbs and shrubs reflects a deep understanding of the medicinal properties of local flora. Their traditional knowledge, rooted in close observation and long experience continues to be a valuable resource for maintaining health and treating various ailments. This tradition of herbal medicine not only provides physical benefits but also strengthens the connection between the community and

their natural environment. This knowledge, passed down through generations, is a testament to the tribe's connection with nature and its role in their well-being and while they are effective in many cases, it's always advisable to consult a healthcare professional for serious conditions.

The traditional medicinal practices of the Mishing community in Nongkhon village represent a valuable repository of indigenous knowledge. Preserving this heritage is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and for the potential benefits it offers to modern medicine. This research underscores the need for collaborative efforts to document, protect, and integrate this knowledge into contemporary healthcare, ensuring that it remains a living tradition for future generations.

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**NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE
AND TRADITION: ORAL CULTURE
IN THE WORKS OF J.M. COETZEE AND NADINE GORDIMER**

Bishnu Prasad Gogoi
Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey

Abstract

*Oral culture serves as a vital thread connecting history, identity, and resistance, particularly in societies grappling with colonial and postcolonial realities. This paper explores how J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer engage with oral traditions in selected novels: Coetzee's *Foe*, *Disgrace*, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and *Life & Times of Michael K*; and Gordimer's *July's People*, *Burger's Daughter*, *The Conservationist*, and *Once Upon a Time*. Through these works, the authors re-imagine history, amplify marginalized voices, and foreground storytelling as a means of cultural preservation and societal transformation. Coetzee's fragmented narratives and allegorical style reflect the fluidity of oral traditions; while Gordimer's incorporation of colloquial speech and communal memory underscores their collective resonance. Drawing parallels with India's diverse oral traditions, the paper highlights literature as a bridge between the oral and the written, ensuring cultural survival amidst modernity's homogenizing forces.*

Keywords: *oral culture, resistance, storytelling, tradition, marginalized voices*

Introduction

Oral culture has long been an integral part of African storytelling, and within the socio-political context of South Africa, it has served not only as a tool for preserving history but also as a form of resistance to colonial and apartheid powers. In the works of J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer, oral culture functions as a critical narrative device that subverts hegemonic power structures, offering marginalized characters a platform for resistance. The interplay between oral traditions and written literature reveals deep tensions between the preservation of indigenous identities and the imposition of foreign colonial and apartheid structures. Coetzee and Gordimer, two of the most prominent South African writers of the post-apartheid era, engage with these themes in ways that illuminate the fraught relationship between resistance, tradition, and the written word.

The following paper explores the ways in which Coetzee and Gordimer use oral

culture as both a form of resistance and a method for preserving tradition within their novels. In particular, this study will focus on *Disgrace* (Coetzee, 1999), *Foe* (Coetzee, 1986), *Burger's Daughter* (Gordimer, 1979), and *July's People* (Gordimer, 1981), examining how these authors navigate the complexities of oral storytelling as a means of preserving marginalized voices, confronting colonial and apartheid legacies, and offering new forms of narrative power.

Objectives

The central objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Examine the role of oral culture in resisting colonial and apartheid power in the works of J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer.
2. Analyze the incorporation of oral traditions to preserve cultural identity and history in these novels.
3. Explore how both authors position oral culture against written language and its

political implications.

4. Assess critical perspectives on the significance of oral culture in these works and its socio-political impact in post-apartheid South Africa.

Methodology

This paper employs a comparative literary analysis of selected novels by J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. Both authors' works are notable for their engagement with themes of colonialism, apartheid, and post-apartheid transition. The novels selected for this study are *Disgrace* and *Foe* by Coetzee, and *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People* by Gordimer. These texts are chosen for their extensive use of oral culture as a narrative device, which is instrumental in their explorations of resistance, identity, and memory.

In addition to primary textual analysis, this paper includes a comprehensive review of secondary sources, drawing on the critical commentary of scholars such as Derek Attridge, David Attwell, Sarah Nuttall, and Richard Ball. These critics provide key insights into how Coetzee and Gordimer manipulate oral culture to subvert colonial and apartheid ideologies, challenging the political and cultural hegemony of the written word.

Discussion

Oral Culture and Resistance in Coetzee's Works

Coetzee's engagement with oral culture is complex, as it reflects an ongoing tension between the written word—an instrument historically tied to colonial authority—and the oral traditions that emerge as vehicles of resistance, survival, and subversion. In *Disgrace*, Coetzee navigates this tension through the portrayal of David Lurie, a white professor in post-apartheid South Africa, who must come to terms with his personal

and moral failings in the aftermath of his inappropriate actions. As Lurie attempts to navigate the shifting political and social landscape of the new South Africa, Coetzee uses silence and oral storytelling to convey forms of resistance, particularly through the character of Lucy, Lurie's daughter.

Lucy's story is a powerful example of how the silencing of the oppressed can become a tool of resistance in a post-apartheid society. After suffering a brutal assault, Lucy chooses not to speak out about her trauma in the same way that one might expect from a victim, especially in a society that continuously demands the airing of injustices. Coetzee presents this silence as a subtle but potent act of defiance against the dominant, colonial-driven narrative that prioritizes written forms of truth and testimony. Rather than submitting to a narrative dictated by others, Lucy's silence challenges the reader's expectations, forcing a confrontation with the limitations of language in representing trauma and the complexities of individual choice in the face of violence.

In the absence of overtly verbal resistance, Lucy's quiet resilience can be read as an expression of her inner strength, one that refuses to conform to societal demands for cathartic release or the public consumption of pain. Through this, Coetzee foregrounds the relationship between the personal, the political, and the communal in post-apartheid South Africa. Lucy's silence becomes a form of oral resistance—one that is not bound by the written narratives or the state-sponsored truth commissions that dominated the cultural landscape in the aftermath of apartheid. The focus on silence as a counterpoint to conventional storytelling techniques reflects Coetzee's broader exploration of how oral traditions, with their

power to evade written constraints, continue to subvert hegemonic forces in the post-colonial context.

By giving voice to this silence, Coetzee offers a critique of the dominant modes of representing historical trauma, while also suggesting that oral culture—whether through silence or speech—remains a vital form of resistance against the prevailing power structures of both apartheid and the post-apartheid era. Thus, Lucy's quiet strength challenges the narrative that oral traditions are merely passive or supplementary, revealing instead their profound capacity to resist and redefine the boundaries of knowledge and cultural identity.

Lucy's experience of trauma and silence is a poignant commentary on the way apartheid's violence is inscribed on the bodies and lives of women. Coetzee strategically allows Melanie, the victim of Lurie's assault, to remain silent throughout the novel, demonstrating the ways in which women in post-apartheid South Africa are both objectified and silenced. This silence, as Derek **Attridge** (2003) noted, "*becomes a form of resistance to Lurie's attempt to dominate and control the narrative of his own life*" (Attridge, 2003, p. 163). Melanie's silence echoes a larger societal silence surrounding the brutalities of apartheid, a silence that is only pierced by the oral histories and testimonies of victims that can never be fully articulated in written form.

In *Foe*, Coetzee engages in a bold reimagining of the canonical narrative of Robinson Crusoe, placing the character of Friday at the very center of the story. Whereas in Daniel Defoe's original text, Friday is reduced to a mute, subjugated figure—a symbol of colonial domination and racial otherness—Coetzee's retelling offers a profound reconfiguration. In Coetzee's version, Friday is given agency, voice, and the

opportunity to reclaim his own narrative, challenging the colonial silencing of indigenous voices and the very foundations of colonial discourse.

By placing Friday at the heart of the novel, Coetzee complicates the power dynamics between colonizer and colonized, emphasizing the importance of storytelling in the construction of identity and history. Friday is no longer simply a passive object of Crusoe's imperial gaze, but a subject with his own capacity for resistance. In the novel, Friday's silence is not an absence but a deliberate, layered choice that underscores the tension between the written and oral cultures. Coetzee reimagines Friday's voice as one that can disrupt and reframe the colonial narrative—by giving him the power to tell his own story, Coetzee emphasizes the importance of recovering silenced histories and reasserting cultural agency.

The novel's engagement with oral culture becomes central in this context. While Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* privileges the written word as the means of knowledge production and the primary medium of power, Coetzee flips this dynamic. In *Foe*, oral culture and the spoken word become vital forms of resistance, challenging the colonial legacy that ties the authority of knowledge to the written text. In the process, Coetzee undermines the Eurocentric notion that writing alone carries the power to shape reality and define the terms of social existence. By amplifying Friday's voice in his retelling, Coetzee demonstrates that oral traditions, often considered "unsophisticated" or "primitive" by colonial powers, have their own formidable strength in resisting hegemonic forces and asserting autonomy.

Friday's reclamation of narrative power is emblematic of a larger critique of colonialist literature, where the subjugated are

historically denied the right to articulate their experiences or shape their identities. Coetzee's Friday challenges this power dynamic, making it clear that the act of storytelling is inherently political. The ability to narrate one's own story is not only an assertion of self-determination but a fundamental resistance to the structures of oppression that have historically relegated indigenous and marginalized voices to silence.

In this way, *Foe* offers a rich, complex exploration of the politics of narrative, memory, and power. Coetzee's retelling of Friday's story speaks directly to the struggle for narrative authority that is so central to postcolonial discourse, using oral culture as both a symbol of resistance and a tool for reclaiming agency in a world where colonial legacies continue to exert influence.

David Attwell (2006) remarks that Coetzee's *Foe* "*compels the reader to confront the limits of the written word, while also affirming the potential of oral storytelling to reconstruct history*" (Attwell, 2006, p. 98). By making Friday a full participant in the narrative, Coetzee allows oral traditions to disrupt colonial authority and reorient the reader's understanding of power and narrative ownership.

Oral Culture and Memory in Gordimer's Works

Nadine Gordimer, too, engages deeply with oral culture in her exploration of resistance and tradition. In *Burger's Daughter*, the protagonist, Rosa Burger, must come to terms with her father's involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle and the political legacies of her family. The novel portrays a fractured and complex South African society, in which personal histories and political movements are intertwined. Oral history plays a key role in preserving the struggles of the past and ensuring that these memories are

not lost in the face of political transition.

Rosa's search for meaning is facilitated by conversations with individuals who impart their oral recollections of her father's activism. These exchanges of oral history serve as a means of bridging the personal and political, highlighting how traditional narratives of resistance are passed down through generations. As **Sarah Nuttall** (2009) observes, "*In Gordimer's narrative, oral culture becomes a repository for the collective memory of resistance, ensuring that history is not erased but carried forward*" (Nuttall, 2009, p. 161). Through the use of oral storytelling, Gordimer reaffirms the significance of collective memory and the role of oral traditions in the survival of marginalized histories.

Similarly, in *July's People*, Gordimer places oral culture at the heart of the novel's post-apartheid transition. The novel follows the collapse of the apartheid system and the subsequent upheaval of power structures. July, a servant who once worked for the white Smales family, becomes an unlikely figure of authority in the new social order. July's stories—told in his own voice—become a means of asserting agency in a world that seeks to control the narratives of both the oppressed and the oppressor.

In *July's People*, oral traditions are also a means of survival. July's stories represent not only a link to the past but a mode of negotiating the present in a world that is rapidly changing. His narrative is essential to understanding the transition from apartheid to the uncertain political future of post-apartheid South Africa. Gordimer's exploration of oral culture highlights how storytelling, rooted in tradition, becomes an act of resistance against the erasure of histories and the imposition of new, hegemonic narratives.

The Politics of Memory and Resistance through Oral Culture

The tension between written and oral forms of knowledge is a crucial thematic thread in both Coetzee's and Gordimer's works, reflecting the broader postcolonial critique of how history and identity have been constructed and controlled. The written word, traditionally associated with colonial power, has been wielded as a tool of authority, legitimizing dominant narratives while silencing those who fall outside the scope of colonial discourse. In contrast, oral traditions emerge as powerful subversive practices that resist the hegemony of the written word, allowing marginalized voices to assert their own histories and experiences. Both Coetzee and Gordimer explore this dynamic, highlighting the inadequacy of the written word to capture the full complexity and richness of South African history, particularly in the context of the traumatic legacies of colonialism and apartheid.

For both authors, the written word is not just a means of communication but a symbol of colonial control. In Coetzee's *Disgrace* and *Foe*, the written text is deeply embedded in the colonial project, a vehicle for imposing foreign narratives and silencing indigenous voices. The written word has the power to shape identity, dictate truth, and define the terms of social and political existence. Yet, in both of these works, Coetzee challenges the notion that written language alone is sufficient to tell the full story of the South African experience. By giving prominence to oral traditions, silence, and the unspoken, Coetzee suggests that these alternative forms of knowledge carry their own significance, capable of offering resistance to the colonial structures embedded in the written word.

Similarly, Gordimer's novels, such as *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People*, explore the limitations of written history in conveying the full scope of South African lived experience,

particularly for those oppressed by apartheid. Gordimer often highlights the gap between official narratives—those inscribed in legal and political documents—and they lived realities of the people who are most affected by injustice. Her characters, often caught between the written and the oral, navigate a world in which language itself has been distorted and weaponized. In her portrayal of the struggles of marginalized individuals, Gordimer underscores the importance of oral narratives as a means of preserving and transmitting experiences that are excluded or suppressed by official histories.

For both Coetzee and Gordimer, the written word cannot fully encompass the history of South Africa, which is marked by violence, displacement, and racialized oppression. The written word, bound to colonial structures, is seen as an inadequate vehicle for representing the complexities of these histories. Instead, oral traditions—stories passed down through generations, experiences shared in speech rather than text—serve as a counterpoint to the official narratives that have been inscribed in colonial and apartheid-era documents. These oral forms of knowledge are not simply forms of resistance but also vehicles for healing, reclaiming, and constructing alternative histories, offering a more authentic and inclusive vision of South Africa's past.

Both authors imply that the stories of the marginalized cannot be adequately captured by the written word alone, and that a broader, more inclusive understanding of history requires the integration of oral traditions, where experiences are not bound by the constraints of the written form. In this way, the tension between written and oral forms of knowledge becomes a site of cultural negotiation and resistance, where the boundaries of history and truth are continually redrawn, and where the voices of those oppressed by colonialism and apartheid can be heard, even in the absence

of formal recognition. By highlighting the inadequacy of the written word and giving space to oral traditions, both Coetzee and Gordimer create powerful critiques of the colonial legacy and advocate for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of South African history.

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee critiques the colonial and apartheid legacies that are embedded in the written history of South Africa. The novel explores the violence of the past and the limitations of traditional narrative forms in representing the complexities of post-apartheid society. By allowing characters to engage in oral storytelling, Coetzee suggests that history cannot be fully contained within the confines of written language. In contrast to the “official” history of apartheid, oral culture offers a more nuanced and multifaceted account of the past, one that resists the simplifications imposed by dominant political discourses.

In *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People*, Gordimer similarly uses oral storytelling to confront the erasure of histories that do not fit within the dominant national narrative. Oral history becomes a means of resisting forgetting, of holding onto the lived experiences of individuals who fought against apartheid. In both novels, oral culture serves not only as a form of resistance but also as a mechanism for rebuilding community and identity in the aftermath of a brutal regime.

Critics' Comments and Observations

Critics have long commented on the role of oral culture in both Coetzee's and Gordimer's works. **Richard Ball** (2010) argues that “oral traditions in South African literature are often seen as subversive because they counteract the hegemony of the written word, offering an alternative means of representing history and identity” (Ball, 2010, p. 220). This perspective is particularly relevant in Coetzee's *Foe*, where oral culture challenges the colonial framework of history as recorded by Western writers.

Similarly, in Gordimer's works, the act of telling oral stories becomes an act of resistance against the erasure of the anti-apartheid struggle. **Nuttall** (2009) notes that “oral traditions in Gordimer's novels are not merely historical records, but living, breathing practices that resist colonial legacies” (Nuttall, 2009, p. 190). These traditions offer a space where marginalized voices can reclaim agency and where history can be re-imagined in the service of liberation and cultural preservation.

Conclusion

The exploration of oral culture in the works of J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer reveals its transformative potential as a form of resistance and preservation. By foregrounding oral storytelling, both authors challenge the hegemony of written narratives, offering a vision of history and identity that is rooted in lived experience and collective memory. Through their engagement with oral culture, Coetzee and Gordimer provide powerful critiques of colonial and apartheid power structures while also offering a hopeful vision of cultural survival and resistance in post-apartheid South Africa.

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ASPECTS OF INDIAN ASTRONOMY AND ASTRONOMICAL INSTRUMENTS: A REVIEW

D.K. Sondhiya

Priyanka Gupta

Abstract

The current analysis focuses on the pioneering achievements of Ancient Indian astronomers, from their origins in the Vedas to groundbreaking works like the Aryabhatiya and Brahmasphutasiddhanta. Astronomical principles have been employed in ancient India since antiquity to determine the passage of time, equinoxes, and solstices for agricultural and religious purposes. The Vedas, a corpus of Brahmanic literature, were authored by Aryans. There are four Vedas: the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda, and the Atharva Veda. Each of the four Vedas consists of the Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upanisad. The Rigveda Samhita was created between 1500 and 1000 BC. The Vedic astronomical book known as Jyotishavedanga was written about the first millennium BC. The study of planetary motion by the Bhaskara I revealed their mathematical talents. Beyond science, astronomy was intricately tied to culture and religion, with implications for architecture and everyday life. Their understanding of the moon's motions led to the development of the Tithi System. This approach, which relied on the moon's phases, was extraordinarily accurate in determining favorable times for a range of tasks, including religious rituals and agricultural.

Indian astronomers invented some celestial instruments for precision measurement and calculation, which are described in ancient literature. Brahmagupta specified ten types of instruments in the early seventh century, and all subsequent writers followed suit with minor changes. Indian astronomy used several tools, including the Water clock (Ghati yantra), Gnomon (Shanku), Cross-staff (Yasti yantra), Armillary sphere (Gola-yantra), board for measuring time from the sun's altitude (Phalaka yantra), Sundial (Kapala yantra), and Astrolabe. Brahmagupta's works, such as Brahmasphuta Siddhanta and Khandakhadya, gained popularity in Baghdad and were translated into Arabic. This book introduced Arabs to Indian astronomy and mathematics. In 11th century Alberuni, arrived in India and admired the Brahmagupta and other Indian mathematicians and astronomers. The production and use of these antique equipment, as well as the development of conventional astronomy, continued until the late 19th century. Ancient Indian astronomers were particularly interested in lunar and solar events. Tithi System and Surya Siddhanta, provided detailed information on lunar and solar eclipses and accurately described the causes, periodicity, and processes for predicting solar eclipses. Ancient Indians were among the first to understand the celestial science of eclipses.

This article delves into the fascinating history of Ancient Indian Astronomy, including the remarkable discoveries and innovative technology that have helped shape our understanding of the Universe. It was intricately connected to religion, philosophy, and culture. Nakshatras, or moon mansions, played an important role in both astronomy and astrology. These 27 moon constellations were extremely culturally and religiously significant, guiding many aspects of life, including marriage and agriculture. Astronomy was critical to the design and construction of monuments and temples. The Sun Temple at Konark, which faces east to catch the sun's first rays, is one of many ancient temples that were properly aligned with astronomy.

Keywords: Vedic period, Tithi System, Surya Siddhanta, Brahmagupta and Lunar and Solar eclipse

1. Introduction

Ancient Indian astronomers made substantial contributions to the subject, expanding our understanding of celestial

bodies, their movements, and the fundamental principles that govern the cosmos. According to Vedic literature, instruments with rudimentary mechanics were

employed to measure vertical angle, horizontal angle, and angles in an inclined plane, distances, and height. Time was measured using water containers and a system that used the water head as a potential. The Vedanga Jyotisha, which dates from roughly 1400 BCE, is one of the oldest known astronomical texts [1]. It established criteria for choosing auspicious dates for rituals and religious rites based on cosmic phenomena. The Aryabhatiya, written by Aryabhata in the 5th century CE, constituted a watershed moment in Indian astronomy. This famous treatise proposed a heliocentric solar system with the Earth spinning on its axis, more than a millennium before Copernicus. Another great astronomer, Brahmagupta, made substantial contributions in the seventh century CE. His work, the Brahmasphutasiddhanta, includes in-depth explanations of celestial body motion, precise predictions of solar and lunar eclipses, and the application of mathematical formulas to compute planetary positions [2]. Bhaskaracharya (1114-1185) was a great Indian mathematician and astronomer who authored the book 'Siddhanta Shiromani'. In his book, he discussed his astronomical observations of planetary placements, conjunctions, eclipses, cosmography, geography, mathematical procedures, and provided references to many of the instruments used by previous astronomers.

2. Historical Review

A. Period of Suryasiddhanta (1000 BC)

Ancient Indian civilization were using astronomy equipment prior to 1000 BC. During this time, one of the most famous books, 'Suryasiddhanta', was written for astronomical calculations. The word 'Suryasiddhanta' means sun theory, and it focuses on calculating the positions of stars and planets. Some Indian mathematicians later created their own tools and methods to

aid the notion of 'Suryasiddhanta'[3].

B. Aryabhata (476 AD)

He created instruments such as the chakra yantra (disk instrument), the Gola yantra (a form of armoured sphere), and shadow instruments.

i. Chakra Yantra



Fig. 1 Chakra Yantra (Courtesy: <https://www.sanskritimagazine.com/ancient-indian-astronomical-instruments-of-bhaskaracharya/>)

This contraption is known as the Chakra Yantra, which means "disk machine". This device is a protractor that is used for angular land marking and city location. It was also used to measure time and certain astrological factors such as 'natta' and 'unnatta'. On the surface of this disk, a particular architecture is recommended to designate the E-W-N-S direction.

C. Varahamihira (505 AD)

He has done an excellent job of compiling five astronomical hypotheses. The assembled book is called as 'Panchasiddhanta'. Varahamihira's most well-known work was the Brihat Samhita, an encyclopedic study of architecture, temples, planetary motions, eclipses, timekeeping, astrology, seasons, cloud formation, rainfall, agriculture, mathematics, gemology, scents, and many other topics [4]. Varahamihira states that, while he summarized previous works on astronomy, the Shilpa Sastra, and temple construction in some lines, his explanation of

many design principles and models is one of the earliest books that remain.

D. Bhaskaracharya (1072 AD)

He was a prominent Indian mathematician and astronomer who wrote the book 'Siddhantshiromani'. In his book, he documents vital ancient literature and provides references to many of the instruments used by astronomers before him. Similarly, he detailed the numerous procedures for using these devices.

i. Semicircular disk machine of Bhaskaracharya

This machine is known as the Chaapa Yantra (Chaapa means semicircle). Basically, it was used to measure vertical angles. Bhaskaracharya used this equipment to compute the heights of terrestrial objects, the diameters of the earth and moon, the circumference of the earth, and the distance between the moon and the earth. The height of the terrestrial item was calculated by focusing a stick at its bottom and top and measuring the angle. This angle was then utilized to compute height using *jya* and *cotijya*. This *jya* and *cotijya* are analogous to sine and cosine, respectively. Siddhanta Shiromani also provides a description of this instrument.



Fig. 3 chaapa -yantra

ii. Star positioning instrument of Bhaskaracharya



Fig. 4 Gola-yantra

The instrument is known as Gola-yantra. The photograph shown here was taken in Kota Fort in Rajasthan. An important astronomical instrument used for astronomical measurement with precision. This instrument is known as Gola yantra and has been also described in the text of 'Siddhantshiromani'. Instrument used by Aryabhata for star positioning consists of one horizontal disk, positioned in East-West-North-South direction and another similar disk held perpendicular to it with a plumb bob arrangement.

iii. Time measuring machine of Bhaskaracharya



Fig.5 Time measuring machine

This contraption was known as the 'Jala chakra yantra' (waterwheel machine). It is a time measurement device described in the book Siddhanta Shiromani. This system maintains a balance between mercury in the tubes and water in the vessels. This device employs water head as a potential. In the starting position, the containers are empty, and mercury is lower on the wheel. As the water collects in one of the containers, the wheel begins to rotate. A stage occurs as mercury slides from one end of the tube to the other, creating an imbalance that forces the wheel to circle faster. Because of mercury, the wheel rotates in jerks. If four containers are used then each container rotates the wheel by 90 degrees.

3. Astronomical Treatises

3.1 Instruments of Precision

Ancient Indian astronomers created a wide range of devices to aid in their

astronomical observations and calculations. One such equipment was the Yantra, a geometrical device used to measure angles and locate celestial objects. The Ram Yantra and the Digamsha Yantra were two instances of such precision tools. The Gnomon, a simple but effective tool, was used to determine the height of celestial bodies. This complicated equipment enables astronomers to precisely measure the locations of stars and planets. It contributed to the accurate forecast of astronomical events such as eclipses.

3.2 Planetary Motion and Predictions

Ancient Indian astronomers made significant advances in understanding the motion of the planets. They created mathematical models to characterize the planets' elliptical trajectories and reliably anticipate their positions in the night sky. The Siddhantas, a collection of astronomy-related literature, included useful information about planetary motion and placements.

The Bhaskara I Theory is one of ancient India's most well-known planetary theories. This theory explained planetary motion in detail and predicted planetary positions with remarkable accuracy.

3.3 Celestial Insights and Cultural Impact

Both astronomy and astrology relied heavily on the concept of Nakshatras, or moon mansions. These 27 moon constellations were extremely culturally and religiously significant, guiding various aspects of life from marriage to agriculture. Astronomy played an important role in the design and construction of temples and monuments.

3.4 Lunar and Solar Observations

Ancient Indian astronomers were keenly interested in lunar and solar occurrences. Their understanding of the moon's motions resulted in the creation of the Tithi System, a lunar calendar. This technique, based on the moon's phases, was extremely accurate in

selecting auspicious times for a variety of tasks, including religious rituals and agriculture.

4. Conclusion

Ancient India was undoubtedly the center of astronomy. Setting up a distinct school of ancient knowledge after independence could have helped India achieve global leadership in development. Sanskrit is commonly used in religious texts like Puranas, Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other epics.

The contributions of ancient Indian astronomy had a long-lasting global impact. Indian astronomy expertise expanded to nearby regions, including Persia and Greece, influencing the works of well-known astronomers such as Al-Biruni and Ptolemy. The mathematical and observational techniques created by Indian astronomers spread across cultures, influencing the path of global astronomy. Finally, ancient Indian astronomy demonstrates a civilization's intellectual prowess in seeking inspiration and insight from the stars. These early astronomers' findings, instruments, and celestial insights continue to inspire and shape modern astronomy, highlighting India's scientific legacy. . Our glory has hidden in our past, which might be brought in to light with some innovative ideas to restore our lost position

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORAL LITERATURE IN THE ASSAMESE CONTEXT

Daisy Priya Gogoi

Abstract

Prior to writing and print, it is the oral tradition that served as solitary means of communication and the maintenance of societies. It is through the oral literature that the emotions and feelings of the people are passed on from one generation to the next and preserved through passing centuries. Every community in the world has their own literature, both in written as well as in oral form. Oral tradition, in the simplest of terms, refers to the preservation of the customs, beliefs, cultural practices, idioms and preachings of a particular cultural group or community by means of verbally passing down the information from one generation to the next with the help of language. Although the British invasion and many other amalgamations have changed or added to the culture of Assam, the oral tradition still exists and has helped preserve the age-old traditions of the Assamese culture in their truest form. Oral literature, which is also called folk literature, express the emotions and feelings of the common people, or it is used by groups to uphold their cultural traditions in group form. Assamese folk culture is rich and diverse as Assam serves as the meeting point of various communities with their own faiths, customs and cultures. This paper shall, thus, attempt to study the oral literature of Assamese people and the various sub-genres it includes.

Keywords: *oral literature, Assam, communication, culture, tradition, folk literature.*

Introduction

Every community in the world has their own literature, both in written as well as in oral form. The first method of communication for human beings was the oral tradition. Speaking out or verbally communicating one's thoughts and beliefs by the medium of language was the primary means of transmitting, storing and preserving knowledge, art and literature. Oral tradition, in the simplest of terms, refers to the preservation of the customs, beliefs, cultural practices, idioms and preachings of a particular cultural group or community by means of verbally passing down the information from one generation to the next with the help of language. Prior to writing and print, it is the oral tradition that served as sole means of communication in societies. It is through the oral literature that the emotions and feelings of the speaker is communicated to the listener. By verbal communication, information is relayed by older generation to the next or younger generation and thus, preserved. Folk culture

is the mirror of any society and thus, helping people understand about its religious, cultural and other aspects unique to them.

Oral tradition refers to the passing down of stories, legends, myths, and cultural values through spoken word, from one generation to the next. This ancient practice has played a vital role in preserving cultural heritage, shaping community identities, and influencing literary and artistic works. Oral literature, which is also called folk literature, can express the emotions and feelings of the common people, or it is used by groups to uphold their cultural traditions in group form. The oral communication done through storytelling is interesting and entertaining, while being educative and instructive at the same time. The beauty of orally passing down a culture's original beliefs, customs and traditions by the experienced and elderly to the young minds, who are entrusted with it for the future, cannot be found in print or written media. Oral literature creates a bond between the speaker and the listener or the listeners, thus attaching an emotional significance, which

perhaps cannot be felt to that extent in written literature. It is true in case of various regional communities and tribes in various places all across the globe, not excluding the state of Assam. Assam is a state in North East India, the largest in terms of population and second in terms of area in the North East. Assamese is the major and the official language of Assam. Not only is the landscape unique and fascinating, but the art, culture and literature of Assam is also interesting and intriguing. Although the British invasion and many other amalgamations have changed or added to the culture of Assam, the oral tradition still exists and has helped preserve the age-old traditions of the Assamese culture in their truest form. Assamese folk culture is rich and diverse as Assam serves as the meeting point of various communities with their own faiths, customs and cultures. This paper shall, thus, attempt to study the oral literature of Assamese people and the various sub-genres it includes.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to study the diverse array of folk literature of the Assamese people through which the unique traditions of the Assamese people have been preserved.

Furthermore, the paper also attempts to analyze the oral tradition as a method of passing down of culture-specific references and myths among the people of Assam. It shall also analyze the distinct divisions under the broad umbrella term of oral literature of Assam.

Methodology

The methodology used is mostly analytical. The sources used for this paper are research papers, articles and webpages. Furthermore, information has also been collected from local people and they have helped in finding more resources vital to the oral tradition.

Discussion

“Storyteller through his art of word gives us access to the very heart of the world with the primacy of visual perception and descriptions with aural sensitivity by descending into a landscape, the music of the world, rhythms and melodies”, states Dr. Arunima Das and Dr. Rabindranath Sarma in their work “Digitisation and Challenges: A Study of Assamese Oral Narratives”. Indeed, the oral tradition is crucial and in fact, one of the most significant means through which the culture-specific history and values of a particular community can be preserved and upheld. The unique and diverse customs of various groups across the globe were conserved by the elders by conveying them to the young generations through their voice, i.e., verbally or orally. No modern-day print media or other forms of writing in pamphlets was used to memorize the cultural traditions and practices of an individual’s particular tribe. Narrowing down the focus to regional groups, in our very own state of Assam, there are idioms and myths which each and every child knows ever since they learn how to speak and understand language. This is through the rhythmic repetition of the information either as lullabies, songs, or as a part of every day language.

The term oral literature became popular only after R.M. Dorson used. The oral literature is transmitted orally basing on the collective memory from one generation to another generation. Assamese folk literature is very resourceful. Assam is in true sense, a meeting point of many communities, faiths and cultures. This state has always been the hub of cultural diversity owing to multiple ethnic and non-ethnic communities living herein. Therefore, the oral literature of Assam is very rich. (Deka, 51)

Oral literature does not limit itself to academic barriers. Instead, it is a means of expressing the raw and genuine emotions of

common people, either in the form of lyrics, verses or simple normal every day spoken language. Oral literature is also often considered synonymous with folk literature. The Assamese folk literature is fascinating and is the oral means of preserving the rich heritage of Assamese culture. It might include myths, legends, tales, riddles, idioms, and even lullabies. One of the most interesting and entertaining way how the cultural tradition of Assam is conserved is through the folk songs. Mostly associated with festivities and agriculture, folk song is a vital part of the oral tradition and include songs called the *Ainaam*, *Biyanaam*, *Bihu sings*, *busori*, *Bambolpita songs*, *Mahoho* songs among the many. Historical ballads (*Barphukanargeet*, *Maniram Dewanargeet*, *ChikanSariharargeet*, etc.), mythological ballads (*Sati Radhikargeet*, *Manikurwarargeet*, *Beula-lakhindarargeet*, *Barnadirgeet*) and imaginary ballads sung by mothers as lullabies also exist and are all in narrative or oral forms. There are also working songs relief the pain of hard work to the worker, like for instance the *Nisukanigeet* (Lullaby), *Naokhelorgeet* (Songs of Boating), *Garakhijageet* (Songs of cowboys) etc. all fall into the category of Assamese working songs.

The Bihu songs are the songs sung typically to reflect the joy of Bohag Bihu, the grandest of the three Bihu festivals of the Assamese people. The pepa, toka and dhul are some of the primary instruments played during Bihu dance and are an indispensable part of the presentation of the performances.

Sote goiyegoie Bohage palehi,

Fulile vebeli lota;

Koi nu koi thakile uroke nopore,

Bobagor bibutir kotha

These lines of this song, which roughly translate to - with the ending of *Sot* or *Chaitra*

and the incoming of *Bohag* or *Vaishak*, the bhebeli or stink vines are in bloom. No matter how much we speak of Bihu, the joy of Bihu is indescribable- have been sung from several generations till date by Assamese youths during Bihu and have been passed on through the oral tradition. Songs like “Roi Roi Moti, Moinamoti” or “Prothome Pronamur Devi Saraswati” have been preserved and passed on likewise. Even toddlers can hum or even sing the lyrics of these songs as they hear their parents or siblings sing them every now and then as they go on doing their chores in their daily lives. Every Assamese is familiar with such songs, which further help people from different parts of Assam, who are otherwise strangers, connect with each other.

The *Biyanaam* is another form of Assamese melody different from Bihu songs. They are about marriage and narrate the new life, responsibilities that the newly wed bride has to take on. It is mandatory to begin the *Biyanaam* with a uruli, which is also a verbal sound that has been used since age-old times in Assamese culture as a good omen. The sound is also believed to purify and cleanse the atmosphere, driving away evil spirits and negative energies. The sound is used to signal important rituals and ceremonies during the wedding, such as the arrival of the groom or the exchange of vows. An example of *Biyanaam* is as follows:

Ram Ram Marar Olonkar

Ram Ram Thua Kati Kora

Ram Ram Deutarar Olonkar Thuabei

Ram Ram Rame di pothaise

Ram Ram Bisitro Olonkar

Ram Ram Koru Jure Kori Luabe.

This is an example of Assamese *Biyanaam* which the women folk of Assam sing in marriages in groups. While one woman leads,

the rest follow and sign along. This type of song falls into the folk literature which communities preserve in group forms. Apart from these, *Lilawati* songs, *Jayadhan Bania's* song, *Baramahi* songs are lyrical ballads that are also part of the Assamese folk culture. These are filled with melancholy and a sad undertone expressing the young women's sorrow on her lover being far away. Interesting enough, there are also songs like *Bhekuli Biyargeet* (song celebrating frog's marriage) and *Mohkbedar Geet* (song to chase away mosquitos) which are quite unique and culture-specific.

Folktales form a crucial and most interesting part of Assamese folk culture. Whether it be children or older people, everyone enjoys listening to these tales. These tales are told as bedtime tales to children and they remember them throughout life. The tales, intentionally or unintentionally, get etched into the young minds since their fresh minds perceive them as vital information. The Assamese folk tales or *Xadhukothas* are of different genres and lengths. Perhaps there is no child that hasn't heard the sorrowful tale of *Tejimola*, or the humorous tale of *Tatun Tamuli*, or about the educative tale of *Bandor aru Xiyal*. The tale of *Tula aru Tezu* and *Kamala Kuwari* are also famous among the people of Assam. While these are fictional tales, various myths and legends are also woven into narratives that the children are told from their childhood days.

The children of one generation of Assamese people learn these from their elders who verbally transfer them to the young minds and with constant repetitions, the knowledge becomes ingrained in their minds. In case of songs or lullabies, the rhythm and beat are also unconsciously or consciously imprinted into their minds. The tale of Bir Lachit Barphukan, the great Ahom general is a tale that is as grand as King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table for the

Assamese folk and every Assamese takes pride in it. The resilience and sacrifice of Joymoti, the creation of *Joysagar Pukhuri*, etc. are some of the stories that are told to the young children by their elders so as to make them proud of the heroes of their tribe and to aspire to be brave and righteous like them. Other than these, various riddles and idioms are also used as a part of everyday speech by the local people of Assam, so much so that children understand the reference from an early age. No tutor needs to teach them those separately as these are phrases that have been passed on from one generation to another and have become a permanent part of the Assamese vocabulary that every Assamese knows. They are household phrases used in every walk and talk by the Assamese people. For instance, the phrases “*ji mula barhe tar dupatote sihn*”, “*abhyakhhor noro, korno pothe kore horo*”, “*hui thoka hxiyale haan dhoribo nuare*” and “*surgole budhi, borokhun gole japi*”- are some common household phrases which children get to listen every once in a while, in their home spoken by their grandparents or their own parents. The phrases are used to apprehend them or to give them a moral preaching. The first idiom, “*ji mula barhe tar dupatote sihn*” means that the signs of a genius can be seen in his early childhood. “*Abhyakhhor noro, korno pothe kore horo*” translates to the fact that through habit, even the most impossible task becomes possible. “*Hui thoka xiyale haan dhoribo nuare*” literally translates to- the sleeping fox can't catch the duck, but metaphorically preaches that the one who is lazy will never achieve their goal. “*Surgole budhi, borokhun gole japi*” humorously refers to the fact that sometimes we get the best and easiest idea only after the problem has been solved through hard and difficult means. These and many more such idioms have been spoken by the Assamese people since ages past and the passing generations

adopt and relay them to the next. Thus, through the oral culture, the Assamese identity and Assamese culture is preserved. Riddles, called *Xathor* in Assamese, like for instance- “habit kahe, ulai nahe”, “pet ase pet unai, mukh ase jiva nai”, “ghoror uporot ghor, tate pori mor” or “tup tup tupuli, pani pale mukoli” are some of the riddles that have been preserved and popularized through the oral tradition or folk culture of Assam. Children listen to these with curiosity and excitement, and memorize them in their minds so as to use them among their friends. They play these as guessing games and at the same time, pass on these riddles.

Conclusion

After analyzing the various literary works in different forms in the folk literature or oral literature of Assam, it is evident how the oral tradition is crucial to preserving its originality and exclusive charm. Print media and written methods of preservation, while more tangible, has the tendency of getting misinterpreted. In the modern world of digitization, most of the texts and folk songs, poems, etc. are being documented and stored in online repositories. However, there might be errors in translation, which ultimately leads to change of meaning in many cases. Furthermore, it is also to be noted that the charm and intrigue that the oral tradition holds can never be found in the written word. The way the children listen to their elders with rapt attention and sing and dance with enthusiasm on the folk songs is the primary joy which they enthrall in. At the same time, their active and youthful minds capture the tune and melody of the verbally communicated tales, songs, riddles, etc. and thus, they would play the crucial role of passing on the knowledge through the oral tradition to their own future generations. The lullabies that mothers sing for their infants, the entertaining tales that are told over a bonfire in the night, the songs and merriment enjoyed at the time of Bihu- these can be enjoyed and lived in their true sense only through the oral culture and hence, it is crucial

that the present generations are made aware of how essential it is to preserve and uphold the oral tradition prevalent in society. Furthermore, as the knowledge passes on, there might be more innovative and new changes that get added to the traditions and customs, thereby not erasing the original trends, but adding to make it more precious and enlightening.

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REVISITING FOLK TRADITIONS IN MANOJ DAS'S SELECT SHORT FICTION

Dr. Anilkumara S R

Abstract

Manoj Das, a bilingual Indian writer, incorporates Indian folk traditions in his short stories. This paper examines "Man Who Lifted the Mountain", "He Who Rode the Tiger", and "The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times" from his collection Man Who Lifted the Mountain and Other Fantasies. Drawing inspiration from Indian oral traditions, especially the Panchatantra, Das employs allegory, humour, and extraordinary aspects of life to focus on the complexities of human emotions and societal dynamics. Through his characters and narratives, the study explores how Das critiques human flaws such as pride, greed, and arrogance. These stories emphasise man's insatiable greed and the moral consequences of unchecked ambition and hubris. Simultaneously, the narratives celebrate traditional values by identifying drab, modern, and mundane urbanisation. By revisiting these folk-inspired tales, the study attempts to point out their relevance in understanding cultural identity and addressing universal themes of morality, humility, and relevance of folklore in contemporary times.

Keywords: Folk Traditions, fables and fantasies, Human Flaws, Cultural Identity.

Folklore is deeply rooted in India's cultural and social fabric and provides insights into the people's beliefs, values, and moral structures. Adrian Cole, in his review of *Man Who Lifted the Mountain and Other Fantasies*, says, "there is more than a little Arabian Nights quality to the stories and all are punctuated with very tasteful imagery and we are given a number of insights into the Indian way of things which the author delivers unobtrusively and without prejudice" (65). The stories (transmitted orally over millennia) serve as powerful tools of instruction and entertainment. In *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-two Languages*, A.K. Ramanujan argues that "folklore is not merely a record of the past but a living, dynamic force that continues to shape individual and communal identities" (14). In this context, the works of Manoj Das become significant and crucial for the contemporary world. His fiction does not merely recreate folk narratives but reinvents and reconstructs them to critique current socio-political realities and human weaknesses.

One can say that Manoj Das's short fiction is a literary treasure that assimilates fables, fantasy, and folklore to critique human nature and societal structures. His stories offer a contemporary reimagining of traditional Indian folk narratives such as the Panchatantra, Jataka Tales, Hitopadesha and Kathasaritasagara, providing readers with moral insights and essential life lessons. As Manoj Das's stories are embedded in folk traditions, they do not merely serve as decorative elements; they form the backbone of his narratives, giving them depth, cultural significance, and a timeless appeal. Consequently, one can say that Das masterfully reinterprets folklore, using it as a medium to dissect themes of human folly, ambition, greed, and arrogance, which remain relevant in modern discourse. This article examines three of his notable short stories— "The Man Who Lifted the Mountain", "He Who Rode the Tiger" and "The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times"—to explore how Das integrates folk traditions with contemporary concerns.

"The Man Who Lifted the Mountain" is

a fantasy that skilfully portrays the protagonist's insatiable greed for power. It also explores the dangers of ambition and how the lack of balance can make one's futile life. Das's fantasies have a coeval appeal to mankind. The story presents the consequences of vanity, ambition, and irrationality. The central character, Thieffou, is greedy and exploits the world to fulfil his never-ending avarice, ultimately becoming a victim of his infirmities. Thus, he represents a consciousness that prefers ignorance to knowledge and would not want to change.

Thieffou, a poor thief, seeks to exploit the mystical promise of a sentient mountain to accumulate wealth and power. The story, set in the dream of the narrator who journeys to Mount Luvurva with his companions (a geologist and an anthropologist), draws heavily from folk motifs to depict the struggle between human greed and the natural order. The central plot revolves around a grief-stricken king whose beloved daughter falls into a slumber, but none of the kingdom's finest physicians can find a cure. However, a wandering ascetic informs the King that the only cure "lies in smearing soil from beneath Mount Luvurva on the princess's body" (64). Consequently, the King declares that whoever can remove the mountain will be rewarded as the wealthiest person in the realm. Folk traditions often serve as allegorical narratives, where moral transgressions, particularly greed and pride, lead to inevitable downfall, reinforcing a cosmic sense of justice as Marina Warner in *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* states, "Fairy tales and folk stories encode social norms, preserving them through time. They offer a space where human flaws, such as hubris and greed, are met with a counterforce of fate, bringing about a resolution that teaches balance" (75).

Thieffou, who is after wealth, hears a mystical voice from the mountain, seizes the

opportunity and engages in an agreement (a deal). The mountain (the spirit of nature) offers to become as light as a jasmine flower for an hour, allowing Thieffou to collect the soil but on the condition that he must give up his habit of stealing. He pledges to reform and goes to the kingdom. He gathers nobles and commoners there, and to everyone's surprise, he lifts the mountain. Nevertheless, his newfound power fosters arrogance as Lord Action states "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Action). No longer remembering the pact, he begins showcasing his arrogance to the kingdom's elite. Then, he threatens the King and demands marriage to the princess. His hubris blinds him, so he forgets the time constraint imposed by the mountain, and then the mountain crushes him under its immense mass.

Thieffou's self-destruction can be compared to the myth of Bhasmasura, whose ambition led to his obliteration. Through this folktale, Das critiques the greed of the modern world. The one possessed by it attempts to break the natural order and equilibrium of existence. The mountain (primordial nature) is benevolent; it extends an opportunity for redemption, but when human arrogance crosses its limits, it crushes it. Folk traditions frequently portray natural elements as responsive that mediate human destiny. The mountain in this narrative serves as both an enabler and an arbiter of justice. Conversely, Thieffou's downfall epitomises the dangers of hubris. In Indian epics, the characters (Ravana and Duryodhana) suffer similar fates. In the Puranas, one can see that the arrogance often consumes even the most learned sages. Das effectively bridges the past and present by invoking folk traditions, demonstrating their enduring relevance in contemporary socio-cultural contexts.

"He Who Rode the Tiger" is another intriguing fantasy that portrays man's

ignorance, pride, greed, and arrogance. The story mocks man's obsession with prestige, false pride, and ego. The story takes place in a rural area near the capital city, where a tiger is caught in a rope trap. Two Malis (workers in the orchard) engage in a heated argument over who has the right to ride the tiger. In the end, neither is able to claim the tiger as the royal officers, the Kotwal and Rotwal, arrive at the scene. Upon learning about the disagreement, they resolve to ride the tiger themselves to assert their authority.

The minister and the commander then arrive, and they, too, begin arguing over who should ride the tiger. The commander, boasting of his family heritage, claims, "My ancestors were passionate about riding tigers. My father even rode a tiger to school (58)!" In contrast, the minister recounts his own family tradition: "In my maternal uncle's house, it was customary to keep a dozen tigers tamed and at our command (58)". Lost in their desire for recognition, both men exaggerate their family legacies, oblivious to the absurdity of their tales. While they continue to argue (swords in hand), the King approaches, and he, too, seeks to assert his superiority. The King (intoxicated by his sense of power) declares that riding the tiger is his royal privilege. However, his size prevents him from doing so, leading to further irony. Despite this, the King demands that his son ride the tiger in his stead. Uninterested in the show of power and the court's pomp, the Prince reluctantly agrees to obey his father's order. The Prince mounts the tiger, which walks off with him into the woods. As the tiger disappears into the distance, the people are left in silent fear while the King belatedly realises the consequences of his actions. The commander, sent to retrieve the Prince, returns with a bloodied piece of the Prince's clothing. Once freed, the tiger unleashes a destructive force, symbolising the destructive

nature of unchecked power. The death of the Prince (innocent and faultless) highlights the dangers of blind vanity and ego, primarily when held by those in power.

The story satirises the foolishness of seeking vain glory, with the human characters, notably the King, portrayed as beasts driven by pride. The King's ego leads to the tragic death of his son, signalling the potential downfall of both his lineage and his kingdom. P. Marudanayagam's "A Ride for Fun: Three Approaches to 'He Who Rode the Tiger'" discusses irony and humour in the story on multiple planes: On the other hand, the Prince who shies away from pomp and publicity wins the glory and rides the tiger at the cost of his life. If in Panchatantra animals and birds are endowed with human qualities, the human characters in this story, except for the Prince, are portrayed as beasts (121). The story thus reflects the dangers of pride and the consequences of the blind pursuit of honour, a theme often seen in folk traditions.

"The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times" is another intriguing fantasy in which Manoj Das blends realism and fantasy. The story is narrated through the dialogue of two Oriyan folk characters, Samanta and Abolkara, and takes place in Sage Dhiman's hermitage in a lush green forest. Tanmoy, a disciple of Sage Dhiman, and Susmitha, the Tantrik, Chandagauranga's adopted daughter, are central to the plot.

Tanmoy meets Susmitha, who used to live in a relatively dense part of the forest. Furthermore, she wins Tanmoy's heart and their love blossoms into an intimate relationship. Tanmoy pays a visit to Susmitha's residence and meets her father. She informs Tanmoy that her father has noticed a great capacity in him for Tantrik practice. Tanmoy, on the other hand, refuses to practise tantra due to its potentially harmful effects as he knows that the ways of Tantra are hard and

can be misleading unless one is extraordinarily careful. He is serious about taking up yoga. "... The Tantriks involve themselves in and delve deep into the attractions which the spiritual seekers of other disciplines are keen to avoid. The Tantriks enter the dusky tunnel of occult laws with the aim of emerging into the sunlight of truth at its other end, but only one in ten thousand succeed in that" (3). Tanmoy is aware of the perils of pursuing Tantric ways and claims that due to tantra's undeniable allure, only one in ten thousand people succeed in following it. Most of the Tantric pursuers easily trapped in the ways of tantra get carried away by "puny siddhis". As a result, they are enticed and diverted by tantra's false lights. Thus, Tanmoy subtly emphasises tantra's dangerous effect, similar to the practice of necromancy in Doctor Faustus.

Susmitha, like Faustus, disregards Tanmoy's warning and falls prey to the magical power of tantra or necromancy and secretly performs a tantrik rite with Tanmoy as its force, which could secure him a throne, without even realising its consequences. However, Sage Dhiman, seeing the ramifications of this, advises Tanmoy to confine himself to his dwelling tomorrow from sunrise to sunset. Tanmoy obeys his Guru and bathes before entering the cave, sits down, closes his eyes, and gets immersed in a light trance, but distracted by a sudden burst of unusual noise, he leaves the cave, overlooking Guru's advice. To his surprise, a massive elephant adorned with jewels and garlands, at the head of a procession with the Prime Minister, General, Kotwal, Chief Priest, and courtiers, raises its trunk and pours fragrant water from a golden pitcher on Tanmoy's head. The Prime Minister proclaims Tanmoy as the King. The General tells him that as the noble king has passed away without a male heir, the choice of the new King is made according to their tradition.

The Tantrik rite performed by Sushmita seemed to bear fruit for Tammoy. After the coronation ceremony, he takes the land's reign and does the dead king's funeral rites. All the more, he feels sad that he ignored his Guru's foresight and disobeyed his Guru. However, the consequences are more profound than his perception. Soon, he is compelled to marry Princess Haimavati despite his reluctance, leaving Sushmitha, who was instrumental in making him the king. Later, the army murders Susmitha and her father without bringing it to Tanmoy's attention. Tanmoy had to marry the Princess. As it is customary for the newlyweds to visit Varanasi, they visit the holy city. Haimavati falls gravely ill as they reach the city. Unable to recover from illness, she dies. Grief-stricken Tanmoy notices the outline of a woman in the faint light and smoke near Haimavati's dead body. The woman in the outline is Susmitha's spirit, who seeks Tanmoy's assistance to enter the queen's dead body. Tanmoy performs the rite, and the queen soon opens her eyes as Susmitha's spirit enters the queen's body. Ignorant of the intricacies of the queen's recovery, the attendants rejoice. The real crisis affects Tanmoy when Susmitha prohibits him from touching Haimavati's body because she feels tormented that he touches another woman. Tanmoy gets caught in a critical situation. Meanwhile, he wants to meet his Guru in the Himalayas; hence, he gives the charge of kingship to the queen to rule in his absence.

When Tanmoy was with his Guru for four months in Haridwar, he received a report of the queen's tyrannous activities. She had executed several nobles in his absence. Then, Tanmoy's Guru, Sage Dhiman, advises him to return to his capital to take control of the situation. Bewildered by such developments, he was enlightened with fresh insight into the whole issue when he sought clarification from his Guru. He tells him that,

unlike Tanmoy's perception, what possessed the queen is not his previous beloved's soul; it is the conflict between Susmita's soul and vital being. My boy, what possessed Queen Haimavati was by no means Sushmita's soul, but only her vital being, her life-force, an explosive reserve of her desires and passions (15).

The sage differentiates between the vital being and the soul as distinct entities. The vital being represents one's life force, desires, and passions, grounded in worldly desires, while the soul refers to a deeper essence. According to the sage, Tanmoy's confusion about the queen for Susmitha is because of the resemblance between their vital beings. When a person dies, their soul departs to its sphere to await rebirth, while the vital being, detached from the soul, may come under the influence of hostile elements and wander for a while. Therefore, as the sage suggests, the vital being should cease to exist in order for one to become a part of the eternal abode.

Tanmoy returns to his capital with this knowledge, only to learn of the queen's violent death due to a rebellious attack led by the General. Once King Tanmoy arrives, the rebels surrender and plead for his mercy. After forgiving them, King Tanmoy continues to reign in peace. Samanta narrates the story to Abolkara as the story of a queen who died one and a half times. When Abolkara wants to know what he meant, Samantha clarifies as follows: "Susmitha at first died in her own body; her vital being died once again in Haimavati's body." (16). Susmitha, like Faustus, becomes a slave to tantric energy, and the consequences are dreadful in both cases. Therefore, the story sheds light on the negative consequences of using tantric powers for personal gain that continue to damage the world even after the practitioner's death. The ancient world has been instructing the vital nature of false and true light through

such folk stories. Here, Manoj Das, by making the reader revisit such tradition, guides the current world.

In conclusion, the folklore in Manoj Das's short stories—The Man Who Lifted the Mountain, He Who Rode the Tiger, and The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times—highlight the lasting impact and, most importantly, the relevance of traditional narratives in contemporary literary discourse. Through these short fiction, Das retreats to age-old themes of human folly, ambition, pride, and the destructive consequences of unchecked desires, all rooted in folk traditions. His use of allegory, humour, and fantastical elements not only honours the rich oral heritage of India. The folk motifs in Das's works serve as timeless morals, reminding readers of the importance of humility, self-awareness, and respect for the natural order.

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ECHOES OF THE ANCESTORS: UNPACKING THE RICH ORAL HERITAGE OF THE SONOWAL KACHARI PEOPLE

Emon Sonowal

Hema Hazarika

Abstract

A culture flourishes through the passing down of oral traditions, socio-cultural values, and collective memories. Oral culture encompasses the traditions and customs that are shared and preserved through verbal communication. Assam, a state in Northeastern India, is indeed home to a rich and vibrant oral culture. The state has a diverse population with various ethnic communities, each with their own unique oral traditions, folktales, myths and legends. Among the various indigenous groups of Assam, the Sonowal Kachari is the third largest plains tribe group of people with a rich cultural heritage and a significant presence in the state. The Sonowal Kachari people are predominantly settled in various districts of upper Assam, including Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Jorhat and Golaghat. The Sonowal Kacharis have rich cultural traits and unique socio-cultural and religious traditions that set them apart from other tribes in Assam. The rich oral heritage has been preserved and transmitted across generations. This paper seeks to explore and analyze the rich oral heritage of the Sonowal Kachari People and analyze their role in preserving cultural identity.

Keywords: Ancestors, Oral Heritage, Sonowal Kachari

Introduction

Oral tradition is the transmission of cultural elements from one member to other, or others. This transmission of cultural values, customs, stories, songs, and historical events from one generation to the next occurs through verbal communication. It is in this way that the civilization is able to maintain its rich cultural heritage over generations, even in the absence of a writing system. According to Jan Vansina, a renowned historian and anthropologist, oral tradition is defined as: “verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation” which “specifies that the message must be oral statements spoken, sung or called out on musical instruments only.” (Nonglait, 2013)

Joseph Ki-Zerbo in *Oral Tradition and its Methodology* says: Oral Tradition may be defined as being a testimony transmitted verbally from one generation to another. Its special characteristics are that it is verbal and

the manner in which it is transmitted. (Nonglait, 2013)

Oral culture depicts a dynamic tradition of communal existence, characterized by the active involvement of community members in songs, dances, and storytelling. These forms of artistic expression typically do not have identifiable authors or origins, rather they embody collective experiences, historical occurrences, and social conventions that are intricately interwoven into the essence of community existence. Moreover, the absence of fixed authorship in oral traditions highlights the communal nature of these practices. Rather than being the product of individual genius, songs, dances, and stories are seen as the collective property of the community. This fosters a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for preserving and perpetuating cultural heritage. It encourages individuals to contribute their own interpretations and variations, enriching the tradition and ensuring its vitality.

Assam, one of the states in India, is home to a diverse array of ethnic communities. Following the partition of India, the state retained 23 tribes, which include 14 hill tribes from the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills, as well as 9 plains tribes residing in the Brahmaputra valley. Among these tribal communities, the Sonowal Kachari stands out as the third largest group in the plains. They are distributed across seven districts in upper Assam, namely Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji, and Lakhimpur. In ethnographic terms, the Sonowal Kacharis are classified as part of the Mongoloid community. Linguistically, they are associated with the Tibetan-Burman language family, specifically within the Burmese sub-branch under the Bodo branch.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to explore the oral traditions of Sonowal Kachari Community including ritualistic performances, songs, folkdances and the myths and legends behind them and analyse their role in preserving cultural identity.

Data Sources and methodology

The present study is mainly based on descriptive method. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used in this paper. The Primary data have been collected through observation and interview with leading personalities of the Sonowal Kachari community and also some elderly people belonging to this community. However, the secondary sources of data have been collected from various books, online journal articles, etc.

Oral Heritage of the Sonowal Kachari People

The Sonowal Kacharis are very rich in their traditions, rituals and practices, oral

traditions, material culture and performing arts. All these make the Sonowal Kachari tribe to be different from other tribal group. Some of the ritual practices, folksongs and dances such as Khiring Khiring Baithow puja, Saragdeo Puja, Hogra Dance, Bohua Dance, Haidang Huchari, Huchari Geet, Kulaburi Geet etc. has given a unique identity among the tribes of Assam.

Ritualistic Performances

Khiring Khiring Baithow Puja: is one of the most significant religious rituals of the Sonowal Kachari community. Lord Shiva is regarded as the supreme deity in their spiritual tradition, and Baithow Puja is dedicated to him. The term 'Khiring' represents four living beings (Bhraman, Gajan, Uran, Buran), while Baithow signifies the five elements- sky, fire, water, air and earth. Additionally, Ba means "five" and Thow refers to philosophy, making Baithow the "Philosophy of Five". This puja begins on the first Sunday of the lunar fortnight (Suklapaksha) in the Assamese month of Phalguna (March/April) and concluded on the third day. The central Baithow Puja celebration takes place at the Baithow Mandir in Borpothar (Dangari), Tinsukia District. Presently, this ritual is celebrated in most Sonowal Kachari inhabitant regions with great enthusiasm and grandeur for only one day.

On the first day, Sunday evening, the Pujari (priest) invokes the deities by chanting mantras and lighting nine chaki (lamps) in honor of Navani Lakhimi (i.e. Sengdoi, Bengdoi, Hakladoi, Phakladoi, Dondoi, Kuladoi, Deobahi, Hombahi and Budhbohî). Nine Pan-Tamul Tupula (betel leaf and areca nut offerings) are prepared for deities such as Khiring Raja, Gojai, Monai, Phulkonwar, Bhuruli Habuki, Saribura, Sarihal Gukhani, Sarasati and Takabahi. The worship is performed at a post of a dead Jamu plant, which represents Khiring Raja Deota.

On the second day, Monday, the Pujari relights the Na-Vani chaki and prepares Bura-hagar-jal from Rohi vodka for purification, which is then used as Santijal in the puja. Offerings of Pan-Tamul and prasad (rice and salt) are made to Khiring Raja. A red Aluwa Pakai (red rooster) is then consecrated to Khiring Khiring Baithou Deota, accompanied by the chanting of mantras. The devotees prepare a dish called Khaji from the rooster, which is then consumed as prasad. Traditional musical instruments like Bihu Dhol, Takamari, Pepa, and Gagana are played after the puja to mark the celebrations.

On the third day, Tuesday morning, the Bihu procession moves from Borsung of Rajaguri Borghor to the Baithou Mandir, accompanied by traditional dances and performances. Devotees sing Haidang Geet, Log Bihu, Leseri, and Huchari, creating an atmosphere of unity and joy. The singing and dancing, accompanied by drums and wind instruments, are believed to awaken nature and ensure a fertile land for cultivation. As an agrarian community, the Sonowal Kacharis believe that these rituals bring prosperity to their crops and well-being to their people.

Over time, Khiring Khiring Baithou Puja has gained widespread popularity among the Sonowal Kacharis. It not only preserves their ancient traditions but also strengthens their cultural identity and community bonds. The festival continues to be a vibrant expression of faith, nature worship, and agricultural heritage among the Sonowal Kachari people.

In addition to Baithow puja, Saragdeo puja is another significant religious and ritualistic function observed by the Sonowal Kachari people. This sacred ritual is deeply rooted in the community's folk beliefs, culture, and historical elements, making it an integral part of their cultural heritage. A noted folklorist and recipient of the Gagan

Chandra Sonowal award, who has also served as the Majindar (priest) of the central Baithow temple, remarks that the Saragdeo puja is performed not only in community settings but also within the confines of individual homes. Saragdeo puja primarily involves the act of worshipping the Sun. It is performed with the intention of seeking divine blessings for the wellbeing and prosperity of future generations, protection from natural calamities and disasters, relief from sickness and diseases, and safeguarding against evil forces and challenges, ultimately ensuring a safe, healthy, and prosperous future for all. The selection of offerings comprises various items, including Mejenga, Nephaphu (commonly known as East Indian Glory Bower, recognized for its medicinal properties), Mechaki, Koupat (a broad-leaved plant variety), tender cane stems, dried betel nut, raw rice cakes, chicken eggs, boiled bananas, a white rooster, a black hen, dried fish, and wine in reed containers etc. Due to the scarcity of these required items, the Saragdeo puja ritual is typically observed at intervals of 2, 3, or 5 years.

Songs and Folkdances

Bohua Dance (Bohua Nritya): Bohua Dance is a traditional folkdance performed by the Sowel Kachari Kachari Community of Assam. It is a sacred occasion for the Sonowal Kacharis, who believe it brings good fortune and helps crops grow well. Bohua Dance has multiple origin stories, one of which is linked to the marriage of Lord Shiva and Sati. According to this legend, King Daksha performed a Yagya but did not invite Shiva and Parvati. When Parvati attended uninvited, her father insulted Shiva, leading to her self-sacrifice. Enraged, Shiva created Virbhadr, who destroyed the Yagya and beheaded Daksha. After prayers from Daksha's wife, Shiva revived him with a goat's

head. Getting back the life of her husband both the king and the queen started dancing. While dancing their cloths were not in proper manner. So, the banana leaves which were used in the Yagya were given them to cover their body. This is why banana leaves are worn by the Bohua and Bohuani while performing the Bohua Dance. It takes place on the seventh day of Bohag, the first month of the Assamese calendar. Before the performance, prayers are offered, and the Bohua and Bohuani observe fasting. The dancers, covered in banana leaves and wearing gourd masks, are accompanied by a group painted in black. The performance occurs in an open space, where Bihu dancers also participate. They dance according to the beats of 'Mridang'. There is no set rule for their dance. Bohua-Bohuani as well as the followers perform dances in harmony with the beats of Mridang. The dance style they perform reflects the Bihu dance form. Bohua Dancers performs dance and jumps 7 times during the dance with the beats of Mridang where they have been throwing clothes made of Banana leaf at the river bank. Also in some places the Bohua Dancers dances on the paddy field and they turn around 7 times during their dance and after that they dive into the river and threw their dresses made of banana leaf. There is no rule to look back on their way. They believe that with the immersion of Bohua, ghosts, demons and evil spirits have been also immersed. The dancers drive away evil spirits using banana leaf sticks and later purify themselves in water without looking back. After their coming back they enjoy meal with the villagers. This event is celebrated particularly in places like Dhamalgaon (Dibrugarh), Naharani (Khowang), Laina Gaon (Tinsukia), and Bihpuria (Lakhimpur).

Hogra Dance: The Hogra dance is a distinctive traditional dance form of the

Sonowal Kachari tribe, known for its unique storytelling aspect during the performance. It is deeply rooted in their religious beliefs and cultural practices. The dance is closely associated with the worship of their deity 'Baithow' and revolves around the theme of hunting and sacrificial rituals. In earlier times, hunting was considered an enjoyable and communal activity, and on their way back, hunter would engage in various oerformances for entertainment. The Hogra Dance is believed to have originated from such tradition. According to Benu Bora, the term Hogra refers to a wild boar and the dance is closely linked to the Baithow Puja, during which a wild boar was hunted and sacrificed. He further explains that the great Kachari leader, HograBir, led these hunting expeditions, which later became the basis for the Hogra dance.

Mohan Sonowal similarly states that Hogra translates to wild boar, and after completing the religious rituals of Baithoww Puja, hunters would narrate their hunting experiences through dance. This performance, known as Hogra Nritya, depicts the challenges faced by hunters while tracking and capturing wild boars. The performers take on different roles, with some portraying the hunted animal while the chief hunter, dressed in traditional attire, prepares for the hunt with bows and arrows. As the dance progresses, it illustrates how the animals were ultimately sacrificed at sacred places like Baithow and Burha Burhi Xaal (a place of worship). Throughout the hunt, hunters would sing songs that conveyed their experiences and emotions..

One particular song narrates how, when HograBir and his group did not return from their hunt, his wife Lakhoi grew anxious. Leaving her baby in the care of a nanny, she set out in search of her husband. To calm the crying child, the nanny fed the baby rice

beer, which stopped the baby's tears. These songs, interwoven with the dance performance, provide a vivid account of Hugarbir's hunting journey and bring the legend to life through storytelling and movement.

Lecheri dance: is a prominent folk dance associated with the Sonowal Kacharis, characterized by its female dominance, this dance is traditionally performed during the Bihu festival. It shares similarities with the "Jeng Bihu". The Lecheri dance is a mesmerizing spectacle of synchronized movement and rhythm. Performed by a group of twenty dancers, this intricate dance form is characterized by precise hand gestures and deliberate leg positions. They engage in clapping, raising their hands to their hips, and bending slightly while maintaining their hips in alignment with their shoulders. Occasionally, they incorporate movements involving their toes and ankles, turning and dancing in harmony with the rhythm of the song. As the dancers move forward in unison, they hold their hands and swing them in a rhythmic back and forth motion. This traditional dance is not merely a form of entertainment; it embodies the collective spirit and resilience of the people who engage in it. The activity of gathering the remnants of the paddy from the field, known as Lecheri collecting, is a vital agricultural practice that reflects the deep connection between the community and their land. The dance that accompanies this activity serves multiple purposes: it fosters a sense of unity among participants, celebrates the fruits of their labor, and honors the agricultural traditions passed down through generations.

Kula Burhi Naas: The Kulabudi dance is a traditional performance among the Sonowal Kachari community, specifically during a girl's

"Tuloni Biya". On the night of "Gathiyong Khunda," after the bride is taken under the wedding tent, seven women dressed in white perform this dance. Each dancer holds a "kula" (a winnowing fan) on her head with her left hand and a "lakhuti" (stick) in her right hand. The "kula" carries a pair of betel nuts, betel leaves, and a bunch of hay, symbolizing fertility. The dance is performed with the belief that it will bless the bride with a strong and healthy child in the future and protect her from evil spirits. During the performance, the women gracefully balance the "kula" while gently shaking the stick in their right hand. Their movements, rather than hand gestures, are the most significant aspect of the dance. They step forward, bending slightly at the waist, then repeat the motion rhythmically. The dancers also raise their hands at the sides of their bodies, clasp their palms together, then open them again, incorporating turns and fluid motions. The dance shares similarities with "Log Bihu," particularly in the way the performers clap, raise their hands to their hips, and bend slightly while maintaining a rhythmic flow. They also dance using intricate foot movements, tapping their ankles and shifting their weight gracefully. At this stage, they do not carry the "kula" or stick, allowing for freer movement.

Haidang Huchori: Haidang huchori is a remarkable part of Sonowal kachari social life. Huchori songs are closely linked to the celebration of "Bohag Bihu". The performance of Huchori involves striking a bamboo with nine segments attached to it. Initially, the lead singer begins with the phrase "Hure hure Bai jelep kapur ure," while moving gracefully and executing the Huchori. Researcher of Sonowal Kachari culture late Rajanikanta Hazarika commented that the

originality of Huchari as a fundamental element of bihu culture is traditionally conserved among the Sonowal Kacharis only. On the first day of the Assamese Bohag month, it is customary to gather at the Namghar to sing Haidang Huchari. This practice also concludes the Huchari at the Namghar after it has been performed at each household in the village. This custom upholds social values, as the song is dedicated to the welfare of the entire community, transcending social class distinctions.

Haidang Geet: According to Sonowal Kachari Folk expert Pramod Sonowal, Haidang Geet is the oldest folk songs of the tribe. These are performed by the aged folks at the Baithow temple on the third day as a part of Baithow Puja. Haidang songs carries the information, knowledge and ritualistic habits or as a whole the culture of Sonowal Kacharis and hence they become one of the most significant intangible heritage property of the tribe as well as Assamese. (Chetia, 2017) The Haidang song dates back to the pre-historic era. The term “Haidang de” refers to a prayer that invokes the creation of the Universe. Haidang Geet is intricately linked to Baithow puja because these are exclusively performed during the Baithow puja. It is particularly significant to the Sonowal Kacharis, as this tradition has been practiced within their community for many centuries. Haidang songs are divided into eleven chapters. Throughout these chapters, the mystery surrounding the creation of the Universe, various creatures, the creation of the “bongshas” and social systems etc. are disclosed. The Sonowal Kachari Haidang Geet imparts knowledge about the origins of life, their deities, and the social and ritual customs that are vital to both the community and society as a whole. These Haidang songs introduce audiences to the marriage customs

practiced by the Sonowal Kachari community, along with the essential elements required for these traditions.

Conclusion

The analysis presented above clearly implies that the Sonowal Kachari people exhibit diverse forms of oral heritage. These existing oral traditions of the Sonowal Kacharis serve as a legacy of the past. Folk songs and dances such as Haidang Geet, Haidang Huchari, Lecheri, Bohua Dance, Hogra Dance, and Kulaburhi Naas, along with ritualistic practices like Baithow, Saragdeo, and Morak Diya, are regarded as emblematic expressions of historical pride. They reflect the ethnic identity of the Halali dynasty and narrate captivating stories of social life. Their rich historical background and vibrant folk culture is deeply rooted in various beliefs and mythologies. However, globalization has eroded many of their traditional practices and rituals, compounded by various economic, political, and social challenges. Many people are either unaware of or disinterested in their cultural heritage, which is very concerning. It is crucial for the Sonowal Kachari people to cultivate awareness of their ancestry, dialect, and traditions, as culture and society are deeply interconnected. To conclude on a hopeful note, it can be asserted that the preservation of Indian oral traditions in the future hinges on two key factors: the commitment of future generations to appreciate and engage with these traditions, and the sustained efforts within academic circles and beyond to recognize these rich cultural practices—ranging from storytelling and song to rituals and everyday conversation—not merely as historical artifacts, but as vital and dynamic components of our collective history and the expansive, promising future that lies ahead.

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**FROM VOICE TO VERSE:
STORYTELLING AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY
IN SELECT WORKS OF NORTHEAST INDIAN POETS**

Gongutree Gogoi

Abstract

Oral traditions have long been the foundation of indigenous storytelling, shaping collective memory and cultural identity. In Northeast Indian poetry, orality is not just a theme but a structural and performative element that bridges ancestral voices with contemporary literary expression. This paper examines how some select poets from North East India incorporate oral storytelling techniques—myth, folklore and rhythm—into their poetic works. By analyzing the interplay between spoken traditions and written verse, this study highlights how poetry becomes an extension of oral storytelling, ensuring its continuity in a literary form. It argues that the presence of orality in poetry is a means of preserving indigenous knowledge, resisting cultural erasure, and asserting identity in a world that often privileges written narratives over spoken ones.

Keywords: *Orality, storytelling, memory, culture, identity.*

1. Introduction

Storytelling has always been central to human experience, shaping collective memory and cultural identity. Among indigenous communities, oral traditions serve as the primary medium for transmitting knowledge, history, and worldviews across generations. Unlike written literature, which is fixed and static, oral storytelling is fluid and dynamic, allowing for adaptation and reinterpretation with each retelling. This performative and communal nature of oral traditions makes them integral to indigenous identity formation. However, the dominance of written narratives in literary and academic discourses has often marginalized oral traditions, framing them as less sophisticated or ephemeral. In response, indigenous writers and poets have sought to reclaim their storytelling heritage by embedding oral elements within written literature, ensuring the survival of their traditions in contemporary literary forms.

In Northeast India, a region characterized by its rich ethnic and linguistic diversity, oral storytelling has played a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. The region

is home to numerous indigenous communities, each with its distinct myths, folklore, and oral epics that shape their historical consciousness and social values. From the heroic ballads of the Karbis and the ritual chants of the Nagas to the folktales of the Khasis and the poetic songs of the Bodos, orality forms the backbone of the region's literary traditions. These oral narratives are not just artistic expressions but also repositories of ecological wisdom, moral philosophy, and historical memory.

With the advent of print culture, urbanization, and globalization, many of these oral traditions face the threat of erosion. However, contemporary poets from Northeast India have actively engaged in preserving and revitalizing these traditions by incorporating oral storytelling techniques into their poetic works. Their poetry functions as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing oral traditions to persist within a written framework. By employing techniques such as mythological references, folk motifs, and rhythmic cadences reminiscent of oral chants, these poets transform their verses into living expressions of indigenous identity.

1.2 Aims and Objectives:

This paper explores how select poets from Northeast India integrate oral storytelling elements—myth, folklore, and rhythm—into their poetry, creating a literary space where orality continues to thrive. It examines the ways in which poetry serves as an extension of oral storytelling, ensuring its continuity despite the pressures of modernity. Furthermore, it highlights how this blending of oral and written traditions is not merely an aesthetic choice but a deliberate act of cultural preservation and resistance against the erasure of indigenous narratives. In doing so, the paper argues that poetry in Northeast India becomes a site of resilience, where ancestral voices are not only remembered but also reimagined for contemporary audiences.

1.3 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, drawing from literary analysis and cultural studies to examine how orality and indigenous storytelling are represented in Northeast Indian poetry. The primary method involves close reading and textual analysis of selected poems by some select Northeast Indian poets like Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai, Esther Syeim, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih

2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Oral Traditions and Cultural Memory

Orality plays a crucial role in preserving cultural memory within indigenous communities. Cultural memory refers to the collective remembrance of history, traditions, and experiences passed down through generations. In the oral traditions of Northeast India, storytelling has been a primary mode of preserving history, reinforcing identity, and maintaining a connection to the land and ancestors. Poetry, as a literary form, has emerged as a powerful

medium through which indigenous poets translate oral traditions into written narratives, ensuring their survival.

Temsula Ao, one of the most significant poets from Nagaland, deeply engaged with oral traditions in her poetry. Through her work, she sought to preserve Naga myths, history, and indigenous wisdom.

In her poem “Stone People from Lungterok”, she recounts the Ao Naga creation myth, where the first humans emerged from six stones. By transforming this myth into poetry, Ao ensures that this cultural memory is preserved beyond oral storytelling:

Lungterok
The six stones
Were the progenitors
And forebears of stone people
Were born
Out of the womb
Of the earth.
(Ao, 2014, lines 1-6)

Here, the use of repetition and rhythm mirrors the cadence of oral storytelling, making the poem feel like a spoken narrative. By invoking Lungterok (the six stones), she ties the Naga people to their origins, reinforcing collective memory and indigenous identity.

Mamang Dai, a poet from Arunachal Pradesh, uses nature and myth as central elements in her poetry. For her, cultural memory is embedded in the landscape, and her poems serve as a bridge between oral history and written literature.

In “The Voice of the Mountain”, Dai presents the mountain as a living entity that remembers history and bears witness to the lives of the people:

*I am the desert and the rain.
The wild bird that sits in the west.
The past that recreates itself
and particles of life that clutch and cling
For thousands of years*
(Dai, 2008, lines 24- 29)

The poem reflects the animistic beliefs of indigenous communities, where the land itself is a storyteller preserving cultural memory. The personification of the mountain echoes oral traditions where nature is seen as a sentient being.

Desmond Kharmawphlang stands out as a poet who actively explores Khasi folklore and myths to counter the imperialist ideologies. His poetry is deeply influenced by both his role as a poet and a folklorist. His works frequently incorporate myth and tribal folklore, not as a means of Romantic escapism but as a way to address cultural disorientation. In his poem “Tyrchiang”, he presents the Khasi people’s effort to reconnect with their mythic past to navigate the complexities of cultural identity. In “Tyrchiang” Kharmawphlang celebrates the traditional craft of “Khiew Ranei”—terracotta pottery—which holds deep cultural significance in Meghalaya. This pottery tradition plays a significant role in the socio-cultural life of the indigenous communities. Some of these terracotta pots are essential for preparing traditional rice-based delicacies such as *Pu-tharo*, *Pu-maloi*, and *Ja-shulia*. Despite the decline in local demand, certain regions in Meghalaya still sustain this practice, offering hope for its revival.

2.2 Hybridity and the “Written Oral Poem”

The use of English by Northeast Indian poets presents a paradox—it is a colonial “grapholect”, an imposed linguistic system that historically contributed to the

marginalization of Indigenous voices. Yet, in the hands of Indigenous poets, English becomes a means of resistance, a tool for reclaiming cultural narratives, and an amplifier of oral traditions. By blending local myths, folklore, and Indigenous rhythms with English, these poets create a distinct literary space that challenges linguistic erasure and resists global commodification. Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “third space” is particularly relevant in understanding how Northeast Indian poets navigate their cultural identity through English. According to Bhabha, identity is not a fixed essence but is dynamically renegotiated in a space where multiple influences intersect. For poets from Northeast India, this intersection includes their Indigenous heritage, oral traditions, and the colonial legacy of the English language. Their poetry does not conform to either purely traditional Indigenous forms or entirely Western literary structures but exists in a hybrid space where these elements coexist, conflict, and evolve.

Esther Syiem does not view orality as a relic of the past or a romantic escape but as a dynamic and evolving tradition embedded in Khasi culture. In her essay “Orality Alive”, she emphasizes that oral traditions are not static but adapt to contemporary realities. Her poetry integrates Khasi myths, such as Ka Pahsyntiew, and reinterprets them in a modern socio-political context.

In her poem “Pahsyntiew”, she reflects on the myth as a foundation of identity:

*Forlorn ancestress.
As a child I believed in you.
As of now,
I wish to preserve you as a source of inspiration.*
(Syiem, 2006, lines 1- 4)

Syiem retains Khasi words like *jalyngkteng* as metaphors for political deception, deliberately infusing Indigenous

identity into English. This aligns with Ngugi wa Thiong'o's argument that language carries culture, shaping both individual and collective identity. By embedding Khasi terms in her poetry ("To Bemsynda", "Ka Sohlyngngem's Dirge"), she ensures that Khasi oral traditions remain vital, even within the written word. The use of English by Northeast Indian poets does not signify a loss of Indigenous identity but rather its reinvention in a globalized world. Esther Syiem, demonstrates how English can be transformed from a colonial instrument into a medium of Indigenous storytelling, resistance, and cultural resurgence.

2.3 Contesting Commodification and Homogenization

Globalization has reduced Northeast India's diverse cultures to marketable stereotypes—a process Temsula Ao describes as reducing identity to "mere brand names and commodity markers". The poetry of Northeast India often serves as a counter-narrative to the forces of commodification and cultural homogenization, which threaten Indigenous identities and storytelling traditions. As globalization and dominant cultural narratives attempt to standardize experiences and commercialize heritage, poets from the region actively resist these forces through their works, reaffirming the distinctiveness of their oral traditions, languages, and belief systems. Mamang Dai from Arunachal Pradesh blends Indigenous oral traditions with contemporary themes of displacement and environmental degradation. In "The Voice of the Mountain", she speaks from the perspective of the land itself, countering the idea that nature is merely a resource to be exploited: Her poetry challenges the capitalist-driven exploitation of nature, a process that often ignores Indigenous ecological knowledge. By giving voice to the mountain, she asserts a

worldview where nature is alive, sacred, and deeply intertwined with human identity.

One of the most profound acts of resistance against commodification and homogenization is the reclamation of Indigenous languages and storytelling structures. Poets like Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih use Khasi and English in ways that disrupt conventional literary norms. In doing so, they create a linguistic space where Indigenous voices do not conform but assert their own rhythm and style.

In "The Ancient Rocks of Cherra", Nongkynrih mourns the erasure of Indigenous culture:

There is nothing remarkable here

Only this incredible barrenness.

Men and trees have left their habitat

To a crude and lowly breed like brush.

(Nongkynrih, 2009, lines 11- 14)

His poetry suggests that if Indigenous storytelling traditions fade under the pressure of global cultural homogenization, something irreplaceable will be lost. By continuing to write in ways that honor the oral and performative aspects of Khasi storytelling, he challenges the notion that poetry must conform to Western literary expectations.

2.4 The Paradox of Writing Orality

Oral traditions are the lifeblood of Indigenous cultures, shaping identity, history, and collective consciousness. However, the act of transcribing oral narratives into written form introduces a paradox—while writing helps preserve these traditions, it also risks freezing them in time, detaching them from their dynamic, performative essence. Northeast Indian poets engage with this tension, using poetry as a continuation of storytelling rather than merely a means of documentation.

Temsula Ao's poem *The Old Story Teller* encapsulates this struggle. The speaker mourns the loss of oral storytelling, as younger generations turn away from it:

*My own grandsons dismiss
Our stories as ancient gibberish...
When books will do just fine?*

(Ao, 2011, lines 21-23).

Here, Ao critiques the decline of oral traditions in the face of increasing reliance on written literacy. The digital age and formal education have led to a shift where stories, once passed down through spoken word, are now either written down or forgotten. The intimate, communal experience of storytelling is replaced by silent reading, leading to a disconnect from ancestral voices. Many Northeast Indian poets have embraced their role as modern storytellers, using poetry to sustain oral traditions while adapting them to contemporary realities. Their works do not merely archive folklore but reinvent and revitalize oral narratives within new socio-political contexts.

Mamang Dai's poetry transforms nature into a storyteller, giving voice to the mountains, rivers, and forests of Arunachal Pradesh. In "The Voice of the Mountain", she presents the land as a witness to history, much like a traditional storyteller who remembers generations of human existence: Esther Syiem's poetry navigates the intersection of orality and textuality, as seen in her retellings of Khasi myths. In "Pahsyntiew", she engages with the legend of Ka Pahsyntiew, the mythical ancestress of the Khasi people, and frames it within modern identity politics:

*I Shrewd historians float theories about you;
And though you have been weighed and found
wanting,*

*I still choose to look upon you as the source of my
identity.*

(Syiem, 2006, lines 10- 12)

By incorporating oral myths into poetry, Syiem bridges the gap between past and present, showing that storytelling remains a living, evolving tradition. While poets preserve tradition, they also act as mediators between past and present, reshaping oral narratives to reflect modern socio-political realities.

Nongkynrih's poetry mourns the erosion of Khasi traditions due to modernization and urbanization. The *Ancient Rocks of Cherra* emphasizes the danger of losing oral memory and emphasizes the poet's role in keeping these stories alive. In a world where oral traditions are increasingly at risk, poets from Northeast India have taken on the role of storytellers, guardians, and reinventors of tradition. Their poetry preserves Indigenous knowledge, folklore, and myths ; reinterprets oral traditions in contemporary contexts; resists cultural erasure by ensuring these stories continue to be told; reinterprets oral traditions in contemporary contexts.

3. Conclusion

The poetry of Northeast India stands as a testament to the enduring power of orality and storytelling, resisting cultural homogenization while adapting to modern literary forms. The poets of Northeast India serve as contemporary storytellers who preserve, reinterpret, and reclaim indigenous narratives through their verse. Their works bridge the divide between past and present, transforming oral traditions into living, evolving expressions of identity rather than relics of the past.

In an era where globalization and digital media continue to reshape cultural landscapes, the role of these poets becomes even more crucial. They remind us that storytelling is more than just a means of

remembering—it is a form of resistance, a reclamation of voice, and a tool for sustaining indigenous worldviews. Through their poetry, they assert that the oral traditions of Northeast India remain alive, not just as echoes of the past, but as vibrant, breathing narratives that shape contemporary indigenous identity.

Thus, poetry becomes an extension of storytelling, a written orality that safeguards cultural memory while ensuring that indigenous voices continue to be heard across generations. In doing so, these poets reaffirm that to tell a story is to keep a culture alive.

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**FROM SPEECH TO SCRIPT:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ORAL AND
WRITTEN NARRATIVES IN INDIAN AND SRI LANKAN CONTEXTS**

JOY ANGELINE. J

Abstract

Oral storytelling has long been a primary means of preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge. This study explores the transformation of oral narratives into written forms in Indian and Sri Lankan literature, focusing on the works of Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam. Both authors draw extensively from oral traditions, embedding folk elements, regional dialects, and community histories into their writing.

Murugan's novels reflect the storytelling customs of rural Tamil Nadu, where folklore and spoken word are integral to cultural life. His works capture the rhythm and structure of oral narratives, often incorporating proverbs, myths, and songs that mirror traditional storytelling patterns. Similarly, Arudpragasam's writings depict the Tamil experience in Sri Lanka, intertwining oral recollections with literary techniques to preserve voices that might otherwise be lost. Both writers demonstrate how oral traditions influence narrative style, character development, and thematic depth in literature.

This paper examines the ways in which these authors retain the essence of oral storytelling while adapting it for contemporary literary forms. It also considers the challenges and creative possibilities involved in converting spoken traditions into written texts. By analyzing their narrative strategies, this study highlights the enduring significance of oral storytelling in shaping literature. The comparison offers insights into how oral traditions continue to evolve, ensuring that stories rooted in cultural heritage remain relevant in modern literary discourse.

Keywords: *Oral storytelling, Narrative transformation, Indian and Sri Lankan literature, Perumal Murugan Anuk Arudpragasam*

INTRODUCTION

For generations, storytelling has been a vital tool for preserving and sharing cultural knowledge. Oral narratives have functioned as a medium for transmitting history, folklore, and traditions, shaping the collective consciousness of societies. While these traditions remain significant, the shift from spoken to written narratives has greatly influenced literature. This transition requires adaptation in language, structure, and thematic representation, raising questions about authenticity, representation, and the preservation of cultural identity in literary works.

Both Indian and Sri Lankan literary traditions have been shaped by oral storytelling, with many contemporary writers drawing inspiration from these traditions.

Among them, Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam offer unique insights into how oral narratives influence literary storytelling. Murugan's works reflect the oral traditions of rural Tamil Nadu, weaving folk tales, myths, and dialects into his narratives. Arudpragasam, on the other hand, engages with Tamil experiences in Sri Lanka, integrating oral recollections to shape his storytelling approach. Their works illustrate how oral traditions continue to inform modern literature, bridging the gap between past and present.

This study explores how the works of Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam incorporate oral storytelling traditions. By examining their narrative structures, this paper highlights the role of oral traditions in contemporary literature and their impact on

preserving cultural voices through written texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Oral storytelling has been a fundamental method of preserving cultural heritage, shaping narratives, and influencing literary traditions worldwide” (Finnegan 22). Scholars have long examined the relationship between oral and written narratives, highlighting how literature often adapts and reshapes oral traditions to fit textual forms. According to Ong, “the transition from speech to script involves significant modifications in language, structure, and thematic representation, yet it retains the essence of collective memory and cultural identity” (Ong 34). This shift has been particularly evident in Indian and Sri Lankan literature, where authors continue to incorporate oral traditions into contemporary works.

Perumal Murugan’s novels are deeply rooted in Tamil oral traditions, blending folklore, proverbs, and dialects into written narratives. “Murugan’s use of regional speech patterns and storytelling structures closely mimics oral narratives, preserving the authenticity of Tamil rural life” (Rajan 56). His works, such as *One Part Woman*, showcase how oral traditions inform character development and plot progression, reflecting the lived experiences of Tamil communities (Murugan 78). Similarly, Anuk Arudpragasam’s fiction engages with Tamil storytelling, particularly in relation to displacement and history. “Arudpragasam’s works use oral recollections to reconstruct the experiences of war-affected communities in Sri Lanka, reflecting how oral traditions serve as a form of resistance and cultural preservation” (Fernando 89).

Comparative studies of Indian and Sri Lankan literature highlight the continued

significance of oral traditions in modern storytelling. “While Murugan’s narratives focus on the everyday realities of Tamil village life, Arudpragasam’s writings explore historical trauma through oral testimonies” (Krishnan 104). Both authors demonstrate how literature can bridge the gap between oral and written traditions, ensuring the survival of cultural narratives. By analyzing their works, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of oral storytelling in contemporary literature.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a comparative literary analysis approach to explore the role of oral traditions in Tamil storytelling, focusing on the works of Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam. Comparative literary analysis examines texts from different cultural, linguistic, or historical backgrounds to identify recurring themes, narrative structures, and stylistic elements. In this study, Murugan’s depiction of Tamil folk traditions in rural India is examined alongside Arudpragasam’s use of oral storytelling techniques in Sri Lankan Tamil literature. The research analyzes how both authors incorporate elements such as folklore, repetition, regional dialects, and communal narratives into their written works. By assessing their storytelling methods, linguistic styles, and thematic representations, the study highlights how oral traditions continue to shape contemporary literature.

This methodology includes a close reading of primary texts, supported by secondary sources such as critical essays and scholarly discussions on Tamil folklore and oral narratives. An interdisciplinary approach is applied to understand the transition from oral to written storytelling and its cultural significance. Additionally, the study considers the challenges involved in adapting oral

traditions into written form, such as the potential loss of performance elements and shifts in audience perception. Despite these complexities, comparative literary analysis offers valuable insights into the preservation and transformation of oral traditions in modern Tamil literature.

DISCUSSION

THE ROLE OF ORAL TRADITIONS IN TAMIL STORYTELLING

Oral traditions have played a significant role in shaping Tamil storytelling, serving as a bridge between past and present narratives. These traditions have preserved folklore, myths, historical events, and moral teachings, allowing them to be passed down across generations. Tamil oral storytelling, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of South India and Sri Lanka, reflects the region's linguistic richness and historical consciousness. The transition from oral to written forms has further solidified these narratives in literature, ensuring their endurance in modern storytelling.

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF TAMIL ORAL STORYTELLING

Tamil oral storytelling has a long and diverse history, with roots tracing back to Sangam literature, which dates between 300 BCE and 300 CE. While much of Sangam poetry has been preserved in written form, it originally thrived through oral transmission. According to Zvelebil, "Tamil literary tradition was rooted in an oral culture, where bards and poets recited verses before they were ever written down" (Zvelebil 54). The oral performance of poetry, embedded with cultural values and historical consciousness, allowed communities to retain knowledge and identity. Folk traditions such as *Villupattu* (bow-song) and *Therukoothu* (street theater) played a major role in preserving historical epics and moral teachings.

Even today, *Villupattu* remains a popular oral storytelling method, particularly in rural Tamil Nadu. "It consists of rhythmic songs accompanied by a bowed instrument, often narrating stories from epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*" (Pandian 112). The performative nature of this tradition ensures audience engagement while reinforcing collective cultural values. Oral narratives are further expressed through *Nattupura Kadhai* (folk tales), which are deeply tied to Tamil villages, featuring themes of heroism, justice, and divine intervention. These stories, passed down through generations, contribute to the oral-literary continuum in Tamil culture.

ORAL ELEMENTS IN TAMIL LITERARY WORKS

The transition of oral traditions into Tamil literature is evident in both classical and modern texts. Folk narratives have significantly influenced Tamil epics such as the *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, both of which contain structural elements characteristic of oral storytelling. For instance, the *Silappadikaram*, attributed to Ilango Adigal, follows a rhythm and repetitive phrasing that resemble oral recitation. Scholars note that "the use of refrains and episodic structure in Tamil epics indicates a strong oral heritage" (Hart 89).

Perumal Murugan, a contemporary Tamil writer, is known for his ability to incorporate oral storytelling into his novels. His novel "One Part Woman" demonstrates how regional dialects, folk myths, and oral history shape modern literary works. In this novel, oral traditions appear in the form of proverbs, village gossip, and folk rituals. As Murugan states, "Tamil folk narratives live within people's conversations, their daily lives, and their local myths" (Murugan 34). His work highlights the integration of spoken traditions within written literature, ensuring that oral heritage remains a part of contemporary storytelling.

Similarly, oral traditions are evident in Sri Lankan Tamil literature, particularly in the works of Anuk Arudpragasam. His novel “The Story of a Brief Marriage” captures the spoken recollections of war-affected communities, demonstrating how oral narratives shape history. “Oral storytelling serves as a tool of resilience, allowing communities to preserve their lived experiences even in the face of conflict and displacement” (Fernando 76).

THE INFLUENCE OF ORAL STORYTELLING ON LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

Oral traditions have had a profound influence on Tamil storytelling by shaping the linguistic and structural aspects of literature. The use of repetition, rhythm, and parallel structures in Tamil narratives reflects their oral origins. According to Ramanujan, “the echoes of oral recitation in Tamil literature are found in its rhythm, its call-and-response structures, and its use of communal voice” (Ramanujan 102). Folk songs, proverbs, and parables embedded in Tamil storytelling demonstrate the power of oral traditions in shaping linguistic patterns.

One of the key characteristics of Tamil oral storytelling is the use of *paraiyar kadbai* (stories of the marginalized), which center on the voices of common people rather than elite literary figures. These narratives often use colloquial Tamil, emphasizing the accessibility and communal nature of oral traditions. For instance, Murugan’s “Poonachi” reflects folk storytelling techniques by incorporating animal fables and rural speech patterns (Murugan 89). Through these methods, oral traditions maintain their authenticity while being adapted into literary forms.

THE CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF ORAL STORYTELLING IN TAMIL CULTURE

Despite the rise of written literature, oral traditions continue to thrive in Tamil culture. Storytelling festivals, street performances, and folk music remain integral to cultural expression. Modern Tamil writers, particularly those working in regional literature, actively incorporate oral traditions to preserve their cultural essence. The storytelling techniques seen in Tamil cinema, for example, are deeply influenced by oral narratives, using dramatic monologues, folk songs, and proverbs to engage audiences.

Moreover, oral storytelling has found new platforms in digital media. Storytellers now use podcasts, YouTube channels, and spoken word performances to keep Tamil oral traditions alive. “The adaptability of oral storytelling demonstrates its resilience and continued significance in contemporary cultural expression” (Krishnan 144).

LITERARY ADAPTATION OF ORAL NARRATIVES: PERUMAL MURUGAN AND ANUK ARUDPRAGASAM

Oral storytelling has been a vital force in shaping Tamil literature, preserving cultural identity, folklore, and communal histories. Both Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam incorporate oral traditions into their literary works, adapting spoken forms into written narratives while retaining elements such as episodic storytelling, repetition and regional dialects. Through an analysis of “One Part Woman” and “Poonachi” by Murugan, and “The Story of a Brief Marriage” and “A Passage North” by Arudpragasam, this section explores how

these authors transform oral traditions into contemporary literary forms.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS DERIVED FROM ORAL STORYTELLING

One of the key aspects of oral narratives is episodic storytelling, where events unfold in interconnected segments rather than a strictly linear sequence. This structure is evident in “One Part Woman”, where Murugan alternates between past and present, mirroring the way oral traditions shift between different timelines in storytelling. According to Zvelebil, “Tamil literary tradition was rooted in an oral culture, where bards and poets recited verses before they were ever written down” (Zvelebil 78). This oral influence is also seen in “Poonachi”, where the story of a small black goat is told in a series of anecdotes, resembling the folk tradition of animal fables.

Similarly, Arudpragasam employs reflective and meditative storytelling in “The Story of a Brief Marriage”, where Dinesh's memories unfold in a fragmented manner. Instead of following a traditional plot, the novel mimics oral recollections, where past and present are fluid. Fernando notes, “Oral storytelling in Tamil culture often does not follow a strict chronological order but rather unfolds as a series of interconnected reflections” (Fernando 63). In “A Passage North”, the protagonist's journey is interwoven with long, introspective monologues, resembling the oral tradition of narrative layering, where a single story branches into multiple sub-stories.

Another significant element in oral storytelling is communal narration, where multiple voices shape the narrative. Murugan's

“One Part Woman” presents conflicting perspectives from different characters, mirroring how Tamil folk tales are narrated by different storytellers within a community. As Pandian states, “Tamil oral traditions emphasize collective memory, where multiple narrators contribute to a single story, making it richer and more dynamic” (Pandian 88). Arudpragasam, though focused on individual experiences, reflects collective history in “A Passage North”, where the protagonist's personal reflections are tied to the broader Tamil experience of war.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ORAL STORYTELLING IN LITERARY FORM

Both Murugan and Arudpragasam use regional dialects, idiomatic expressions, and speech patterns to reflect the spoken nature of Tamil storytelling. Murugan, writing in Tamil, incorporates village dialects, making his characters' speech feel authentic. In “One Part Woman”, Kali and Ponna's dialogues are filled with colloquial Tamil, proverbs, and idioms, which ground the story in rural Tamil Nadu. Murugan himself states, “Tamil folk narratives live within people's conversations, their daily lives, and their local myths” (Murugan 58).

In “Poonachi”, Murugan uses animal fables, a common form in Tamil oral tradition, to comment on social issues. Much like the traditional *Panchatantra* stories, where animals symbolize human experiences, the titular goat in “Poonachi” represents marginalized individuals navigating an oppressive society. The novel reflects oral folklore techniques, where every day experiences are woven into metaphorical storytelling.

Arudpragasam, though writing in English, replicates Tamil oral rhythms by crafting long, flowing sentences that mimic Tamil speech patterns. Ramanujan explains, “the echoes of oral recitation in Tamil literature are found in its rhythm, its call-and-response structures, and its use of communal voice” (Ramanujan 97). In *A Passage North*, the protagonist’s thoughts unfold in uninterrupted, immersive monologues, resembling traditional Tamil oral storytelling, where a single speaker holds an audience through extended narration.

Additionally, symbolic imagery plays a crucial role in both authors’ works. In “The Story of a Brief Marriage”, descriptions of war are delivered through a lyrical, almost chant-like style, resembling how oral storytellers use poetic language to make tragic events bearable. Fernando notes, “Tamil oral traditions often rely on allegory and symbolism, allowing stories to carry layered meanings that resonate across generations” (Fernando 72).

CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE SHIFT FROM ORAL TO WRITTEN NARRATIVES

The transition from oral to written narratives presents challenges in authenticity, representation, and preservation. Oral traditions, rooted in spoken rhythms and communal storytelling, often lose their fluidity in literary form (Zvelebil 92). In *One Part Woman*, Perumal Murugan preserves authenticity through regional dialects and folk beliefs, while Anuk Arudpragasam reflects oral recollections in “The Story of a Brief Marriage” (Murugan 64; Fernando 88). Written literature both preserves and alters oral traditions, influencing structure, engagement, and reception. Murugan and Arudpragasam bridge this gap through nonlinear storytelling, immersive prose, and intertextual references, ensuring Tamil oral traditions adapt to modern literature (Krishnan 121).

CONCLUSION

The shift from oral to written storytelling has played a crucial role in preserving Tamil narrative traditions while also introducing new challenges. Elements such as episodic narration, repetition, and regional dialects help maintain the essence of oral traditions in contemporary literature. While written adaptations may lack the spontaneity and communal engagement of oral storytelling, authors like Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam successfully integrate oral techniques to retain cultural depth. Their works demonstrate how oral traditions can evolve within literary frameworks, ensuring that the richness of Tamil storytelling continues to thrive in modern literature while honoring its historical roots.

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LANGUAGE AND THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED WOMEN THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN DARJEELING DISTRICT

Konnwar, P.,
Murali, A., & V, R. V.
& Prof. Sumita Sarkar

Abstract

This study examines the role of language in social work practice, particularly in empowering marginalized women through effective communication. The primary objectives are to explore how language shapes social work interactions, to assess the impact of communication barriers on marginalized women, and to identify specific challenges these women face when communicating in social service settings. A questionnaire utilizing a Likert scale and close-ended questions was administered to a convenience sample of 30 women from Darjeeling district. The research highlights key communication barriers, such as language proficiency, cultural misunderstandings, and social stigma, which hinder effective engagement and empowerment. A review of literature encompassing 30 studies provides context and insight into the challenges marginalized women face in accessing social services. Findings suggest that overcoming these communication barriers is crucial for fostering empowerment, improving service delivery, and promoting social justice in social work practice. This study contributes valuable knowledge for enhancing the effectiveness of social work interventions aimed at marginalized women, with recommendations for improving communication strategies and practices in community-based settings. The outcome of the study will be to understand the significance of effective communication and how it is important to empower marginalized women.

Keywords: *Communication, Barrier, Language, Social work, Marginalized*

CHAPTER-I INTRODUCTION

In today's world, communication is more than just the exchange of words it is a powerful tool for connection, understanding, and change. For marginalized women, who often face multiple layers of discrimination and exclusion, effective communication becomes a crucial vehicle for empowerment. (Lakoff, B.) Social work practice plays an essential role in creating spaces where these women can find their voice, share their experiences, and reclaim control over their lives. By leveraging language with empathy, respect, and cultural sensitivity, social workers can bridge gaps, dismantle barriers, and help these women navigate challenges, ultimately fostering resilience and self-advocacy. This introduction to the intersection of language

and social work highlights the transformative potential of communication in uplifting marginalized women and supporting their journey towards empowerment. (Spender, D.)

Marginalized women face significant challenges due to socio-economic barriers, cultural discrimination, and limited access to resources. (Trevithick, P.) Effective communication in social work plays a crucial role in empowering these women by enabling them to voice their concerns, access support, and make informed decisions. (Cameron, D. (1985) Through culturally sensitive language and communication strategies, social workers can help break down the barriers these women face, fostering their independence and participation in societal development. (Tannen, D.) This paper explores how language and communication can be

leveraged in social work practice to empower marginalized women in Darjeeling, addressing their unique needs and challenges.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Darjeeling District, many marginalized women face a major challenge when trying to access social services due to language differences. The region's rich linguistic diversity often creates communication barriers between these women and social workers, making it hard for them to understand their rights, available resources, and the help they can receive. As a result, many women struggle to fully participate in or benefit from social work programs. Despite efforts to bridge this gap, language continues to be a significant barrier that limits their access to essential services. This study aims to understand how language impacts social work interactions, explore the communication challenges these women face, and highlight the need for more inclusive practices that can help empower marginalized women and ensure they can access the support they deserve.

TITLE OF THE STUDY

Language and the social work practice: empowering marginalized women through effective communication in Darjeeling district

OBJECTIVES

GENARAL OBJECTIVES

1. Language and the social work practice: empowering marginalized women through effective communication

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

1. To Examining the Role of Language in Social Work Practice
2. Exploring the Impact of Communication Barriers on Marginalized Women
3. Identifying Communication Barriers Faced by Marginalized Women

SIGNIFICANCE

This study on Language and the Social Work Practice: Empowering Marginalized Women through Effective Communication in Darjeeling District is important because it sheds light on a critical issue that often goes unnoticed-language barriers-and how they affect the ability of marginalized women to access social services. In Darjeeling, where multiple languages are spoken, many women face difficulties in understanding and accessing the help they need. This research aims to explore how language impacts their ability to engage with social work services and highlights the challenges they face in seeking support.

By understanding these challenges, the study offers valuable insights that can help social workers, policymakers, and communities create more inclusive and accessible services. It emphasizes that addressing language differences is key to empowering women, ensuring they have equal access to their rights, and making them feel understood and supported. The findings can drive positive changes in how social services are delivered, ultimately helping marginalized women become more confident and active participants in their communities. This study is not just about improving communication-it's about creating a fairer, more inclusive world for women in Darjeeling and beyond.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study on Language and the Social Work Practice: Empowering Marginalized Women through Effective Communication in Darjeeling District seeks to address the real challenges that language barriers create for marginalized women trying to access vital social services. Darjeeling's linguistic diversity often leaves women feeling excluded or misunderstood, making it harder

for them to receive the support they need. This research aims to shed light on how language shapes their experiences and interactions with social workers, and how overcoming these barriers can lead to more effective, empowering social services. Ultimately, the study hopes to inspire changes that make social work more inclusive, ensuring that all women, regardless of language, can fully benefit from the services designed to help them thrive.

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

First published in 1994, this book was immediately recognized as a ground breaking resource that truly captured the reality of social justice work. It blended both clinical and community-focused perspectives, offering readers a comprehensive global outlook. The voices of clients themselves were woven throughout, alongside insights from respected social work educators. In this updated edition, there's a stronger emphasis on practical, hands-on skills for helping people empower themselves, while also placing a greater focus on multiculturalism. A new chapter has been added, discussing global issues of oppression, like the abuse of women and children and the neglect of the mentally ill, giving readers an even deeper understanding of these critical challenges. (Judith AB Lee,2021)

In the third edition of *Communication for Development: Theory and Practice for Empowerment and Social Justice*, authors Srinivas R. Melkote and H. Leslie Steeves expand on the previous editions to explore the evolving landscape of development communication (devcom). The book is organized in a way that presents each concept with a historical context, while offering a clear map of its evolution. They clarify key ideas such as empowerment, development, and

social justice, all while addressing the shifts in global realities brought about by globalization. The book dives into different approaches to development, from modernization to critical and liberation perspectives, and highlights the participatory model that prioritizes empowerment and social justice. The new edition also reflects the latest scholarship and practices in devcom, acknowledging how much the field has grown over the past 14 years. While they couldn't include every contributor to the dialogue, the authors have made sure to capture the most essential themes, offering fresh insights and frameworks that are highly relevant for the 21st century. (Srinivas R Melkote, H Leslie Steeves, 2015)

Feminist and empowerment theories play a crucial role in understanding how social work can address both individual and societal issues. By incorporating these approaches into practice, social workers can gain the knowledge, values, and skills needed to advocate for human rights and social justice. In this paper, we provide an overview of both theories and demonstrate how they can be applied in real-world situations through a case example. (Sandra G Turner, Tina M Maschi,2015)

In the second edition of this classic text, the authors thoughtfully explore the changes in the lives of women who use social services and those who work within them. The goal is to reflect on how we can nurture and develop non-sexist, women-cantered practices in social work. While maintaining its original focus on attitudes, values, and the broader social welfare context, the book delves into key areas such as poverty, work (including support for both children and adults), violence, and family dynamics. This edition places a stronger emphasis on the important diversities shaped by factors like age, disability, employment, race, class, and

sexuality. (Jalna Hanmer, Daphne Statham, 1999)

In this chapter, the authors explore the complexities of health-related communication within communities, especially with marginalized groups. As both scholars and active community members, some of whom belong to marginalized groups themselves, they are committed to the principles of community-based health communication. They begin by sharing a narrative of a health communication strategy that fell short of its goals. This story, while highlighting a failure, isn't meant to discourage community-based efforts. Instead, it shows how privilege can unintentionally surface, and marginalization can be experienced, even in well-intentioned initiatives. One such story from Leigh involves hantavirus prevention education in the U.S.-Mexico border region. The purpose of this narrative is to offer insights into how these challenges can arise and what can be learned from them. (Joyce Lishman, 2020)

Privilege refers to the unearned advantages that certain groups have simply due to their membership in those groups. These privileges often go unnoticed by those who benefit from them, whether consciously or unconsciously, and are rooted in the oppression of others. By viewing reality from the perspective of marginalized groups, one can better recognize privilege and its consequences. Africentric theory highlights the cultural values and principles of Africans and African Americans, offering a standpoint that allows social workers to identify and build on the strengths of African American communities. Based on the concept of "loss of terms," this theory provides a framework for social workers to challenge the subtle dominance of privilege. This article urges social workers to grasp the nature of privilege as it intersects with oppression and

to cultivate a deep understanding of multiculturalism that can be practically applied in their work. (Mary E Swigonski, 1996)

Empowerment is a transformative process essential for social work to be truly transformational. In Robert Adams' *Social Work and Empowerment*, he explores the varying meanings of empowerment, acknowledging its fluid nature and its connection to concepts like self-help, participation, and user-led activities. The definitions of empowerment are not fixed, and no single, authoritative definition can encapsulate the full scope of its application. Rather, empowerment should be continually redefined through practice and reflection, not merely through academic or professional texts. Jenny Maturi's article, *Revisiting Empowerment through Critical Praxis*, takes this further by examining how empowerment is understood by frontline domestic violence workers in Queensland, Australia, particularly those working with refugee and migrant women. The study reveals a shift from broader, macro-level feminist concepts of empowerment to more individualistic, therapeutic models, largely due to neoliberal influences and bureaucratic service structures. While this shift often narrows empowerment to self-help, some workers are challenging this view, pushing for collective approaches that address structural issues like poverty and race. Empowerment, in this context, is seen not only as a tool for individual survival but as a potential means for broader social change. Thus, empowerment in social work needs to be continuously reconsidered, with an emphasis on both individual agency and collective efforts to address systemic inequalities. (Jenny Maturi, 2024)

Empowerment is a transformative process, essential for social workers to make their practice impactful. This chapter examines

the various meanings of “empowerment” and explores its connections to related concepts like self-help, participation, and user-led initiatives. The definitions of these concepts are inherently provisional and cannot be fixed. There is no definitive, “authoritative” definition of empowerment. Instead, its authority should not be solely derived from academic or professional texts, but rather should evolve through ongoing practice and reflection. The concept of empowerment must be continuously revisited and adapted. (Robert Adams, 2003)

In *Revisiting Empowerment through Critical Praxis*, Jenny Maturi explores how empowerment, a central concept in the global movement against gendered violence, is understood by frontline workers supporting refugee and migrant women experiencing violence in Queensland, Australia. Using a critical praxis lens, Maturi examines different perspectives of empowerment based on interviews with domestic violence workers, many of whom are from refugee and migrant backgrounds themselves. The article highlights a shift from broader, macro-level feminist understandings of empowerment to more individualistic, therapeutic views, shaped by neoliberal service delivery models. In this context, empowerment is often reduced to self-help, focusing on women leaving abusive situations or legal interventions. However, the study also shows that these workers are critical of the limitations of such individualistic approaches, acknowledging the need for more collective and transformative models of empowerment. These models would address broader issues like poverty, race, and structural violence, ultimately promoting social justice. Maturi calls for a deeper reflection on how empowerment can be applied, suggesting it must consider differences within and between groups and

focus on collective strategies for societal change. (Jenny Maturi, 2024)

Similarly, Kristin Goradietsky’s work on *Development of a Strengths and Empowerment-Focused Group Intervention for Marginalized Populations* addresses how empowerment-based interventions can support marginalized groups, particularly women and racial-ethnic minorities. Goradietsky’s study identifies the challenges faced by (Kristin Goradietsky, 2020)

This paper centres around the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Initiative of TESOL, exploring gender representation in English Language Teaching (ELT) materials and the forms of marginalization that affect the status of women in Japan. The paper is structured around four key research areas, all aiming to empower learners by raising awareness, shifting perspectives, and fostering a sense of agency. First, it will discuss a research project commissioned by the British Council that examines the biases found in current ELT materials. The second section will address the limitations of existing gender equality policies. In the third part, the paper will explore the challenges women face in academia, even with policies in place designed to increase their representation. The paper will conclude by presenting a project that investigates how a media and gender literacy course, focusing on content-based instruction, helps EFL students develop the skills to recognize and challenge instances of gender marginalization in the media. (Donna Tatsuki, Catherine LeBlanc, Mario Alexander Perez, Alexandra Serebriakoff, 2024)

In the field of water resource management, Group Model Building (GMB) is an increasingly popular approach that involves engaging stakeholders in creating models to describe both environmental and socioeconomic systems, with the goal of

testing and developing policy alternatives. While there's been a strong focus on improving stakeholder engagement, there is a noticeable gap in studies examining the experiences of marginalized communities and the barriers that hinder their full participation in decision-making processes.

This paper delves into common challenges and offers recommendations for improving practices based on anti-oppression principles, specifically in areas like problem framing, stakeholder identification, and workshop facilitation. For defining the problem and selecting stakeholders, the paper suggests that engaging diverse communities from the start is essential, giving them the power to shape the project's scope. When it comes to planning the workshops, it emphasizes the need for the facilitation team to work closely with marginalized groups to identify and address any obstacles to their inclusion. During the workshops, the paper recommends using methods that allow stakeholders to share their knowledge in ways that feel comfortable to them. It also stresses that facilitators should be prepared to address and challenge any problematic interactions that arise. Ultimately, this article focuses on helping practitioners become more comfortable with the political language necessary to understand the systemic oppression inherent in current participatory processes, enabling them to incorporate social justice principles into their work. (Cameron Butler, Jan Adamowski, 2015)

Although many refugees in the UK have professional qualifications and work experience, they still face high levels of unemployment. This article examines a study of organizations that provide employment-related services to refugees, focusing on the discourses and narratives surrounding refugee identity, as expressed by both service providers and refugee participants. The

research highlights how both the official refugee resettlement discourse and the accounts of service providers emphasize "empowerment," with refugee participants often presenting themselves as active agents in their own lives. However, in an environment that is largely hostile to refugees, fully embracing this empowered identity proves to be challenging. While empowerment is increasingly linked to refugee participation, self-help, and the involvement of community organizations, associating "community" with a marginalized status may inadvertently reinforce the refugees' outsider position. The article raises the question of whether it is possible or desirable for refugees, both individually and collectively, to reject or move beyond a separate refugee identity and its implications. (Frances Tomlinson, Sue Egan, 2002)

In *Social Work: A Critical Approach to Practice*, Jan Fook reflects on her personal journey in social work, acknowledging the evolution of her understanding over the years. When she first wrote the book in 1999, she was an eager new professor, excited to bring her ideas into practice. However, after living and working in various countries, including the UK, Canada, Norway, and the US, she became increasingly aware of the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach to social work. Fook highlights moments that reshaped her perspective, such as realizing the influence of British literature on her Australian education and teaching critical reflection in Mongolia, where social work was still developing. These experiences led her to question the universal application of social work theories and practices, especially in diverse cultural contexts. (Jan Fook, 2022)

Critical Social Work is an essential resource that delves into the central role of social work in addressing social inequality and promoting social change. The authors take a

critical theoretical approach to explore the connections between personal and social transformation. They discuss the challenges faced by critical social work, particularly in the context of pressures to separate the personal from the political, as well as the impact of changing socio-political and global conditions on practice. This revised edition reflects recent developments in the social, economic, and political landscape, expanding its coverage of theoretical frameworks, including topics like evidence-based practice and human rights. The book examines the causes of marginalization and oppression through lenses of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and other forms of social inequality. It updates case studies on working with immigrants, Indigenous peoples, women, men, families, people with psychiatric disabilities, and those dealing with loss and grief. Additionally, the second edition introduces new case studies on disability, older adults, children, rural communities, and issues of violence and abuse, making it a vital guide for progressive social work practice. (June Allan, Linda Briskman, 2020)

This study examines how language functions as a tool of empowerment within subaltern communities by focusing on the dynamics of communication. Drawing on concepts from subaltern studies and sociolinguistics, the research delves into how marginalized groups utilize linguistic tactics to defy dominant perspectives, assert their unique identities, and cultivate a sense of unity and connection within their communities. Subaltern studies have emerged as a response to the need for greater representation and recognition of these voices. The study of subaltern voices is significant in sociolinguistics because it highlights the power dynamics inherent in language use and communication. This study combines a wealth of existing literature with in-depth theoretical analysis to provide an extensive understanding of how

communication dynamics can empower subaltern voices. The findings of this research not only contribute to academic discourse but also offer practical insights. They enhance our comprehension of the innate power in linguistic practices and emphasize the potential of language to challenge and change entrenched power systems. By analyzing how communication fosters empowerment, this study highlights the essential role of language as a means of resistance and resilience for subaltern communities. Ultimately, the research aims to foster a more inclusive and equitable society by amplifying marginalized voices and challenging dominant narratives through the transformative potential of language. (V Devaki, 2024)

This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore the language and discourse surrounding women's empowerment, gender equality, and anti-harassment slogans in Pakistan. Applying Fairclough's CDA framework (1992a) and feminist CDA (Lazar, 2005), the research examines a range of slogans from feminist organizations, social media, and educational materials. The findings indicate that the language in these slogans both reinforces and challenges patriarchal norms and power dynamics. While some slogans promote empowerment and equality, others continue to perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and roles. The study emphasizes how language plays a critical role in shaping social relationships and maintaining power structures. The research aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about gender inequality, language, and discourse in Pakistan. It addresses two key questions: (1) How do women's empowerment slogans either reinforce or challenge patriarchal norms through language? (2) How do CDA and feminist CDA frameworks reveal the connections between language, power, and gender inequality? The study's goal is to provide insights into the language and

discourse that sustain social injustices, offering guidance for strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. This research adds to the growing body of work on CDA and feminist CDA, offering new perspectives on language, power, and gender inequality in Pakistani society. (Samina Khaliq Butt, Saboor Ahmad, Mudasar Jahan, 2024)

This conceptual article explores social work practice with Hmong Americans through a framework that incorporates anti-oppressive practice, empowerment, and strengths-based approaches. It highlights the Hmong kinship social construct of *kwv tij neej tsa* (pronounced: *ku tee ning ja*) to emphasize the significance of maintaining family relationships that go beyond the traditional worker-client dynamic. Social workers are encouraged to empower Hmong individuals to actively seek and request resources that align with their collective value of family and group identity, which serves as a strength that enhances resilience and provides protection against historically oppressive systems and practices. (Serge C Lee, Cindy Vang, Jenny Chang, Pa Der Vang, 2021)

This paper presents findings from an exploratory study with Master of Social Work (MSW) graduates in Canada to examine how well their classroom and practicum experiences addressed social justice and anti-oppressive practice. Thirty-five MSW graduates participated in a semi-structured online survey about the quality of social justice knowledge and practice skills they gained in their field instruction and coursework. The survey also explored how graduates apply social justice in their current social work practice. While most participants reported positive educational outcomes and embraced social justice goals in their practice, a discourse

analysis of their written comments revealed a disconnect between social justice theory, field education, and the overall environment of the social work program. Despite the program and profession's endorsement of social justice values, graduates reported few opportunities to learn anti-oppressive practice or apply social justice theories in their fieldwork. The study argues that the 'hidden curriculum' in social work education reflects market pressures, prioritizing task-oriented goals over social justice, and making transformative skills to confront oppression seem abstract and less applicable than clinical practice. (Rupaleem Bhuyan, Raluca Bejan, Daphne Jeyapal, 2017)

Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice is the first text to fully integrate anti-oppressive concepts with generalist practice course content. This comprehensive approach introduces the principles of social justice and explores how these ideas intersect with social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The book covers ethics, values, and social work theory while offering practical insight into working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It also emphasizes policy, social movement activism, and practice within a global context. Through an integrative approach, authors Karen Morgaine and Moshoula Capous-Desyllas bridge the gap between anti-oppressive principles and practice, providing a practical solution for schools approaching reaccreditation under the CSWE Standards. Christian Itin from Metropolitan State University of Denver notes that the book is an important step in the ongoing evolution of generalist practice in social work, challenging the profession to become more explicit about the revolutionary aspects of practice. Terrence Allen of North Carolina Central University adds that it offers a fresh

perspective on social work practice interventions. (Karen Morgaine, Moshoula Capous-Desyllas, 2014)

CHAPTER-III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used to solve a research problem. It covers the strategies, techniques, and procedures involved in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. The purpose of research methodology is to provide a structured and scientific framework for conducting research, ensuring that findings are valid, reliable, and unbiased.

This study explores the role of language in social work practice and its impact on empowering marginalized women in Darjeeling District. Language is a crucial tool in social work, as effective communication enables trust-building, access to resources, and advocacy for social change. However, linguistic barriers often limit marginalized women's participation in welfare programs, affecting their empowerment.

THEORETICAL DEFINITION

LANGUAGE: According to the Britannica language is a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves.

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: According to National Association of Social Workers, Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups

provide or improve social and health services; and participating in legislative processes.

MARGINALIZED WOMEN:

According to the United Nations (UN Women, 2020): "Marginalized women are those who experience systemic barriers to social, economic, and political participation due to factors such as poverty, ethnicity, caste, disability, geographic location, and cultural norms, leading to limited access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power."

EMPOWERMENT: The United Nations defines empowerment as a process that enables individuals to gain control over their lives, fostering participation in decision-making and enhancing their capacity to act on issues they consider important. This concept is central to achieving sustainable development and other vital goals.

LINGUISTIC BARRIERS: According to Nulab, a language barrier is any linguistic limitation that creates confusion or prevents comprehension. This includes differences in national and cultural languages, specialized knowledge, or speech impairments. Such barriers can impede effective communication, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

LANGUAGE: A system of conventional spoken, written, or signed symbols used by a community to communicate meaning through a set of established rules governing the combination of those symbols, allowing for the expression of ideas and thoughts within a social group

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: Social work practice is the application of social work principles, values, and techniques to help people and communities.

MARGINALIZED WOMEN:

Marginalized women are women who face

multiple disadvantages and risks to their human rights. They may be economically or socially marginalized, or face discrimination based on their identity.

EMPOWERMENT: Empowerment is the act or action of empowering or enabling someone to perform certain acts or duties

LINGUISTIC BARRIERS: Linguistic barriers are obstacles that make it difficult to communicate with others because of language differences. They can include challenges with understanding words and phrases, or with speaking a language well enough.

VARIABLE

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:

- Cultural sensitivity in communication.
- Community engagement and involvement

DEPENDENT VARIABLE:

- Self-esteem and confidence
- Access to resource and opportunities

RESEARCH DESIGN:

- Exploratory research design and Descriptive in nature.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The research is based on the women at Darjeeling district is the universe of study.



Map of District Darjeeling

SAMPLING

Convenient sampling was applied to conduct this research. A sample of 30 respondents were selected from two subdivisions of district Darjeeling.

SOURCES OF DATA

PRIMARY DATA: It was sourced through the Google Scholar, Infilbnet and few books from the library.

SECONDARY DATA: The data was collected through home visits, telephonic interview and Google form.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaire, Google form.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The procedure of data collection is based on the google form, through the telephonic interview and home visits.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the google forms and telephonic interview were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

CONCLUSION

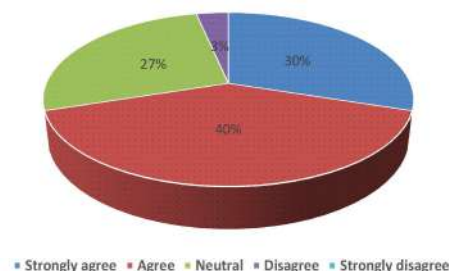
In conclusion, language and communication are fundamental to the success of social work practices aimed at empowering marginalized women in the Darjeeling district. The ability to communicate effectively, in a culturally sensitive and contextually relevant manner, enables social workers to bridge gaps in understanding, build trust, and foster meaningful engagement with the community. By customizing language to the needs of marginalized women—considering factors such as local dialects, educational backgrounds, and social norms—social workers can help create environments where these women feel heard, respected, and empowered.

Effective communication is not only about transmitting information but also about fostering social relationships that enable women to access resources, participate in decision-making, and realize their potential. The empowerment process is multifaceted, involving increased self-esteem, access to opportunities, and social mobility. Through the strategic use of language and communication techniques, marginalized women in Darjeeling can gain greater autonomy, achieve personal growth, and become active participants in both their communities

CHAPTER-IV ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION INTRODUCTION

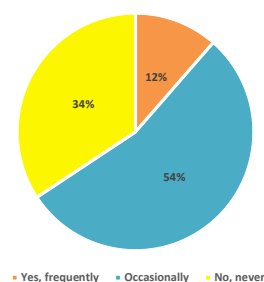
The analysis and interpretation chapter delves into the intricate relationship between language, social work, and empowerment within the context of marginalized women in Darjeeling District. By examining the role of language as a pivotal tool in social work practice, this chapter seeks to explore how effective communication can break down barriers and foster inclusion. Understanding how language influence's identity, access to resources, and the ability to voice concerns is crucial to the empowerment of women who have long been silenced by societal, cultural, and economic constraints. Through this analysis, we will interpret the findings and insights gathered from both fieldwork and literature to shed light on how language can be leveraged to facilitate deeper connections, trust.

Enhancing access for marginalized women through local languages in social work



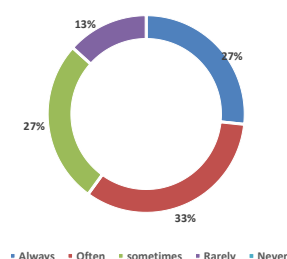
Most of the respondents were agreed that enhancing access for marginalized women through local languages in social work.

Faced difficulty in understanding the information provided by social workers due to language difference



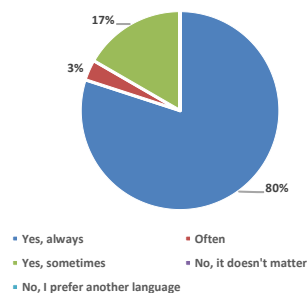
Majority of the respondents occasionally faced difficulty in understanding the information provided by social workers due to language difference.

Soial workers provided translated materials or interpreters when needed.



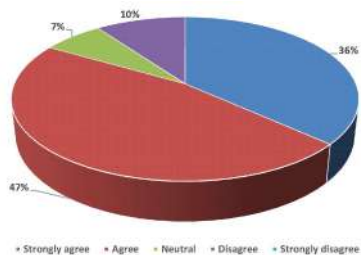
Majority of the respondents responded that the most of the social workers often provided translated materials or interpreters.

Feel more comfortable when social workers speak your native language



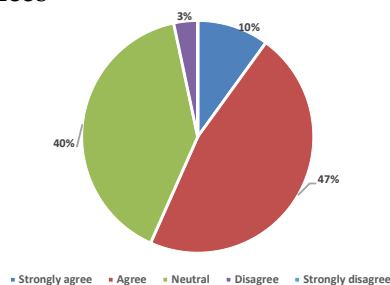
Most of the respondents feels that more comfortable when social workers speak there local language.

Believing languages plays a crucial role in accessing social work services



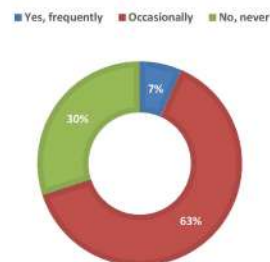
Most of the respondents believes that languages play a crucial role in accessing social work services.

Communication difficulties prevent women from fully utilizing social work services



Majority of the respondents agreed that Communication difficulties prevent women from fully utilizing social work services.

Misunderstood social work instructions due to language issues



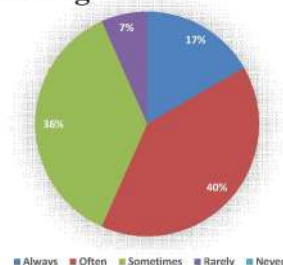
Misunderstood social work instructions due to language issues.

Women from marginalized communities faces more challenges in understanding social services due to languages difference



Majority of the respondents agreed that Women from marginalized communities faces more challenges in understanding social services due to languages difference.

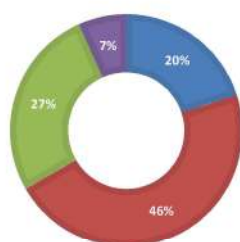
Social workers simplify legal or administrative language to ensure understanding



Most of the respondents replied that the social workers often simplify legal or administrative language to ensure understanding.

Provides written materials in language the respondent understands

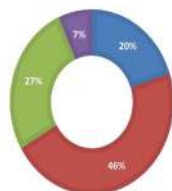
■ Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ Never



Majority of the respondents responded that the social workers often Provide written materials in language the respondent understands.

Believing implementing more language-inclusive social work services would empower marginalized women

■ Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ Never



Most of the respondents were Believing implementing more language-inclusive social work services would empower marginalized women.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS & CONCLUSION INTRODUCTION

The research on Language and the Social Work Practice: Empowering Marginalized Women through Effective Communication

in Darjeeling District explores the crucial role of language in social work practices aimed at empowering marginalized women. Darjeeling, with its diverse linguistic and cultural landscape, presents unique challenges for social workers in reaching out to and effectively supporting these women. This study investigates how the use of local languages can bridge communication gaps, improve access to social services, and enhance the participation of marginalized women in decision-making processes. The findings highlight the significance of language as a tool for fostering trust, ensuring cultural relevance, and ultimately promoting social inclusion and empowerment for women in the region. Through this research, we aim to underscore the transformative potential of using local languages in social work to create more accessible and effective interventions for marginalized groups.

FINDINGS

- Most of them were enhancing access for marginalized women through local languages in social work.
- Majority of them were occasionally faced difficulty in understanding the information provided by social workers due to language difference.
- Majority of the social workers often provided translated materials or interpreters.
- Most of them feels that more comfortable when social workers speak their local language.
- Most of them believes that languages play a crucial role in accessing social work services.
- Communication difficulties prevent women from fully utilizing social work services.
- Majority of them occasionally misunderstood social work instructions due to language issues.
- Majority of the Women from marginalized

communities faces more challenges in understanding social services due to languages difference.

- Most of the social workers often simplify legal or administrative language to ensure understanding.
- Majority of the social workers often Provide written materials in language the respondent understands.
- Implementing more language-inclusive social work services would empower marginalized women.

CONCLUSION

The research on Language and the Social Work Practice: Empowering Marginalized Women through Effective Communication in Darjeeling District underscores the pivotal role that language plays in shaping social work interactions and facilitating access to essential services for marginalized women. The findings reveal that while social workers are making efforts to enhance accessibility through local languages, communication barriers remain a significant challenge. A majority of marginalized women face difficulties in understanding information provided by social workers due to language differences, which limits their full engagement with social services. However, the research highlights that when social workers use local languages or provide translated materials and interpreters, it greatly improves the comfort and understanding of these women.

The study also reveals that simplifying complex legal and administrative language and offering written materials in accessible languages can help bridge these gaps. Most women feel more empowered and are better able to navigate social services when communication is conducted in their local language. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of language inclusivity in social

work, suggesting that implementing more language-responsive strategies could significantly empower marginalized women, reduce social exclusion, and promote greater participation in community development initiatives. The research advocates for a more language-conscious approach to social work to ensure that all women, regardless of linguistic background, have equal access to services that can improve their lives.

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<https://images.app.goo.gl/RhoWiFiaN7u5Qs4KA>

**STORIES AS BRIDGES:
EXPLORING ADIVASI CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN
HANSDA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR'S *THE ADIVASI WILL NOT DANCE***

Muthuraju M

Abstract

*This article examines the portrayal of Adivasi culture in Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015), a collection of ten short stories. Shekhar's narratives capture the complexities of Adivasi life, intertwining themes of resistance, displacement, and resilience within the framework of oral traditions. Stories such as "The Adivasi Will Not Dance," "They Eat Meat!" and "November Is the Month of Migrations" reveal the richness of Adivasi heritage while addressing the community's struggles against systemic marginalisation and cultural erosion. The study explores the dual role of storytelling: as a means of cultural preservation and a form of resistance that connects historical consciousness with contemporary identity. It highlights the challenges faced by Adivasi communities, including forced displacement and the disintegration of traditional norms, alongside their triumphs in sustaining oral traditions amid adversity. By positioning Shekhar's work within the larger context of indigenous and Dalit literature, the article emphasises its advocacy for marginalised voices and the preservation of traditional knowledge and values.*

Keywords: *Adivasi culture, marginalised voices, storytelling, cultural identity, resilience*

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015) is a collection of ten short stories that portray the lived experiences of the Adivasi, particularly the Santhal community in Jharkhand. The book's reception, including its ban in Jharkhand, highlights mainstream discomfort with Shekhar's unfiltered depiction of Adivasi realities. The analysis situates Shekhar's work within broader socio-historical, postcolonial, and feminist frameworks while engaging with global indigenous literary movements to argue that *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is both a literary archive of resistance and a decolonial critique of India's development paradigm.

It is essential to contextualise the Adivasi experience within India's colonial and postcolonial history. Adivasis (meaning "original inhabitants") constitute 8.6% of India's population yet remain disenfranchised communities. Colonial policies (such as the 1865 Indian Forest Act) rebranded Adivasi as "encroachers" in territories they had inhabited for millennia. Post-independence, the Indian state perpetuated this dispossession

through legislation like the 1955 Scheduled Tribes Act, which reduced Adivasi identity to a bureaucratic category while enabling land acquisition for "national development." Economist Virginius Xaxa notes that 90% of India's mineral resources lie in Adivasi regions, fueling state-corporate collusion to displace communities for mining, dams, and industrialisation (Xaxa 45). This is captured in the titular short story "The Adivasi Will Not Dance".

In "November Is the Month of Migrations", Shekhar portrays seasonal migration, where Santhal men, women, and children are left with no other choice but to leave their villages for exploitative labour. Talamai Kisku, the protagonist, embodies socio-economic vulnerability. Her desperation leads to her sexual exploitation by a railway policeman: "Are you hungry?" the jawan calls out as Talamai rounds the corner. 'You need food?' He is standing in front of the policemen's quarters. 'Yes,' Talamai answers. 'You need money?' 'Yes.' 'Will you do some work for me?' Talamai knows what work

he is talking about” (40). Her predicament illustrates the intersectionality of economic and gender-based oppression. Shekhar’s stories mirror these structural injustices. In “Eating with the Enemy,” an Adivasi maid’s silent defiance against casteist dining practices eating alongside her upper-caste employer encapsulates the daily subtle passive aggressions faced by Adivasis. Her act, though seemingly mundane, subverts caste hierarchies that relegate Adivasis to servitude. Anthropologist Jason Cons frames such acts as “negotiations in sensitive spaces,” where marginalised communities reclaim agency through subtle resistance (Cons 112).

Shekhar does not shy away from portraying gendered violence within and beyond Adivasi communities. His story, “Merely a Whore”, exposes caste, class, and sexual exploitation. Sona, a sex worker, endures degradation at the hands of upper-caste men: “Madarchod! Mood kharab kar diya! Nirmal pulled himself out. ‘Kiss? I don’t kiss a rendi on the lips” (166). This transactional dehumanisation underscores how caste and gender hierarchies commodify Adivasi women and highlights how Adivasi women are disproportionately targeted due to their “triple marginalisation” (Kimberlé Crenshaw) as poor, indigenous, and female. In contrast, Shekhar resists reducing his characters to victims in “Desire, Divination, Death”. Here, he explores female sexuality through an Adivasi woman who asserts agency over her body, challenging societal moral policing, aligning with Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s call to recognise Third World women as “active agents of resistance” (Mohanty 34). In “Getting Even”, an Adivasi woman refuses to accept victimhood, opposing caste oppression. In another story, “Blue Baby”, he explicates the psychological toll of caste-based stigma, focusing on an Adivasi woman’s struggles with childbirth and motherhood. Shekhar

highlights Adivasi resilience in shaping identity despite systemic constraints through these narratives. His storytelling exposes these injustices and highlights acts of survival and resistance.

A recurring motif in Shekhar’s work is the stigmatisation of Adivasi identity, particularly regarding religion and social standing (food habits and culture). In “They Eat Meat!”, Shekhar addresses food politics and cultural policing, where dietary practices become a battleground for identity. Food emerges as a potent symbol of cultural resistance in Shekhar’s work. The protagonist’s, Biram Soren, incredulity at being ridiculed for consuming meat reflects broader efforts to suppress Adivasi traditions. Shekhar reveals how economic and cultural hegemony reinforces marginalisation, cementing Adivasis’ outsider status within their homeland. The protagonist’s incredulity, “How can people dislike those who eat meat?” (Shekhar 7), reflects global indigenous struggles against culinary colonialism. For instance, the Maori of New Zealand faced similar stigmatisation for consuming traditional foods like “hangi” (earth-cooked meals), which settlers deemed “uncivilised” (Smith 78). The story foregrounds the tension between imposed norms and indigenous autonomy, demonstrating how everyday acts such as eating hold significant political and cultural implications. As anthropologist Utsa Mukherjee points out, “Food habits among marginalised communities are a site of contested identity, where dietary choices become acts of defiance against hegemonic cultural norms” (Mukherjee 219). The short story “Sons” examines generational tensions within an Adivasi family as modernity clashes with traditional customs. Similarly, “Baso-jhi” portrays an elderly Adivasi woman grappling with cultural shifts as younger generations abandon traditional practices. The erosion of

indigenous knowledge systems and community structures reflects anxieties about cultural preservation.

Adivasis have historically been displaced and economically exploited, often losing their lands to industrial projects that leave them impoverished. While Adivasi's struggles are significant, Shekhar also depicts acts of resilience. Whether oral or written, storytelling serves as a means of resistance against cultural erasure. Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asserts that subaltern voices are often silenced, but storytelling allows them to "speak back" (Spivak 283). Shekhar exemplifies this by centring Adivasi characters who challenge marginalisation through acts of defiance. Shekhar captures these realities in *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, where Mangal Murmu refuses to perform for Indian dignitaries after his community's land is seized for mining. His defiance becomes a powerful act of resistance: "We were poor but we had our land, our trees, our ponds. Now, we are landless. Our ponds have dried up. They want us to celebrate?" (Shekhar 181). This moment sums up the forced transition from a self-sufficient Adivasi life to one marked by displacement. Similarly, in "Eating with the Enemy", an Adivasi woman working as a maid negotiates the tensions between servitude and self-respect. Her act of eating with her employer, something forbidden by casteist customs, becomes a subtle yet profound assertion of dignity.

One of Shekhar's most compelling contributions is his role in literary archiving. His stories document Adivasi histories, traditions, and resistance strategies, preserving narratives often erased from mainstream discourse. Walter J. Ong asserts that oral cultures prioritise "a close relationship between speaker and audience, where knowledge is communal rather than individually owned" (Ong 45). Shekhar's

storytelling embodies this principle, mirroring oral traditions that assert agency against dominant narratives. For instance, in "The Adivasi Will Not Dance", Mangal Murmu's refusal to perform his tribe's traditional dance in front of the President of India reflects a rejection of Adivasi culture's commodification: "You will now start building the power plant, but this plant will be the end of us all, the end of all the Adivasi... And how can we Adivasis dance and be happy? Unless we are given back our homes and land, we will not sing and dance. We Adivasis will not dance. The Adivasi will not—" (187). His silencing by police brutality exposes the state's suppression of indigenous voices. Bhowmik, in his review, argues that Murmu's defiance functions as a "counter-discourse to the popular narratives made by the upper-caste and upper-class about Santhals" (5). Shekhar's critique aligns with subaltern studies, particularly in its emphasis on the erasure of indigenous agency. The story's reflective mode mimics oral recounting, reinforcing communal history and resistance, and echoes real-world movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan, where Adivasis resisted displacement by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Sociologist Arundhati Roy, who chronicled this struggle, critiques development as "the genocide of the poor in the name of progress" (Roy 301).

Despite the resilience of oral traditions, Adivasi communities face growing threats to cultural preservation. In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Partha Chatterjee argues that indigenous groups must assimilate into the nation-state while retaining "authentic" cultural markers for public consumption (135). This paradox is evident in Shekhar's stories, where characters struggle to balance modernity and tradition. Shekhar's use of untranslated Adivasi words and phrases reinforces linguistic and cultural legitimacy, resisting literary dilution for non-

Adivasi readers. Shekhar's narrative style itself constitutes resistance. By embedding Santhali idioms like "disom" (homeland) and "jaher" (sacred grove) without translation, he asserts linguistic sovereignty, challenging what Ngugi wa Thiong'o calls "the cultural bomb of colonialism" (Ngugi 3).

Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a powerful testament to Adivasi's lived experiences. His narratives weave together economic precarity, gender violence, and environmental degradation, offering a holistic critique of India's treatment of its indigenous populations. His work affirms that resistance—through migration, defiance, or storytelling—is not just survival but a reclamation of dignity and identity. However, this insightful and thought-provoking work was banned in Jharkhand in 2017, and the author was suspended from his position as a government medical officer. This is the reflection of the hegemonic structure where the mainstream discourse refuses to incorporate such works. Sanjay Srivastava critiques the ban, arguing that *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* presents "unsentimental renderings of quotidian struggles and aspirations" that expose uncomfortable truths about Adivasi oppression (8). The state's justification, citing "immorality" and "pornography," underscores a resistance to narratives that challenge established power structures. Stålenhag critiques by comparing it to Perumal Murugan's *One Part Woman* (withdrawn in 2015 after caste groups protested) reveals how caste hegemony weaponises "obscurity" to suppress dissent (Stålenhag 2020). As Adivasi storytelling evolves, adapting to modern mediums while retaining its core principles, Shekhar's work contributes to a broader movement within Adivasi and Dalit literature. As Arundhati Roy highlights in her discourse on displacement, "The so-called development of the nation often demands the erasure of

indigenous cultures and histories" (Roy 301). Thus, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is not merely a collection of stories but an assertion of identity, resilience, and historical truth.

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DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF INDIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE: APPROACHES AND INITIATIVES

Nayana Borah

Pallabi Sonowal

Abstract

Culture and heritage represent the ways of living by a community that has been developed and inherited through generations. Traditional cultural heritage can be defined as diverse type of intangible and tangible heritage related to our ancestors in the ancient time such as cultures, beliefs, practices, ceremonies, indigenous knowledge etc. India represents the diverse, old and invaluable culture and traditions that people practice for thousands of years. Preserving traditional cultural heritage is important to maintain a country's identity and history. The advancements in the information and communication technologies witnessed in the last three decades are proving to be a boon for the preservation of cultural heritage. The government of India launched several initiatives to provide universal and open access to cultural heritage in the form of virtual content in digital form to each and every one with an internet connection. Some of the initiatives for digital preservation of Indian cultural heritage are INTACH Knowledge Centre (IKC), KALASAMPDA by IGNCA, Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, Digital Library of India etc. In this paper an attempt has been made to study different approaches and initiatives for digital preservation of Indian cultural heritage. The study used qualitative research methodology.

Keywords: *Cultural heritage, preservation, Digital archive, Oral history, Indian initiatives*

Introduction

The oral traditions and expressions domain encompasses an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances and more. Oral traditions and expressions are used to pass on knowledge, cultural and social values, and collective memory. They play a crucial part in keeping cultures alive.

Some types of oral expression are common and can be used by entire communities while others are limited to particular social groups, only men or women, perhaps, or only the elderly. In many societies, performing oral traditions is a highly specialized occupation and the community holds professional performers in the highest regard as guardians of collective memory. Such performers can be found in communities all over the world. While poets

and storytellers in non-Western societies such as the griots and dyelli from Africa are well known, there is also a rich oral tradition in Europe and North America. In Germany and the USA, for example, there are hundreds of professional storytellers.

Because they are passed on by word of mouth, oral traditions and expressions often vary significantly in their telling. Stories are a combination – differing from genre to genre, from context to context and from performer to performer – of reproduction, improvisation, and creation. This combination makes them a vibrant and colourful form of expression, but also fragile, as their viability depends on an uninterrupted chain passing traditions from one generation of performers to the next.

Documentation of cultural heritage is crucial for preservation. It involves recording, cataloging, and creating an inventory of tangible and intangible cultural heritage

elements. This can be done through photographs, videos, written records, and audio recordings. Traditional Cultural Heritage can be captured through interviews, observations, communications, and recordings. It can be documented through writing down, taking notes, photographing, digitizing and videotaping. Documented traditional cultural heritage can be published in printed media or presented in digital media as You Tube presentation, Blog, E-portal, or website etc. However, preserving traditional cultural heritage is a challenging task. It is a well-known fact traditional cultural heritage or IK of a community is in the individual's head and it is called tacit knowledge.

What is the necessity of documentation and archives of arts? The answer is simple, what cultural heritage will we leave behind for our future generations in absence of documented work?

Objective

The main objective of the study is to find out the various initiatives taken for digital preservation of Indian cultural heritage.

Methodology

Observation method has been used to collect data. Websites of various Organisations and Institutions as well as the home page of the libraries engaged in the collection and preservation of cultural heritage of India has been used to collect the information for the present descriptive study.

Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture

Scientific and technical innovations and particularly Information and communication technology has revolutionised the whole process of preserving, organising and sharing. The multimedia technology that it provides is the main reason. It supports traditional culture to be incorporated with modern and contemporary knowledge

system. Thus, digital technologies offer modern tools for preservation of Indigenous culture and knowledge. Systematic and coordinated approach is required by the organisations or libraries involved in preservation of cultural heritage through modern technologies. Librarians, archivists, conservators, educational Institutes, hardware software developers, and managers of digital repositories could play vital role in preserving IK. Preservation calls for Documentation. Bradford (1953) has defined the term Documentation as "the art of collecting, classifying and making readily assessable the records of all kinds of intellectual activities to put before the creative specialist the existing literature, bearing the subjects of his investigation in order that he may be fully made aware of the pervious achievements of his genius upon work already done. Documentation is an art of practical necessity practiced by brotherhood of enthusiastic devotees whose painstaking labour contributes in modest obscurity towards the progress of society". Documentation leads to the preservation, proper use, enhancement and empowerment of the holders of IK

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Many Govt. and Non-Govt. organisations are engaged in integrating modern technology for preserving the Indian Heritage. Libraries of these Institutions play crucial role in documentation and preservation of Indigenous knowledge and culture. World organisations like IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) has put forward recommendations for libraries and archives for inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge to ensure its preservation which includes, implementing programs to collect, preserve and disseminate indigenous and local traditional knowledge resources (IFLA,

2014). Some initiatives in preserving cultural heritage of India are presented below.

INTACH Knowledge Centre (IKC)

The main objective of The Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is to make aware public about the social responsibility towards nation's heritage and to conduct training programmes for the conservation, restoration, preservation and to documentation of cultural heritage of the country. The INTACH Knowledge Centre (IKC) resources includes books on architecture, art, conservation, crafts, archaeology, Intangible heritage, history, Indigenous people, tourism and museums. The documentation and cultural mapping of the Cultural heritage is being done in the centre. The Audiovisual centre of the knowledge centre maintains collection of these documentary films, recorded interviews, lecture, slides, photographs and selected archives of Akashvani. The Documentation centre of IKC fulfils the requirements of the scholars, researchers and practitioners in the field of conservation of architecture and natural heritage with its special collection.

Kalasampada (Digital Library: Resources of Indian Cultural Heritage)

It is a project initiated by the IGNCA in collaboration with Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. Kalasampada facilitates the users to access and view the materials including over couple of lakhs of manuscripts, over a lakhs of slides, thousands of rare books, rare photographs, audio and video along with highly researched publications of the IGNCA, from a single window. Multimedia computer technology has been used for the development of a software package that integrates variety of cultural information accessible at one place. The system aims at

being a digital repository of content and information with a user-friendly interface.

Kalasampada Digital Library- Resource for Indian Cultural Heritage (DL-RICH) was established in 1985 has rich collection of tribal art, folk arts and provides open access to cultural informatics through five of its regional centres namely

- Sutradhara
- Kalinidhi
- Kalakosha
- Janapadasampada
- Kaladarshana.

Kalasampada in Hindi means artistic treasure and this repository is not only preserving but also providing open access to the cultural wealth of India

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

India has possessed a rich traditional knowledge to diagnose and treat various kinds of diseases since time immemorial. This knowledge was passed down from generation to generation either through archive literature or word of mouth. Recognizing the urgent need to preserve this rich cultural legacy the TKDL was established by the government of India.

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) is a pioneering initiative of India to protect Indian traditional medicinal knowledge and prevent its misappropriation at International Patent Offices. Traditional Knowledge (TK) is a valuable yet vulnerable asset to indigenous and local communities who depend on TK for their livelihood. The healthcare needs of more than 70% population and livelihood of millions of people in India is dependent on traditional medicine. Globally too there has been renewed attention and interest in the use of

traditional medicine increasing its vulnerability to exploitation. The problem related to Indian TK is further compounded by the fact that India's traditional medicinal knowledge exists in languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, Urdu, Tamil etc. that too in ancient local dialects that are no more in practice. Thus, the published Indian TK literature is neither accessible nor understood by patent examiners at international patent offices.

The TKDL provides information on traditional knowledge existing in the country in languages and formats understandable to patent examiners at international patent office's (IPO's) so as to prevent the grant of wrong patents, Thus acting as a bridge between traditional Indian medicinal knowledge existing in local languages and the patent examiners at IPO's. TKDL was setup in 2001 by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (Dept of AYUSH) and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India. It has transcribed over 34 million pages of traditional Indian formulations into five languages-English, German, French, Spanish and Japanese and makes them available in public domain.

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library has overcome the language and format barrier by systematically and scientifically converting and structuring the available contents of the ancient texts on Indian Systems of Medicines i.e. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa Rigpa as well as Yoga, into five international languages, namely, English, Japanese, French, German and Spanish, with the help of information technology tools and an innovative classification system - Traditional Knowledge Resource Classification (TKRC). As on date, more than 4.54 lakh formulations/ practices have been transcribed into the TKDL database.

National Digital Library of India

National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a virtual repository of learning resources which is not just a repository with search/browse facilities but provides a host of services for the learner community. It is sponsored and mentored by Ministry of Education, Government of India, through its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT). NDLI includes cultural archives such as books, photographs, paintings, manuscripts and other visual art.

Conclusion

Like other forms of intangible cultural heritage, oral traditions are threatened by rapid urbanization, large-scale migration, industrialization, and environmental change. Books, newspapers and magazines, radio, television and the Internet can have an especially damaging effect on oral traditions and expressions. Modern mass media may significantly alter or over replace traditional forms of oral expression. Epic poems that once took several days to recite in full may be reduced to just a few hours and traditional courtship songs that were sung before marriage may be replaced by CDs or digital music files.

The most important part of safeguarding oral traditions and expressions is maintaining their everyday role in society. It is also essential that opportunities for knowledge to be passed from person-to-person survive; chances for elders to interact with young people and pass on stories in homes and schools, for example. Oral tradition often forms an important part of festive and cultural celebrations and these events may need to be promoted and new contexts, such as storytelling festivals, encouraged to allow traditional creativity to find new means of expression.

Communities, researchers and institutions are using information technology to help safeguard the full range and richness of oral traditions, including textual variations and different styles of performance. Unique expressive features, such as intonation and a much larger number of varying styles, can now be recorded as audio or video, as can interactions between performers and audiences and non-verbal story elements including gestures and mimicry. Mass media and communication technologies can be used to preserve and even strengthen oral traditions and expressions by broadcasting recorded performances both to their communities of origin and to a wider audience.

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PEDAGOGY IN THE ANCIENT INDIAN VEDIC EDUCATION SYSTEM AND IT' S TRANSFORMATION

Dr. Padma Dutta

Priyashree Konwar

Abstract

The traditional Indian education system during the Vedic period mainly based on the Gurukula system, where students lived with their guru and learned through oral transmission, memorization and experiential learning. This study explores ancient teaching - learning methods and how these teaching methods evolved over time. The transformation is necessary to adopt contemporary needs including scientific inquiry, skill-based learning, inclusivity and technology - driven education. This study focuses on how education was imparted in ancient India, how it changed over time and its relevance in modern education policies specially in NEP 2020. This study based on secondary sources.

Keywords: *Vedic education, verbal teaching method, NEP 2020*

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The Ancient Indian Education System refers to the organized and structured form of learning that existed in India from the Vedic period to the pre-colonial era. It was a holistic and value-based system designed to promote intellectual, moral, spiritual, and physical development. It was primarily based on oral traditions (Shruti and Smriti) and was imparted through the Gurukula system, where students lived with their teachers to receive education in various subjects such as Vedic scriptures, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and warfare. This system evolved through three major phases. The Vedic Education (1500 BCE – 500 BCE) focused on religious teachings, rituals, and moral values, with the four Vedas forming the core of learning. The Buddhist Education (500 BCE – 1200 CE) introduced institutionalized learning through universities like Nalanda and Takshashila, promoting logical reasoning, debate, and monastic education. The Medieval Education (1200 CE – 1700 CE) was influenced by Islamic traditions, incorporating madrasas, Persian and Arabic studies, and formal examinations. Each phase contributed uniquely to India's

educational heritage, emphasizing holistic learning, ethical values, and lifelong wisdom, making it one of the most comprehensive education systems in history. After these, the British education system in India was introduced modern subjects like science, mathematics, history, geography and while reducing emphasis on traditional Indian Knowledge Systems.

The Vedic Period (1500 BCE – 500 BCE) marked the foundation of the ancient Indian education system, deeply rooted in spirituality, moral values, and holistic learning. Education during this time was primarily oral and self-study, with knowledge being transmitted through memorization and recitation of sacred texts. The Vedas are the original source of the philosophy of life in ancient India. The Vedas are also known as Shruti. . The Vedas are full of knowledge and wisdom .The four Vedas—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda—formed the core of learning, covering a wide range of subjects. The Rigveda, the oldest, contained hymns and philosophical verses; the Yajurveda focused on rituals and sacrificial ceremonies; the Samaveda emphasized music and chants; and the Atharvaveda included

medicine, magic, and everyday life practices.

The Gurukula system was a traditional form of education where disciples left their homes to reside at the guru's house, living as family members while receiving education under the guru's guidance. After completing the Upanayana ceremony between the ages of 8 to 12, students would join the Gurukula and stay for around 12 years, fully dedicating themselves to learning. They performed daily chores along with their studies, fostering discipline and self-sufficiency. Education was imparted through a close bond between the guru and the disciple, with the guru's personality significantly shaping the student's character and personality development. Gurukula were typically located in secluded areas, away from cities, to provide a peaceful learning environment. The guru nurtured children, ensuring they faced no difficulties in food, shelter, or studies. Students were required to follow strict rules and maintain both physical and spiritual discipline. Gurukula offered education to all, regardless of social or economic background, promoting equality. Upon completing their education, disciples expressed gratitude by offering Guru Dakshina, a token of appreciation, based on their capability.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW:

Lila Gogoi writes that the Vedic education system was deeply rooted in oral traditions, emphasizing memorization (Shruti), reflection (Manana), and realization (Nididhyasana) to impart knowledge. The Gurukul system, a key feature, focused on holistic learning where students lived with their teachers (Acharyas), ensuring a disciplined, value-based education. This pedagogy emphasized self-discipline, spiritual growth, and moral development, shaping the intellectual and ethical foundations of students.

According to Mohendra Neog, with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, a shift towards dialogue-based learning occurred, promoting critical thinking over rote memorization. This period saw the establishment of monastic universities like Takshashila and Nalanda, which expanded the curriculum to include logic, medicine, and arts, transforming Vedic pedagogy. Later, Islamic and colonial influences introduced Persian, Arabic, and Western education models, leading to a gradual decline of traditional Vedic learning systems.

Scholars like Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda advocated for a revival of Indian education, stressing the integration of Vedic ideals with modern scientific learning. Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy emphasized a synthesis of ancient wisdom and contemporary knowledge, aligning with the transformational necessity in pedagogy. Lila Gogoi commented on the shift towards modern educational frameworks while retaining ethical and value-based learning reflects the enduring impact of Vedic pedagogy.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

3.1 To examine pedagogical methods used in Vedic education system particularly in the Gurukula tradition.

3.2 To analyse the transformation of Vedic pedagogy due to influences from Buddhist, Medieval and Colonial education systems.

3.3 To study the necessity of transformation in education in teaching-learning process to meet contemporary needs like as skill-based learning and digital education.

3.4 To access the impact of NEP 2020 in integrating modern pedagogical approach.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study based on secondary sources like book & journal, reprint of published

papers soft copies included web pages, newspaper, article, research paper, etc.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY:

5.1. Objective: To examine pedagogical methods used in Vedic education system particularly in the Gurukula tradition.

VERBAL MODE IN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS IN VEDIC EDUCATION:

The verbal mode in the teaching – learning process refers to use of spoken words for imparting knowledge, instruction and communication between teachers and students. The verbal mode in Vedic education was the foundation of knowledge transmission, where wisdom was preserved and passed down through oral recitation, chanting, discussion, and debate. Since the Vedas were considered divine revelations, they were not written down but committed to memory with precise pronunciation and rhythm. This oral tradition was not merely a method of instruction but a deeply immersive learning experience that shaped intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth.

There are different types of verbal modes in the teaching-learning process of Vedic education and all are powerful tool for preserving and transmitting knowledge. These oral traditions were not just methods of instruction but deeply immersive experiences that shaped intellectual and spiritual growth.

1. Shravana (Listening and Memorization): Shravana which means “that which is heard”, was the main way of passing knowledge in Vedic education. It was based on listening and memorization, where students learned by carefully hearing their Guru and repeating the teachings. Since the Vedas were considered sacred, they were not written down but

passed from generation to generation through oral recitation. Special techniques like repetition, chanting, and correct pronunciation helped students remember the texts accurately. This method not only kept the knowledge pure and unchanged for thousands of years but also helped learners develop strong memory and deep understanding. The Vedas, Upanishads, and Brahmanas are part of Shravana and form the foundation of Hindu philosophy. Shravana was more than just a way of learning—it was a spiritual and disciplined practice that connected students deeply with knowledge¹.

2. Abhyasa (Repetition and Chanting): Abhyasa, meaning “practice” or “repetition”, was an essential part of the teaching-learning process in Vedic education. It focused on constant repetition and memorization to help students retain knowledge effectively. In Gurukuls, students learned by listening to their Guru and repeatedly chanting Vedic hymns, mantras, and scriptures. This method ensured that knowledge was deeply embedded in memory and passed down without changes. Through Abhyasa, students developed strong concentration, discipline, and accuracy in their learning. The practice of chanting and reciting aloud not only strengthened memory but also created a spiritual and meditative experience. It was believed that continuous practice refined the mind, sharpened intellect, and deepened understanding. Even today, the concept of Abhyasa is relevant in learning, as regular revision and repetition help in mastering any subject or skill².

3. Shastrartha (Debate and Discussion): Shastrartha, meaning “discussion and debate on scriptures,” was an important part of the teaching-learning process in Vedic education. It involved deep discussions, logical arguments, and debates between students and scholars to analyze and interpret Vedic texts,

philosophical concepts, and spiritual teachings. This method encouraged critical thinking, reasoning, and intellectual growth, helping students develop a clear understanding of complex ideas. In Gurukulas, Shastrartha was conducted in a structured manner, where students presented their viewpoints, questioned different interpretations, and defended their arguments using logic and scriptural evidence. It was a way of testing knowledge, refining ideas, and arriving at deeper truths. This method played a crucial role in preserving and evolving Indian philosophy, ethics, and traditions. Even today, the spirit of Shastrartha continues in academic discussions, research, and debates, making it a timeless approach to learning and knowledge-sharing.

4. Upadesha (Oral Instructions and Explanations): In the Vedic Education system, Upadesha was deeply associated with the Gurukula traditions, where students learned by listening, repeating and internalizing the scriptures. The guru's role was not to instruct but also to interpret, explain and clarify deeper philosophical meanings.

5. Pravachana (Lectures and Discourses): In the Vedic system, Pravachan was a key method of oral teaching, where rishis, gurus, and scholars explained the deeper meanings of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Smritis. These discourses were highly structured and aimed at clarifying abstract philosophical concepts. Pravachan was often delivered in Sanskrit, and students absorbed knowledge through listening, repetition, and contemplation. The emphasis was on Shravana (listening), Manana (reflection), and Nididhyasana (deep meditation on knowledge). This system ensured the preservation and oral continuity of ancient wisdom without the reliance on written texts.

6. Manana (Reflection and Internalization): The meaning of Manan (Meditation) is to

internalize or assimilate knowledge. It refers to the effort of deeply understanding every word, sentence, and concept that is spoken or conveyed. True knowledge can be attained only through Manan. Those who carefully listen to each word and sentence and comprehend the meaning and significance explained by the teacher are the true possessors of knowledge. Individuals with high intellectual capacity excel in this process. Therefore, the act of repeatedly contemplating and internalizing knowledge that arises through reasoning and analysis is called Manan³.

7. Samvad (Dialogue and Question-Answer Sessions): Samvad (dialogue) was an essential method of learning in the Vedic education system. It encouraged interactive discussions between teachers (Gurus) and students (Shishyas), as well as debates among scholars. Through Samvad, students refined their understanding by questioning, analyzing, and exchanging ideas. This approach nurtured critical thinking and helped in grasping complex philosophical and spiritual concepts.

8. Nididhyasana (Realisation): Nididhyasana means focusing the mind on the contemplation of truth. It refers to deeply reflecting on the concepts understood through Sravana (listening) and Manana (reflection) to ascertain their ultimate truth. Several other techniques were used in Vedic era for teaching and learning. These included: Swadhyaya, analogy method, repetition method etc⁴.

These verbal modes formed the very essence of Vedic education, creating a learning system that was dynamic, engaging, and deeply transformative. While modern education leans heavily on written and digital mediums, the wisdom of these oral traditions continues to inspire interactive and meaningful learning experiences today.

5.2 Objective: To analyse the transformation

of Vedic pedagogy due to influences from Buddhist, Medieval and Colonial education systems.

TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHING METHODS OF BUDDHIST, ISLAMIC AND COLONIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Vedic pedagogy was deeply rooted in the oral transmission of knowledge, where students learned scriptures, hymns, and philosophies through memorization and recitation under the Gurukula system. However, with the arrival of Buddhist, Islamic, and Colonial influences, this oral system underwent significant transformations. Each phase introduced new methodologies that either supplemented or replaced the purely oral tradition of Vedic education.

Buddhism brought a major shift in the oral tradition of Vedic learning. While memorization and recitation remained important, Buddhist scholars emphasized discussions, debates, and reasoning as key methods of knowledge transmission. In monastic institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila, oral teaching was supplemented with interactive discourse, where monks engaged in argumentation to clarify concepts. The use of Pali and Prakrit languages instead of Sanskrit made knowledge more accessible to the common people, encouraging a broader participation in learning. The Buddhist emphasis on sermons and storytelling as methods of knowledge dissemination allowed oral pedagogy to evolve beyond rigid memorization into a more dialogical and analytical process⁵.

Islamic education introduced new oral pedagogical methods such as the Ijazah system, where students received direct oral instruction from scholars and were granted permission to teach once they mastered a

subject. The Madrasas followed a semi-oral system, where recitation of the Quran and Hadith was central, but it was also combined with written commentaries. This system influenced Hindu scholars as well, as many adopted a more structured approach to oral learning, incorporating elements of oral verification before written documentation. The use of Persian and Arabic as dominant languages further modified the oral transmission process, as many Sanskrit oral traditions lost prominence in favour of new linguistic and educational structures⁶.

The British colonial education system had the most disruptive impact on the oral Vedic pedagogy. The introduction of textbook-based learning and examinations diminished the importance of oral traditions. The British model emphasized reading and writing over memorization and recitation, making oral transmission an out-dated mode of education. Schools and colleges introduced a lecture-based system, where oral teaching was used primarily for explanation rather than as the main form of knowledge retention. Additionally, the dominance of English as the medium of instruction reduced the prevalence of Sanskrit and other oral traditions. The abolition of the Gurukul system and the establishment of formal classroom structures marked the final transition from an oral-centric education system to a text-based, examination-driven model⁷.

Overall, the oral system of Vedic pedagogy evolved significantly due to Buddhist, Islamic, and Colonial influences. Buddhist education transformed oral learning by integrating debates, discussions, and storytelling instead of rote memorization. Islamic education introduced structured oral learning and verification methods like the Ijazah system, modifying traditional Vedic recitation practices. Colonial education led to

the decline of oral traditions, replacing them with text-based learning and examinations.

5.3 Objective: To study the necessity of transformation in education in teaching-learning process to meet contemporary needs like as skill-based learning and digital education.

METHODS OF MODERN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

The modern teaching-learning process is a dynamic and evolving approach that integrates innovative methodologies to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and real-world skill development. With rapid advancements in technology and shifting educational demands, traditional rote-learning methods are being replaced by interactive, student-centered techniques. Digital education plays a crucial role, incorporating blended learning, flipped classrooms, and AI-powered adaptive learning to offer personalized and flexible learning experiences. Platforms like Google Classroom and Moodle enable seamless collaboration, while gamification and immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) make learning more engaging. Simultaneously, skill-based learning has gained prominence, emphasizing hands-on experiences through project-based learning, competency-based education, and vocational training, ensuring students are equipped for real-world challenges. Active learning strategies, including inquiry-based learning, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative discussions, foster creativity, independence, and deeper comprehension. Moreover, modern assessment techniques, such as formative assessments and portfolio-based evaluations, provide a holistic understanding of student progress. The growing adoption of hybrid learning, micro-learning, and AI-driven personalized instruction underscores the necessity of transforming education to

meet contemporary needs. By embracing these innovative teaching-learning methods, education is evolving into a more dynamic, skill-oriented, and technology-driven system, ensuring learners are not only knowledgeable but also proficient in essential life and professional skills.

5.4 Objectives: To access the impact of NEP 2020 in integrating modern pedagogical approach.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 focuses on bringing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the mainstream education system. It aims to combine ancient Indian wisdom, traditional practices, and contributions in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, Ayurveda, and philosophy with modern education. To make this possible, NEP 2020 supports research, documentation, and curriculum development based on IKS. Universities are setting up Research Centers on IKS to help students learn about traditional knowledge alongside modern science. Also, subjects like Ayurveda, Yoga, and Metallurgy are being added to school and college courses to encourage practical learning, community participation, and the use of local knowledge. Important institutions like AICTE, NCERT, and UGC are helping update textbooks and syllabi to include India's traditional knowledge. NEP 2020 also recognizes the value of tribal and regional knowledge, ensuring that folk traditions, herbal medicine, and environmental conservation practices are preserved and taught in schools and colleges⁸. Additionally, technology is being used to digitize ancient manuscripts and translate old texts using AI, making traditional knowledge easier to access for students and researchers. This study will examine how well IKS has been included in education, its effects on students and teachers, and the challenges in

implementing it. The goal is to understand whether this initiative is helping to create an inclusive, well-rounded, and culturally rich learning environment.

6.0 CONCLUSION:

The Vedic education system was deeply rooted in self-confidence, self-realization, and the holistic development of individuals. It emphasized spiritual and moral education, character formation, and personality development, ensuring that learners not only gained knowledge but also cultivated wisdom and ethical values. The system played a crucial role in preserving and nurturing cultural heritage while fostering a strong sense of discipline and purpose. However, despite its strengths, it had certain limitations, such as rigidity and exclusivity. These challenges can be overcome by integrating modern pedagogical approaches that blend traditional wisdom with contemporary educational methods. By adopting a balanced approach, we can create an education system that nurtures intellectual growth, ethical consciousness, and cultural preservation, shaping well-rounded individuals for the future.

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ORAL HEALTH TRADITION OF THE TEA TRIBE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BORBAM TEA ESTATE IN THE SIVASAGAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM

Pallabi Hazarika

Abstract

Culture is often defined as coherent, shared patterns of actions or beliefs specific to named groups of people that provides basic life roadmaps or social contexts, defining behavioural norms and interpersonal relationships as well as unwritten rules for proper living. This paper intends to discuss the oral health tradition among the Tea Tribes. Ethnic groups are a marker for oral health status. Underlying cultural beliefs and practices influence the condition of the teeth and mouth through diet, care seeking behaviours or use of home remedies. The tea garden people believe their folk healer rather than Medical Practitioner. Moreover during the field work it was observed that most of the Tea Garden people are very much expert in Home Remedies. The Oral Health Tradition is spread among them from one generation to another generation.

Hence, in this paper try to examine the Oral Health Tradition among the Tea Tribes in Borbam Tea Estate in Sivasagar district of Assam. One hundred respondents were selected to analyze the objective of the study.

Keywords: *Culture, Oral Health, Tea Tribe, Tradition*

Introduction

Assam has been an influential and integral part of India's North East Region, having substantial socio-cultural linkages with the entire sub-continent. Assam is a complex mix of various communities. The population comprises both tribal and non-tribal groups. The diverse social set-up, however, far from cultural assimilation has found itself in a situation of alienation and isolation today. The Tea Garden community is a major part of the entire population in Assam. In the multi-ethnic sphere of Assam, the Tea Tribes form a distinct population therein. They have been traced as the descendants of Adivasi communities such as Munda, Oraon, Santhal and other tribals of mainland India (found in present-day Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh etc. (Boruah S.1999). The Tea Garden community considered themselves as Adivasi rather than Tea Tribe but in Assam these Adivasi Tea tribes are not recognized as STs as they are not indigenous to the State.

They are basically migrated from different areas of India i.e., Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh etc.

Culture is often defined as coherent, shared patterns of actions or beliefs specific to named groups of people that provides basic life roadmaps or social contexts, defining behavioural norms and interpersonal relationships as well as unwritten rules for proper living. Underlying cultural beliefs and practices influence the condition of the teeth and mouth through diet, care seeking behaviours or use of home remedies. The health practices are not independent of culture in any society and the socio-religious beliefs and practices have various health implications in human society (Choudhury 2002). This paper intends to discuss the oral health tradition among the Tea Tribes with special reference to Borbam Tea Estate in the Sivasagar District of Assam. Borbam Tea Estate as established 1865. It is one of the oldest Tea Estate in the Sivasagar District. It is located nearby Nagaland Boarder.

Oral health refers the health practices those who are not mention in written document. It spread from one generation another generation. The Ethno-medicine is main focus of this paper which is directly related to oral health tradition.

Objectives

- i. To know the awareness on oral health of the Tea tribes in the Borbam Tea Estate
- ii. To examine the relevance of ethno-medicine among the respondents
- iii. To analyse relation between health and culture

Methodology

The design of this research is exploratory in nature. 50 respondents were selected as sample of this study through purposive sampling method between the age group of 25-60. The qualitative and quantitative both methods were applied for analysis the data. The data for the present study were collected by both primary and secondary sources. There are two primary sources were used as method of data collection in this research. They are interview method and observation method. There are two interview methods were applied for data collection, they are face to face interview and telephonic interview. And in the observation method, only non-participant observation method was used for data collection. Interview schedule were used as a tool of data collection in this research. The questions are framed manner of the interview schedule that helps the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study.

Analysis

Oral health tradition plays most important role in rural India. Before the

advent of modern science our society was completely depends on traditional medicare system which is closely related with our Traditional Knowledge system. Traditional medicine is sometimes seen as pre-scientific, its practice and treatments to be replaced by modern, better, more efficient science based medicine. What is less known, however, its contribution to modern science and medicine, and a long history of traditional products and practices being translated into effective treatments for health condition. The Nobel Prize Achiever Scientist TU Youyou's when she was worked on Malaria then she found the Clue in traditional Chinese Medical Literature. Now Artemisinin is recommended by the World Health Organisation as the first and second line of treatment for Malaria. She had received her Nobel prize for that research on Malaria which has saved millions of lives. Along with that Willow Bark as the aspirin is another example of how nature and traditional knowledge have contributed to modern medicine.

A person's health status is determined by the quality of food. Food is something that provides nutrients of our body. Nutrients are substances that provide energy for work, development, and all body functions like breathing, digestion, and staying warm, as well as blood purification and body warmth. They also assist in the development of a strong immune system, which is essential for protecting the body from different kind diseases. Some of the nutrients are necessary for make a good health. i.e. protein, vitamin, carbohydrates etc. Food culture is different from society to society. Still, all kinds of food culture get importance to maintain a good health of the people.

Table 1.1: Amount of calorie per 100 g of different food item

Sl. No	Food Item	Calorie intake	Carbohydrate	Protein
1	Rice	13	79.4	2.7
2	Wheat	340	72.4	13
3	Meat	240	-	25
4	Fish(Big)	97	-	24.24
5	Fish (Small)	83	-	22
6	Egg	78 (per egg)	-	6.3 (per egg)
7	Milk	6.3	-	3.4
8	Yogurt	59	-	10
9	Potato	7.7	64	2g (1 potato)
10	Mustard Oil	1.2	-	-
11	Various Green Vegetables	Above 50	5.22	2.9
12	Miscellaneous	21.78	-	-

Distribution of respondents Calorie deficiency based on required calorie

Table 1.2: Calorie Range of the respondents Per Capita Per day

Sl. No	Calorie range per capita(per day)	Respondents		Required Calorie intake for women	Deficiency of Calorie Intake
		Nos.	%		
1	Less than 1,000	35	70%	2000	More than 1000
2	1000-1,399	10	20%	2000	1000-600
3	1400-1,599	3	6%	2000	600-400
4	1600-1,999	2	4%	2000	400-1

The table shows 1.2 that out of the total 50 respondents, 35(70%) respondents calorie range per capita per day in less than 1000 while 10(20%) respondents per day calorie range is 1000-1,399. There are only 3(6%) respondents belong to 1,400-1,599 per day calorie range and remaining 2(4%) respondents calorie range per capita per day is 1,600-1,999.

It is clearly seen that most of the labour families suffer from calorie deficiency, i.e., the calorie intake is much lower than the calorie requirement. Therefore, the health condition of the labourers of the Borbam Tea Estate is not sound. In the present study, most of the respondents opined that they are suffering from health problems such as fever, cough, gastric problems, body pain, tuberculosis, stomach problem, etc., but they are not aware on it. A very small percentage of labourers go to the hospital for treatment.

1.3: Common Health Problems of the respondents

Sl. No	Name of the diseases	Respondents	
		Frequency	%
1	Fever	All	100%
2	Cough /cold	All	100%
3	Headache/Body aches	40	80%
4	Stomachaches/ Gastric pain	30	60%
5	Respiratory Problems	10	20%
6	White Discharge	25	50%

From the table 1.3 we are able to know that out of the total respondents there are all of the workers have common health problems i.e. fever, cough/cold. And out of total 100 respondents (workers) 40(80%) of the workers has headache/ body-aches problem, 30(60%) have suffered stomach-aches/ gastric pain and 10(20%) has faced respiratory problems. And 25(50%) has faced white discharge.

The workers do not take their some diseases seriously i.e., fever, cough gastric pain etc. For this kinds of diseases they never go to the doctor. But if cough is being continued more than two weeks then they go to the folk healer. They think it is pneumonia and they think that it can be cure only through the treatment of folk healer.

In Borbam Tea Estate the elder people are very much aware on oral health. They never believe on Medical Practitioner for some kind of some kind of health issues i.e., Teeth issues, dysentery, Jaundice, cough, dehydration, Pneumonia etc. It has to mentioned that any kind of teeth issues they just considered as DAT PUK. In this context one of my respondent give her statement,

“I had a toothache for a long time. No doctor could cure it. But finally I went to my neighbour of my house who knows the home remedies of toothache. She just remove removed the worms from my ears. And Since that time I have no issues with my teeth.”

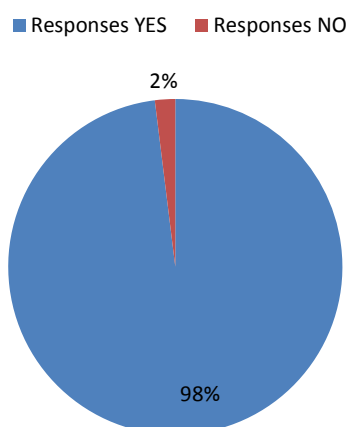


Figure 1.1: Respondents believe on Traditional Medicare of Toothache

Figure 1.1 clearly reveals that majority of the respondents believe on traditional medicare system on Toothache. That is why most of the respondents prefer the traditional healing practices instead of medical science. But it has observed that the educated people believe were both of them Medical science as well as traditional health care practices.

Similarly the dehydration they always considered as NAJAR. One more respondent give her opinion on this

There is no medical treatment for Najar. One of our folk healer gives you a glass of water and you just drink and you will be completely fine after 5 minutes.

The Tea garden community people are very much conscious with their teeth. Majority of the elder people use DATUN (Chewing stick) instead of Toothbrush. They believe that Datun is more safe and effective for maintaining their teeth. They also told that the Datun is more hygienic one than the regular uses toothbrushes. They basically use neem tree and different types of shorter tree on the basis of availability of their locality.

On the basis of their opinion we may give a statement the oral heal practices and etno-medicines are very much relevance among them. And we can't ignore that the importance of home remedies because in an emergency situation it always work very well.

It is observable for the Tea Tribes that the curative measures and the other health care services utilised by a cultural group largely depend on the tradition and disease-etiology of the people, the Tea Tribes inclination towards their traditional medicare system rather than the modern ones.

Among the tribals the diseases are commonly related to their belief in different deities and spirits (Chaudhuri,1986). Their belief practices is responsible for their poor health status. They believe that their God save them from the evil spirits. They belief their deities than medical practitioner. It is also one of the most challenging issue of poor health conditions of the Tea Tribes. Their traditional rituals and ceremonies are directly related with their health status. Discussed as below:

Gram Puja or Sarna Puja

Tea tribe celebrate this puja in the month of March, at the outskirts of the residential area. Here they worship of Gram devtas (village deities). The main objective of this

puja is that overall welfare of their village or line. They believe that the village deities protect themselves from bahira hawa (evil spirit from outside).

Karam Puja

The karam puja is considered as festival of women. The people perform karam puja with great enthusiasm. This is performed by five or seven unmarried girls in the assamese month of Bhada (August- September). The tea tribe celebrate this puja with the expectation of that the newly married women of the community will deliver healthy babies without any complications.

Tusu Puja

Besides this three puja, they also perform one another puja, whenever pox appears in a family. They perform this ritual for the satisfaction of the Mata (Goddesses), who is believed to be responsible for this particular disease. Through this puja they try to satisfied their Mata (Goddesses) for protect themselves from this disease.

Agni or baha puja

This puja only celebrate the sauntal community. It celebrates every year the Assamese month of Bahag (April). The sauntali people believe that if they celebrate this puja in the first week of Bahag then they will safe from the all kind of diseases. The Agni Devta protect themselves from all of the diseases. This puja celebrate along with all of the people of the village. This puja is celebrated publicly at Namghar (their religious institution). They also believe that if they do not perform this puja then no one can protect themselves from those diseases.

It is clearly seen that the tea garden workers celebrate all of the puja only for their better health. They completely believe on god for their good health status rather than medical science. They are not aware on the causes of various diseases. They only think

that if they suffer any kind of disease, owing to dissatisfaction of their God and Goddesses. So, it is concluded that superstitious beliefs and practices are also responsible for their poor health status.

Conclusion

Oral health tradition is most important part of our society. Not only tea tribe also the people of entire society can't ignore the importance of traditional medicare system. It is very much relevance in our day to day life because in the emergency situation our home remedies work very effectively. And WHO also support the uses of ETHNO-MEDICINE. Culture and Health are closely associated with each other. Religious worsips and festivals are always giving us mental peach and positivity. Hence, if we may use it proper manner it will be definitely works very much positive in our society.

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RETHINKING THE ROLE OF JOYMOTI KONWARI AND BADAN CHANDRA BARPHUKAN THROUGH ASSAMESE ORAL TRADITION

Pompi Boruah

Punu Sonowal

Abstract

Folk tales, songs, and other forms of oral tradition have been utilized for a very long time to convey people's observations about life. Together with Assam's shifting political climate, the textual content of these oral traditions or narratives experienced substantial change throughout time. The analysis of the experiences of persons whose quiddity was previously disregarded has been accomplished through oral tradition. This is important because the lives and labors of the vast majority of people in the past are frequently viewed as unattainable or trivial in the histories we read. A notable subset of Assamese oral tradition that portrays historical events are ballads and certain Bihu songs. This seminar paper primarily discusses a few chosen oral traditions or stories that emphasize the roles of prominent figures like Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan. These Oral traditions allow us to see how these historical figures were interpreted through popular imagination.

Keywords: Oral tradition, Assam, ballads, bihu songs

Introduction

Oral tradition is one of the important and likely areas of oral historical research. Oral traditions are regarded as a valuable resource for historical reconstruction. Jan Vansina in his "Oral tradition as History" beautifully analyses how oral history can be written on the basis of oral tradition or tradition as a source. Knowledge, art; ideas, cultural aspects, and information are all learned through oral tradition. Orality serves as the exclusive means of communication. It was passed down verbally from generation to generation. Folktales, epic poems, rhymes, songs, ballads, proverbs, chants, poetry, prose, and more might be included. Like other nations, oral tradition was also common in Asia. Mythology, folklore, and other things were passed down orally in ancient India. Like other nations, oral tradition was also common in Asia. Assam a state in north-eastern India, is renowned for its most extensive oral tradition and literature, which encompasses many facets of Assamese culture. One significant aspect of Assamese oral tradition

is ballads. Ballads are referred to as "Malita" in Assamese. "Geet" is occasionally used to refer to Malita or ballad. The ballad is referred to as "Geet-Kabya" by Dimbeswar Neog. There is no identifiable authorship indication on the ballad. These ballads demand a prominent place in both literature and history. Similar to ballads, certain Bihu songs also emphasize certain historical occurrences of Assam. Through a few chosen oral traditions, this seminar paper examines the history of Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan as well as some facets of Medieval Assamese and 19th century socio political history.

Objectives

The seminar paper primarily deals with some Assamese oral traditions which narrate the events related to Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan. It also aims to throw light on how social memory reflects various important aspects of Assam during that particular period. The objectives of the study are therefore as follows-

1. To elucidate role of common people in

record of their responses in popular memories.

2. To reconstruct the existing knowledge regarding Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan through oral narratives

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this seminar paper is mainly descriptive cum analytical. This analysis basically concentrates on some oral tradition which reflects some events related to Ahom princess Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan, the chief of Ahom force in lower Assam. Some secondary sources such as books, journal, and article are used in this paper.

DISCUSSION

Re-analyzing the roles of prominent figures like Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan through the lens of Assamese oral tradition can offer deep insights into the cultural and historical significance of these characters, and how they have been constructed, interpreted, and transmitted through generations.

Joymoti Konwari

Joymoti Konwari is one of the most revered figures in Assam history. Known for her immense courage and sacrifices for her husband, Gadadhar Singha, the Ahom king, Joymoti's story has been passed down in various forms in Assamese oral traditions, songs, and folk narratives. In these retellings, she often embodies the virtues of loyalty, resilience, and patriotism, and her suffering and death in the hands of the Ahom kings are seen as a symbol of the cost of unyielding allegiance to the state and family. The way Joymoti is represented in oral tradition is heavily emotional and symbolic. It is shaped by a combination of folklore, ballads, and regional songs, which have helped to amplify her role as a symbol of devotion and sacrifice.

Through these narratives, Joymoti becomes more than just a historical figure; she evolves into a cultural and moral archetype in Assamese society. These stories also reflect the political and social ethos of the time, where loyalty to the king and the kingdom was paramount.

Joymoti Konwari popularly known as Sati Joymoti is an important character of Ahom dynasty. But a few Buranjis mention her but not as Joymati but only as a nameless wife of Godapani. Most historians believe that Joymoti was the first daughter of Laithepena Bargohain and Chandradaru. Her father was an official of the Ahom kingdom. Joymoti was born in Maduri, nine kilometres away from Sivasagar. She was married to Godapani Konwar who was the son of Gobar Roja of Tungkhungia family by chaklong marriage. The ballad narrates the story of Joymoti, such as-

Maduri soborot dangor boi asilu

Bargobainr asilu jee,

Godapani Konware Nile tungkhungole

Chaklong biyakoi di

(Chaliha, 2005,p.9)

A pivotal period in Assam history started just after the Battle of Saraighat. This crisis lasted till Gadadhar Singha's accession and started at the conclusion of Udayaditya Singha's rule. In order to keep an eye on the Mughals during the battle of Saraighat and its aftermath, some powerful and talented commanders, including Atan Buragohain, were forced to relocate from the Ahom capital Gargaon to southern Guwahati. But a few self-centered and power-hungry ministers or officials like Debera Barbarua and Laluksola Barphukan, who took advantage of the absence of the influential authorities in Gargaon, the capital of Ahom became a hub for conspiracy and power

struggles. In order to serve their own interests at this time of crisis, one of these officials frequently put a weak prince on the throne. For instance, Laluksola Barphukan made a 14-year-old prince named Chulikpha (also called Lora Raja). Laluksola Barphukan also hoped to take over the Ahom kingdom's throne. He feared that the puppet Chulikpha might be killed and his authority terminated by one of the princes from other clans who could ascend to the throne at any time. Laluksola Barphukan therefore devised a brutal method of retaining his position of authority, exploited this custom to his advantage, and dismembered every eligible prince who may have succeeded to the throne. A possible heir was Langi Godapani, the son of Gobar Raja of the Tungkhungia clan, Joymoti's husband, and Laithepena Bargohain's son-in-law. It is highlighted in ballads :

(i)

Godapani Komware Biyakoi anile
Maduri Saboror pora
Sakalu Sukbote Bidhatai Banchile
Deboru tamuli choura.
 (Chaliha,2005,p.11)

(ii)

Lai Lesai Komwarok Tumate Arpilu
Satote paliba aai,
Bela sai paliba Bela sai khnaba
Khemiba Sakalu Dai.
 (Chaliha,2005,p.13)

Joymoti, Godapani's wife, convinced Godapani to escape to the Naga Hills after knowing of Laluksola's intentions beforehand. The court was shocked by Godapani's escape, and troops were dispatched to find him. His wife Joymoti was

called to the king's palace when the troops were unable to locate Godapani.

Bipodor batori Palu moi Lahori

Tumar kormot lekha,

Moronoloi bhoi Arilu Lahori

Dilugoi agote dekha.

(Chaliha,2005,p.14)

Joymoti was urged to reveal where her spouse was hiding. She was brought to Jerenga Pathar and subjected to cruel physical abuse when she refused to comply. Bihu songs, like ballads, tell the story of Joymoti. The events surrounding Joymoti, who is identified in a few Assam Buranjis as the unnamed wife of Godapani, are highlighted in some Bihu songs. Some Bihu songs represent the sorrow and sympathy of the general populace as well as the terrible story of Joymoti. For instance:

(i)

Axomor asile ejoni buwari
Sati Joymoti Naam
Swamir karone pranoku tejile
Rakhile Axomor maan

(ii)

Jerenga potharat kande Joymoti
Lai Lesair mukholoi sai
Lai Lesai duti bhai kande enai binai
Aajir pora amar maa nai
 (Das,2017,p.264)

Joymoti's position in these stories is notable because she challenges traditional gender roles. Her strength, resilience, and sacrifice are portrayed in heroic terms. This re-framing of gender roles in Assam history opens up interesting avenues to explore how women were conceptualized as protagonists in larger historical narratives.

Badan Chandra Barphukan

Badan Chandra Barphukan is another historical figure whose legacy has been shaped significantly by Assamese oral traditions. Serving as an important figure as chief officials of lower Assam in Ahom kingdom, his roles, especially his involvement in the historical dynamics of power struggles, have been memorialized in various oral accounts. In oral tradition, Badan Chandra Barphukan is often portrayed as a man of ambition, and the narratives around his life are mixed with elements of intrigue, betrayal, and valour. These stories are often retold in ballads and folk tales, reflecting the deep political dynamics within the Ahom kingdom, where internal conflicts and shifts in power were common. Barphukan's position as a "protagonist" in these oral traditions often highlights the complexities of loyalty and betrayal, with his portrayal as both a loyal servant of the Ahom king and a man caught in the larger political currents. The portrayal of Barphukan as a figure who balanced his loyalty with ambition mirrors many larger themes in Assamese folk songs like ballads, where personal desires often clash with duties to the state or community.

Badan Chandra Barphukan's character in Assam history is very ignored, disgusting, and vile/inferior. Badan Chandra Barphukan played an important role in the loss of freedom in Assam. Even today Assamese people are angry with Badan Chandra Barphukan and hate him. In one word, Badan Chandra Barphukan is the villain of the history of Assam. Badan Chandra Barphukan was extremely selfish and very cruel. In fact, there was also a conflict with Purnananda Burhagohain by Badan Chandra Barphukan. S L Baruah commented that through this action, he not only dug his own grave, but It also brought a huge flood of attacks in Assam. Badan Chandra performed

his duties smoothly for a few days in the early days before taking over as charge of Barphukan. But in a very short span of time, Badan Chandra resorted to dictatorship instead of his responsibility and carried out brutal rule. Badan Chandra begged for help from Burmese king. Importantly, he got a positive response from Maan Raja (Burmese king). In March 1817, 8000 soldiers were sent to attack Assam under Badan Chandra Barphukan. This was the Burmese's first attack under Badan Chandra Barphukan's initiative. The Ahom monarchy was not ready for this attack of standards because it occurred unexpectedly. Yet Ahom's army was ready to face the standard attack with fewer soldiers. The first battle of Assamese soldiers with Burmese took place on March 27, 1817. In this battle, the Burmese Soldiers won. It may be recalled that at this time Purnananda Buragohain also died. It is said that Purnananda Buragohain died after getting the news of losing the war as per the proverb. Importantly, after they defeated the Ahoms in the war, the Burmese soldiers returned to its country with the responsibility of giving silver of 24,000, a gold stamp of 8000, Rs 1 lakh as compensation and robbing many other properties and the responsibility of Chandrakanta Singha as king and Badan Chandra as Buragohain they returned to their own country. After the return of Burmese, Badan Chandra Barphukan became the best with the responsibility of Buragohain given by the Burmese. The Malita describe the entire events of the Burmese invasion as follows:

(i)

E deo, kinu mass Maribor hol
Ghinai barphukandeo bhotiyai gol
E deo, kinu mass Maribor tura
Bilatot lolegoi bilati ghura
(Chaliha, B, 2005,p.67)

(ii)

*Hoi amak nibi,
Dekholoi golenu ki ki dibi?
“tumalukok nim,
Prothomote Rangpuror xun-rupor dukhon gula
dim.
Jora kumol jim,
Bogi bogi sunalibur tumalukok dim
Bhal kori nim
Xoru xoru sunalibur tar logot dim...*

(iii)

*Mone guni sabi,
Sadinor muret ron dibole jabi
Nethakiba xui,
Rajyar boiri bhatir barphukanre ghorote logaise
jui.*

(Chaliha, 2005, pp. 75-79)

Parallel to the internal turmoil of the Ahom monarchy reaching the final stage, Ahom Rajmao of that time made a final decision to kill Badan chandra by discussing with the officials as the dictatorship of Badan Chandra Borphukan reached its final stage. As a result, Badan Chandra was killed in an unarmed state by a Hindustani Sepoy named Roop Singh Subedar and Rahman Khai. The Malita also described whole conspiracy as follows:

(i)

*Taant bobor tanti
Aane rajmaowe phukanok mati
E kotha thuva
Bidesholoi goisilu kenekoi
Mur agot kuwa..
“e kotha thou,
Kenekoi goisilu, pehi,*

Tumar agot kou

Enekoi toru,

Bartupor gultu haat pati dhoru..

Onek gunoni dhoril rajmaor

Uthil maje-nixa rati,

Param bitkaari Rupesingh bangalok

Tetiai onale mati...

(Chaliha, 2005, pp. 84-85)

Through the lens of oral tradition, the roles of Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan can be seen as emblematic of larger social values—loyalty, patriotism, sacrifice, and power.

Conclusion

Oral narratives, songs, and folk traditions are not static; they are living histories that evolve, reflecting the changing political, social, and cultural landscapes. The stories of both Joymoti and Barphukan may have been shaped and reshaped over time, reflecting the concerns and ideals of successive generations. Oral traditions allow us to see how these historical figures were interpreted through popular imagination. These reinterpretations might also influence how gender and power dynamics were understood in Assamese culture. For example, Joymoti's symbolic transformation from a historical figure into a legend of moral integrity and self-sacrifice allows us to see how femininity and heroism could coexist in the cultural imagination, even in a society dominated by male heroes and warriors. In summary, re-analyzing the roles of these two figures through Assamese oral traditions not only illuminates their role history but also reveals the cultural and societal values encoded in these retellings, giving us a nuanced understanding of how heroism, loyalty, and power are constructed and transmitted through generations.

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**FOLKLORE AND IDENTITY:
ORAL TRADITIONS IN DEVANUR MAHADEVA'S *KUSUMABALE***

Pradeepkumar S

Abstract

Devanur Mahadeva is a noted Kannada writer and contemporary cultural critic. His novel Kusumabale (2015) explores myth and folklore and their role in shaping identity within the socio-cultural framework of rural Karnataka. The story weaves the oral traditions of marginalised communities into its narrative, portraying the resilience, struggles, and aspirations of the underprivileged. Through its lyrical prose and rich storytelling, Kusumabale preserves and reinterprets the oral traditions that have long been instrumental in defining the cultural identity of these communities. This paper examines how Mahadeva employs folklore as a medium to challenge dominant historical and cultural discourses, offering a counter-narrative to hegemonic ideologies. It highlights the significance of oral traditions in fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity among marginalised groups, serving as a repository of collective memory and resistance. By delving into myths, songs, rituals, and anecdotes, Mahadeva revitalises fading cultural practices and underscores their continued relevance in contemporary times marked by globalisation and cultural homogenisation. The analysis explores how oral traditions in Kusumabale become a site of cultural negotiation, bridging the past with the present. It also reflects on the potential of folklore to address modern issues of identity, cultural preservation, and social justice. The study emphasises that safeguarding oral traditions is essential for sustaining diverse cultural identities and resisting cultural erasure in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: *Myth, Folklore, Identity, Oral traditions, Cultural preservation, Rural, Resistance.*

Devanoora Mahadeva emerged as a significant literary voice in the 1970s, which also saw the emergence of the Dalit Movement. Mahadeva's short stories, collected in *Dyavanuru* (1973), were anchored around the life of Dalits and redefined the Dalit Movement. His innovative narrative techniques swerved away from the modernist modes. His novella *Odalaala* (1981) was instantaneously recognised as a classic in how it brought inwardness to the Dalit life together. The novel (selected for the study) *Kusumabale*, first written in 1984 (serialised in a Kannada magazine) before being published in book form in 1988, has created a sensation and received diverse responses from readers, activists, and critics alike. Without a doubt, one can say that the novel is a landmark in Kannada literature, a classic that redefined the treatment of the Dalit experience through its innovative narrative style. Mahadeva's work stands out for its unprecedented blending of folklore, myth, and social reality

and its non-linear storytelling technique, which challenges conventional narrative structures. This approach has earned *Kusumabale* a cult status, marking it as a turning point in modern Kannada literature.

The novel blends folklore, myth, and oral traditions into its fabric, offering a deeply rooted portrayal of the lived experiences of marginalised communities in rural Karnataka. By integrating elements of oral storytelling, Mahadeva not only preserves indigenous cultural expressions but also uses them as a means of resistance against dominant historical and social narratives. Helen Dwyer, Chairperson of the Irish Writers' Union, aptly states, "Both in light-hearted and in serious passages I sense an unworldly quality which elevates this work to the mythical, mystical, archetypal genre" (Dwyer). *Kusumabale* thus becomes more than just a literary work; it serves as a repository of collective memory, articulating the voices of the oppressed and reinforcing their sense of identity and

belonging. This paper examines how Mahadeva employs folklore as a medium to challenge hegemonic ideologies and offer a counter-narrative to mainstream historical and cultural discourses. The study explores how oral traditions in *Kusumabale* become a site of cultural negotiation, bridging the past with the present through an analysis of the text.

One of the most intriguing qualities of folklore is its use of colloquial language, which serves as a crucial marker of cultural identity. Devanur Mahadeva's novel *Kusumabale* is a testament to this, employing a regional dialect unfamiliar to many Kannada readers; "then he got himself down to the valley and cheering with a kuvai... kuvai... tarraa.. tarraa.. rounded up the sheep and goats, and yodelling an ummbaah... ummbaah.. he herded cows and bullocks, and drove them straight to the Friday shandy at Nanjanagud (37). This linguistic choice not only preserves the oral traditions of the Dalit community but also asserts a distinct identity that resists assimilation into standardised literary forms. Upon its release, the immediate responses to *Kusumabale* emphasise its linguistic and cultural significance. A noted Kannada writer and poet famously remarked that the novel needed to be translated into Kannada first, highlighting the novel's deep immersion in a dialect spoken in the Nanjangud and Chamarajanagar regions of South Karnataka. This reaction reveals the challenge that the novel posed to the dominant literary establishment—*Kusumabale* brought forth voices and experiences that had long been marginalised. It did so in a language deeply rooted in oral tradition rather than the codified, standardised Kannada of mainstream literature.

Beyond language, the novel's treatment of its central themes further sets it apart. Dr. G. H. Nayak, an eminent Kannada critic, pointed out that *Kusumabale* required a

complete reshaping of existing critical tools for a genuine appraisal of its unique narrative style. Unlike conventional Dalit literature, which often focuses on oppression, deprivation, and societal critique, *Kusumabale* takes a more introspective and meditative approach. It moves beyond the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy, instead portraying the lives of both Dalits and non-Dalits with minute particularity. The influence of folklore and oral traditions helps him to employ mythical and fabular elements, allowing both animate and inanimate characters to voice their own stories. For instance, the old four-poster bedstead narrates its own experiences, and even human emotions like worry and disenchantment are personified, engaging in dialogues with the characters they inhabit. The novel opens with a nightly assembly of guardian light spirits, the Jothammas, who introduces the reader to the tragic love story of Channa, a Dalit boy, and Kusuma, an upper-caste girl. This scene, reminiscent of the opening sequences of Shakespearean plays (*Hamlet* and *Macbeth*), sets the following narrative's mood, tone, and atmosphere.

Mahadeva's use of folklore and dialect is not merely an aesthetic choice but a political statement. By choosing the spoken language of a specific community, he reinforces the idea that literature need not conform to dominant linguistic norms to be considered valuable or authentic. In doing so, *Kusumabale* aligns itself with the oral storytelling traditions that have historically carried the voices of the oppressed. Thus, the novel becomes an act of cultural resistance, ensuring Dalit narratives are heard and conveyed in their own linguistic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, folklore in *Kusumabale* serves as a bridge between the past and the present, preserving collective memory and identity. The novel's storytelling techniques, idioms, and linguistic structures are reminiscent of oral narratives passed down through generations. This oral history

reinforces the idea that language is not just a means of communication but also a repository of history, struggle, and resilience.

Devanur Mahadeva's prose captures the rhythm, cadence, and spirit of oral narration, making folklore an intrinsic part of the novel's structure and substance. The opening scene announces this departure from conventional storytelling. At midnight, the hour when stone and water are said to melt, the guardian-lamp spirits of various homes gather at the village entrance, engaging in a conversation that introduces the reader to Kusuma, the protagonist.

...past the still hour of night, and water and
stone melting away, then

Whence the mango tree, whence the
nightingale; whence this bond, ayya
The hill gooseberry and salt from the sea-
whither are we tend-ing, ayya?
The Lord of the secret caves and this soul;
and whence this bond, ayya?

-Allama

It was past the still hour of night. And water and stone were melting away. Then the Jothammas, the House Lamp Spirits, their chores done, meet-as was their custom in the deep-ening darkness in front of the village, to share their joys and woes. (7)

This imaginative leap, where spirits embody memory, justice, and community wisdom, immediately establishes the novel's close kinship with oral traditions, where the boundaries between the real and the supernatural blur effortlessly.

Mahadeva's native colloquial expressions and an episodic structure unfold in a manner that resists linear progression, instead adopting a fluid, associative form that allows for digressions, repetitions, and layered perspectives—features characteristic of oral traditions. The world of *Kusumabale* is one

where the inanimate comes alive, and a cot's spirit narrates the transformation of Yaada into a wealthy man; it is described in the following way by the author;

The day after this Time returns, however, the wealth of a thousand sarees having filled the house in the meantime-Somappa slept a sleep he had never slept before. His soul that was awake now stirs out of his body and sits itself beside Somappa's head. Pleased, but feigning otherwise, the bed-stead sighs, but before long the coquette is headlong onto its tale.

'Where did I stop ...? For what sin...' wasn't it at that point? Hhmm... and then that good man, my master, set me up like a doll. (49)

In another instance, Turamma engages in a battle with Fate itself; "What's it with you girl? Playing pranks... are you? Think you could have fooled me... Unh? Monkey tricks...? And she pulled her by the hair" (25). These seemingly disparate episodes come together in a larger cosmos where all elements—human and non-human, material and metaphysical—are interconnected. The novel's style is not an experiment but an organic expression of a worldview where folklore is not just a means of storytelling but a way of understanding existence.

Folklore, in *Kusumabale*, also functions as an effective medium of social critique. The spirits that inhabit this novel are not passive observers; they embody justice and moral clarity, standing in contrast to the injustices of the human world. Their conversations reveal the lives of the marginalised, the struggles of Kusuma, and the systemic oppression faced by the Dalit community. Through their voices, Mahadeva exposes the fissures within society, using the oral tradition not merely as a cultural artefact but as a means of resistance. The moment when one of the spirits enters Kuriyiah's body before the

assembled Dalit Sangharsh Samiti leaders is emblematic of this—folklore here becomes an assertion of political consciousness, where the supernatural and the historical converge to amplify the voices of the oppressed. The cosmos of *Kusumabale* is one of deep interconnectedness, where human life is enmeshed within a larger ecological and spiritual continuum. This is not a world where nature exists merely as a backdrop to human action; instead, it actively participates in destiny unfolding. Worry takes shape; Fate assumes a form, and the spirits of lamps, cots, and night air witness human suffering and resilience. Mahadeva's storytelling does not impose this vision upon the reader—it emerges naturally, as intrinsic to the novel's fabric as breath is to life. What might appear as a fantastical technique in another narrative here becomes an authentic mode of expression, inseparable from the realities it seeks to portray.

Identity is an integral part of analysing the influence of folk and oral traditions. In this novel, identity is deeply intertwined with social stratification, particularly the caste system. While infused with the cadence of folklore and oral traditions, the novel's narrative does not shy away from the brutal realities of caste oppression. The lives of the characters, especially *Kusumabale* and *Channa*, are shaped by these hierarchies, revealing the inescapable nature of caste-based identity in Indian society. Through its blending of folklore and social critique, *Kusumabale* tells a story and exposes the rigid and violent power structures that dictate the lives of marginalised communities. Moreover, the novel's central plot revolves around the love affair between *Kusumabale* and *Channa*. Their relationship, though seemingly personal, becomes a matter of public concern as soon as the village discovers it. The reaction is immediate and ruthless—unidentified upper-caste individuals murder *Channa*, and his

existence becomes an unresolved mystery for his family. The fact that his disappearance is never fully acknowledged or investigated highlights how caste dictates not only social status but also one's very right to exist. His caste marks his identity, and because of it, he is expendable in the eyes of the upper caste. The novel stresses the fact that caste is not just a social category but an all-encompassing force that determines one's Fate, a force so deeply embedded in societal consciousness that even love becomes a transgression worthy of erasure.

Mahadeva further critiques caste oppression through *Channa's* interactions with his Brahmin master. In these moments, the novel reveals how caste hierarchy manifests in everyday relationships, reinforcing that one's social status is inescapable. *Channa's* subservience is not merely a matter of economic necessity but a reflection of an ingrained system where birth dictates identity rather than individual merit. His attempts to navigate this structure highlight the suffocating nature of caste identity, demonstrating that even moments of personal agency are constrained by deeply entrenched social norms. Another instance in the novel that underscores the connection between caste and identity is the Fate of *Garesidda*. Accused of plucking sixteen coconuts from an upper-caste farm, *Garesidda* is tied to a justice pole, brutally beaten to death, and reminded of his place in society. "Your mother caste be fucked ... does one pluck sixteen coconuts to quench one's thirst ...? Sixteen ...? (65)" His punishment is not merely for theft but for transgressing the boundaries imposed by caste. The disproportionate violence inflicted upon him serves as a reminder that lower-caste individuals are not only denied economic rights but are also stripped of their basic humanity. Their identities are so rigidly constructed within the caste system that any

challenge to these hierarchies is met with extreme brutality.

Kusumabale is particularly powerful in how Mahadeva embeds these caste struggles within a folklore-infused narrative. Folklore, often seen as a repository of cultural memory and wisdom, becomes a tool for exploring and exposing caste injustices. The presence of spirits, guardian lamps, and speaking objects adds a layer of supernatural intervention, yet these elements do not dilute the reality of caste violence. Similarly, when a spirit enters the body of Kuriyaiah before the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, it symbolises the voice of the marginalised finding a platform where the supernatural aids in articulating truths that the dominant social order seeks to suppress, offering an alternative perspective where human institutions do not bind justice but is instead a cosmic force. The following lines best illustrate this; “The men of our caste needed just that. Those things the upper-caste chaps loathed and pointed to with their feet, our men gladly took up in their hands! So it came to pass ...and so they lived on ...” (96).

In sum, Mahadeva's use of folklore does not function as mere embellishment; it is integral to the novel's argument about identity and caste. By merging folklore with the lived experiences of Dalits, he underscores that caste is not just a social construct but a historical and cultural reality that has been passed down through generations. The novel suggests that just as folklore shapes cultural memory, caste shapes individual and collective identity, making it nearly impossible to escape its influence. Furthermore, the novel's oral storytelling style, marked by colloquial language and episodic structure, reinforces the themes of community and collective experience. The narrative does not belong to any single character but is a tapestry of voices, much like folklore itself. This multiplicity of perspectives serves to highlight the shared struggles of marginalised communities, emphasising that the caste system does not merely oppress individuals

but entire groups whose identities are inextricably linked to their social status. *Kusumabale* thus presents a powerful critique of caste-based identity, demonstrating how social stratification dictates the lives of its characters in explicit and insidious ways. Through the intertwining of folklore and lived reality, Mahadeva crafts a narrative that was once mythical and painfully real. The novel's unique storytelling approach ensures that caste is not just discussed but experienced through the voices of spirits, the whispers of the village, and the brutal fates of its lower-caste characters. In doing so, Mahadeva not only preserves the oral traditions of his community but also uses them as a means of resistance, ensuring that the stories of the oppressed are neither forgotten nor silenced.

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GENDERIZATION OF ORAL TRADITIONS: SOCIETAL NORMS

Raktima Goswami

Abstract

The idea of formulating a society is always composed with various other aspects in order to maintain the dynamic nature of the society, which approves the heterogeneous composition of various belief systems, rituals, social code and conduct, cultural patterns etc, society emerged as a collective body once the sedentary life began, this also has a direct relationship with the land. Flexibility is an important essence which allow a society to change its basic patterns with due course of time . while going through the changes, oral traditions plays an integral part in maintaining some basic orders within the society, myths, superstitions and taboos are basic essence of the oral traditions, their importance are often laid in the folklores and folktales which deeply focused on how these oral traditions played an important role in reconstructing the history.

This paper is an attempt to understand the intricacies of the oral traditions i.e; myths, superstitions and taboos as a societal chores which requires a micro analytical study of these traditions from a gender perspective, which tries to navigate as a functional force in a society to assert the patriarchal presence, through a historical perspective , I have made a little attempt in reflecting how the societies are bounded with certain superstitious belief system even in the contemporary times, certain belief systems still maintains its hold within it. This paper aims to broaden the lens in respective to analyze the role of the oral traditions in a constructive manner and also promised to frame an unbiased analytical framework how modern societies perceived the oral traditional belief systems, An effort would also be undertaken to go through various debates and discourses around the authenticity of the "oral sources".

Keywords: Oral tradition, folklore, myths, society

Introduction

A society since its formation maintained through a specific traditional rules and customs as a navigating force in establishing normal functioning within the society. Though with the due course of time, some of these traditions are in the stage of vanishing, while others still manage to maintain its hold within the society through oral versions in the form of folklores and folktales. Yet there are many societies who are still deeply living with their traditional rule and customs instead of blended with the modern notion of development. It is often quite an intense topic of debate and discourse whether the societal norms can be a marker of the status of the progression of the society.

Objective

As the title of the paper suggests the basic aim of this paper is to throw light on the oral traditional belief systems holding the

societal chores and norms. In addition there is a little attempt to focus how these traditional norms are more often inclined towards a gender fragmentation in a society. These idea of traditional belief system is the agelong legacy that is running from generation to generation in keeping some of the belief system alive within the mind. In the geographical context of Assam, inhabited by various group of people belonging to various communities, each group has some set of rituals to as a chores to be followed, this paper would attempt to highlight these chores from a gender perspective which would broaden the lens of the traditional belief to present a new dimension.

Methodology

The adopted methodology for the respective work summarises use of secondary data and primary data while framing the whole paper with a theoretical approach. The

study is further based on the digital interviews ,along with various literary works based on the traditional practices prevailed within the community for a better understanding.

Tradition and culture

Often this two term gets intermixed with one another while referring to some circumstances. But both have different meaning in terms of scope and dimension, while culture is a complex whole with an inclusive nature, tradition falls under the broader paradigm of culture. i.e, Every community has a specific cultural patterns bounded by different traditional values, are the tradition that makes one culture different from the other one. Tradition are most often continued verbally from a person to person, where as while speaking of culture, being a complex whole it involved various other aspects such as living style, dress code, food cuisine and so on. This traditional and cultural variance of various communities has an unique pattern of livelihood, matrimonial system.

Geographical Specialization

Tradition and customs are more often influenced by the surrounding and which provides a specific way of living to the people, incase of Assam, there are various communities expertise in various other craftsmanship which gradually became the culture of the respective place and their became a tradition of being engaged in these crafts. 'Musk making culture of Majuli' is one of the renown culture with a world wide acclimation, this is also associated with the satra culture.

Assam being the cradle of various communities and tribal groups which follows various cultural patterns as a part of their life style till the date, though many of the practices are abandoned but yet many are practicing in a way to carry out their ancestral legacy and maintaining a patriarchal hold in the society. Folk lores and fables are an

important source to trace the idea of society back then and to what extent the notion of modernity affecting the same.

Folk lores and fables : Navigatory force

The role of oral traditions is a significant one in tracing the history of the pre-historical period in terms of folk lore and fables which help in understanding the society. Though various debates and discourses revolves around the authenticity of the oral sources as a means of understanding societal norms but the existing norms of various communities of Assam holds its supremacy over the discourses. Various communities of Assam presents a clear picture of rich oral traditions in forms of folk lores and fables, myths, poems in reconstructing the history of the traditional societies in the social science paradigm. Jan Vansina argues that oral traditions can be broadly divided into two forms one in 'poetic' and 'narrative' one, while poetic verses are fixed and learnt by heart and the narrative one is free handed and transmitted by their own way.

Geographical canvas of Assam is surrounded by hills and rivers dominated by various ethnic groups, who maintained to hold their own customs and traditions. Though in the due course of time, customs and traditions underwent various changes under the fold of acculturation and assimilation but still few are maintaining its hold. That makes the society a dynamic in nature.

While making a deeper analysis to the concerned topic, its basically more of a genderized in form, where women are asked to carry the customs and traditions as their responsibility, where a man are free from these burdens of carrying but an women has to bear it since her birth till the death, in other words "women is the carrier of the customs" with the gradual progress in agriculture, the egalitarian nature of the tribal societies eventually developed a societal

form of hierarchy further moulded up with the gender diversification.

Customary laws plays a pivotal role in the tribal societies in maintaining a hold within the society for a proper functionality, they kept on practicing those rituals since a long time and hereby became a part and parcel of their daily livelihood, which were primarily aimed to directed towards women as an oral traditions.

As the tribal societies, are animist in nature, they had a certain supernatural belief system, which was way before the concept of religion came into being. They followed the practice of worshipping sun, moon and ancestor seek blessings for a long and healthy life.

The Dimasas, one of the earliest inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley and currently found inhabited largely in Dima Hasao district practice a system of double descent where lineage is traced from both the parents. The *pitri* clan is called *sengphong* and the *matri* clan is called *jadi/julu*. But after marriage, women has to give up her patriclan and adopt husband's patriclan though her *matri* clan remains unchanged. The prevalence of double descent indicates a relative high status of women but at the same time the need to adopt husband's patriclan also indicates a patriarchal nature. In addition, if we look at the customary law of inheritance and ownership, women's position is no different from other communities. Daughters could only inherit the maternal property which consists of jewellery, clothes, looms and accessories along with objects including cooking utensils, brass metal etc., which are considered as common property that is to be equally inherited with sons. They have no right to inherit the paternal property comprising of land, house, weapons etc. There are very few instances where married or unmarried daughters are given a share of property. In recent times, there has been a

transformation from community ownership of land (which is common in tribal cultures) to individual ownership. In community ownership, *kebunang* (gaonburah) is recognized as the landowner of the village who could even give pattas to individuals. Even when individual ownership has been introduced women's land ownership is negligible since most of the land is preferably registered in the name of the head (father) of the family resulting in enhanced patriarchy. In addition to that, the state government's right to turn unoccupied lands or forests which were earlier under the community into state's property restricted women's access to such lands or forests.

In Mishing society, since the pregnancy was detected couple had to maintain certain taboos like abstain from killing, crossing the roof, visiting any dead family. Another important customary practice prevailed among the various tribes of Assam is the "Bride Price", where a groom family had to pay a certain amount in order to marry the bride for her absence in her natal home, but what we failed to observe from this practice is how it turned women to be an object which could be purchased. This reification of women is not only considered in quantitative terms but also in qualitative aspects like after the death of her husband, a widow is considered to be a burden in both sides.

The widowhood in the Brahmanical society is a social death, being a widow is more of a living a life without a soul, her presence is considered inauspicious in any kind of rituals, she was also prohibited from wearing any colorful dress and consuming meat, her presence is nullified in any of the decision of the family matters. She has to live a life of seclusion.

The appreciation of wearing pale over bright for a widow, portrays the idea how the only the presence of a man makes her womanhood colorful in a patriarchal society.

Another traditions follows in a various communities, where the mother isn't allowed to present during the process of wedding rituals

The custom of *kanyadan* during the marriage ceremonies, where a father gives away his daughter to the groom in lieu of an assurance of protection is not only a dominated customs among the Brahmanical families is actually giving her chastity to her husband ,this tradition simply portrays the picture of women to be remain dependent on her husband after marriage. Among the Deori, sons inherit their father's property. If a man has no sons, his property goes to the nearest agnatic male relative. The *Lalung* are a matrilineal tribe with men as family heads and the daughter as its building block. She inherits the house, land and family heirloom but her husband is its manager. Each daughter establishes a new household with the eldest inheriting the house and the others getting some agricultural land and a site for their own house. If the Lalung woman marries outside her tribe, she loses her right to inheritance. Till his death a man may keep a share of his property for his own use. After his death it goes to the son who looks after him. Among the Mishing if a man has no sons, his daughters may share his property and bear his funeral expenses. The voice of patriarchy even in the matrilineal society is a visible change within their customary laws with the assimilation with the caste based society.

Rituals and traditions are not only confined during the life tenure , certain rituals are still observed for the dead ones *pindo dan*. Such as offering food to the dead ones nearby water bodies, observing a day for the remembrance of the dead ones every year as *shardh*.

The social implications of oral traditions are not only confined with the daily rituals, it even has a broader implications also in the medical field. Prior to the advent of the colonialism, India along with Assam was deeply relied on the various myths and herbal medicines for the cure. Such as in Assam,

occurrence of any kind of bodily disorder is basically considered as some unevil appearance within the body or some miracles most commonly the chicken pox is never considered as allergy rather it is considered as appearance of *Maa Sitala* (one deity of associated pox) within the body and hereby treated with *kheer* (a sweet dish made of rice and milk) and so on. this kind of traditions are not yet vanished from the Assamese households even after many decades of medical development.

Conclusion

While drawing the concluding remark of the concerned title , these customary laws are no where documented in the written form but keep on practising among the communities as the traditions since the time immemorial verbally. The significance of the oral traditions cannot be overshadowed without focusing on the social paradigm of the various communities of Assam. Though with due course of time with the access to education and smelling the taste of development certain traditions against women are prohibited but these are the traditions and belief systems that acting as an invisible force in maintaining an order and fraternity with the communities. The Seclusion and segregation of women from the considered auspicious occasions portrays the natures of genderization in the societal chores carried off by the oral traditions.

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PRESERVATION OF ORAL CULTURE IN MODERN INDIA: CHALLENGES, INITIATIVES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Mrs. S. Sita Mahalakshmi(PhD)

Dr. D. Parvatheepathi

Abstract

Oral culture has been an integral part of India's cultural heritage, passing down stories, legends, and historical events from one generation to the next. However, with the advent of modernization and technological advancements, the preservation of oral culture in India has become a pressing concern. This seminar aims to explore the challenges faced in preserving oral culture in modern India, initiatives taken to safeguard this valuable aspect of Indian heritage, and future directions for its preservation.

The seminar will bring together scholars, researchers, and practitioners from various disciplines to share their perspectives on the preservation of oral culture in India. Key themes to be discussed include:

- The significance of oral culture in Indian society and its relevance in modern times*
- Challenges faced in preserving oral culture, including urbanization, globalization, and technological advancements*
- Initiatives taken by government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations to preserve oral culture*
- Role of digital technologies in preserving oral culture*
- Future directions for the preservation of oral culture in India*

The seminar aims to provide a platform for discussion, debate, and knowledge sharing on the preservation of oral culture in modern India. It is expected to contribute to the development of strategies and policies for the preservation of oral culture in India.

Keywords: *Oral culture, preservation, modern India, cultural heritage, tradition.*

Introduction

Oral culture has been an integral part of Indian tradition and heritage, passing down stories, legends, and historical events from one generation to the next. However, with the advent of modernization and technological advancements, the preservation of oral culture in India has become a pressing concern. This essay will explore the importance of preserving oral culture in modern India, the challenges faced, and the initiatives taken to safeguard this valuable aspect of Indian heritage.

Oral culture refers to the transmission of cultural knowledge, traditions, and values through spoken words, stories, songs, and other forms of verbal communication. It

encompasses the customs, beliefs, and practices of a community or society that are passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions.

Oral culture includes various forms of expression, such as:

1. Folktales: Stories passed down through generations, often containing moral lessons or explaining natural phenomena.
2. Myths: Legends that explain the creation of the world, gods, and goddesses.
3. Legends: Stories about historical events or figures, often embellished with supernatural elements.
4. Songs: Traditional music, often accompanied by dance or instrumental performances.

5. Proverbs: Short sayings that convey wisdom, advice, or cultural values.
6. Riddles: Puzzles or enigmas that require thought and creativity to solve.
7. Oral histories: Accounts of historical events, often passed down through generations.
8. Epic poems: Long narrative poems that tell stories of heroes, gods, and legendary events.

Oral culture plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting community identity, and transmitting values and traditions. It is an essential part of human communication and has been a cornerstone of cultural expression throughout history.

Importance of Oral Culture

Oral culture is a vital part of India's cultural identity, encompassing folk songs, stories, proverbs, and myths. It has played a significant role in shaping Indian society, influencing social norms, and preserving historical events. Oral culture has also been a powerful tool for social commentary, allowing marginalized communities to express their concerns and struggles.

Moreover, oral culture has been a vital means of education, transmitting knowledge and values from one generation to the next. It has helped to preserve India's rich cultural diversity, with different regions and communities having their unique oral traditions.

Challenges Faced

Despite its importance, oral culture in India faces numerous challenges, threatening its preservation. Some of the key challenges include:

1. Urbanization and Modernization: The rapid urbanization and modernization of India have led to a decline in the importance

of oral culture. Younger generations are increasingly influenced by Western culture and are less interested in preserving traditional oral practices.

Urbanization and modernization have had a significant impact on oral culture, both positively and negatively.

Negative impacts

1. Loss of traditional ways of life: Urbanization and modernization have led to the decline of traditional occupations and ways of life, which were often closely tied to oral culture.
2. Displacement of communities: Urbanization has resulted in the displacement of communities from their traditional lands, leading to the disruption of oral cultural practices.
3. Homogenization of cultures: Modernization has led to the spread of Western culture, resulting in the homogenization of cultures and the loss of unique oral traditions.
4. Decline of oral storytelling: The rise of digital media has led to a decline in oral storytelling, as people increasingly rely on written and visual forms of communication.

Positive impacts

1. Increased access to technology: Modernization has provided increased access to technology, such as audio and video recorders, which can be used to document and preserve oral culture.
2. New platforms for oral culture: Urbanization and modernization have created new platforms for oral culture, such as spoken word poetry and storytelling events.
3. Increased connectivity: Modernization has increased connectivity between communities, allowing for the sharing and exchange of oral cultural practices.

4. Revitalization of oral culture: Urbanization and modernization have also led to a renewed interest in oral culture, with many young people seeking to learn about and preserve their cultural heritage.

2. Globalization and Cultural Homogenization: Globalization has resulted in the spread of Western culture, leading to cultural homogenization. This has threatened the preservation of India's unique oral traditions.

Globalization has led to cultural homogenization in several ways:

Economic Factors

1. Global Market: Globalization has created a global market, where multinational corporations promote standardized products and services, leading to a uniform cultural experience.

2. Consumerism: The spread of consumerism has promoted a culture of materialism, where people are encouraged to buy and consume similar products, regardless of their cultural background.

Technological Factors: The following Technological factors have contributed to the decrease of cultural values in India in several ways:

Impact of Social Media

1. Westernization: Social media platforms have exposed Indians to Western culture, leading to the adoption of Western values and practices.

2. Loss of Traditional Practices: Social media has reduced the importance of traditional practices, such as joint family systems and community gatherings.

3. Decreased Attention Span: Social media has led to a decrease in attention span, making it difficult for people to engage in traditional cultural activities.

Impact of Television and Cinema

1. Western Influence: Indian television and cinema have been influenced by Western culture, leading to the promotion of Western values and practices.

2. Stereotyping: Television and cinema have perpetuated stereotypes, reinforcing negative cultural attitudes and values.

3. Commercialization: The commercialization of Indian television and cinema has led to the prioritization of profit over cultural values.

Impact of the Internet

1. Access to Explicit Content: The internet has made it easy for people to access explicit content, leading to a decline in moral values.

2. Cyberbullying: The internet has enabled cyberbullying, which can lead to a decline in emotional and mental well-being.

3. Addiction: The internet can be addictive, leading to a decline in physical and mental health.

Impact of Mobile Phones

1. Decreased Face-to-Face Interaction: Mobile phones have reduced face-to-face interaction, leading to a decline in social skills and emotional intelligence.

2. Increased Isolation: Mobile phones have increased isolation, as people spend more time interacting with their devices than with other humans.

3. Decreased Attention to Traditional Practices: Mobile phones have reduced attention to traditional practices, such as meditation and yoga.

Consequences

1. Erosion of Cultural Identity: The decline of cultural values has led to the erosion of India's cultural identity.

2. Loss of Traditional Practices: The decline of cultural values has led to the loss of traditional practices and customs.

3. Negative Impact on Mental and Physical Health: The decline of cultural values has had a negative impact on mental and physical health.

Cultural Factors:

Here are some cultural factors that contribute to the decrease of cultural values in India:

Changing Family Structure

1. Nuclear Families: The shift from joint families to nuclear families has led to a decline in traditional values and practices.
2. Decreased Respect for Elders: The changing family structure has also led to a decrease in respect for elders and traditional values.

Urbanization and Modernization

1. Adoption of Western Culture: Urbanization and modernization have led to the adoption of Western culture, values, and practices, which often conflict with traditional Indian values.
2. Increased Focus on Materialism: Urbanization and modernization have also led to an increased focus on materialism, which can erode traditional values and practices.

Influence of Media and Entertainment

1. Negative Portrayal of Traditional Values: The media and entertainment industry often portray traditional values and practices in a negative light, contributing to their decline.
2. Promotion of Western Culture: The media and entertainment industry also promote Western culture, values, and practices, which can lead to the erosion of traditional Indian v

Education System

The education system in India has been criticized for contributing to cultural disaster in several ways:

Neglect of Indian Culture and History

1. Lack of emphasis on Indian culture and history: The education system in India often prioritizes Western culture and history over Indian culture and history.
2. Inadequate representation of Indian perspectives: Indian perspectives and experiences are often marginalized or excluded from educational curricula.

Promotion of Western Values

1. Emphasis on Western values and practices: The education system in India often promotes Western values and practices, such as individualism and consumerism, over traditional Indian values.
2. Encouragement of Western-style education: The education system in India often encourages Western-style education, which can lead to the erosion of traditional Indian knowledge systems.

Disconnection from Traditional Knowledge Systems

1. Neglect of traditional knowledge systems: The education system in India often neglects traditional knowledge systems, such as Ayurveda and Yoga.
2. Disconnection from indigenous knowledge: The education system in India often disconnects students from indigenous knowledge and practices.

Focus on Standardized Testing

1. Overemphasis on standardized testing: The education system in India often prioritizes standardized testing over critical thinking and creativity.
2. Teaching to the test: The education system in India often encourages teaching to the test, rather than encouraging deep learning and understanding.

Lack of Critical Thinking and Creativity

1. Inadequate emphasis on critical thinking

and creativity: The education system in India often neglects critical thinking and creativity in favor of rote memorization.

2. Encouragement of conformity: The education system in India often encourages conformity over individuality and creativity.

Consequences

1. Erosion of traditional values and practices: The education system in India can contribute to the erosion of traditional values and practices.

2. Loss of cultural identity: The education system in India can also contribute to the loss of cultural identity and the homogenization of Indian culture.

3. Disconnection from Indian heritage: The education system in India can disconnect students from Indian heritage and cultural traditions.

1. Lack of Emphasis on Traditional Values: The education system in India often places a greater emphasis on Western values and practices, rather than traditional Indian values.

2. Limited Exposure to Indian Culture: The education system also often provides limited exposure to Indian culture, history, and values.

Migration and Globalization:

Migration and globalization have contributed to the decrease of Indian culture in several ways:

Migration

1. Brain Drain: Many Indians migrate to other countries for better opportunities, leading to a brain drain and a loss of cultural knowledge and traditions.

2. Cultural Exchange: While migration can lead to cultural exchange, it can also result in the loss of traditional Indian values and practices as people adapt to new cultures.

3. Assimilation: Migrants may assimilate into the dominant culture of their host country, leading to a decline in traditional Indian cultural practices.

Globalization

1. Western Cultural Dominance: Globalization has led to the dominance of Western culture, values, and practices, which can erode traditional Indian cultural values.

2. Homogenization: Globalization has resulted in the homogenization of cultures, leading to the loss of unique Indian cultural traditions and practices.

3. Consumerism: Globalization has promoted consumerism, which can lead to the commodification of Indian culture and the loss of traditional values and practices.

Common Factors

1. Loss of Traditional Occupations: Both migration and globalization have led to the decline of traditional Indian occupations, such as artisans and craftsmen.

2. Urbanization: Both migration and globalization have contributed to urbanization, which can lead to the erosion of traditional Indian cultural values and practices.

3. Cultural Hybridity: Both migration and globalization have resulted in cultural hybridity, which can lead to the creation of new cultural forms, but also the loss of traditional Indian cultural practices.

Consequences

1. Erosion of Cultural Identity: The decrease of Indian culture due to migration and globalization can lead to the erosion of cultural identity and a sense of disconnection from Indian heritage.

2. Loss of Traditional Knowledge: The decline of traditional Indian cultural practices can result in the loss of traditional knowledge and skills.

3. Homogenization of Culture: The dominance of Western culture and values can lead to the homogenization of Indian culture, resulting in the loss of unique cultural traditions and practices.

Other Factors

1. **Corruption and Moral Decay:** Corruption and moral decay in Indian society have contributed to the decline of traditional values and practices.

2. **Lack of Leadership and Role Models:** The lack of leadership and role models who embody traditional Indian values has also contributed to their decline.

1. **Western Cultural Dominance:** Globalization has led to the dominance of Western culture, with many non-Western cultures adopting Western values, practices, and norms.

2. **Loss of Traditional Practices:** The spread of globalization has led to the decline of traditional cultural practices, as people adopt more modern and Westernized ways of life.

Consequences of Cultural Homogenization

1. **Loss of Cultural Diversity:** Cultural homogenization leads to the loss of cultural diversity, as unique cultural practices and traditions are replaced by standardized global culture.

2. **Cultural Imperialism:** Cultural homogenization can be seen as a form of cultural imperialism, where dominant cultures impose their values, practices, and norms on weaker cultures.

3. **Resistance and Hybridity:** However, cultural homogenization has also led to resistance and hybridity, as people seek to preserve their cultural identities and create new forms of cultural expression.

4. **Lack of Documentation:** Much of India's oral culture remains undocumented, making it vulnerable to loss and distortion.

5. **Aging Community:** Many of the traditional oral culture practitioners are aging, and there is a concern that their knowledge and skills will be lost with their passing.

Initiatives for Preservation

Preserving oral culture in India is crucial, and

several initiatives are underway to protect and promote it. Here are some major initiatives:

- **Language Preservation Efforts:** Communities like the Toto tribals in Bengal are developing new alphabet systems to revive their endangered languages. Similarly, the Tai Phake community in Assam is working to preserve their language and script ¹.

- **National Oral Health Program (NOHP):** Launched by the Indian Dental Association (IDA), NOHP aims to promote optimal oral health by 2020. The program focuses on education, awareness, and preventive measures to reduce oral health issues ².

- **National Oral Health Care Program:** This program was launched in 1999 to reduce oral health morbidity. It focuses on primary prevention, education, and awareness ².

- **Oral Health Education and Awareness:** Various organizations are working to educate people about the importance of oral health and its connection to overall well-being ^{2 3}.

- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Local communities are taking initiatives to preserve their oral traditions, such as storytelling, music, and dance. These initiatives help to keep their cultural heritage alive.

These initiatives demonstrate the efforts being made to preserve oral culture in India. However, more needs to be done to protect and promote India's rich cultural heritage.

To address these challenges, various initiatives have been taken to preserve oral culture in modern India. Some of these initiatives include:

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for the preservation of oral culture in India:

I Government Initiatives

1. **Establish a National Oral Culture Preservation Board:** To oversee and coordinate efforts to preserve oral culture.

2. Develop a National Oral Culture Policy: To provide a framework for preserving and promoting oral culture.

3. Allocate Funds for Oral Culture Preservation: To support initiatives and projects that preserve and promote oral culture.

Community-Based Initiatives

1. Establish Community-Based Oral Culture Centers: To provide a platform for communities to preserve and promote their oral traditions.

2. Train Community Members in Oral Culture Documentation: To ensure that communities have the skills and knowledge to document their oral traditions.

3. Support Community-Led Oral Culture Preservation Projects: To empower communities to take ownership of their oral culture preservation efforts.

II Digital Preservation

1. Develop a National Digital Archive for Oral Culture: To provide a centralized platform for preserving and accessing oral culture recordings.

2. Use Digital Technologies to Document Oral Culture: To ensure that oral traditions are documented and preserved for future generations.

3. Make Oral Culture Recordings Accessible Online: To promote access to oral culture recordings and support research and education.

III Education and Awareness

1. Integrate Oral Culture into School Curricula: To educate children about the importance of oral culture and its significance in Indian heritage.

2. Organize Oral Culture Festivals and Events: To promote awareness and appreciation of oral culture among the general public.

3. Develop Educational Resources on Oral Culture: To support teaching and learning

about oral culture.

IV Collaboration and Partnerships

1. Collaborate with International Organizations: To learn from best practices in oral culture preservation and promote Indian oral culture globally.

2. Partner with NGOs and Community Organizations: To support community-led oral culture preservation initiatives and promote oral culture awareness.

3. Engage with Private Sector Companies: To leverage resources and expertise to support oral culture preservation efforts.

By implementing these recommendations, India can ensure the preservation of its rich oral culture for future generations.

Conclusion

The preservation of oral culture in modern India is crucial for maintaining India's cultural identity and diversity. While challenges exist, various initiatives have been taken to preserve oral culture. It is essential that these efforts continue, and that oral culture is recognized as an integral part of India's cultural heritage.

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THE LOST SONGS : MARSHIYA AND SADI GEET

Dr. Sajmina Akhtar

Abstract

Women play a vital role in preserving the traditions of society by practicing cultural activities, passing down heritage, and maintaining social consistency. Their contributions span various aspects of life, including culture, family, education, religion, and community life of a society. Like other societies, the women of Jolha community, a tea tribe of Assam also plays a crucial role in upholding the tradition of society by preserving cultural values. Jolha is a Muslim tea community of Assam residing in various tea and ex-tea areas of eleven district of Assam. In their societies women are very much involved in the cultural and also economic activity of the family and society. Women frequently participate in religious ceremonies and rituals, ensuring that spiritual traditions should continue. Many cultural diction, such as traditional weaving, embroidery, music, and cooking, are preserved by women the women of Jolha community, plays a crucial role in upholding the tradition of society by preserving cultural values. This community found in parts of Assam once had a rich tradition of singing and dancing viz: Marshiya songs, Shadigget, Notuwa Dance etc. These musical forms were deeply rooted in their cultural and religious identity especially as a means of expressing grief, devotion and remembrance. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the songs especially the Marshiya songs and Sadigeet related to the culture and religion of Jolha community in Assam and also documenting the songs that were sung during Muharram. The interview method will be in use to collect and preserve these oral traditions.

Keywords: Jolha, Sadigeet, Marshiya

Introduction

Women play a vital role in preserving the traditions of society by practicing cultural activities, passing down heritage, and maintaining social consistency. Their contributions span various aspects of life, including culture, family, education, religion, and community life of a society. Women frequently participate in religious ceremonies and rituals, ensuring that spiritual traditions should continue. Many cultural diction, such as traditional weaving, embroidery, music, and cooking, are preserved by women. Like other societies, the women of Jolha community, plays a crucial role in upholding the tradition of society by preserving cultural values. This community found in parts of Assam once had a rich tradition of singing and dancing viz. Marshiya songs, Shadigget, Notuwa Dance etc. These musical forms were deeply rooted in their cultural and religious identity especially as a means of expressing grief, devotion and remembrance. It is worth to mention here that in the first part of their stay in Assam their religious

practices were influenced by the Shias (a Muslim religious group) and also the Hindus as they observed rituals like Tazia, Lathikhel, Sapher Puja etc. In the passage of time, gradually these practices vanished from their society. It may be understood in this way, that while In Bihar, these people after their conversion to Islam must have followed the Shias. In Assam they practiced both the Hindu and Shia rituals and gradually turned towards the Sunni faith as in Assam, majority of the people are the followers of the Sunni faith. However over time due to various socio-religious influences, these traditions have ben faded from the society.

Objective of the Study

This paper aims to explore the cultural and religious songs of the Jolha community of Assam, with a particular focus on traditionally sung during the month of Muharram. Additionally it has been collected for documentation and to preserve these fading musical traditions.

Methodology

The study is based on observations and interviews conducted within the community to gain deeper insights into their musical heritage and its transformation over time.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The Jolha Community :

Jolha is a Muslim tea community of Assam residing in various tea and ex-tea areas of eleven district of Assam. The word Jolha means weavers. In Bihar the prime occupation of these people was weaving and it was a male dominated profession. But in Assam they were forced to work in tea gardens instead of their ancestral profession i.e. weaving but in Assam they are considered as an integral part of tea community of Assamese society. It is worth to mention here that the Julas of Ahom period and the Jolhas of British period have maintained a long gap of likely 200 of years. The Julas of Ahom period assimilated with the Assamese society in such a way that they had nothing of their own like language, culture, rite and rituals, their ancestral skill except their religion. It is very difficult to find out any difference between the Julas of Ahom period and other Assamese Muslims of the land. On the other hand Jolhas have been living in Assam for almost 185 years, maintaining their ethnic identity to some extent. Though in the process of assimilation, they have lost most of their ethnic feature and by embracing the language, culture and religious rites and rituals of the host society they contributed a lot in forming a broader Assamese society. The Jolhas are inhabited in ten districts of Upper Brahmaputra Valley such as Tinisukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nagaon Sonitpur, Biswanath Chariali, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. According to Assam Chah Janagusthi Jolha Yuva Chatra Parishad and Chah Sramik aru Prakton Chah Sramik Jolha Jati Sanmilan the population of

Jolha people of Brahmaputra Valley is 83,049 excluding the Barak Valley and BTAD region. Among 278 Jolha inhabited area, there are 101 Tea Garden area and 177 village area where the ex-tea people are living with diversified livelihood. In some tea garden area also people are living who are not involved in the tea garden anymore. This census was carried out by the organizations in the year 2022 only.

Marshiya Geet and Sadi Ggeet :

Marshiya is a form of elegiac Urdu poetry traditionally recited to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his companions during the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. It holds deep cultural and religious significance, particularly among Shia Muslims in India, where it remains an essential part of Muharram commemorations. However, among the Jolha people, much like other Muslim communities worldwide, these art forms had been given significant importance. The Jolha community, consisting of both tea and ex-tea garden workers, once practiced the tradition of singing Marshiya songs during Muharram processions. Observations reveal that the Jolhas have lost many of their distinct cultural traits due to prolonged residence in Assam. Over time, their unique traditions have faded, leaving behind only traces of their original heritage.

During the month of Muharram, the practice of Tajiya was observed to honor the memory of Imam Hussain and Imam Hassan grandsons of Prophet Muhammad and the martyrs of the Battle of Karbala. A replica of a tomb, crafted from bamboo and coloured paper, was constructed and placed in a special location known as the Dargah. On the 10th day of Muharram, the Tajiya was carried in a grand procession and positioned in a designated area called Karbala. As part of the procession, participants performed Lathikhel (a

traditional stick performance) at the forefront. Women also took part in the procession, singing Marshiya songs in remembrance of the martyrs of Karbala. While coming to the land the Jolhas were well versed in Marshia Geet (Elegiac song contains tragic history of Karbala). It was continued among them till they have come under the influence of Sunni Muslims of Assamese society.

In Keihang Tea Estate of Tinsukia District, some elderly individuals shared their knowledge about the lyrics and singing of Marshiya Geet.

(i)

Jharua pokorke roye dadi
Hussain chale dil todke,
Aao re sheher ke logo
Dadi ko samjhaoge,
O' Dadi tum samojhke robo
Phir Dunia main phiroge

(Personal communication, 22nd January, 2010)

Meaning of above mentioned Marshiya Geet is "Grandmother weeps, shedding endless tears, Imam Hussain departs, leaving hearts shattered. Come, people of the city, Will you console the grieving grandmother? Oh, Grandmother, understand and endure, Only then will you be able to move through the world again." This stanza reflects deep sorrow, likely referencing the mourning for Imam Hussain and the immense grief felt by those left behind, particularly an elderly figure (possibly symbolizing a grieving mother or grandmother). It conveys a call for consolation and resilience in the face of profound loss.

(ii)

Nala rowe nodi rowe
Aro rowe Sokhina

Lotae lotae rowe
Bonore dbodboki phool
Karbala main Begum rowe
Chuna hoilo Modina.

(Banu, R, 2006, p.21)

Meaning of above mentioned Marshiya Geet is "The streams weep, the rivers cry and Sokhina mourns in sorrow. Even the rolling waves lament, like the trembling flowers in the forest. In Karbala, the noble ladies weep, while Medina remains silent and empty." These lines express deep grief and mourning, likely referring to the tragedy of Karbala, where the suffering of Imam Hussain and his family caused immense sorrow, affecting not just people but even nature itself. The mention of Sokhina may symbolize a grieving soul, and the contrast between Karbala's mourning and Medina's silence highlights the pain of loss.

(iii)

Ek Sedam ka ganza liya
Sante santé der hua
Khate pite Adha rat
Aab cholo Imam ke sath.

(Personal Communication, 22nd January, 2010)

Meaning of above mentioned Marshiya Geet is "Took a handful of sorrow, lingering and delaying along the way. Spent half the night eating and drinking, now, let's go with the Imam." This stanza reflects hesitation or delay in fully committing to a cause, possibly referring to those who were slow to join Imam Hussain in his struggle. It contrasts worldly distractions with the call to stand by the Imam, urging devotion and sacrifice over comfort.

Like *Biyanam* of Assamese society, Shadigeet (Shadi-marriage, Geet-song) were

sung by the ladies assembled for the occasion of the marriage ceremony which are not familiar among the young girls but the elder ladies even now are continuing this tradition in some places. Coming under the influence of Islam all these has gradually gone into dark which is prevailed among their Hindu counterpart thereafter. Some example of Shadigeet are-

(i)

Jawa re Gohuma ke Ubton

Rai Soricha Ke Tel

Beti Boithol Re Ubton

(Personal communication 22nd January, 2010)

Meaning of the above mentioned Shadigeet is "A special ubtan made of barley and wheat, oil infused with mustard and turmeric, the ubtan is applied to the bride as part of the wedding rituals." It reflects the cultural tradition of applying *ubtan* (a herbal paste) to enhance the bride's beauty and bless her before the wedding.

(ii)

Ghara se Bahara Bhail, Maya Mora

Biba Maya Logon Chumai Ho

Logon Nihara Bhail

Hate Gulala, Mukhe Paan

Logon Nihara Bhail, Mai Ho

Logon Nihara Bhail

(Personal Communication, 1st November, 2009)

Meaning of the above mentioned Shadigeet is "I stepped out of the house, my love. People saw me, my beloved. They embraced me with affection. People kept looking at me. With colors in my hands and betel leaves in my mouth, people kept looking at me, my dear. People kept looking at me."

(iii)

Ahara ho Sukhi Gel

Pokhora ho sukhi geil

Aabe beti rohobe Kumwar.

Ahara ho bhoi geil

Pokhoi ho bhoi geil

Chuyan basi Bahr bobi giel

Baba ke chati aahi

Porosa phuti geil

Abe beti howo to Biha

(Personal communication, 1st November, 2009)

Meaning of the above mentioned Shadigeet is "The pond has dried up, the lake has dried up, now the daughter will remain unmarried; The pond is full, the lake is full, the sound of conch shells echoes as the wedding procession departs. the father's heart fills with emotion, his eyes well up with tears. Now, dear daughter, it's time for your wedding".

This verse reflects the emotional journey of a father as he prepares to marry off his daughter, using the imagery of water levels in ponds and lakes as metaphors for change and transition. Let me know if you'd like a more poetic translation!

Conclusion :

Collecting Marshiya songs has become increasingly difficult task, as the practice of Taziya is no longer observed within the community. With the passing of the older generation, Marshiya and Shadigeet are gradually fading from society, leading to the loss of these traditional forms of mourning and expressions. These performances have become faded due to various influences. The process of assimilation and the impact of advancements in communication have played significant roles in shaping religious beliefs

and practices. Additionally, the increasing interaction and social integration between the Jolhas and other members of society have contributed to these changes, leading to adaptations in traditional rituals and customs. As a result, these songs have almost disappeared, especially since the people who knew the songs have already passed away and the practice of the songs particularly the Marshiya songs are not done in the society, searching for them in their society could be another important research topic for the researcher of present time.

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UPHOLDING TRADITIONS: THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Shameen Sultana

Abstract

In the intricate tapestry of indigenous cultures worldwide, women have long held pivotal roles as custodians of traditional knowledge and guardians of cultural heritage. Rooted deeply in ancestral wisdom and passed down through generations, indigenous knowledge systems encompass a rich array of practices, beliefs, and insights that are integral to the identity and resilience of indigenous communities. India is a country which boast its glorious heritage, where woman has not only enjoyed the equal status but has been described in the scriptures more than the better half, the same she lost with the passage of time. In fact, the problem is deep rooted as to be found in any patriarchal society of which India is a living example where males generally dominate and women are trailing in a subordinate position though they shoulder major responsibilities. In this paper, we will delve deep into how women role has been defined throughout the stages of history and their role in the preservation of culture. How the women of the country at various times have proved themselves and broke free from the barriers of patriarchy. They have established themselves in the spheres of economic, political and social and are able to leave a never-ending impact.

Keywords: *cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, patriarchy, economic development*

Introduction

Family is considered as the cradle of the society and women forms a vital but vulnerable section of the society. She is a pivot round which the whole family revolves. In a country like India which boast its glorious heritage, where women have not only enjoyed equal status but has been described in the annals of history more than better half. Women throughout history has played a very important role in nurturing the culture, traditional practices and values and most importantly passing it to the next generations. The roles of Indian women have been deeply influenced by cultural, historical, and societal factors. The ancient civilizations along the Indus and the Ganges, with their spiritual wisdom and gender-neutral ideals, laid the foundation for a rich heritage that celebrated the feminine divine. In indigenous communities worldwide, women serve as the custodians of cultural heritage, holding profound knowledge of ancestral traditions, rituals, and storytelling. Their intimate connection with the land, community, and

ancestral wisdom shapes the very fabric of indigenous identity. Women are the keepers of oral traditions, passing down stories, songs, and teachings that encapsulate the collective memory of their people. Through their nurturing and caretaking roles, women instill values, ethics, and cultural pride in future generations, fostering a deep sense of belonging and interconnectedness with the land and ancestors. However, over the centuries, as India experienced waves of invasion, colonization, and changing social norms, the roles of women underwent profound shifts. Yet, this role, while essential, often confined women to domestic spheres, limiting their opportunities for personal growth and economic independence

During Rig-Vedic period women enjoyed a status of equality with men. She along with men received education, participated in assemblies and debates, studied Vedas and made sacrifices along with their husbands. Rig-Veda, the oldest known literature in the whole world that contains 1,028 hymns written by a number of priestly

families of which some were even contributed by 27 women called *Brahmavadinis* who enjoyed family life as well. In Ramayana and Mahabharata, we find novel examples of women like *Anasuya*, *Sramanisabari*, *Maitreye* and *Gargi* who were highly educated. The highest manifestation of domestic perfection is found in great personality of *Sita*, the idol of Indian womanhood. In Mahabharata there are instances of women who led dedicated lives at home e.g., *Gandhari*, *Kunti* and *Draupadi*. History is full of examples which shows that women have always been an example not just of purity and chastity but also of devotion towards the society. Women are frequently responsible for leading or participating in cultural rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations that honor the natural world and ancestral spirits. These practices may include offerings to the land, prayers for abundance and fertility, and rites of passage marking life transitions. Women's roles as spiritual leaders or ceremonial practitioners contribute to the transmission and preservation of traditional ecological knowledge and cultural heritage. Women have played a crucial role in transmitting traditional knowledge to future generations, particularly within matrilineal societies where descent and inheritance are traced through the maternal line. Through oral storytelling, hands-on apprenticeship, and everyday practices shared within families and communities, women pass on valuable ecological knowledge, cultural traditions, and ethical values related to environmental stewardship. Women have historically been the primary custodians of traditional songs, lullabies, and chants. These songs can be a reflection of social life, rituals, and spirituality. For example, in some African, Native American, and Pacific Islander cultures, women perform songs during ceremonies like childbirth, marriages, or seasonal festivals, preserving not only the melodies but the accompanying cultural meanings. The Sabar

dance and drum performances in Senegal and Mali often feature women, and these performances can contain historical narratives about the community's history, heroes, and important events. Mirabai, a 16th-century Rajput princess and poet-saint from Rajasthan, is one of the most celebrated female figures in the Bhakti movement. Her *bhajans* (devotional songs) dedicated to Lord Krishna became immensely popular and were passed down orally through generations. She is considered one of the most powerful female voices in the spiritual and cultural history of India. In Bengal, the tradition of *Kirtan* (devotional singing) has been sustained by women, particularly in rural areas. In the Naga and Assamese cultures of northeastern India, women are key figures in the oral transmission of the myths surrounding their gods, deities, and ancestral heroes. Women have been instrumental in preserving local languages. They teach the younger generations the correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of their native tongues, passing on linguistic traditions that might otherwise be lost due to colonization, globalization, or social changes. In Andhra Pradesh, the classical dance form *Kuchipudi* has strong roots in oral storytelling.

But we cannot ignore the facts that history is also full of examples where women have been mistreated or the least kept out of all the affairs be it that of the state, parganas or home. During the later Vedic period their position deteriorated. The golden Rig-Vedic ideals of unity and equality began to fade off. They were denied the right to study Vedas, to utter Vedic mantras and to perform Vedic rights. On the other hand, marriage or domestic life became compulsory for women and unquestionable devotion to their husbands. The birth of a daughter was not liked by their parents. Women along with Sudras were held in derision by several authors of Dharmasastras and Puranas. Socially they were regarded most impure. They were even denied the right of

inheritance. Their situation further worsened as dowry emerged as a custom in the society. The ruler of Magadh Bimbisara (544-492 B.C) married a Koshalan princess, got Kashi village as dowry which yielded 10,00,000 coins as revenue. Chandragupta Maurya defeated Selucus in 305 B.C married his daughter. In marriage he got Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Baluchistan as dowry from his father-in-law. With the passage of time more social evils crept in the society effecting the position of women which were sati, female infanticide, child marriage, pardah, jauhar, widowhood. In the *Milindapanho*, the widow as a person is despised and condemned in this world. The Sangam literature reveals that as a rule the widows were expected to lead a life of self-denial and that the custom of sati was extolled as a great virtue. But women never failed to stand up against odds and prove themselves like *Prabhavatigupta* of the *Vakataka* dynasty who ruled for 13 years as the mother of the *Yuvraja*, Queen Didda (958-1003 A.D) ruled Kashmir for 45 years and withstood all intrigues against her. Even the present-day society reports many deaths of women due to dowry related violence, girls married off at a young age because the girl child has always been considered as a burden on the parents.

But not to forget that Indian society is again crowded with many examples which speaks not only of the bravery of Indian women but also their determination and perseverance to raise above the bar. The most sought-after example is of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi who bravely fought against the Britishers. We are also aware of examples of Sarojini Naidu, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Aruna Asaf Ali etc. who stood as befitting replies not just to the colonial rule but also to the patriarchal Indian Society. Many a times it was their male counterparts who helped them to break free from the cages of injustices and dominance. Savitribai Phule who was illiterate at the time of her marriage

but her husband Jyotiba Phule educated her and she went on to become the first female teacher of India. Raja Rammohun Roy has been a champion of women rights. He single handedly fought for the abolition of sati and eventually it was abolished by Lord William Bentinck in 1829. Accordingly, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar launched an uncompromising struggle in favor of widow remarriage. The success of this country wide movement for widow remarriage got fruit in 1856 as widow remarriage got legalized

In politics, the contribution of women has been significant but often unheralded. From Rani Laskhmibai to Indira Gandhi, women have risen to political prominence and held the highest offices in the land. They have shaped policies, led movements, and left lasting legacies. Yet, the path to political leadership has been fraught with challenges, from gender bias to a lack of representation. Fortunately, the Indian Government has brought in one-third reservation of seats for the women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies with the Women Reservation Act, 2023. There had been women chiefs of political parties like Mayamati of Bahujan Samaj Party or Rabri Devi of Bihar or Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal who have led a remarkable example for the women of the coming generations to follow. Women have been the greatest advocates of social and women rights like Kamla Bhasin, Medha Patkar, Sadhana Amte etc. And definitely we have seen a rise of women in the political sphere. We can somewhere call it a *Silent Revolution* of the women who are breaking free all the barriers of life. In the era of globalization women are facing even more threats to their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge system. For ex with global warming various herbs or medicinal plants have been disappearing or like with the onslaught of development of cities, towns forest lands have been cleared which is again causing harm to the traditional societal values and emotions. There has been

a marginalization of traditional medicinal system. In earlier days, the women of the household were full of traditional knowledge and knew how to cure different ailments and diseases with the various traditional medicines. People too had a better quality of life. The destruction of forest and the forest lands has not only disturbed the traditional knowledge system but also the lives of the tribal communities who stayed there and were completely dependent on the forest for their livelihood. The Chipko Andolan is an example where women showed remarkable resilience in advocating for forest preservation.

In economics, women are making substantial strides, emerging as vital contributors to India's growing economy. Needless to mention that India's Finance Minister is a woman Nirmala Sitharaman who has made significant contributions to the country's economic and defense policies. They are entering the workforce, becoming entrepreneurs, and driving innovation in various sectors. Access to education, economic reforms, and a changing mindset have empowered women to seize economic opportunities and provide for their families.

Findings

1. Women are the guardians of cultural heritage
2. They have a very important role in preservation of traditional knowledge and practices
3. Women have a multifaceted capacity as in balancing tradition and modernity.
4. Women's involvement in politics has become a key factor in reinterpreting traditions
5. Impact of globalization in women's roles in tradition

Conclusion

India, the cradle which worships women, is a land of great divinity. Women play a pivotal role in preserving cultural heritage, passing down traditions and maintaining

community values. Through their involvement in family, education and social structures, women ensure the continuity of practices, knowledge and customs across generations. At the same time, women have been instrumental in adapting and transforming these traditions to meet the evolving needs of modern society. Their influence is not limited to just the domestic spheres but has overcome every barrier to play a dominant role in political, economic and educational spheres. Although many a times there has been instances where women have been neglected, mistreated or abused, our women have always fought back, risen up and gave their best. The various acid attack survivors like Laxmi Agarwal is a growing inspiration for the girls of the generations. Women are advocating for equality, inclusivity and sustainability while honoring the wisdom of the past. Efforts need to revive their glory and honor by removing the inequality and imbalance they are facing in the society.

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**A STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES
TO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN
DUE TO LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN ANGADIKADAVU, KERALA**

Guite, S. L.

Joy, J.

Konwar, P.

Abstract

Language serves as a vital medium of communication, connecting people and fostering relationships that form the foundation of society. This foundation varies across different societal contexts. Previous studies have established that language significantly influences the overall development of individuals and communities. It also highlights how language is both shaped by and shapes societal changes and institutional transformations. Moreover, language barriers have been shown to directly affect access to education, healthcare, and employment. However, limited attention has been given to the specific challenges faced in the overall development due to language barriers by rural women. This study seeks to identify these challenges and explore their impact on the psychological, social, and economic dimensions of development. The findings underscore the pivotal role of language in the holistic growth of women, revealing that women increasingly acknowledge the value of multilingual proficiency. This shift has contributed significantly to their social, economic, and psychological advancement within society.

Keywords: Rural, Psycho-Socio-Economic Development, Language Barrier, Multi-lingual Proficiency, Women.

**CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION**

Language has long been a subject of fascination for scholars as it plays a fundamental role in human communication, social organization, and economic participation. Aristotle described language as speech sounds used to express thoughts and emotions (Ruggles, 2019), while Derbyshire (1961) defined it as a systematic and symbolic communication tool. Lyons (1977) further emphasized language as the principal means of interaction within societies. Beyond its communicative function, language serves as a mechanism for inclusion or exclusion, shaping access to opportunities and resources. Language barriers—defined as difficulties arising from limited proficiency in a dominant or shared language (Kreps & Jackson, 1996)—pose significant challenges to women's development, restricting their participation in education, employment, and decision-making processes. These barriers

reinforce existing gender inequalities, making it critical to examine their impact through historical, sociological, and economic lenses with the inclusion of the feminist perspective to comprehensively understand the true impact of the challenges in the overall development of women.

Historical Context: Language and Women's Exclusion

Language has been a tool of both empowerment and oppression, influencing social mobility and access to knowledge. Women have often been excluded from formal education and public discourse, limiting their ability to engage in intellectual, economic, and political spheres. As per historical records in the Linguistic hierarchies, where dominant languages hold economic and political power, have further marginalized women with limited language proficiency. For example in Ancient times like Sumer, Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt and even in Middle Age times, education had been a privilege that

was only availed by the higher-class women which greatly limited the growth in the proficiency of language among women in general and the usage of knowledge has also had some variable changes across time such as the education in ancient times being more inclusive and progressive as compared to the middle ages. The trajectory of women's education has witnessed both progress and setbacks. (Saini, 2023) This historical exclusion continues to affect contemporary gender dynamics, reinforcing systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation in development. The acquisition of knowledge is pivotal for language enhancement which in turn influences overall women development.

Sociological Challenges: Language and Gender Inequality

From a sociological perspective, language is integral to identity formation, access to social resources, and structural inequalities. Proficiency in dominant languages determines an individual's ability to access education, employment, and healthcare, all of which are essential for development (Laitin & Ramachandran, 2016). Women with limited language skills face compounded disadvantages, as linguistic exclusion reinforces gendered social hierarchies (Fairclough, 2013). Language also plays a role in shaping gender norms and perceptions, influencing how women are represented and treated in society (Rwodzi, 2017). The inability to communicate effectively can lead to social isolation, reduced confidence, and restricted participation in decision-making processes.

Economic Constraints: Language as a Barrier to Women's Financial Independence

There is a vital connection between economic development and women's empowerment, highlighting how structural

barriers like unequal property rights, labor discrimination, and limited financial access hinder women's economic independence. While economic growth can create opportunities, systemic inequalities often persist, restricting women's full participation. These challenges are further compounded by language barriers, which limit access to education, employment, and financial resources, reinforcing gender disparities. Understanding the intersection of economic policies, gender dynamics, and linguistic constraints is crucial for developing inclusive strategies that foster sustainable women's development (Boserup et al., 2013).

Economic development is closely tied to language proficiency, as communication skills influence access to labor markets, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship opportunities. Women who struggle with language barriers often face limited employment options, lower wages, and reduced mobility within the workforce. The economic disparities between men and women are exacerbated by linguistic challenges that restrict women's ability to engage with financial institutions, access credit, and participate in business networks. Development, in its broadest sense, involves creating opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods (Parpart et al., 2000).

However, language barriers add an additional layer of exclusion, preventing women from fully benefiting from economic growth and policy initiatives.

Feminist Methodologies and Addressing Language-Based Exclusion

Feminist research methodologies highlight the role of gender in knowledge production and advocate for inclusive research approaches that consider women's lived experiences (Cook & Fonow, 1986). These methodologies challenge traditional

epistemological assumptions and emphasize the need to address structural barriers such as language exclusion. Limited language proficiency not only restricts women's economic and social mobility but also hinders their ability to advocate for their rights and participate in policy discussions. Integrating feminist perspectives into research on economic and social development is essential for formulating inclusive strategies that address both gender disparities and linguistic constraints.

Language barriers remain a significant but often overlooked obstacle to women's development. They restrict access to education, employment, healthcare, and political participation, reinforcing broader gender inequalities. Understanding these challenges from historical, sociological, and economic perspectives allows for a more comprehensive analysis of their impact. This study, therefore, aims to explore the challenges women face in their development due to language barriers, shedding light on how limited linguistic access influences their opportunities and societal participation. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions on gender, language, and development, offering insights into potential interventions that can bridge linguistic gaps and promote women's empowerment.

Psychological Challenges: Language as a Barrier

Language barriers create psychological challenges for women in developing regions by limiting their ability to fully engage in economic, social, and personal development, leading to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and frustration. Mehra (1997) emphasizes that women are often excluded from development policies that focus more on their reproductive roles than their economic potential, which can hinder their mental well-being. Sharma et al. (2012) discuss

how rural women entrepreneurs face obstacles such as limited access to finance and markets, causing stress and impeding personal growth. Mammen and Paxson (2000) highlight that women's roles change with economic development, which can be psychologically overwhelming. Recent psychological research challenges traditional theories like those of Freud and Erikson, suggesting that the concept of a "relational self," developed through early mother-daughter relationships, better explains women's psychological development (Surrey, 1985). This relational self-structure emphasizes the importance of continuous relationships throughout women's lives, which language barriers can obstruct, further impacting their psychological well-being and growth.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design with a historical and sociological approach to examine the impact of language barriers on middle-aged and older women's development. A mixed-methods approach integrates historical analysis, qualitative interviews, and survey data to ensure a comprehensive understanding.

Research Approach

Historical Analysis: Examined literature to trace language barriers over time.

Qualitative Interviews: Captures lived experiences through semi-structured interviews.

Survey Research: Identifies contemporary challenges through structured questionnaires.

Sampling and Challenges

A purposive sampling strategy targeted women aged 40 and above across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. However, finding respondents was challenging due to the selective age criteria. Many women

reported no language barriers within their home state but faced difficulties elsewhere, relying on husbands for communication with authoritative figures such as government officials and medical professionals.

Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted using pre-prepared questions, originally in English but translated into Malayalam, which introduced potential interpretation limitations and extended the interview duration.

Surveys: Gathered data on women's current language-related socio-economic challenges.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis: Identified recurring themes in historical and interview data.

Qualitative Content Analysis: Examined dependencies and lived experiences.

Descriptive Statistics: Analyzed survey trends using Google Forms.

Ethical Considerations

1. Informed consent and anonymity were ensured.
2. Translation was conducted with cultural sensitivity.
3. Data was securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

Limitations

1. Selective age criteria restricted the sample size.
2. Translation challenges may have caused minor inconsistencies.
3. Dependency on male family members complicated independent assessment of women's experiences.
4. Self-reported data may introduce biases.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Language plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's access to opportunities, social interactions, and overall well-being. This study, conducted among 30 women aged 45-70 in Kerala, sheds light on the impact of language barriers on various aspects of life. Data was collected through interviews, structured into a Google Forms questionnaire, and analyzed systematically to understand the sociological, economic, and psychological implications of linguistic limitations.

Linguistic Limitations and Their Societal Impact

The study reveals that all respondents are native Malayalam speakers, with most being monolingual. While some have basic proficiency in other languages, their interactions in non-native languages are minimal. This linguistic limitation has led to social exclusion, increased dependency, and restricted access to resources, affecting various dimensions of life:

1. Social Implications:

73.3% of respondents reported experiencing difficulties due to language barriers.

Limited proficiency in other languages has contributed to feelings of embarrassment, isolation, and reduced self-confidence, particularly in public settings.

50% of the women have faced challenges in filling out forms, struggling with bureaucratic procedures and accessing essential services.

Difficulties in navigating digital platforms have resulted in increased reliance on younger family members.

2. Economic Challenges:

Language barriers have directly impacted employment opportunities, making it difficult

for women to secure jobs or advance in their careers.

The inability to communicate effectively in non-native languages has restricted participation in economic activities, reinforcing financial dependence on family members.

The digital divide further limits access to online job markets, government schemes, and financial independence, widening the economic disparity.

3. Psychological and Emotional Well-being:

Low self-esteem and stress were commonly reported due to difficulties in communication.

The lack of linguistic skills has contributed to anxiety in social interactions, reinforcing a cycle of self-doubt and avoidance behaviors.

However, 96.7% of respondents believe that learning new languages would improve their psychological well-being, highlighting a strong willingness for self-improvement.

CHAPTER IV RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Given the interconnected social, economic, and psychological challenges posed by language barriers, a multi-dimensional approach is essential. The following interventions aim to foster linguistic empowerment, digital inclusion, and socio-economic participation:

1. Language Accessibility and Education Initiatives

Establish community-driven language learning programs focusing on functional communication for daily life, employment, and public interactions.

Promote peer learning models, where women support each other in gaining new

linguistic skills in informal and inclusive settings.

2. Bridging the Digital Divide

Develop localized digital literacy programs, ensuring that technological advancements are accessible to monolingual individuals.

Encourage the creation of language-friendly digital tools that provide real-time translations, voice-assisted interfaces, and easy-to-navigate applications.

3. Strengthening Public Services and Workplace Inclusivity

Advocate for multilingual support in government institutions, healthcare facilities, and workplaces to improve accessibility.

Implement bilingual training programs, allowing women to acquire job-specific language skills without feeling excluded.

Ensure that official forms, public transportation systems, and essential services are equipped with language assistance mechanisms.

4. Psychological and Social Empowerment

Introduce self-confidence and communication workshops, helping women navigate linguistic challenges without fear of judgment.

Provide counseling and community-based support systems, addressing the psychological distress caused by language exclusion.

Encourage intergenerational learning, where younger family members actively assist older women in language learning and digital adaptation.

Conclusion:

Language is more than a tool for communication; it is a gateway to opportunities, self-sufficiency, and active participation in society. The findings highlight

how language barriers reinforce social inequalities, limit economic mobility, and affect psychological well-being. However, the strong willingness among respondents to learn and adapt presents an opportunity for transformation.

By implementing structured interventions that promote language accessibility, digital inclusion, and social empowerment, it is possible to bridge systemic gaps and create a more inclusive society. Breaking linguistic barriers is not just about education—it is about ensuring that every individual, regardless of age or background, has the means to thrive, participate, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

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TATTOO AS A MEDIUM OF INDIVIDUALITY AND ORAL TRADITION IN A GLOBALIZED MARKET

Sujata Sonowal

Abstract

Tattoos have been used for thousands of years as a symbol for all humanity. Tattoo as an art form, serve as a powerful means of expressing individuality. Symbolic thought has always been part of construct that makes us human. The body ornamentation specifically tattooing has always been related to the birth of symbolic thought due to its appearance early on in our cultural history. It contributes significantly to the preservation of oral culture by serving as a visual language that supplements and strengthens verbal traditions. It serves as enduring symbols in cultures where knowledge, history, and values are passed down orally. Tattooing is a complex, embodied process that involves not only literally inscribing layers of skin with externally apparent color on certain places of the body, but also in cultural, symbolic, and socio-psychological contexts.

Furthermore, it indicates that it is not merely seen as an art form rather it has now become a part of consumer culture. There have been limited studies particularly on the importance of tattoo making and its relation with individual's identity. Of late there has been the rise of tattoo industry, in north-east India. The current study will try to investigate how the idea of tattoo plays a symbolic representation as a form of expression to preserve oral traditions. These are some of the factors that have aroused the intellectual sensitivity of the researcher to undertake this research work for detailed investigation using an appropriate methodology. Therefore, as tattooing and various socio-cultural and economic aspects relating to it assumes significance, the methodology which will be based on qualitative approach using in-depth interview method.

Keywords: *Tattoo, Culture, Identity and Symbolic Expression*

Introduction

Tattooing, the art of engraving the human skin, is an ancient cultural practice that continues to this day. The Romans and Greeks practiced tattooing extensively, as did some of their less civilized contemporaries. Early Christians forbade tattooing, and its popularity declined in the Dark and the Middle Ages (Roenigk, 1971). The ritual of tattooing can be found in Greece, Persia, the Sudan, China, Japan, as well as in the Polynesia Island, "where an artistic peak was reached and where the word 'Tatau' meaning artistic, originated" (Ferguson report, et, al, 1955).

Tattoo is one of the key elements of a society's culture and tradition and is an expression of unique identity. In the late 18th century, Captain Cook reintroduced it to Europe through his contact with Polynesia (Roenigk, 1971). The term tattoo was first

introduced into the English language by Captain Cook on his return from the South Seas. It is originated from the Tahitian word 'tatau' which refer to the practice of pricking the skin with indelible ink (Konyak, 2014). Thus, the origin and historical meaning of the word tattoo is believed to have two derivations that is "ta"-striking something and "tatau"- to mark something (Savitha, 2017). It was first used by the French navigator Bougainville to highlight the body decoration of the Tahitian natives (Fedorenko, 1999). In 1769, James Cook coined the word tattoo after observing the "rapid rhythmic rapping" as needles were hit with a stick into the skin of Tahitians and New Zealanders (Zelyck, 2005). Cambridge Dictionary (1995) defines tattoo as a permanent image, pattern, or word on the skin that is created by using needles to put colors under the skin.

Tattooing is a multifaceted, embodied phenomenon, not only in the concrete sense of literally inscribing layers of skin with outwardly visible pigment on areas of the body, but also in cultural, symbolic, and socio-psychological terms (Atkinson, 2002; DeMello, 2000).

The standard practice of warriors tattooing themselves dates back more than 12,000 years. The warrior cultures that have preceded us have often times tattooed themselves as a way to define them as a warrior for life (Krutak, 1999). The implications of these markings had significant cultural importance and equated to status. The nomadic tribes of the Viking warriors would tattoo themselves to identify amongst their kinsmen that they were indeed warriors of different skill levels. Celtic warriors were adorned with Woad tattoos as well as ink along meridian lines in the belief that it would enhance their performance in battle (Jennings, 2015). A “Woad tattoo” refers to a tattoo design inspired by the ancient practice of using a blue dye extracted from the woad plant to paint oneself on the body. Woad plant is an European plant whose leaves can be used to make a blue dye to inscribe into the skin and also for coloring clothes. Tattoo blossom at the crossroads of bodies and art, the physical and the imaginary. Their colors, shapes, and symbols pulsate with memories, meanings, and emotions. Above all, body art captures and reveals unspoken aspects of human relationships, both past and present (Belkin, 2014). Tattoos often represent thoughts and feelings that we have not spoken about or acknowledge, even to ourselves.

Tattooing is a personalized marking, an expression of oneself, a mark to identify oneself body-captures the idea of skin marking as an extension of one's personal self (Nikora, 2002). Nonetheless, the function of tattoo is not limited to just displaying one's group

membership. They also cater to the expression of oneself, as well as pander to the need for uniqueness of the individual (Tiggemann & Golder, 2006).

Tattooing is perceived as symbolic expression through which socio-cultural practices, customary beliefs and individual choices are reflected. It is a means of self-expression, for standing out from the crowd, having deep symbolic value and cultural connotations, or as marks which inspire curiosity, sometimes revulsion or fear, and, many times, attraction (Waskul, 2006). As a ‘visual language’ in which culture is inscribed on the skin by the individual (Ghosh, 2020), it becomes a symbol of communication. The concept of ‘visual language’, can be related to symbolic interactionism theory of George Herbert Mead. According to the interactionist perspective of Mead, the symbolic interactionism is the manner in which the individual is connected to the social structure wherein possible interplay between the individual and others takes place (Dong, 2008). An important characteristic of the tattoo as a form of communication is that it largely speaks through non-verbal transmission. Though interactions with others may provoke a verbal exchange, much of the conversation that attributed through tattoo is unspoken. The non-verbal communication through the art of tattoo making in one's own body is fundamentally attributed to appearance evaluation. The body becomes the medium through which the culturally set ideal body is attained and attains the perfect self. Thus, it becomes important to point out how the body image reflects the individual's sense of identity.

Statement of the Problem

Tattooing is no more confined to isolated individuals and groups such as sailors, circus performers, convicts and criminal gangs. Tattoo as an art form, serve as a

powerful means of expressing individuality. Symbolic thought has always been part of construct that makes us human. The body ornamentation specifically tattooing has always been related to the birth of symbolic thought due to its appearance early on in our cultural history. It contributes significantly to the preservation of oral culture by serving as a visual language that supplements and strengthens verbal traditions. It serves as enduring symbols in cultures where knowledge, history, and values are passed down orally. It has become a modern consumer culture that can be seen in terms of fashion and popular culture. Furthermore, it indicates that it is not merely seen as an art form rather it has now become a part of consumer culture. There are various factors ranging from individual to societal factors that motivate people to inscribe tattoo in their bodies. As tattoo is becoming a popular consumer culture there has been a steady rise of tattoo studios in urban centres. The traditional notion of tattoo is being replaced in modern society as it is not merely confined to art form rather it has become a part of consumer behaviour.

There have been limited studies particularly on the importance of tattoo making and its relation with individual's identity. Of late there has been the rise of tattoo industry, in north-east India. The current study will try to investigate how the idea of tattoo plays a symbolic representation as a form of expression to preserve oral traditions.

Objective

The primary objective of the study is to investigate how the idea of tattoo plays a symbolic representation as a form of expression to preserve oral traditions.

Methodology

These are some of the factors that have

aroused the intellectual sensitivity of the researcher to undertake this research work for detailed investigation using an appropriate methodology. Therefore, as tattooing and various socio-cultural and economic aspects relating to it assumes significance, the methodology which will be based on qualitative approach using in-depth interview method. Multiple techniques of data collection have been used to collect the requisite data. The researcher have used questionnaire, interview schedule and observation techniques to collect primary data.

Discussion

Tattoos are frequently discussed in modern sociological discourse as a form of self-expression, identity creation, and social membership. While modern tattooing is frequently connected with personal aesthetics and countercultural movements, Indigenous and traditional tattoos play a more profound significance, such as acting as an embodied kind of oral heritage. Based on field observations and qualitative interviews, this debate delves into how tattoos function as a visual language and how tattooing traditions are adjusting to current influences while maintaining authenticity. Oral traditions sustain historical continuity through storytelling, ceremonial information transfer, and embodied cultural behaviors. Tattooing supplements this system in many cultures by permanently inscribing symbols, genealogical markers, and religious knowledge on the skin. This method converts the body into a living text, a canvas on which personal and collective history is narrated through elaborate design. In many cultures, tattooing was deeply intertwined with oral storytelling, as each marking on the body carried a specific meaning that was explained and passed down through spoken narratives. Tattoo studios, particularly those run by Indigenous

artists and cultural practitioners, have become contemporary sites where these endangered traditions are being revived. Unlike commercial tattoo parlors that focus solely on decorative ink, these studios serve as educational spaces where clients, apprentices, and community members engage in discussions about the significance of traditional tattooing. Traditional Indian tattooing carries deep meanings, often reflecting the oral traditions and belief systems of their respective communities.

In the Indian context, tattooing has a variety of reasons and beliefs. Generally, tattoos are used to keep their Indigenous identity among other tribal clan. The various tattoo forms of the Bhunjia Tribes of Chattisgarh are associated with religious beliefs and it is believed that they will carry it after their death as a marker of their identity (Dev, 2016). In Chhattisgarh, the community called Kothuna or Godharins makes their livelihood from traditional tattooing practice. This art is closely related to the Hindu religion and is mainly practiced by the Nondwig castes of the Avadhi region. The artist is known as Godarins or Maharins. In India's Awadh region, the Godna tradition is associated with the concept of purity and pollution, which is an important dimension of Hindu caste, order, and identity (Singh, 2015). A myth that is associated with the Godna art of this region. They are very knowledgeable about the different types of tattoos preferred by various tribes. The art of tattooing, working procedures, raw materials, techniques, and relevant knowledge passed by their mothers from generation to generation. Moreover, in many Indian tribal cultures, tattoos mark a girl's transition from puberty to marriage and motherhood. Thus inscribing a tattoo explains the significance of each tattoo while performing the tattooing process. These tattoos are deeply embedded in folklore,

spiritual beliefs, and social customs, making them a powerful means of storytelling that does not rely on written records but on lived experience and oral transmission.

The concept of tattooing and preserving oral tradition is analyzed on the basis of narratives given by the tattoo artist with whom I communicated on a very personal level.

Narrative 1

Gogoi one of my key respondent who is now an entrepreneur having his own tattoo studio in Gauhati. On my one to one communication with Mr Gogoi, he let me know the current situation of the age old tradition of tattoo and its transformation.

My love of art, which dates back to my childhood, formed the foundation of my tattooing career. I was drawn to using ink to make a lasting imprint before I learned about tattooing. Anil Gupta, an Indian artist currently residing in New York, who works as a fine art professional, provided me with online instruction for about a year. Over my 15-year career in this industry, I have seen a wide variety of clientele with different approaches to tattooing. Young people rediscovering their origins are among those who come looking for emblems of their loved ones. My most treasured guests, however, are the elderly women from rural areas who had tattoos from a time when getting inked was a rite of passage, a spiritual mark, and an oral history inscribed into the flesh rather than a fashion statement. Occasionally bringing their daughters and granddaughters, they gather to share their memories to preserve a tradition that is gradually fading.

My art continues to have roots in both tradition and mixed culture, even in the modern world when tattoos are becoming more and more marketed. Assam has a long history of tattooing, especially among its tribal people, where it was used as a symbol of beauty, protection, and identification. My research revealed that tattooing was mostly practiced by the Bodo, Mishings, Rabha, Tiwa, and Deori communities in Assam. Elderly women who were both storytellers

and tattoo artists were frequently the ones doing tattooing during the period. To maintain authenticity, I visit villages and speak with seniors who haven't forgotten the traditional customs. I brought these designs to my studio after documenting their experiences, drawing their fading tattoos, and getting their permission. A young Assamese woman from an urban family sat in my chair one evening. Her tattooing customs were not directly related to tribal culture. After learning about and being informed about the different kinds of art, she became interested in the traditional history of inking.

In Assam, tattooing is evolving. Some traditions are finding ways to survive, even though they might never be revived in their original form. Yes, I do tattoos, but my main responsibility is to use tattoos to conserve and promote cultural art forms.

Narrative 2

Another tattoo artist who is a Naga boy residing in Gauhati since a very long time now. On communicating with him his perspective towards tattoo is very different and what led him to towards Assam.

When I was born in a little Nagaland village, I was told stories of my ancestors, the Konyak tribe's headhunters, whose bodies were formerly covered in tattoos that symbolized their triumphs and maturation. However, by the time I reached adulthood, those customs had diminished. But I've always had a thing for tattooing. Not only those from my culture but those from many others. I have always been fascinated by Japanese Irezumi, including dragons, koi fish, and many other creatures. Like the tattoos of my ancestors, Japanese tattoos have the same significance for me in terms of history, symbolism, and honor.

I therefore relocated to Assam to pursue a career in tattooing, where the tattoo business flourished and had indigenous roots. Initially, customers were taken aback to find a Naga lad with a Japanese tattooing specialty. They would ask me, "Why not designs by Konyak or Ao?" To me, however, tattooing was always about carrying on a single tradition—it was about

telling stories, and every culture had a unique format for doing so. However, I did not entirely abandon my roots. I studied Japanese tattooing techniques, but I also tried to bring back traditional tribal tattoos from throughout the Northeast, not only Nagaland.

I began visiting isolated communities and conversing with elderly residents who still had the faded scars of their youth. They told me of periods when tattoos were considered sacred when they represented a woman's might or a warrior's bravery. I gradually began to merge the two worlds. One day, a Bodo woman asked me for a tiger tattoo, but instead of the typical design, I combined it with her native Jathi pattern, creating something unique to her. Ink, I feel blends and changes in the same way cultures do. If I can serve as a link between the past and the present, I believe tattooing has a place in the modern world, reconnecting the current generation with their ancestors' inked history.

Thus, just from two narratives the researcher cannot come to the conclusion that almost all, tattoo artist were indulging in preserving indigenous culture. For detailed analysis the researcher have to deeply indulge into the tattoo culture and its role in preserving heritage. As we gaze upon the body image of others, we necessarily interpret what we observe just as the looking-glass reflections. Likewise, individuals make body image in order to get more acceptances among the group members. From interactionist perspective, the body is more than a mere object. It is more than "a mere skeleton wrapped in muscles and stuffed with organs" (Moore 1998) – the body is also an enormous vessel of the meaning of utmost significance to both individual and society. The body as an object cannot be separated from the body as a subject; they are emergent from one another (Waskul, 2002). The body becomes the medium through which the culturally set ideal body is attained and attains the perfect self. Thus, it becomes important

to point out how the body image reflects the individual's sense of identity. The symbolic orientation of tattoos becomes prominent, as they symbolize the organized structure of identities. Interaction is a dynamic process that motivates the actors to adjust to each other's responses and the perceived evaluation of responses that occur in a situation (Martin, 2018). Tattooing, therefore, can be perceived as one such form of communication to regulate individuals and his/her relationships with other members of society. Tattooing is a way of using coded meanings in the everyday life of social interaction. A physical body is decorated with images, symbols, or signs. Symbols and signs are used to convey messages to others. The images of tattoos are significant symbols representing not only the self, but also one's interactions with others and society.

Conclusion

Tattoos are strong cultural symbols that connect oral traditions with contemporary identity politics. They encapsulate histories, encode social hierarchies, and behave as forms of cultural resistance, according to field observations. While globalization brings problems to the authenticity of indigenous tattooing, it also provides an opportunity for resurrection. Finally, tattooing is a deeply social act that takes oral traditions beyond spoken words and into the visual and tactile realms. These markings will continue to be effective means of maintaining cultural memory in a world that is changing quickly as long as practitioners and communities incorporate meaning, ritual, and storytelling into their tattooing practices. In today's world, tattoo parlors have become vital venues for oral traditions to be passed down and preserved. Indigenous knowledge is preserved in large part by tattoo artists through the use of digital storytelling, cultural education, and the revival of old practices. Once in danger of extinction, oral traditions

are now being actively revived and modified for upcoming generations thanks to the creation of these studios. However, preserving the authenticity and holiness of these traditions in a globalized and commercialized tattoo business necessitates continuing debate, ethical practices, and community-led initiatives. Tattoo studios are not only spaces for artistic expression, but also modern-day cultural archives, where relatives' stories are engraved onto contemporary bodies, ensuring that oral traditions survive in a quickly changing world.

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**REINTERPRETING BRIDE PRICE:
INSIGHTS FROM ORAL TRADITIONS,
A CASE STUDY OF THE SHINGPHOS OF ASSAM**

Sukanya Sonowal

Abstract

Goods and service transaction on the occasion of marriage is one of the prime characteristics of Indian marriages. Bride price simple is the sum of money or livestock or any other material where the groom's kin (relative) is obliged to transfer resources to the bride kin as an arrangement between corporate groups. The practice of bride price within the Singphos popularly known as 'fu' in their local language is not merely a financial transaction for them but they regard it to be a ceremonial practice that undergoes the respect and value attributed to the bride and her family.

As the research topic, marriage and bride price is a socially and culturally significant issue, as well as being an outsider to the Singpho tribal community, the design and methodology which has been used in this research is qualitative approach and the approach to conduct the entire study and to analyse data is based on narrative research methodology. This study will try to examine the process of knowledge production on how certain customs gain predominance over the other. Here, Singpho customs and marriage practices are the point of reference and there is very little literature on the Singpho community in general and also on the bride price. Therefore, study will try to explore how we get to access to that part of oral culture on bride price and history which talks about everyday living within Singpho community. Moreover, attempt will also be made to understand how Singphos are able to continue this practice over these periods.

Keywords: *Bride Price, Singpho, Fu*

Introduction:

How should one view tribal field – as the realm of study specific to a particular group, such as indigenous people, or as a domain defined by specific topics like land, forests, myths, bride price, language, and so on? What could be the relationship between tribe, bride price, kinship and marriage? Marriage payments are agreements negotiated between the groom and the bride's parents. Bride price is a custom that is observed worldwide. This practice is primarily observed in lower-class and tribal societies. The prevalent marriage customs in India differ greatly from this bride price custom.

One of the challenges to do research on tribal studies that too particular focus to Singpho community is that Singpho tribal community is almost always invisible in

modern archives, library and texts. The following discussion thus implicitly argues around the question of why is it important to pay the bride price in text as well as in the field and also at the same time analyse the process between the researcher and those that are being studied.

In India, tribal form a population of 8.6% of the total population (according to 2011 census). They have distinct cultures, dialects, and economic pursuits in different ecological setting. States in India with a tribal dominant population include- Manipur, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh. Except for the two areas, i.e. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, is not completely a tribal dominated area, whereas the states other than these two all are entirely dominated by tribal population. The tribes of India cannot be

match up to the native tribes of Africa or aborigines of Australia (Patnaik, 2008).

In this way, we can say that group of people who stay together and have same culture can be termed as a tribe. Assam is a place of integration of various different cultures. In this state we can find both caste Hindu culture and also tribal culture. This amalgamation has produced a rich culture. “There are hundreds of tribal groups who are not living an isolated life” (Hasain; 5). One of them is the tribe Singpho. They are the inhabitants of mostly different district of Upper Assam. The largest number of its population stays in Tinsukia district.

The Singphos’ history in North-eastern India has been one of resistance and assimilation. Machey(2018) contended that, the Singphos were regarded as powerful warriors/warlike tribes among the various other tribes of North East (Machey, 2018). “The Singpho (1990) states “The Singpho today look like a weak race but when Robinson wrote about them some one hundred and forty nine years ago they were described as the most powerful tribe bordering on the valley of several generations” as cited in (Ningkhoo, 2012). It has also been said that there has been cultural homogeneity between the Singphos of Assam and the Kachin. The Singphos, belongs to hill ethnic groups among other, which in China is known as Jingphow, in India as Singpho and in Burma, they are regarded as Kachin. They were known as Singphos, only on the spread of the valley of Assam, which in their own local language means ‘Man’¹.

Out of many tribe’s in NER, the Singpho tribe is one of the most important

tribes of the North East India, which is a Mongoloid stock inhabiting in the Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam and also Lohit, Namsai and Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh (Machey, 2013). A total of 7958 Singpho people reside in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, with 3999 males and 3959 females (Census 2011). It was believed that Singphos are originally the inhabitants of Shan states and came to Assam only in 1893.

Conceptualising Bride Price

Marriage payments are agreements negotiated between the groom and the bride’s parents. These arrangements are typically influenced by various factors such as social status and the financial situation of the groom’s family (Lindenbaum, 1981). There have also been continuous discussions about marital compensation and its relationship to the dominant method of production. Bride price simple is the sum of money or livestock or any other material where the groom’s kin (relative) is obliged to transfer resources to the bride kin as an arrangement between corporate groups (Visaria, 1984).

How Bride price is practiced within the Singphos?

In the Singpho culture, marriage rituals, rites, procedures, traditions vary in accordance with their ethnic identity, religious considerations. The practice of bride price within the Singphos popularly known as *fu* in their local language is not merely a financial transaction for them but they regard it to be a ceremonial practice that undergoes the respect and value attributed to the bride and her family. *Fu dia tu amar karone suwali kina*

¹Nath, P. K (2013). A multilingual education programme for the Singpho language in North East India. Retrieved from <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/116425>

besa tu noboi (paying fu within our community is not a symbol of buying the bride at the time of marriage). This practice of payment symbolises the honour we pay to women of our community and her family to make her so much capable and reach the age of marriage.

Respondent Takolong Singpho (named changed), has added about the bride price practiced and its importance:

Apuni jitu fu kotha koise amar Singpho bokolor majot, atu niyom agore pora soli abise. Atu nboi j ami bothat koi atu niyom (ritual) follow koru. Ami ketiau hudha nai amar community majot j fu kio dia hoi ba lua hoi. (the things that what you are talking about i.e. the payment of fu is not such is prevalent within our community in recent time. it has been practiced by our ancestors, our parents as well as grandparents from time immemorial. We never questioned why it is necessary to take or give bride price, as this is a ritual within our community. It is like a gift which we regard and a responsibility and duty of a husband to pay the amount).

Similar to other tribes in Northeast India, bride prices are also observed among the Singphos. From interviewing respondents from the community it has been found that within the Singpho community one cannot marry from within the same clan. But a marriage ritual is there is that, in the Singpho society; a young man can or should marry his maternal cousin (i.e. his maternal uncle's daughter).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework/approach is a way which controls, directs and conducts the study system, its recognition and propounding of principles. Theoretical framework discusses on the traditional customary practices on marriage and bride price (Fu) among Singpho tribe, which is usually articulated within the narratives of

men and the patriarchal structure and function of the society. Without having any written record or law, oral tradition has been the primary form of human connection and transferring knowledge, ideas, and customs from one generation to another.

For better understanding of customary rights and marriage and bride price, my research work revolves around the symbolic interactionism perspective. The common understanding of fu is the exchange of gifts that is passed on during marriage from the groom's family to the bride's family and kin. Marcel Mauss, in his classic book 'The Gift', writes that 'exchanges and contracts that take place in the form of presents; in theory these are voluntary, in reality they are given and reciprocated obligatorily. Moreover, Mary Douglas in the preface to Mauss book on The Gift wrote that the gift is not only about religion. It is about politics and economics; the political and moral implications. The value of Fu depends on the social status of both the families. Thus, the theory of the gift is a theory of human solidarity, and the social relations change with changes in the mode of production (Lovitoli, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The study of kinship is the study of what he does and why he does it. This study therefore will try to engage critically with the kinds of marriage-kinship rituals and customary practices available on the region through the gendered lens. This study will try to examine the process of knowledge production on how certain customs gain predominance over the other. Here, Singpho customs and marriage practices are the point of reference where the exchange of fu in the marriage alliance will be critically examine. Additionally, there is very little literature on the Singpho community in general and also on the bride price. Within the Singpho

community, there lies a great emphasis on the tradition of bride-price or *fu*.

The proposed study will try to answer questions such as, does the *fu* continue to play the same role as in the past? How far the *fu* has brought changes in the life of the Singpho community.

Objective

To explore the continuity and change of the bride-price rituals within the Singpho community.

Research Question

1. How has the practice of bride price evolved over generations within the Singpho community?

2. What factors contribute to the continuity of the bride price tradition among the Singpho?

Methodology

As the research topic, marriage and bride price is a socially and culturally significant issue, as well as being an outsider to the Singpho tribal community, the design and methodology which has been used in this research is qualitative approach and the approach to conduct the entire study and to analyse data is based on narrative research methodology.

Thus, qualitative study and narrative analysis will help me helps to understand the human aspect of social settings as it requires in-depth understanding and captured multiple realities, dynamics and taboos existing regarding the related topic. Additionally, written sources are also crucial to comprehending the methods used. Therefore, I have used both primary and secondary sources of data in this research. The primary data comprised of field notes, unpublished poetry from the participants, and transcripts from interviews. Secondary data

includes newspapers, documentary, memoirs, travelogues, fiction, and anthologies of poetry, books, journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and relevant documentaries. For the present research study purposive sampling technique has been used for the study. Sample of the population has been gathered from Margherita of Tinsukia district, Assam.

One village where I interviewed my participants include - Bisagaon 1. My sample size has come around 60 people ranging from the age of 18 to 85 years. And the reason behind choosing the particular tribe is that the community has some unique social functions or norms related to marriage which caught the eye of the researcher.

Finding & Analysis

The bride price practice, a deeply ingrained tradition in many cultures, including the Singpho community in particular, continues to evoke debate. While some argue it's a valuable custom promoting respect, reciprocity and family bonding, others see it as outdated, exploitative, and perpetuating gender inequality. Continuing from the list of items that constitute the Singpho bride price or *fu*, each of these elements has symbolic meaning and practical significance in Singpho marriage customs. It appears that there exist a wide range of resources to be exchanged, from cattle to computers to cash. Here's an expanded explanation of the continuity of *fu* within the Singphos:

1. **Bga**: this refers to the contribution of money, valuables or sometimes physical labour. Earlier it was the ritual of giving Bga² as its physical labour. It was the practice of paying back the labour of the bride's mother in her entire brought up, from childhood to her adulthood, socialising her from a child to a woman. Provision of labour, such as working on the bride's family's farm or assisting with household chores. It depends

on the groom's financial status and position as to what need to pay as Bga.

2. **Baw:** the baw³ is an important ceremonial item in Singpho culture. "Baw" in Singpho tradition is a musical instrument similar to large bell used specifically in the cremation ceremony of an individual. In the framework of bride price payment, "baw" serve as a valuable commodity during the cremation ceremony. Its significance behind using in the ceremony according to the oral narrative made by respondents is that-

Earlier due to the no proper means of communication to inform neighbours and people across about someone's death, large gongs were used through which news can be transferred. From then on this item has got its significant position during the negotiation of bride price payment. It is passed down through generations now, where these gongs carry historical significance.

3. **Mba Fushung:** Mba Fushung⁴ is not just practical items but hold ceremonial importance. Traditionally, the Mba or garments signify the social status of both families and represent the sharing of wealth and resources between the groom's and bride's families. Mba, comprising traditional garments which includes:

- Headgear (Banban)

- Skirts/ Mekhela (Phukang)
- Blouse/ Top (Soiplong)
- Cloth above the blouse (Ningwot)

A strip of cloth is given to the bride by the groom's family, *mugot*, which she needs to tie over the blouse. It signifies that from now on the girl is married and has become the wife of some one. Through this special piece of cloth or dress, within the Singphos, woman can be differentiated between married and unmarried girl. These are presented to the bride as a symbol of respect, honouring the bride's identity and cultural heritage. It also signifies acceptance, beauty with their Singpho traditional attire.

4. **Gnsu:** Within the Singpho community, large livestock like paying *gnsu*⁵ is vital to their agriculture, where the individuals used these livestock for farming and as a measure of wealth. *Gnsu* is a highly valued item or product and custom among the Singpho people that represents respect, thankfulness, and cultural continuity when paid as a bride price/ *fu*. In this age-old tradition called *fu*, the bride's family receives one or more oxen or buffaloes from the groom's family as a sign of social standing, riches, and agricultural success. In order to ensure fertility and

²Bga is the term called in the Singpho culture to the practice of providing ga-dhan i.e. paying back the physical labour of mother while socializing and brought up of her daughter.

³The Baw is regarded to the gong used in different customs and ceremonies. A musical instrument played and having its cultural significance. The gong, a traditional musical instrument, holds significant cultural and symbolic value in the Singpho community.

⁴Mba Fushung is named in the Singpho dialect to the clothes or garments people of the community used and wear. Mba refers to a specific type of clothing, usually a wrapper or a garment that is highly valued for its quality, design, and cultural significance. The quality and value of the Mba clothing reflect the groom's family wealth and status.

⁵Gnsu is used for the ox or buffalo in Singpho local language. Gnsu is domesticated cattle highly valued in Singpho culture. It reflects a rich tradition tied to kinship and marriage customs within the Singpho tradition.

prosperity for the newlyweds, community elders frequently perform traditional blessings on the oxen and buffaloes. This custom emphasises the value of reciprocity and respect in marriage while reaffirming the Singpho community's strong ties to agriculture, cultural legacy, and social peace. Offering livestock as part of the bride price (fu) reflects the economic stability of the groom and ensures the bride's family receives something of lasting value.

Changing Dynamics in Singpho Tradition

The contemporary period is a stage of change in various aspects. Change is the law of nature. Marriage systems across the world have undergone significant transformation over the centuries, reflecting broader social, economic, and cultural changes. From ancient times to the modern era, the institution of marriage has been a cornerstone of human society, evolving in its functions, structures and its meanings. Traditionally, marriage system was more about alliances, economic stability, and social order. It served as a mechanism to secure property, ensure legitimate heirs, and forge alliances between families and communities.

Like many other ethnic groups in India and Southeast Asia, the Singpho community is a reflection of the intricacies of marriage, kinship, and the related economic exchanges. Even though Singpho culture has historically been associated with customs like bride prices rather than dowries, its growing incorporation into larger regional and national structures indicates that dowry-type practices still have an impact on their marriage rites.

However, ancient rituals like bride prices have been influenced by alternative systems, such as dowries, as the Singpho community interacts more and more with neighbouring cultures, contemporary socioeconomic

systems, and prevailing national norms. Economic modernity, cross-cultural exchanges, and changing social dynamics have caused dowry-like customs to be incorporated or modified throughout time.

Examining the several elements that contribute to this change, investigating the interaction between conventional values and outside pressures, and assessing the consequences for Singpho society are all crucial to comprehending this phenomenon. These cultures have adopted the new practice of sending the bride with articles as part of the dower. These new trends are also observed among Singphos of Assam. Not many responders were particularly explicit about it. They claim that since people have started providing dowries with their daughters, dowries have started to appear in their society. It didn't exist until a few decades ago, but as society has evolved, people have begun to give their daughters dowries. Consequently, it is accurate to state that these societies are likewise altering their marriage customs.

Conclusion

Marriage practices among Singpho where bride price is paid, dowry has become an inevitable part in recent years. Bride price is a ritual and dowry is a new trend. It is in practice from a long time and still people practice it. It is practice in both arranged and eloped marriage. People do not think that bride price is a ritual of paying money or other items like livestock etc. where the daughter is purchased by the groom's family. According to the respondents, it would be wrong to think like that.

Marriage practices (both eloped and arranged) have now become more glamorous and more and more money is used to celebrate it in villages also. Imitation of Assamese communities is mostly seen

among them as they want to perform their marriages according to what they see in other marriages.

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**FOLK SONGS AS A WINDOW TO
INDIA'S ORAL CULTURAL HERITAGE:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TAMIL NADU'S CULTURE**

T. Karthikeyan,

E. Vijay

Abstract

Folk songs are an invaluable repository of India's oral cultural heritage, reflecting the socio-cultural, historical, and spiritual ethos of diverse communities. This study explores the role of folk songs as a medium to preserve and transmit Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage, focusing on their linguistic, thematic, and performative dimensions. Tamil Nadu, with its vibrant traditions, showcases a deep connection between folk music and daily life, where songs narrate stories of love, labor, devotion, and resistance. These compositions are often imbued with regional dialects, metaphors, and indigenous knowledge systems, serving as a living archive of collective memory. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining ethnomusicology, anthropology, and cultural studies, this research highlights how folk songs function as a dynamic cultural practice that evolves while retaining traditional values. The study also examines the challenges faced in preserving these oral traditions amidst globalization and cultural homogenization. By focusing on Tamil Nadu's folk genres such as Villupattu, Oppari, and Kummi, the paper emphasizes their role in fostering community identity and continuity. This research underscores the urgent need to document, revive, and celebrate folk songs as a means of safeguarding India's intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords: Folk songs, Oral cultural heritage, Tamil Nadu, Intangible cultural heritage, Community identity

1. Introduction

India's cultural heritage is deeply rooted in its oral traditions, with folk songs serving as an essential medium for transmitting history, beliefs, and social customs across generations. Unlike classical music, which follows structured compositions, folk songs are spontaneous, community-driven expressions that capture the everyday experiences of people. These songs, rich in regional dialects, metaphors, and indigenous knowledge, form an integral part of the nation's intangible cultural heritage. In Tamil Nadu, folk songs reflect the ethos of rural life, encapsulating themes of love, labor, devotion, and social justice. The oral nature of these traditions makes them dynamic, allowing them to evolve while retaining their historical and cultural significance.

Tamil Nadu's folk music tradition is diverse, with songs accompanying various life events, from birth and marriage to

agricultural work and mourning. The state is home to unique folk genres such as Villupattu (musical storytelling), Oppari (mourning songs), Kummi (dance-based folk songs), and Themmangu (melancholic ballads). These songs not only provide entertainment but also serve as repositories of social values, reinforcing moral lessons and communal bonds. The oral transmission of folk songs ensures that local history, myths, and cultural practices are preserved through generations. However, this rich heritage is increasingly at risk due to modernization, urbanization, and the influence of mainstream entertainment industries, which have shifted focus away from traditional folk expressions.

Despite these challenges, folk songs continue to play a crucial role in preserving Tamil identity and cultural memory. They serve as a means of resistance, solidarity, and historical documentation, providing insights into the lives of marginalized communities.

The study of Tamil Nadu's folk songs offers a unique lens through which to understand the state's cultural landscape, highlighting the importance of oral traditions in shaping collective memory. This paper explores the thematic, linguistic, and performative dimensions of Tamil folk songs, emphasizing their role in sustaining community identity and the urgent need for preservation in the face of cultural homogenization.

2. Literature Review

The study of folk songs as an essential aspect of oral cultural heritage has gained attention in disciplines such as ethnomusicology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Scholars have emphasized the role of folk music in preserving indigenous knowledge, reinforcing cultural identity, and transmitting social values. This section reviews relevant literature on oral traditions, Tamil Nadu's folk music, and the challenges of preserving intangible cultural heritage.

2.1 Folk Songs and Oral Cultural Heritage

Oral traditions have been widely recognized as a fundamental means of preserving cultural memory. Goody and Watt (1963) discuss how oral societies transmit history and traditions through spoken word, songs, and performances, making them dynamic and adaptable. Vansina (1985) highlights the importance of oral traditions in historical reconstruction, emphasizing that folk songs function as archives of collective memory. Similarly, Finnegan (1977) explores how oral poetry and folk songs serve as vehicles for historical consciousness and social commentary. These studies underline that folk songs are not merely entertainment but vital carriers of historical and cultural knowledge.

2.2 Folk Music in Tamil Nadu

The folk music of Tamil Nadu has been the subject of scholarly research, with a focus

on its thematic diversity and performative aspects. Kothari (2006) and Subramanian (2011) document the rich variety of Tamil folk traditions, including Villupattu (narrative ballads), Kummi (women's circle dances), and Oppari (mourning songs). Their works highlight how folk songs reflect Tamil Nadu's agrarian lifestyle, religious beliefs, and socio-political movements. Mahadevan (2015) examines the linguistic features of Tamil folk songs, noting their use of regional dialects, repetition, and symbolism. These studies establish that Tamil folk music is deeply embedded in daily life and serves multiple functions, from storytelling to social resistance.

2.3 Folk Songs as a Medium of Resistance and Social Identity

Several scholars have explored the role of folk songs in expressing dissent and shaping social identity. Ramanujan (1999) argues that folk traditions often provide a voice to marginalized communities, challenging dominant cultural narratives. In the Tamil context, folk songs have historically addressed themes of caste oppression, labor struggles, and women's empowerment. Ananthakrishnan (2018) discusses how Dalit folk songs challenge hegemonic cultural structures by preserving subaltern histories. Similarly, scholars like Sivathambi (2009) have examined how folk performances, such as Therukoothu (street theatre), serve as tools for political resistance and community solidarity. These studies demonstrate that folk songs are not just artistic expressions but also instruments of social change.

2.4 Challenges in Preserving Folk Traditions

The decline of folk traditions due to globalization and urbanization has been a recurring theme in cultural studies. Smith (2006) and UNESCO (2010) emphasize the threats posed by modernization, which leads to the commercialization and dilution of folk

traditions. In the context of Tamil Nadu, Sriram (2017) notes that the integration of folk songs into mainstream cinema has led to the loss of their original context and meaning. Additionally, Krishnan (2020) discusses the lack of institutional support for folk artists, leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional practices. These studies stress the urgency of documentation, digital preservation, and community-based initiatives to safeguard folk heritage.

2.5 Efforts in Documentation and Revitalization

Recent efforts to document and revitalize folk music have been explored in several studies. Narayanaswamy (2019) highlights digital archiving projects that aim to record and preserve Tamil folk songs. Government initiatives, such as those led by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and Tamil Nadu's Department of Art and Culture, have focused on supporting folk artists and integrating folk traditions into formal education. Research by Bose (2021) suggests that using new media, such as social media platforms and podcasts, can help popularize folk music among younger generations. These studies provide valuable insights into the potential strategies for ensuring the survival of Tamil Nadu's folk heritage.

3. Folk Songs as an Expression of Tamil Nadu's Cultural Heritage

Tamil Nadu's folk songs serve as a powerful medium for expressing the state's cultural heritage, encapsulating its history, traditions, and social values. These songs, passed down orally through generations, are deeply intertwined with the lives of Tamil people, reflecting their emotions, beliefs, and struggles. Unlike classical Carnatic music, which follows rigid structures and is primarily

associated with temple and court traditions, Tamil folk songs are spontaneous, community-oriented, and rooted in everyday life. They serve multiple functions, including storytelling, spiritual devotion, social protest, and entertainment, making them an integral part of Tamil Nadu's intangible cultural heritage.

3.1 Folk Songs in Everyday Life and Work

One of the most significant aspects of Tamil folk music is its connection to daily life and labor. Agricultural songs (*Velaan Paattu*) are sung by farmers while plowing fields, sowing seeds, or harvesting crops, reinforcing a deep relationship with nature. Fishermen sing sea-faring songs that express their reverence for the ocean and seek divine protection. Similarly, *Ulumadal* songs accompany the work of grinding grain, and *Kummi Paattu* is sung during women's group activities such as rice pounding and weaving. These work songs not only enhance productivity but also foster a sense of unity and shared experience among laborers.

3.2 Ritual and Devotional Folk Songs

Tamil folk songs play a crucial role in religious and ritualistic practices. *Amman Paattu*, dedicated to village goddesses like Mariamman and Kaliyamman, are performed during temple festivals, invoking divine blessings and protection. *Themmangu Paattu*, often associated with devotion and heroism, narrates mythological and historical tales of revered figures like Kannagi and Lord Murugan. In funeral traditions, *Oppari Paattu* (mourning songs) provide a communal space for expressing grief, allowing emotional catharsis for the bereaved. These songs serve as spiritual expressions that strengthen communal bonds and reinforce Tamil Nadu's deep-rooted belief systems.

3.3 Folk Songs as Narratives of History and Social Identity

Tamil folk songs act as oral archives, preserving historical events, folk legends, and social movements. Villupattu, a form of musical storytelling, is an example of how folk traditions have been used to educate communities about historical and religious narratives. These songs often depict the valor of Tamil kings, the sacrifices of freedom fighters, and the struggles of the working class. The songs of legendary folk poets like Pulavar Keeran and Subbu Arumugam have played a key role in raising social awareness through music.

Additionally, folk songs serve as a medium for the expression of marginalized voices. Dalit folk songs, for instance, highlight issues of caste discrimination and social injustice, providing a platform for resistance and self-assertion. Women's folk songs, on the other hand, explore themes of love, marriage, motherhood, and oppression, reflecting the lived experiences of Tamil women across generations.

3.4 Celebratory and Festive Folk Songs

Tamil Nadu's festivals and celebrations are incomplete without folk music. Kummi and Kolattam songs accompany vibrant dance performances during Pongal, Navaratri, and village fairs, symbolizing communal joy and harmony. Wedding songs, such as Nalangu Paattu, add to the festivities by humorously narrating stories of love and marital life. These celebratory songs not only provide entertainment but also reinforce cultural traditions and social values.

Tamil Nadu's folk songs are more than just musical expressions; they are living testimonies of the state's cultural heritage. They capture the essence of Tamil identity,

providing insight into the traditions, beliefs, and struggles of its people. However, with increasing modernization and cultural shifts, there is a growing need to document and preserve these oral traditions. Efforts such as digital archiving, folk festivals, and educational integration can ensure that Tamil Nadu's rich folk music legacy continues to thrive for future generations.

4. Linguistic and Stylistic Features

Tamil folk songs are distinct from classical Carnatic music in their simplicity and accessibility. Their linguistic characteristics include:

- **Use of Regional Dialects:** Folk songs incorporate local dialects, making them relatable to the community.
- **Repetitive and Rhythmic Patterns:** Many folk songs use repetition and rhythmic structures to make them easy to remember and sing.
- **Symbolism and Metaphors:** Nature, animals, and local folklore are commonly used as metaphors to convey deeper meanings.
- **Call-and-Response Format:** Many songs involve a leader singing a line followed by a chorus response, making them interactive and communal.

5. Challenges in Preserving Folk Songs

Tamil Nadu's folk songs, deeply embedded in the state's oral cultural heritage, face several challenges in the modern era. While these songs have historically been passed down through generations, rapid socio-economic changes, globalization, and technological advancements have significantly impacted their transmission and survival. The decline of traditional performance spaces, shifts in lifestyle, and commercialization of

music pose serious threats to the preservation of these invaluable cultural assets. This section examines the key challenges in safeguarding Tamil Nadu's folk songs.

5.1 Decline of Oral Transmission

Folk songs have traditionally been transmitted orally from elders to younger generations within communities. However, with the increasing influence of formal education and digital media, the younger generation is becoming less engaged with these traditions. As literacy rates rise and oral storytelling practices decline, the once-vibrant tradition of learning folk songs through communal participation is gradually disappearing. Unlike written texts, oral traditions rely on active performance, and the lack of practitioners threatens the continuity of these songs.

5.2 Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

The advent of globalization has led to a preference for popular and mainstream music over traditional folk songs. Western and Bollywood influences dominate Tamil Nadu's entertainment industry, pushing folk music to the margins. Younger audiences are more inclined toward digital music platforms and modern genres, leading to a decline in the patronage of folk artists. As cultural exchanges increase, the distinctiveness of Tamil Nadu's folk music is being overshadowed by homogenized, commercialized musical expressions.

5.3 Commercialization and Loss of Authenticity

While folk songs have found some visibility through Tamil cinema and commercial music, this adaptation often comes at the cost of authenticity. Many traditional songs are altered to fit modern tastes, stripping them of their original cultural and contextual significance. The

commercialization of folk music has led to the dilution of lyrics, rhythms, and meanings, transforming deep-rooted traditional expressions into entertainment-oriented compositions. This shift has led to a disconnect between the original communities that created these songs and their adapted commercial versions.

5.4 Declining Patronage for Folk Artists

Folk musicians and performers traditionally relied on community patronage for sustenance. With changing economic structures and urban migration, the livelihoods of folk artists are increasingly under threat. Many artists struggle to find platforms to showcase their talents, and younger generations are reluctant to take up folk music as a profession due to financial instability. The lack of institutional support, funding, and official recognition for folk artists further exacerbates the issue, leading many to abandon their musical traditions in search of alternative livelihoods.

5.5 Urbanization and Changing Lifestyles

Rapid urbanization has significantly altered the socio-cultural fabric of Tamil Nadu, affecting the spaces where folk songs were traditionally performed. Village festivals, agricultural gatherings, and ritual ceremonies—once the primary settings for folk performances—are either diminishing or undergoing transformations that exclude traditional music. As people migrate to urban centers, they often lose touch with their native cultural practices, further weakening the intergenerational transmission of folk songs.

5.6 Lack of Documentation and Archival Efforts

Due to their oral nature, many folk songs remain undocumented and are at risk of being lost forever. Unlike classical music, which has extensive written records, folk songs exist primarily in the memories of

performers and elders. The absence of systematic documentation, archival projects, and research initiatives has made it difficult to preserve these songs in their original form. While some government and private organizations have taken steps to record and archive Tamil folk music, these efforts remain insufficient compared to the scale of cultural loss.

5.7 Influence of Digital Media and Technology

While digital platforms have the potential to aid in the preservation of folk music, they also contribute to its decline in traditional settings. With the rise of internet-based entertainment, live folk performances have decreased, reducing opportunities for young learners to engage with these traditions firsthand. Additionally, many folk artists lack access to digital resources or the technical know-how to adapt their performances for online platforms, limiting their reach to wider audiences.

6. Revitalization and Preservation Efforts

Given the challenges facing Tamil Nadu's folk songs, efforts to revitalize and preserve this rich cultural heritage have become crucial. Various governmental, non-governmental, and community-driven initiatives have been launched to safeguard folk traditions and ensure their transmission to future generations. These efforts focus on documentation, education, financial support for folk artists, and the integration of folk music into modern platforms. This section explores key strategies for the preservation and revitalization of Tamil Nadu's folk songs.

6.1 Documentation and Digital Archiving

One of the most effective ways to preserve folk songs is through systematic documentation and archiving. Given that folk music is primarily transmitted orally, recording

and storing these songs in digital formats can prevent their loss. Several institutions, such as the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and the Tamil Nadu Folk Arts Society, have undertaken projects to record, transcribe, and translate traditional folk songs. Digital libraries, podcasts, and YouTube channels dedicated to Tamil folk music have also emerged, making these songs accessible to a global audience.

Additionally, scholars and researchers have compiled anthologies of Tamil folk songs, ensuring that these oral traditions are available in written form for future study. The use of modern technology, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, can further enhance archival efforts by creating interactive and decentralized folk music databases.

6.2 Integration into Education and Curriculum

Incorporating folk music into school and university curricula is an important step in keeping these traditions alive. Educational institutions can introduce students to folk songs as part of music, history, and cultural studies programs. This can be done through workshops, storytelling sessions, and hands-on learning experiences with folk artists.

The Tamil Nadu government has taken steps to integrate folk arts into school programs, organizing cultural competitions and folk music performances in educational settings. Such initiatives help instill pride in local traditions and encourage young people to engage with their heritage. Additionally, collaboration with universities can foster research and academic study of Tamil folk traditions, leading to greater awareness and appreciation.

6.3 Supporting Folk Artists and Communities

The survival of Tamil folk songs depends largely on the well-being of the

artists who perform them. Many folk musicians struggle with financial instability due to a lack of regular performance opportunities. Government and private organizations have started offering financial aid, pensions, and grants to traditional artists to sustain their livelihood. The Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Mandram (TN Folk Arts Academy) has played a role in providing recognition and support for folk performers.

Initiatives such as artist residency programs, cultural fellowships, and state-sponsored folk music festivals help create sustainable platforms for folk artists. These efforts not only provide economic support but also encourage the younger generation to pursue folk music as a career.

6.4 Revival Through Media and Popular Culture

Mainstream and digital media can play a significant role in the revival of folk music. Tamil cinema, historically known for incorporating folk elements, can promote authentic folk songs and artists rather than merely commercialized adaptations. Independent musicians and cultural organizations have begun fusing folk music with contemporary genres like rock and electronic music to attract younger audiences.

Social media platforms, podcasts, and streaming services have also become instrumental in popularizing folk music. Platforms like YouTube and Spotify host Tamil folk music channels, bringing traditional sounds to a wider audience. Reality shows and competitions featuring folk music provide additional exposure, encouraging young talents to explore and innovate within folk traditions.

6.5 Community-Led Revitalization Programs

Grassroots initiatives play a crucial role in preserving folk traditions. Local cultural organizations and village communities often organize folk music festivals, workshops, and

competitions to encourage participation. Community-led efforts to revive traditional celebrations, temple festivals, and folk theatre performances contribute to the organic transmission of folk songs.

Intergenerational learning programs, where elders teach folk songs to younger members of the community, help maintain authenticity and cultural continuity. Folk music appreciation clubs and cultural tourism initiatives also contribute to the sustenance of traditional music.

6.6 Government Policies and Institutional Support

The Tamil Nadu government, along with institutions such as the Sangeet Natak Akademi, has implemented policies to protect and promote folk music. Schemes such as grants for folk artists, the establishment of cultural centers, and the recognition of folk traditions as part of India's intangible cultural heritage have been introduced. Further policy measures, such as tax benefits for folk art initiatives, increased funding for folk music research, and collaborations between government bodies and cultural organizations, can strengthen preservation efforts. International partnerships with UNESCO and other heritage organizations can also provide global recognition and resources for Tamil folk music conservation.

The revitalization and preservation of Tamil Nadu's folk songs require a multi-pronged approach that combines documentation, education, financial support, media exposure, community participation, and policy interventions. By leveraging both traditional and modern platforms, it is possible to ensure that folk music remains a vibrant and integral part of Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage. Moving forward, a collective effort from artists, scholars, cultural enthusiasts, and policymakers is essential to safeguard and celebrate Tamil folk traditions for future generations.

Conclusion

Tamil Nadu's folk songs serve as a vital link to the state's rich cultural heritage, encapsulating its history, traditions, and collective experiences. As oral traditions, these songs have preserved the voices of generations, providing insight into the lives, struggles, and aspirations of Tamil communities. They function as tools of storytelling, social cohesion, spiritual devotion, and even resistance, making them an essential part of Tamil identity. However, the challenges posed by globalization, modernization, and declining patronage have put these invaluable traditions at risk. The gradual disappearance of folk performance spaces, the commercialization of music, and the diminishing interest among younger generations have highlighted the urgent need for preservation efforts.

To safeguard Tamil Nadu's folk songs, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is necessary. Documentation through digital archiving, integration into educational curricula, financial and institutional support for folk artists, and the promotion of folk music through mainstream and social media are key strategies for ensuring their survival. Community-led initiatives and policy interventions must work hand in hand to foster a renewed appreciation for folk traditions. By embracing both traditional and contemporary platforms, Tamil folk music can be revitalized, ensuring that it remains a living, evolving cultural treasure rather than a relic of the past. Ultimately, preserving folk songs is not just about safeguarding music—it is about honoring the voices and heritage of a people, ensuring that their stories continue to be sung for generations to come.

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THE LORES OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA: EXPLORING ASSAM'S ORAL TRADITIONS IN LITERATURE

Tukhar Gogoi

Harshit Singh

Abstract

The Brahmaputra River, a lifeline of Assam, holds a deeply significant place in its cultural and spiritual identity, inspiring a rich tapestry of oral traditions encompassing myths, folktales, and songs. This paper explores how these oral traditions, deeply rooted in Assam's heritage, have been preserved and revitalized through literature, bridging the past and present. It shows how these traditions play a vital role in shaping cultural identity and raising awareness about the importance of protecting the environment in contemporary times.

In this paper, we delve into how the literary works of renowned writers like Laksbminath Bezbaruah, Indira Goswami, Mamang Dai beautifully capture and preserve the essence of oral traditions in Assamese literature. For instance, Bezbaruah's Buri Aai Hadbu brings to life folktales that have been cherished and passed down through generations, while Goswami's novels beautifully weave together myths and struggles of communities living along the Brahmaputra. These literary works don't just keep oral traditions alive—they also explore important themes like environmental sustainability and the resilience of society.

This study highlights the relevance of Assam's oral traditions in a rapidly globalising world, where such cultural treasures face the threat of being forgotten. It underscores how literature acts as a powerful tool to preserve and breathe new life into these traditions, keeping them relevant in today's conversations and cultural narratives. Ultimately, this paper advocates for a renewed focus on oral narratives and indispensable tools for cultural preservation and environmental awareness.

Keywords: Oral Tradition, Brahmaputra River, Literature, Cultural Preservation, Environmental Awareness

Introduction

Oral traditions have long been instrumental in shaping India's cultural and historical consciousness. These narratives, transmitted across generations, serve as repositories of history, folklore, ethical values, and ecological wisdoms. Among India's diverse oral tradition, the Brahmaputra River holds a profound cultural and significance in Assam, deeply embedded in myths, folktales, and songs that continue to define Assam's identity. This paper examines the dynamic relationship between Assam's oral traditions and literature, focusing on how Assamese writers have documented, interpreted, and preserved these narratives over time.

The Brahmaputra is more than just a river; it is a symbol of life and change in Assamese

oral culture and is often referred to as "Lifeline of Assam", holds a sacred status in Assamese traditions, symbolising both creation and destruction, prosperity and devastation.

It has inspired countless stories and folk songs, reflecting the lived experiences, struggles, and aspirations of the people. These oral narratives serve as a cultural archive, preserving Assam's collective memory and shaping its literary landscape. By exploring these traditions, this study highlights their enduring relevance in contemporary literary discourse.

Objectives

This paper aims to explore the rich oral tradition associated with the Brahmaputra

River, encompassing myths, folktales, and folk songs and how they have been preserved and adapted in Assamese literature. It examines the work of Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Indira Goswami, and Mamang Dai to highlight the literary representation of oral traditions. Additionally, it discusses the relevance of oral culture in contemporary times, emphasizing its role in cultural preservation, ecological awareness and identity formation through literature.

Methodology

To write this paper, primary sources such as textbooks, along with secondary sources like the internet, articles, and journals, have been used to ensure a clear and insightful discussion.

The Brahmaputra in Assamese Oral Traditions

The Brahmaputra River, one of the most significant rivers in India, is deeply interwoven with the cultural, spiritual, and ecological life of Assam. It has been a source of inspiration for countless myths, folk songs, and oral histories, shaping the cultural consciousness of Assam. Some of its prominent oral traditions include:

1. Myths and Legends

The origin of the Brahmaputra River is deeply rooted in Assamese mythology, where it is believed to be the son of Lord Brahma. This is reflected in its very name, 'Brahmaputra,' meaning 'son of Brahma.' This myth elevates the river to a sacred status, making it an object of reverence and worship across Assam. Beyond its religious significance, the legend also highlights the deep connection between nature and spirituality in Assamese oral traditions, reinforcing the river's role not just as a physical entity but as a divine and cultural symbol. Additionally, legends surrounding Umananda

Island, located in the middle of the Brahmaputra, further reinforce the river's sacred significance in Assamese culture. According to mythology, Lord Shiva meditated on the island, creating it to protect Goddess Parvati from disturbances. Even today, Umananda temple stands as the reminder of this story visited by thousands of devotees who offer prayers to both Lord Shiva and the river. Furthermore, every Assamese child grows up hearing elders refer to the Brahmaputra as *Burha Luit*, meaning 'The Old Red River'. This name, often used in songs, conversations, and oral tales reflects the deep bond that the people of Assam shared with the river. It is sometimes spoken of as a benevolent provider, and at other times as fierce destroyer, showing both respect and fear for its unpredictable nature.

2. Folk songs and Ballads

Assam's folk music tradition frequently references the Brahmaputra, celebrating its role in agriculture, livelihood, and spiritual wellbeing. Some key forms include:

- **Bihu Songs:** The Bihu festival, the heartbeat of Assamese culture, is incomplete without its vibrant folk songs. It is celebrated during Bohag Bihu, also known as Rongali Bihu, which marks the Assamese New Year and the onset of the sowing season, where the people seek blessing for a fruitful harvest. Many Bihu songs be a homage to nature's abundance celebrating the arrival of springs, the fertility of the land, and the hopes of a good harvest. Although these songs may not always explicitly mention the Brahmaputra by name, their spirit is deeply intertwined with the river's role in sustaining agriculture and life in Assam.

The joyous beats of the Dhol, the echoing call of the Pepa, and the sweet hum of the Gogona create soundscapes that reflect the bond between the Assamese people and their

land- a land enriched by the Brahmaputra's water. The plains made fertile by the river's annual floods and the very fields these songs celebrate.

The lyrics often speak of golden paddy fields blooming mustard flowers and the promise of prosperity- imagery that indirectly owes its richness to the river's life-giving waters. These songs, sung in harmony with nature's rhythm, remind the people that their fortunes are bound to the Brahmaputra's embrace.

• **Majuli Ballads:** Majuli, the world's largest river island, holds a unique place in Assam's cultural and ecological landscape. It is nestled in the heart of the Brahmaputra, Majuli is both blessed and burdened by the river's presence.

Every year, the river's floods threaten to swallow parts of the island, eroding lands, uprooting families, and testing the resilience of its people. Yet, in the face of this recurring devastation, the islanders rebuild their lives, their homes, and their hope—and they sing.

The ballads of Majuli are not just songs; they are oral records of survival and endurance. It is sung during community gatherings, festivals, or while working in the fields, these songs reflect the river's dual nature, nurturing and destructive.

While many of these folk ballads are not formally named or written down, they are passed down through generations as part of Majuli's oral heritage. Their themes revolve around the struggle against floods, the loss of homes, and the hope for renewal each season.

The songs often describe the swelling waters of the Brahmaputra, the sight of boats rescuing villagers, the rebuilding of homes on raised ground, and the first sprouts of paddy after the flood retreats. Through these ballads, the people of Majuli voice both their

suffering and their strength, demonstrating their unbreakable bond with the river that shapes their existence.

One elder from Majuli once remarked: "The river takes our land, but it gives us our harvest. It washes away our homes, but we rebuild stronger. We sing not because we forget the pain, but because we remember our strength."

These ballads continue to serve as both emotional expressions and communal resilience ensuring that the Brahmaputra is not just a river to them, but a storyteller, a destroyer, and a provider, all at once.

• **Boat Men's Song:** The boatmen and fishermen of Assam share an inseparable bond with the Brahmaputra, relying on its waters for their daily survival. Their lives unfold on the river rowing boats, casting nets, and navigating its changing currents and their songs echo this relationship.

Boatmen's songs, often sung while rowing or fishing, serve multiple purposes—they lighten the burden of hard labor, offer prayers for safety, and provide emotional relief from the uncertainties of river life. These songs capture both the generosity of the river that feeds their families and the fear of its unpredictable currents.

Among these are Bhatiali songs, traditionally sung by fishermen and boatmen along the riverbanks of Assam and Bengal. The slow, drifting rhythm of Bhatiali mirrors the gentle flow of the Brahmaputra on calm days, while the lyrics often speak of the longing for home, the challenges of the river, and the hope for safe passage.

Another notable tradition is O Bideshi Geet, sung by migrant workers and boatmen who travel away from their homes. These songs reflect the pain of separation and the desire to return to their families, with the Brahmaputra serving as both the path to

distant lands and the connection to their homeland. Though many of these songs do not name the river explicitly, the imagery of flowing water, wooden boats, and distant shores makes it clear that the Brahmaputra is the silent witness to their struggles and dreams.

Through these melodies, boatmen not only voice their dependence on the river but also remind us that the Brahmaputra is more than just water, it is their companion, their livelihood, and their fate.

3. Oral Histories of Indigenous Communities

The Brahmaputra is more than a geographical entity; it is deeply woven into the histories, livelihoods, and cultural expressions of Assam's indigenous communities. For generations, the river has shaped their traditions, migration patterns, and survival strategies, making it an integral part of their oral narratives.

- **The Mising Community:** The Mising community, sometimes called the Miri, primarily inhabits the riverine areas of Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, and Golaghat districts in Assam.

Their oral traditions recount ancestral migrations along the river, teaching adaptation to floods and respect for nature. They build Chang Ghars (stilt houses) to protect against rising waters, a practice passed down through oral knowledge. Mising folk songs, like Oi Nitom, reflect the river's dual role as a giver and a taker of life, capturing their resilience and deep connection with the Brahmaputra.

- **Bodo Community:** The Bodo community, one of Assam's oldest ethnic groups, has a rich oral tradition that reflects their deep connection with the Brahmaputra. Their folktales, riddles, and proverbs passed through generations portray the river as a

divine force, guiding their ancestors and shaping their way of life. Their oral histories emphasize the Brahmaputra's role in agriculture, spiritual practices, and socio-political unity. The river is often revered as a life-giver in Bodo beliefs, demonstrating how their oral traditions blend myth, history, and ecological wisdom into their cultural identity.

- **The Kachari (Dimasa) Community:** The Kachari (Dimasa) Community is among Assam's earliest settlers, and their oral traditions hold deep connections to the Brahmaputra. The folktales described how their ancestors once lived along the river's bank, gradually moving toward the hills due to wars, floods, and changing landscapes. The Kachari kings, known as Dimasa rulers, are often glorified in oral ballads, with the Brahmaputra serving as a backdrop for stories of battle, expansion, and migration. Their oral traditions also contain ecological wisdom, cautioning against deforestation and disrespecting natural water sources, reinforcing the idea that humans must coexist with nature, not exploit it.

These indigenous oral histories demonstrate that the Brahmaputra is more than just a river- it is a storyteller, a witness, and a guide. Through folktales, songs, and oral traditions, these communities have kept alive their histories, ecological wisdom and cultural identities. The transitions of these oral narratives into literature ensures that these traditions continue to be studied, celebrated, and preserved in contemporary academic and literary discourse.

Case Studies: Oral Tradition in Assamese Literature

1. Lakshminath Bezbaruah - The Literary Archivist of Assamese folktales.

Lakshminath Bezbaruah (1864-1938) is widely regarded as a pioneer of modern Assamese literature, but his most profound

contribution lies in the documentation and preservation of Assamese folktales. His work ensured that centuries-old oral storytelling traditions were permanently recorded, preventing their erosion in an era of colonial and literary transitions.

1.1 Burhi Aair Xadhu: A Cultural Repository of Oral Narratives

Bezbaruah's *Burhi Aair Xadhu* was first published in 1911, is a landmark collection of Assamese folktales. This book captures stories that have long been passed down orally, particularly in the form of grandmothers' bedtime stories. These tales were carefully structured to reflect moral teachings, social customs and humor, making them an integral part of Assamese childhood.

The tales of *Burhi Aair Xadhu* display several defining elements of oral traditions:

- **Moral and Ethical Themes:** Many stories emphasize lessons on honesty, kindness, and justice, ensuring that traditional values were passed to the younger generation.
- **Animal-Based Narratives:** Similar to global oral traditions, Assamese folktales often feature talking animals and enchanted beings, reinforcing moral values in an engaging manner.
- **Repetitive and Mnemonic Patterns:** The use of repeated phrases and rhythmic storytelling techniques reflects their oral origins, making them easy to memorize and retell.

1.2 Impact of Bezbaroa's Work on Oral Tradition Preservation

Bezbaroa's role extended beyond documentation, he revitalized Assamese storytelling, ensuring that folktales were not lost in the transition to modern literature. His contributions include:

- Shielded Assamese folklore from cultural extinction, particularly during the colonial

period when external influences threatened native traditions.

- Preserved the oral storytelling structure, ensuring authenticity in the written versions.
- Inspired future generations of writers to explore and adapt traditional oral tales in contemporary literature.

By bridging the gap between oral and literary storytelling, Bezbaroa's works reinforced Assamese identity and provided a foundation for future literary efforts in preserving oral traditions.

2. Indira Goswami – Integrating Oral Testimonies into Fiction

Indira Goswami (1942–2011), popularly known as Mamoni Raisom Goswami, revolutionized Assamese literature by incorporating oral histories and testimonies into modern fiction. Unlike Bezbaroa, who focused on folktales, Goswami's literary approach involved recording oral narratives of marginalized communities, ensuring that their stories were immortalized in Assamese literature.

2.1 Oral Histories in “Datal Hatir Uye Khowa Haoda”

One of Goswami's most celebrated novels, *Datal Hatir Uye Khowa Haoda* (The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tuske), is a striking example of how oral testimonies can shape fiction. Based on real-life accounts of widows in Vrindavan, the novel seamlessly blends historical truth with folklore, presenting narratives that had previously been excluded from written history.

The novel, *Datal Hatir Uye Khowa Haoda* display several key elements of oral traditions:

- **First-Person Oral Testimonies:** The novel records spoken narratives of widows whose stories had previously existed only in oral form, ensuring their voices were heard in literature.

- **Blending of Fact and Fiction:** Goswami expertly integrates oral legends with historical events demonstrating how popular preserves personal and collective histories.

- **Dialect and Authenticity:** The use of regional speech patterns and informal storytelling structures reflects the raw, spoken qualities of oral traditions.

2.2 Significance of Goswami's Contribution to Oral Narratives

Goswami's literary approach validates oral storytelling as a form of historical record proving that:

- Oral testimonies are crucial in preserving marginalized histories that might otherwise be lost.
- Folklore and Fiction can merge seamlessly, allowing oral traditions to evolve while maintaining authenticity.
- Literature can serve as an archive for spoken traditions, ensuring their survival in the face of modernization.
- Through her novel, Goswami bridged the gap between oral storytelling and literary preservation, demonstrating the power of oral traditions in shaping literature, history, and identity.

3. Mamang Dai - Indigenous Oral Narratives in Literature

Mamang Dai, a distinguished writer from Arunachal Pradesh, plays a crucial role in documenting and preserving the oral traditions of Northeast India. Her works focus on tribal needs, oral histories, and spiritual narratives, ensuring that indigenous storytelling remains an active part of contemporary literature.

3.1 The Black Hill: A Literary Archive of Indigenous Oral Traditions

Dai's novel *The Black Hill* is a profound literary work that merges oral history with

historical fiction, reflecting tribal perspectives, colonial encounters and indigenous resistance. The novel reflects oral traditions through:

- **Tribal Myths as Historical Memory:** Dai incorporates the folk myths about nature, spirits, and ancestors, demonstrating how oral traditions act as unwritten histories preserving indigenous identity.

- **Spiritual Connection to the Land:** The novel portrays nature as a living entity, reinforcing indigenous beliefs about harmony with the environment, a key theme in oral traditions.

- **Orality in Narrative Style:** The storytelling mirrors spoken traditions using non-linear narration, repetition, and poetic language, maintaining the rhythmic essence of oral storytelling.

3.2 Significance of Dai's Work:

Dai's literature proves that oral traditions are vital sources of historical and cultural knowledge. Her works serve as counter-narratives to colonial histories highlighting the ecological wisdom in indigenous storytelling, and amplifying tribal voices in global literature. By bridging oral and written traditions, Dai ensures that indigenous knowledge remains relevant and respected in modern literary discourse.

Relevance of Oral Tradition in the Contemporary World

Oral traditions continue to play a crucial role in preserving cultural identity, history, and ecological wisdom, especially in regions like Assam, where folklore and storytelling remain deeply rooted in daily life. These traditions serve as a link between past and present, ensuring that indigenous knowledge, myths, and collective memories are not lost in an era of rapid globalization.

One of the most significant aspects of oral traditions is their role in cultural

preservation. In communities where languages and dialects are endangered, oral storytelling helps sustain linguistic and regional identities. Assamese folktales, Bihu songs, and myths surrounding the Brahmaputra River continue to be key markers of cultural heritage, particularly among indigenous communities like the Mising, Bodo, and Kachari.

Oral traditions also serve as alternative historical records, offering perspectives that are often missing from written history. Many marginalized communities have relied on storytelling to pass down accounts of migration, struggles, and societal changes, ensuring that their narratives are not erased. In Assam, oral histories about displacement due to floods, battles fought along the Brahmaputra, and indigenous resistance provide valuable insights beyond conventional historical documentation.

Additionally, oral traditions embed ecological wisdom, emphasizing sustainable living. Many folktales depict rivers, forests, and mountains as sacred, reinforcing the idea that nature must be respected. Such narratives are particularly relevant today as climate change and environmental crises threaten ecosystems.

Despite modernization, oral traditions are adapting to new platforms, including digital media, podcasts, and literature, ensuring their continued transmission. Their integration into contemporary storytelling, education, and cinema highlights their enduring significance in shaping culture, history, and environmental consciousness.

Conclusion

Oral traditions have long served as the cultural backbone of Assamese society, preserving historical narratives, folklore, and ecological wisdom through generations. The Brahmaputra River, deeply embedded in Assamese oral storytelling, has inspired myths, folktales, and ballads that continue to shape the region's literary and cultural identity. By analyzing the contributions of Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Indira Goswami, and Mamang Dai, this paper demonstrates how oral tradition transitioned into literature, ensuring their survival in an evolving world.

Bezbaruah's documentation of folktales in *Burhi Aair Xadhu* safeguarded centuries-old oral storytelling traditions from being lost, while Goswami's use of oral testimonies in fiction provided a voice to marginalised communities, making oral histories part of mainstream literature. Mamang Dai's works showcase how tribal myths and indigenous oral traditions continue to shape contemporary storytelling, reinforcing their relevance beyond folklore. These literary contributions validate oral traditions as authentic historical records and cultural expressions that remain crucial in Assam's identity.

In the contemporary world, oral traditions are not mere relics of the past; they serve as counter-narratives to dominant histories, preserve linguistic heritage, and embed ecological awareness in storytelling. However, modernization poses challenges to their survival. The integration of oral traditions into digital archives, literature, films,

and academic research is essential to ensure their continuity. Future research should focus on documenting endangered oral traditions, analyzing their literary adaptation, and exploring their influence on modern cultural expressions.

As oral traditions continue to evolve, their role in shaping Assamese literature, history, and environmental consciousness remains indispensable. Their preservation is not just an academic pursuit rather it is a commitment to safeguarding Assam's rich cultural heritage for generations to come.

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**REIMAGINING MUGHAL INDIA:
WOMEN, TRADITION, AND NARRATIVE
IMAGINATION IN INDU SUNDARESAN'S *SHADOW PRINCESS***

Yogeshkumara M V

Abstract

Indu Sundaresan's Shadow Princess (2010) (part of her acclaimed Taj Trilogy) reimagines Mughal history, centering on women's lives and contributions within Emperor Shah Jahan's royal household. The novel transcends documented historical accounts to present an intimate portrayal of the emotional, political, and cultural dynamics of the Mughal era. By focusing on often-overlooked female figures, Sundaresan critiques patriarchal historical frameworks and reclaims women's roles as cultural custodians and political actors. In Shadow Princess, Sundaresan reinterprets historical memory and captures the essence of Mughal norms, values, and traditions. The zenana (women's quarters) is depicted as a significant space where tradition and agency converge, enabling women to uphold and subtly reshape societal values. The novel also emphasises the inheritance of wisdom through governance, familial obligations, and cultural practices while simultaneously questioning these norms through the perspectives of its characters. This article examines how Sundaresan uses historical fiction to bridge the gap between documented history and imaginative storytelling.

Keywords: *Mughal India, Historical Fiction, Gender Roles, Cultural Values, Narrative Imagination.*

Indu Sundaresan's *Shadow Princess* (2010), the final part of her Taj Trilogy, reshapes the historical narrative of the Mughal Empire by focusing on the lives of women who inhabited the *zenana* (a part of the palace reserved for women). It is known that the traditional histories have long privileged the political and military exploits of emperors like Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. However, Sundaresan's novel unearths the obscured stories of princesses, queens, and consorts who shaped their era's cultural and political fabric. Through Jahanara Begum, Shah Jahan's eldest daughter and other women characters, the novel interrogates the paradoxes of power, agency, and confinement that define the lives of Mughal women. By redefining history through meticulous research and imaginative reconstruction, Sundaresan challenges the patriarchal frameworks that have rendered these women invisible, offering instead a narrative that positions them as custodians of tradition and architects of their legacies. Thus, one can argue that *Shadow Princess* not only revises dominant historical accounts but also raises critical questions about the role of

fiction in recuperating marginalised voices; as Edward Said argues in *Orientalism* (1978), the production of historical knowledge is inherently tied to power structures that determine whose stories are preserved and whose are erased (32)

The Mughal Empire is often depicted through the prism of male achievement (the grandeur of architectural marvels like the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort). However, Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot note that in *India Before Europe* (2006), the "domestic sphere of the Mughals remains underexplored, particularly the roles women played in governance, trade, and cultural patronage" (143). This omission is not incidental but reflects a broader patriarchal structure. Ruby Lal's *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (2005) challenge this structured bias and counter-argue that the *zenana* functioned as a "parallel court" where royal women exercised significant political and economic influence (89). Sundaresan's novel builds on this idea, offering a vivid portrayal of Jahanara Begum, who, as the "Begam Sahib", managed the imperial household, advised her father on state matters, and controlled a vast

network of trade and patronage. However, her authority remains overshadowed by patriarchal-oriented historiography. When Sundaresan writes,

When Princess Jahanara heard the news, she suggested to her father that Ali Mardan Khan should offer his allegiance in person. That way, the governorship of the newly acquired Qandahar could be given to Said Khan himself. It was a brilliant diplomatic move—for Said Khan was firmly on the Mughal side and could not be swayed into releasing Qandahar again to the Persians without a fight. (285)

The quote highlights Jahanara's strategic political role in the Mughal court. By advising Shah Jahan to have Ali Mardan Khan offer his allegiance in person, she demonstrates her understanding of diplomacy and power dynamics. Her suggestion to assign the governorship of Qandahar to Said Khan shows her insight into maintaining loyalty and stability within the empire. Despite not holding a formal position of authority, Jahanara's influence in key decisions reveals her political brilliance. Her involvement in shaping such important diplomatic strategies emphasises her substantial, though unofficial, power in the empire's governance. However, her authority is juxtaposed against the fact that her father's presence in the background overshadows her actions, reflecting how women's contributions, despite their visible power, remain marginalised in official histories. This duality of power and marginalisation lies at the heart of Sundaresan's *Shadow Princess*, which seeks to recover the realities of women and the constraints of their world.

Jahanara's narrative exemplifies the complex interplay of power structure and subjugation that defined Mughal women's lives. As the emperor's favoured daughter, she inherits her mother, Mumtaz Mahal's role as the emotional and administrative anchor of the court. Nevertheless, her position and

power heavily depend on her father's favour and willingness to renounce personal desires for dynastic responsibility. Shah Jahan's decree, "I am not of a mind, however, to let either of my daughters marry" (Sundaresan 155), ensures that Jahanara remains tethered to the throne, her autonomy sacrificed to consolidate imperial power. Judith Butler's theorisation of gender in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, norms as instruments that "maintain structures of power" (45) rightly probes this dynamic: Jahanara's unwed, framed as a mark of purity and devotion, reinforces her symbolic value to the empire while denying her the autonomy afforded to male heirs. Her lament,

I will not go." This from Dara, his face pale, his eyes a dull red, his whole frame shaking. "Nor will I," Murad had cried. "Mama will come back if I do not go for her funeral." "We will all be there," Jahanara had said, almost shouting. Her eyes had smarted with a flash of tears, but she had brushed them away impatiently. She did not have the time for this sort of weakness; who would look after them if she began to cry again? (18)

This passage underscores Jahanara's role as the emotional anchor of the family after her mother's death, displaying both her influence and the weight of responsibility she bears. Her position in the family is pivotal, but the circumstances and her gender limit her autonomy. She is expected to maintain control and composure, especially in times of crisis, reinforcing her symbolic value to the empire. However, this role constrains her ability to express vulnerability or seek her own agency. This illustrates the anomaly of her influence a power derived from proximity to patriarchal authority yet perpetually constrained by it. Sundaresan does not romanticise Jahanara's plight; instead, she foregrounds the strategic negotiations that enabled her protagonist to look for a way to

counter the rigid hierarchies. For instance, Jahanara's patronage of Sufi shrines and her construction of the Chandni Chowk marketplace in Delhi demonstrates how she leveraged her economic resources to form the empire's cultural and urban landscapes. As Ram Nath observes in *Private Life of the Mughals*, these achievements were not mere acts of piety but "political statements that asserted her visibility in a male-dominated sphere" (167)

Indu Sundaresan's portrayal of Jahanara's sister, Roshanara Begum, whose ambition and resentment (towards her sister) starkly contrast Jahanara's measured diplomacy. Jahanara aligns herself with the syncretic ideals of her brother Dara Shikoh, and Roshanara allies with Aurangzeb, whose orthodox vision of Islam promises her more significant influence. Roshanara's declaration that

"I am going to send him a note" Roshanara said. "And he will come. That, unfortunately, is all I have left now."

"He will not," Jahanara said without inflection, but anger raged inside her. Suddenly, it was important for her to know why Najabat had stayed away from her summons and to see whether he would indeed respond to Roshanara's. She had thought for many long hours about him and about the time they had spent together—this was all she had, all she had based her obsession upon. If he went to Roshan, he would never be hers; it was better to know that for sure than to harbor any desires that would not find their way to fulfillment. "Call for him then, Roshan," she said wearily. "If he comes, you can have him." (222)

This quote illustrates the contrast in their approaches. While Roshanara relies on manipulation and strategising, Jahanara is more direct and resigned, acknowledging her sister's tactics while holding onto her emotional integrity. This vividly captures her tactical approach to survival in a court where

women's access to power is indirect and precarious. Unlike Jahanara, who operates within the bounds of tradition, Roshanara manipulates those bounds, using intrigue and alliances to secure her position. This divergence in their strategies reflects the varied modes of agency available to Mughal women, as Kathryn Hansen notes in her study of the *Virangana* (warrior woman) archetype in Indian history. Hansen argues that women in precolonial India often exercised power through "both conformity and subversion, depending on the constraints and opportunities of their social contexts" (27). Roshanara's defiance, marked by her clandestine correspondence with Aurangzeb and her eventual betrayal of Dara, illustrates how women could exploit familial rivalries to assert influence, even as their actions were often vilified in historical accounts. Sundaresan resists reducing Roshanara to a mere antagonist; instead, she contextualises her choices within the limited avenues available to women.

Mumtaz Mahal is another important female character in the novel. Though she dies early in the novel, she embodies the contradictions of feminine power in Mughal society. Revered as the devoted, virtuous and ideal queen, Mumtaz's legacy is enshrined in the Taj Mahal, a monument to Shah Jahan's grief. As Jahanara reflects, "Jahanara knew that she was etching her name in history. One day, four or five hundred years from now, posterity would talk with amazement of her generosity, her open hand, her dominance over the glittering zenana." (143) This highlights how women's authority is celebrated posthumously but remains confined by societal and patriarchal limitations in life. This emphasises the paradox of women's power in the Mughal court, celebrated and memorialised after death but denied the autonomy that men possess during their lifetimes. This observation shows the precariousness of women's authority in a

system that celebrated their roles as wives and mothers but denied them sovereignty and freedom. Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* critiques this dynamic, arguing that patriarchal societies often conflate womanhood with motherhood, reducing women to "repositories of male legacies" (42). Sundaresan problematises this trope by portraying Mumtaz's daughters grappling with her legacy (Jahanara strives to emulate her mother's grace under pressure, and Roshanara rejects it). The Taj Mahal itself becomes a metaphor for the tension between women's visibility and erasure. Though Mumtaz is immortalised in marble, her individuality is subsumed by the emperor's narrative of loss. Sundaresan's subtle portrayal invites readers to question the hegemonic narratives behind every historical monument.

Nadira Banu (the wife of Dara Shikoh) emerges as another pivotal female character whose intellectual and emotional partnership with her husband challenges conventional gender roles. Unlike Roshanara (whose power derives from manoeuvre), Nadira embodies the ideal of the Mughal noblewoman: educated, devout, and politically astute. Her support of Dara's syncretic philosophy, which sought to harmonise Islamic and Hindu traditions, positions her as a quiet but formidable force in the court's ideological battles. When she asserts, "No one but you can be Emperor," Nadira said softly. She was not looking at him, though her head was turned toward him and slanted to one side, her eyes cast down upon his hands. (57)

This reflects her significant, though often under-recognised, role in Dara's life and in his ideas. She acknowledges her marginalisation while affirming her role in shaping the empire's intellectual heritage. Sundaresan amplifies this scholarship, depicting Nadira not as a passive consort but as a collaborator in Dara's vision, her influence evident in his writings and policies.

Nevertheless, her fate (like that of Jahanara and Roshanara) is connected to the men she supports. Dara's execution by Aurangzeb makes Nadira a widow, and her political relevance is extinguished with her husband's demise. This reflects Gayatri Spivak's contention in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that women's agency is often mediated by their relationships with male power structures, rendering their voices doubly silenced (287). Sundaresan, however, contests this silencing, using Nadira's character to illustrate the subtle yet significant ways women redefined Mughal intellectual history.

The *zenana*, often misrepresented as a static confinement space, is reimaged in *Shadow Princess* as an abode of cultural production and political strategy. Lal's assertion that the Mughal domestic sphere was a "dynamic space where power was negotiated and tradition reinvented" (102) finds resonance in Sundaresan's depiction of the *zenana* as an intellectual hub of governance, education, and artistic patronage. Jahanara's administration of the imperial household, such as overseeing finances, mediating disputes, and hosting foreign dignitaries, mirrors the administrative duties of male courtiers, blurring the line between public and private spheres. The novel also points out the economic agency of royal women, who managed vast estates, commissioned architectural projects, and engaged in trade. Nath's research reverberates this, noting that Mughal women "controlled significant financial resources, which they deployed to build mosques, gardens, and caravanserais, leaving an indelible mark on the empire's infrastructure" (135).

One can say that Sundaresan's narrative technique blends historical fidelity and creative speculation. She exemplifies the potential of fiction to redress the gaps in historical records. In *A Literature of Their Own*, Elaine Showalter argues that women writers have historically used fiction to "reimagine their

place in history, filling the silences with stories that official accounts omitted" (12). *Shadow Princess* aptly embodies this tradition, restructuring the emotional and psychological landscapes of women whose inner lives remain absent, subsided, marginalised and forgotten from chronicles. By reimagining and reconstructing dialogues, desires, and conflicts, Sundaresan reshapes characters like Jahanara, whose historical persona is often reduced to a list of accomplishments. This approach aligns with Meenakshi Mukherjee's analysis of Indian historical fiction, which she argues "bridges the factual and the speculative, offering a more holistic understanding of the past" (64). However, Sundaresan's project is not without its tensions. While she draws on primary sources to anchor her narrative, her portrayal of harmonious interfaith dialogue epitomised by Dara and Nadira's syncretism has been critiqued as idealistic, given the sectarian strife that characterised Aurangzeb's reign. However, this idealism serves a deliberate purpose: to recover alternative visions of Mughal India.

The novel *Shadow Princess*'s engagement with tradition and modernity further commits to its revisionist agenda. For instance, Jahanara's negotiation of her public and private selves mirrors modern debates about women's roles in leadership. Similarly, Roshanara's manipulation of court politics prefigures contemporary understandings of gendered power dynamics in institutional settings. As Spivak notes, this temporal fluidity is a hallmark of postcolonial fiction, which often "collapses historical distances to illuminate persistent structures of oppression" (299). In conclusion, it is essential to say that the novel transcends the confines of history and particular historical fiction. By reinterpreting the lives of Mughal women, Sundaresan reclaims their contributions and exposes how patriarchal historiography has suppressed them. The novel's portrayal of

the zenana invites a revaluation of the Mughal Empire's cultural and political legacy. In giving voice to Jahanara, Roshanara, and Nadira, Sundaresan challenges the binaries of power and powerlessness, showing how women navigated, contested, and reshaped the structures.

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ECHOES OF RESISTANCE: COLONIAL SUPPRESSION AND SURVIVAL OF MUSLIM ORAL TRADITIONS IN BENGAL

Shireen Sardar

Abstract

For decades, Muslim oral tradition has played an important role in influencing religious consciousness, communal solidarity, and political resistance. Some of these oral traditions of Bengal narrated the spread of Islam in Bengal; others included biographies of Sufi saints. In colonial Bengal, in particular, oral traditions like Jari Gaan (Islamic ballads) and Marsiya (elegies for martyrs of Karbala) played a crucial part in shaping Muslim identity and community consciousness both in rural and urban Bengal. However, the British colonial state approached these traditions with suspicion, often suppressing or co-opting them to serve its governance strategies. This paper will thus explore the complex relationship between the British colonial state in Bengal and Muslim oral traditions. This paper will examine some of the oral traditions of Bengal, such as Jari Gaan, Puthi literature, Pir Kathas, Marsiyas, etc., to understand their significance and the colonial responses to them.

Secondly, Muslim oral traditions played a dual role in the colonial space - while the British viewed oral storytelling as a sign of "backwardness," they also recognized its power to mobilize anti-colonial sentiments. Thus, this paper will analyze the selective patronization and promotion of these oral traditions. Lastly, this paper will bring forward how Muslim oral traditions had a lasting impact on cultural memory and identity politics in postcolonial Bengal.

Keywords: *Oral traditions, Muslim, Colonial Bengal, Jari Gaan, Marsiya, Pir Katha*

Introduction

Islam in Bengal, as Dr. Eaton rightly observed, is cultivated through a "fluid context in which Islamic superhuman agencies... gradually seeped into local cosmologies that were themselves dynamic." (Eaton, 1993, p. 223). This integrative nature of Islamic traditions helped its oral tradition to blend smoothly with the preexisting religious and cultural landscape, particularly through the efforts of Sufi saints and preachers. With time, oral traditions, which were dynamically integrated with Bengal's local beliefs and practices, helped shape religious identity, political consciousness, and social cohesion by touching the traditional chords of communal knowledge. These oral traditions propagated through folk ballads and sermons, became a centre for the transmission of knowledge. Oral traditions like the performance of Jari Gaan (Islamic

ballads), the recitation of Marsiyas (elegies), mourning songs commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husain, and oral accounts of Islamic heroes adapted to local Bengali contexts became a part of cultural expression and collective memory, as they were read out loud in public gatherings, mosques, and madrasas. These traditions infused Islamic narratives with locally intelligible symbols and metaphors, ensuring their accessibility and relevance to the Muslims of Bengal and thereby quickly seeping into the local cosmologies in an organic and transformative way,

Colonial Surveillance and the Fluidity of Muslim Oral Traditions in Bengal

Over time, the oral culture of Muslims came under the surveillant gaze of the British colonial administration. The fluid nature of these oral traditions posed a challenge to the

colonial state, which was then trying to grasp the local understanding of its native populace. In other words, the colonial state, which sought to categorize and regulate religious identities through rigid boundaries, found it difficult to control the fluidity and dynamic nature of oral traditions. These oral traditions came under scrutiny and were often perceived as subversive or 'backward.' Secondly, the colonial gaze on these oral traditions was also exacerbated because it was viewed as a potential instrument for mobilization for anti-colonial movements. For instance, the themes of sacrifices, brotherhood, resistance, and justice could resonate closely with the anti-colonial struggle against colonial politics. The themes of political suppression, intertwined with ethical teachings, communal values, and religious narratives, became an important part of cultural memory and identity politics, not only in colonial Bengal but extended to influence postcolonial Bengal as well.

The gradual inflow of Muslim folk tradition from rural corners to urban gatherings of Bengal was propagated through Sufi saints and Pir. Unlike the textual Islam of theological scholars, the Islam propagated by these saintly figures was deeply intertwined with local cultural and religious landscapes. Richard M. Eaton argues that in Bengal, Sufis played a crucial role in the expansion of the Islamic frontier by engaging in land reclamation, religious propagation, and political activities. The veneration of Pirs in Bengal was not confined to Muslims alone; instead, it extended to non-Muslim communities, reflecting the fluid and inclusive nature of Bengali Islam (Eaton, 1993). Sufis and Pirs were holy men who claimed to be mystically powerful, and oral narratives like Pir Katha were celebrated with great veneration. The widespread veneration of Pirs created a shared cultural space where religious distinctions between Hindus and Muslims were often blurred (Stewart, 2001).

For instance, a folk tale about a mythical saint called Satya Pir was celebrated by both Hindus and Muslims. It was believed that Satya Pir was an avatar of both a Sufi saint and Lord Krishna (Stewart, 2004). Satya Pir was described as someone who blended the lifestyle of both a Hindu Sanyasi and a Muslim Fakir, wearing Brahmin sacred threads and growing a Sufi beard. The storytelling traditions surrounding these figures played a crucial role in integrating Islamic beliefs within the broader Bengali folk milieu, allowing Islam to take root in a society historically shaped by diverse religious traditions (Ahmed, 2018).

Sufis, Shrines, and the Colonial Challenge to Syncretic Oral Traditions

From the sixteenth century onwards, the role of Sufis and Pirs transformed from being merely religious figures to social reformers. In other words, the institution of Sufism and mystical association played an important role in tying together people from both Islam and Hinduism. Their role as community builders was further enhanced through the establishment of Khanqahs (Sufi lodges) and dargahs (shrines). These sites served as vibrant centers of religious exchange and communication, where local narratives, accounts of Imam Hussain's martyrdom, and Islamic teachings were openly discussed in communal gatherings and during yearly Urs celebrations. Sufi saints or Pirs even became legitimate objects of worship, given the tales about their miraculous powers. Stories of how infertile women would bare a child after praying in the dargahs spread from village to village and also to the cities. Thus, it could be asserted that these establishments attracted a lot of people. Added to this were the facilities it provided, like community kitchens, praying halls, etc. This slowly led to the formation of settlements around these shrines,

contributing to the spread of Islamic culture and values in Bengal. The interaction between Hindu and Muslim devotees at these sites further strengthened the syncretic fabric of Bengali society (Chatterjee, 2009).

The British colonial administration suspiciously observed this syncretistic nature of Muslim oral tradition. The cohesive nature of orality challenged the administrators' rigid and limited understanding of Bengal's social and religious structures. Their governance strategies often relied on categorizing religious identities in rigid, mutually exclusive terms, a stark contrast to the organic and fluid nature of Bengali Islam (Eaton, 1993). The British colonial text heavily depended on textualized religious doctrines, thereby ignoring the deeper interwoven nature of the oral culture of Bengal, where propagation of Islamic ideas through Sufi songs and stories of Muslim brotherhood was communicated in local gatherings to both Hindu and Muslim audiences. Unable to understand or subdue the power of oral culture in Bengal, the British imposed legal and administrative distinctions between Hindus and Muslims. This, in turn, disrupted the communal harmony fostered by oral traditions centered around Pir and Sufi saints.

Secondly, Muslim folktales of Bengal at the time carried implicit and explicit messages of resistance against suppression and injustice. These stories varied from the miraculous intervention of saints who saved the community from oppressive rulers to tales about how Hindu and Muslim brethren unitedly fought against injustice. These tales of tyranny resonated with Bengali Muslims under colonial subjugation. As a result, the British sought to regulate and control these narratives, fearing their potential to inspire anti-colonial sentiments (Stewart, 2001).

Oral Traditions as Cultural Memory and Political Resistance in Colonial Bengal

Oral tales about Sufi saints like Satya Pir often imbibed certain factors that led to cult development with stories of miraculous healing and deeds (Karamat). Folks ballads, storytelling performances, and devotional songs (such as Jari Gaan) celebrated the lives of these saints, reinforcing their spiritual significance. Since literacy rates in rural Bengal were low, oral traditions were the primary medium through which religious knowledge and communal memory were preserved. These narratives often evolved over time, incorporating new legends and responding to the socio-political needs of different eras. Secondly, It is also essential to recognize that the Muslim community in Bengal had not yet fully articulated an identity distinct from the broader socio-religious landscape. With the rise of Urdu as the language of intellectual and cultural expression among the Muslims of Northern India and the use of the Bengali language as a familiar identifier among the Hindus of Bengal, Muslim oral traditions also became an essential symbol of syncretism. As a result, Muslim oral traditions, especially those focused on Sufi saints, became an essential vehicle for forging a distinct yet syncretic identity. The significance of this syncretism lies in its dual function. On one hand, it served to bind the Muslim community together, providing a shared narrative and spiritual framework that transcended linguistic and regional boundaries. On the other hand, it allowed Islam to coexist and flourish within the diverse religious tapestry of Bengal, where Hindus and Muslims, through everyday rituals and practices, could coexist peacefully. In this way, oral traditions played a critical role in the formation of a collective Muslim identity in

Bengal, one that was informed by both Islamic teachings and the region's rich cultural history.

Islamic ballads, such as Jari Gaan, elegiac poems, such as Marsiyas, and other Islamic anecdotes, tales, etc., were orally circulated in large gatherings, which not only helped preserve and transmit a rich tradition for generations but also attracted a large audience. The theme of Jari Gaan initially centered around the battle of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, one of the most significant events in Islamic history. The narrations of Marsiyas, although traditionally associated with Shias, transcended beyond the sectarian boundaries and became a part of collective mourning for Muslims. The imagery of suffering, ruthless killings by opponents of innocent children, and weaponless warriors became a part of collective mourning traditions for the Muslims of Bengal (Borderless Journal, 2023). However, with time, the themes of Jari Gaan started to evolve and diversify, adapting themes of contemporary political scenarios like poverty, drought, poor harvest, etc - all of which were both, directly and indirectly, the result of British colonial policies such as heavy taxation, land revenue settlements, and economic exploitation. Much like the followers of Imam Hussain faced oppressive opponents who endured hardships and injustice, Bengali Muslims, too, found resonance in the economic, social, and religious 'otherisation' under colonial rule. As Epsita Halder notes, "The Karbala narrative oscillated between the oral-scribal culture and early print culture, reflecting its deep entrenchment in the Bengali Muslim psyche" (Halder, 2015, p. 3). Thus, it could be asserted that the Jari Gaan espoused a dynamic form of historical archive that was passed on through oral culture. The symbolic nature of Jari Gaan through the depiction of Karbala resonated deeply with the Muslims in Colonial Bengal.

With the growing popularity of Muslim oral traditions, the British colonial power recognized its ability to foster anti-colonial sentiments. Government of Bengal Reports on Native Newspapers (1860-1940) indicated that Jari Gaan's performances were seen as inciting dissents. As noted by Sufia M. Uddin, "The British colonial state often viewed the performative aspects of Muslim oral traditions as potential sites of dissent, leading to measures aimed at suppression or co-optation" (Uddin, 2006, p. 45). The *Vernacular Press Act of 1878*, though primarily aimed at print media, also extended its implications to public performances and oral narratives deemed politically charged.

Colonial Orientalism and Selective Patronage of Muslim Oral Traditions

The Orientalist approach to these Islamic oral ballads was connotated negatively as they deemed these folk traditions as 'backward,' an approach that needed to be cured through 'civilization,' 'rationality,' and 'modernity'. As Bernard S. Cohn discusses, "The British colonial project involved the classification and transformation of Indian society, often viewing indigenous traditions through an Orientalist lens that emphasized their perceived backwardness" (Cohn, 1996, p. 21).

Despite colonial restrictions, Jaari Gaan did not disappear. Instead, it found new ways to persist, including being recorded in print. Newspapers like *Mashik Mohammadi* played a role in archiving and reviving these oral traditions in written form, ensuring their survival beyond colonial censorship. Additionally, religious gatherings and informal community spaces allowed these songs to be performed, reinforcing Muslim collective memory and resistance. Secondly, limited and selective patronage was extended to the oral folk traditions of Muslims of Bengal. The British colonial administration recognized the

possibilities of these oral traditions. It extended its patronage to further colonial objectives, promote loyalty to the colonial state, or curb anti-colonial movements. As Michael H. Fisher notes, "The British often engaged in selective patronage of indigenous." For instance, the British colonialists extended their patronage to those Sufi saints who were seen as politically neutral. Stories of Pir Kathas that only depicted loyalty to the ruler and obedience to authority were favored and flourished without colonial intervention.

Conclusion

Despite challenges from British authority, the influence of Muslim oral traditions remained deeply embedded in Bengal's cultural and social milieu. Oral traditions like Pir Kathas, Sufi songs, and Mersiyas survived the long-drawn colonial scrutiny and went ahead in shaping cultural memory and religious identity in postcolonial Bengal. In postcolonial Bengal, the legacy of these oral traditions remains a vital part of the cultural and spiritual landscape. Even today, the legacies of Sufi saints and the stories passed

down through generations remain integral to Bengali Muslim consciousness, illustrating the resilience of oral traditions in the face of historical challenges (Ahmed, 2018).

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THE SUN, SISTERS, AND SUFFERING: GENDERED SYMBOLISM IN BENGALI ORAL NARRATIVES OF ITU PUJA

Sanjukta Chakraborty

Abstract

Itu Puja, also known as Ghot Puja, is a longstanding Bengali tradition deeply intertwined with the oral narrative of Brotokotha. This narrative carries immense cultural significance, particularly in shaping perceptions of gender roles within Bengali society. The word Itu traces its origins to Mitu or Mitra, names associated with the Sun, tying the tradition to Sun worship during winter. At the heart of the Brotokotha are two sisters, Umno and Jhumno, whose tragic story explores themes of punishment, endurance, and resilience.

The tale recounts how their father, in anger for having Pithey (rice cakes), abandoned the sisters in a jungle, leaving them to face a tiger. This act of severe punishment underscores patriarchal authority and instils in the narrative a recurring theme of female suffering and forgiveness. Over time, the retelling of this story has subtly influenced women's understanding of their roles, reinforcing endurance and submission as inherent virtues. Though the oral narrative differs slightly in different parts of Bengal, the sisters' suffering and forgiveness remain the story's core.

This study delves into how the Brotokotha has shaped the gendered spaces of Bengali culture. Examining the portrayal of women in these oral traditions aims to shed light on the enduring impact of such narratives on cultural identity and collective consciousness.

Keywords: Gender Dynamics, Bengali Oral Narratives, Cultural Identity

Itu Puja, also known as *Ghot Puja*, is a longstanding Bengali tradition deeply intertwined with the oral narrative of *Brotokotha*. This narrative carries immense cultural significance, particularly in shaping perceptions of gender roles within Bengali society. The word *Itu* traces its origins to *Mitu* or *Mitra*, names associated with the Sun, tying the tradition to Sun worship during winter. It is a local cultural practice of a particular ritual remembering the story of two sisters, Umno and Jhumno, who were able to succeed through different hurdles posed upon them in the traditional society.

The tradition of worshipping *Itu* or *Ghot* involves rituals that include chanting mantras and reciting the *Brotokotha* (sacred story) of *Itu*. *Itu Puja* is a widely observed ritual in rural Bengal, with the *Itu Brata* (vow) commencing on *Kartik Sankranti* and continuing every Sunday throughout the

Bengali month of *Agrahayan*. Women primarily practise this ritual within domestic spaces. Domestic spaces are often considered to be bastions of tradition. Within the domestic space, ritual performances by women are regarded as crucial sites for upholding sacrality and preserving respectability (Chatterjee 119-120).

During the recitation, devotees wash eight grains of *Atap rice* and eight blades of *Durba* grass in water, place them in a small vessel, and hold them in their hands. Both *Durba* grass and *Atap* rice hold deep cultural significance in Bengal, particularly during winter, as this period is crucial for growing and harvesting rice, the region's staple crop. "Most rituals have their source in ancient traditions of prayers for the fertility of soil, good crops or rain, the destruction of evil forces, the ablution of sins, cure for diseases, and the like, they are also constantly

reinterpreted to maintain their relevance...However the scholarship lacks on showing the everyday domestic rituals and women's agency in those performances" (Chatterjee 121).

In Bengali households, rice is synonymous with *Lokkhi* or *Lakshmi*, the goddess of prosperity, symbolising the *Bhodromobila*—a socially ideal woman responsible for the well-being and progress of her family. "Scholarship on Hindu ritual narratives have primarily examined the subjectivities of a *Bhodramabila* through their ritual performances, provided rich historical contexts for the rituals, and the effect of these rituals in promoting a patriarchal middle-class value to be sanctioned as a respectable woman. Research work has been carried on ritual narratives, but not in terms of the linguistic behaviour of women in the performance of ritual narratives, story-telling and personal narratives." (Banerjee 54). Meanwhile, Durba grass represents resilience, an essential trait of a *Bhodromobila*. Despite being trampled, the grass remains firmly rooted due to its flexibility and enduring nature, mirroring the perseverance expected of women in Bengali society. The story of Itu puja *Brotokotha* is similar to *Durba* grass and *Atap* rice, as both showcase endurance as the subject of growth. However, this paper focuses on women's traditional practice of this oral narrative as the subject of teaching them endurance.

The gendered implication of the *Bratakatha* narrates the tale of a poor Brahmin and his two daughters, Umno and Jhumno, who were exiled to the forest to be eaten by a tiger as punishment for eating *Pithey* (rice cakes). While in the forest, the sorrowful sisters began *worshipping* Itu alongside celestial maidens. They sought Itu's blessing for the prosperity of their father, and the Brahmin's poverty had miraculously vanished, but he

was unaware of the cause of his newfound fortune (Gupta 17). Even when mistreated, women in these narratives remain devoted to their families, reinforcing their role as caretakers regardless of their suffering portraying the image of a Bengali *Grihini*. As Anindita Chatterjee discusses in her paper, the role of *Grihini*, with caregiving and endurance, is passed through oral narratives as in the case of these sister duo; she says, "The narratives or brata-kathas are an integral part of any domestic Bengali ritual, performed by the lady or the *Grihini* of the house. In such context, tales circulated by and for women can serve as important indicators of the values the narrative community holds and transmits to future generations." (Chatterjee 132). This echoes how Umno and Jhumno continue to pray for their father's well-being despite being cast out into the forest.

Eventually, the sisters returned home, and seeing his daughters, he scolded them once again until the sisters revealed that their worship of Itu had brought prosperity to their household (Gupta 17). The paper highlights how Bengali women's religious narratives often centre around "endurance and sacrifice," portraying the *Lokkhisree* (good woman) as one who bears suffering for the greater good. This mirrors the sisters' continued devotion to their father despite their abandonment. (Bagchi 128). "The Bengali 'brata katha' narratives share a plot construction marked by supernatural/ superhuman powers in its characters, and the themes of the endurance and sacrifice of 'good woman' (*lokkhisree*) and a reiteration of the power and importance of mothers." (Bagchi 129). The *bratakatha* narratives are structured in a way that conditions women to see their suffering as part of their role in maintaining familial and social harmony. "The 'brata' or the vow is a justification and

reassurance about her position and worth as a 'bhadramahila', where she aims to maintain the 'sambhranto paribar' (respectable family)." (Chatterjee 131). This directly applies to Umno and Jhumno, whose devotion to Itu is tied to their desire to restore their father's prosperity.

Later, Umno married a king, while Jhumno wed another nobleman. Jhumno continued her devotion to Itu Puja, which brought prosperity to her husband. However, Umno, consumed by arrogance due to her royal status, abandoned the ritual. As a result, misfortune struck the king's household. In anger, the king ordered Umno's execution. Seeking refuge, she returned to her sister's home, where she resumed the worship of Itu. Soon, the king's fortune was restored, and he brought Umno back to the palace (Gupta 17). Women in Bengali society perform rituals that reinforce traditional gender roles rather than subvert them. The sisters' suffering and continued prayers for their father's prosperity and later husband's order of death sentence and Umno's neglect to a death sentence and yet praying for her husband's wellness reflect this constructed passivity. "Rather than being told with feeling and empathy, the narrative is read from an established book in a style that lacks all spontaneity. I suggest that this is due to the patriarchal nature of ritual spaces, which cannot function as an emancipatory space, as they continue to reproduce and perpetuate the marginalisation and oppression of women." (Chatterjee 119).

After enduring various trials and tribulations, the family was reunited, and everyone embraced Itu Puja as a sacred practice. The ritual symbolised deliverance—from poverty, separation, and even death. To explore how *Brotokotha* contributes to the cultural conditioning of women, "a ritual is an established tradition that has been acquired

and transmitted socio-culturally. Rituals are sacred acts of piety, considered by their performers to confer upon himself/herself great virtue and value for the individual, and in many cases the welfare of the family, and often the whole clan. In general, rituals tend to involve the whole community and foster a sense of belongingness and togetherness amongst all" (Singer 19). The characters of Umno and Jhumno follow the exact definition by following the rituals of Itu puja for the well-being of the family and enduring tortures as an ordinary normal phenomenon, creating an enduring identity of Bengali women who will go to any extent for the good of the family, and community.

The narrative of Itu Puja's *Brotokotha* exemplifies how suffering and forgiveness are internalised as virtues within the female psyche. The story of Umno and Jhumno being abandoned in the jungle by their father after consuming *Pithey* (rice cakes) underscores a deeply ingrained patriarchal structure where male authority is absolute, and women's survival depends on submission and endurance. The father's harsh punishment, rather than being questioned, is accepted as a natural course of action, reinforcing the idea that women must bear suffering without resistance. As discussed in "Telling Tales In Gendered Spaces: Ritual Narratives In The Lokkhi Pooja of Bengal", "The gendered structuring of ritual narratives ensures that women are socialised into accepting suffering as a necessary attribute of womanhood, equating patience and endurance with moral and spiritual strength." (Chatterjee 131). Thus, the father's act of abandonment is not merely an individual act of cruelty but a reflection of a larger patriarchal ideology that conditions women to accept suffering as their destiny and forgiveness as their duty.

Food in *Brotokotha* is not merely a sustenance tool but a gendered symbol of

discipline, morality, and control. The sisters' punishment for eating *Pithey* (a traditional rice cake) suggests indulgence, especially by women, is a transgression worthy of severe consequences. The act of consuming food, in this case, is equated with disobedience, and the punishment serves as a reinforcement of patriarchal control over female desires while men's indulgences are normalised. The punishment of Umno and Jhumno reflects a more significant historical tendency to associate female consumption with moral weakness. The author of *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* discusses the same, "Women in domestic rituals are often required to fast and abstain from indulgence, reinforcing the notion that self-denial is a marker of virtue while indulgence is a sign of moral failure." (Sangari 149). Moreover, food as a metaphor for temptation is not unique to *Brotokotha*. Similar narratives appear across cultures, such as Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit in the Biblical story of Genesis, where a woman's act of eating results in widespread consequences. In both cases, the act of consuming something desirable leads to punishment, reinforcing gendered moral expectations. While discussing the same, Ray wrote in *Nari O Paribar, Bamabodhini Patrika [Women and the Family]*, "The recurrent theme of punishing women for consumption reflects the idea that a woman's body and desires are not her own, but rather subject to the moral and social codes dictated by patriarchal structures." (Ray 4). Thus, in *Brotokotha*, *Pithey* is not just a rice cake; it becomes a tool of patriarchal control, symbolising how women's desires, no matter how small, must be regulated and, if necessary, punished.

The jungle in the narrative of *Itu Puja* represents more than just a physical location; it is a metaphor for female vulnerability, social exile, and the dangers that await women who deviate from patriarchal norms. When

the sisters are abandoned in the forest, they are not merely cast away from their homes, even placed in a space of uncertainty and peril, a fate that women in patriarchal societies have historically feared. This metaphor of the jungle as a testing ground for female endurance is seen in many folk narratives, including the exile of Sita in the *Ramayana* and Shakuntala's abandonment in the *Mahabharata*. In each case, the forest becomes a space where women must prove their resilience, endure suffering, and ultimately reaffirm their loyalty to male figures. Discussing the jungle and folktale in "Showers of Flowers: A. K. Ramanujan and an Indian Folktale", Narayan says, "The jungle in folklore functions as both a site of exile and transformation, where women are stripped of social protection and left to navigate their fate within a space governed by uncertainty and danger." (Narayan 15).

By sending Umno and Jhumno into the jungle, their father symbolically places them in a space of extreme vulnerability, where they are expected to perish or prove their virtue through endurance and devotion. The fact that they seek divine intervention rather than resisting their fate further cements the idea of women as passive recipients of destiny rather than active agents of change. Furthermore, the jungle as a gendered space mirrors real-life societal fears about female independence: "The return of exiled female characters is almost always facilitated by divine intervention or male authority, rather than by their agency, reinforcing the notion that a woman's survival is dependent on external validation." (Shulman 280) In this context, the jungle serves as a space of patriarchal discipline, where women must undergo trials before being allowed back into the fold of society. Thus, *Brotokotha* uses the jungle as a powerful metaphor to illustrate the precarious position of women in a patriarchal world where survival is possible

only through devotion and submission.

The Sun in Hindu tradition represents both life and moral order. Gupta finds, “Sun worship in agrarian societies is not just a religious act, but a symbolic affirmation of nature’s rhythms, where the Sun embodies both divine energy and agricultural sustenance.” rituals like *Itu* and *Chhath Puja* emphasise its role in fertility and prosperity, positioning women as spiritual nurturers whose devotion ensures cosmic balance (Gupta 176). While men in Hindu mythology derive power from the Sun, women’s connection is marked by self-sacrifice, reinforcing gendered roles through religious devotion.

“A woman’s strength in Hindu narratives is often measured by her ability to endure suffering silently, reinforcing the ideal of the self-sacrificing wife and daughter.” (Banerjee 165). This conditioning extends beyond storytelling into real-life fasting rituals like *Karva Chauth* and *Teej*, further cementing the association between endurance and female virtue. The *Brotokotha* of *Itu Puja* conditions women to accept suffering and submission as natural virtues. The sisters’ punishment for eating *Pithe* reinforces the belief that female desires must be controlled, while their continued devotion to their father reflects the expectation of unconditional forgiveness.

The *Brotokotha* tradition has long conditioned women to equate suffering with virtue, reinforcing patriarchal norms through ritual practices like fasting and self-sacrifice. The retelling of these narratives does not merely recall suffering but legitimises it as a path to virtue and social acceptance. However, with urbanisation, education, and media reshaping cultural perceptions, the future of *Brotokotha* faces a crucial choice: preservation or reformation. While maintaining heritage is essential, folklore can be reinterpreted to align with contemporary

gender discourse, balancing tradition with progressive ideals and ensuring storytelling continues to shape societal values meaningfully.

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KITCHEN CHRONICLES: THE ORAL JOURNEY OF BENGALI FLAVOURS

Dr. Megna Bose

Abstract

The transmission of Bengali recipes in West Bengal is a rich manifestation of oral culture that has been preserved across generations, playing a pivotal role in both the culinary and social fabric of the region. Through informal channels such as family gatherings, festivals, and community interactions, Bengali recipes are passed down orally, often with nuanced variations based on familial and regional preferences. This oral tradition has not only facilitated the continuity of regional culinary practices but has also reinforced social bonds within communities, highlighting the significance of food in maintaining cultural identity. The recipes, often embedded with emotional narratives, serve as a cultural medium that transcends mere sustenance, becoming an expression of love, hospitality, and tradition. Furthermore, the oral transmission of these recipes provides insights into the historical evolution of Bengali food, reflecting influences from different periods of cultural exchange, colonialism, and migration. In contemporary times, the rapid spread of digital technology poses a challenge to this oral tradition, with written recipes and online platforms gradually replacing face-to-face culinary storytelling. However, the resilience of oral culture continues to shape the culinary landscape, ensuring that traditional Bengali dishes retain their cultural essence. This paper explores the sociocultural dynamics of recipe transmission in Bengali households and the impact of modernity on this age-old practice.

Keywords: *Bengali cuisine, oral tradition, cultural transmission, food culture*

1. Introduction

Food is not just a means of sustenance; it is a cornerstone of cultural identity and social connection. In West Bengal, the tradition of passing down Bengali recipes orally is a testament to the rich tapestry of culinary knowledge and community ties. These recipes are not stagnant relics of the past; they are living, breathing entities that evolve with each generation, adapting to changing circumstances while staying true to their cultural roots. Through family gatherings, festive occasions, and community interactions, these recipes are kept alive, ensuring that the essence of Bengali cuisine continues to thrive.

This paper delves into the intricate sociocultural dynamics that underlie the oral transmission of Bengali recipes, shedding light on how this age-old practice serves to strengthen social bonds and foster a sense of identity. At the same time, the study explores the impact of digital modernity on this cherished tradition. In today's digital age,

with the proliferation of the Internet, mobile technology, and social media, the traditional art of face-to-face culinary storytelling that once thrived in Bengali households is gradually giving way to written texts, video tutorials, and online recipe-sharing platforms. While digital media presents opportunities for wider dissemination, it also poses a threat to the rich nuances and context-specific elements of oral tradition.

The central questions guiding this research are: How do Bengali families and communities transmit culinary knowledge through oral culture? In what ways does this process reinforce social cohesion and cultural identity? And how is this age-old practice being reshaped in the face of rapid digital transformation? By exploring these questions, the study aims to contribute to the broader sociological understanding of cultural transmission, the interplay between tradition and modernity, and the resilience of oral culture in a digital age.

2. Literature Review

The oral transmission of culture has been a central theme in sociological and anthropological studies. Scholars such as Ong (1982) have emphasized the epistemological and cultural significance of orality in pre-literate societies, while later studies (Finnegan, 2002) have explored how oral traditions persist even in literate cultures. In the context of food culture, Mintz and Du Bois (2002) illustrate that culinary traditions serve as both a repository of cultural history and a means for sustaining social networks.

Bengali cuisine, with its unique blend of spices, cooking techniques, and regional ingredients, has been noted as a critical component of Bengali cultural identity (Chatterjee, 2010). Researchers have documented that the transmission of recipes in West Bengal is not merely a technical process but one imbued with emotional and symbolic meanings (Dasgupta, 2012). For example, family gatherings and religious festivals serve as communal sites where recipes are shared and refined, reinforcing bonds of kinship and collective identity (Mukherjee & Sen, 2015).

Recent studies on the impact of digital technology on traditional practices (Roy, 2018; Bhattacharya, 2020) indicate that while digital media can extend the reach of cultural practices, it also transforms the nature of transmission. Written recipes and online platforms offer consistency and permanence but may lack the personalized, context-rich elements of oral storytelling. This tension between preservation and transformation is at the heart of debates in cultural sociology today (Appadurai, 1996).

Merton's (1948) concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy, though originally applied in the context of bank runs and racial stereotypes, has been used metaphorically to

explain how cultural practices reinforce themselves over time. In the case of Bengali recipes, the continued oral transmission can be seen as a self-fulfilling process where the shared belief in the value of traditional methods reinforces their ongoing practice, even as external influences push toward modernization.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the oral transmission of Bengali recipes and the challenges posed by digital modernity. The methodology includes three complementary approaches:

3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 30 participants from diverse backgrounds in West Bengal. Participants included elder family members recognized as custodians of traditional recipes, younger generations who are both transmitters and receivers of culinary knowledge. The interviews aimed to capture:

- Personal narratives about how recipes were learned and passed down.
- Perceptions of the role of oral tradition in maintaining cultural identity.
- Views on the impact of digital media on traditional culinary storytelling.

A purposive sampling strategy ensured a mix of gender, socioeconomic status, and urban–rural representation. Interviews were recorded (with consent) and later transcribed for thematic analysis.

3.2 Participant Observation

Fieldwork was carried out over six months in various settings, including family gatherings, local festivals (such as Durga Puja and Kali Puja), and community kitchens. Participant observation allowed the researcher to witness firsthand:

- The contexts in which recipes are shared orally.
- Variations in recipe details during transmission.
- The interaction dynamics between different generations during culinary practices.

Detailed field notes were maintained to record observations, which were later coded and analyzed to identify recurring themes related to social bonding, cultural identity, and the narrative style of recipe transmission.

3.3 Archival Research

To understand the historical evolution of Bengali culinary traditions, archival research was conducted in local libraries and cultural institutions. This included examining historical cookbooks, community newsletters, and old audio recordings (where available) that documented oral recitations of recipes. The archival materials provided a historical context for how recipes have evolved over time and the influences of colonialism, migration, and cultural exchange on Bengali cuisine.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data from interviews and participant observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcripts and field notes were coded to identify major themes such as:

- **Oral Narrative and Emotion:** How emotional storytelling reinforces recipe transmission and how every recipe is a repository of cultural memory, a tangible connection to the past that preserves not only the culinary techniques but also the values, beliefs and experiences of the community.
- **Social Bonding:** The role of communal gatherings in preserving oral traditions.
- **Cultural Identity:** The symbolic importance of recipes in defining Bengali cultural identity.

- **Digital Disruption:** Perceptions of how digital technology is transforming the transmission process.

Triangulation among these methods ensured that the findings were robust and reflective of the multifaceted nature of oral culinary traditions.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 The Richness of Oral Culinary Culture

Interviews have uncovered a fascinating insight into the significance of oral recipe transmission among participants. Many individuals consider this practice to be sacred, a vital component of family life. Older participants fondly reminisced about how they acquired recipes by observing their mothers and grandmothers cooking during special occasions and family gatherings. These recipes were not mere guidelines for preparing food; they were intertwined with tales of family history, personal anecdotes, and expressions of love and hospitality. One respondent poignantly expressed, “Every recipe holds a memory—a narrative of our shared celebrations. It's more than just food; it's a reflection of our essence.” For instance, the preparation of *Ilish Macher Jhal* (Hilsa fish curry) is taught not just as a cooking method but as an art form, where the careful cleaning of the Hilsa fish, the precise marination with turmeric and salt, and the gentle simmering in mustard oil and green chillies are all passed on through live demonstrations and oral commentary. Each household may have its own variation—some may add an extra pinch of spice or a secret ingredient—demonstrating how the recipe evolves while still remaining rooted in tradition. This dynamic process of adaptation reflects the sociological concept of cultural transmission, where learned behaviours and practices are continuously modified as they pass from one generation to the next (Ong, 1982; Finnegan, 2002).

Participant observation during festivals has unequivocally confirmed that culinary storytelling is a deeply communal activity. One particularly poignant example occurred during a Durga Puja celebration in a quaint rural village. An elderly woman took center stage, regaling the gathered crowd with the origins of a beloved fish curry recipe while expertly demonstrating the cooking process. Her narrative was rich with references to historical events and personal anecdotes, effectively strengthening the communal identity and shared heritage of all in attendance.

4.2 Social Bonds and Cultural Identity

The research suggests that sharing recipes orally serves as a social bond, strengthening family connections and community unity. In numerous homes, cooking and exchanging recipes take place in a communal environment, with various generations participating. The casual atmosphere of these exchanges fosters trust and a sense of continuity, allowing for the passing down of not just cooking skills, but also cherished values and traditions.

The act of verbally passing down recipes is not only a tradition but also a symbol of cultural authenticity. In today's fast-paced globalized society, individuals take great pride in the fact that Bengali cuisine has managed to maintain its distinct identity over the years. Many participants emphasized that the slight modifications made to recipes by different families or regions actually contribute to, rather than diminish, the cultural diversity. For instance, the preparation of a traditional "macher jhol" (fish curry) may vary slightly between coastal and inland households, but these differences are embraced as a testament to local creativity and historical progression. "Aloo Posto" also stands as a powerful testament to the role of food in building and sustaining social bonds and cultural identity

in West Bengal. Its preparation—rooted in oral tradition—ensures that each generation not only learns a recipe but also absorbs the collective memory and values of their community.

4.3 The Impact of Digital Modernity

Despite the long-standing oral culinary traditions in West Bengal, digital technology is beginning to have an impact on how recipes are shared. Many younger individuals have expressed their appreciation for the oral tradition, but they are also turning to written recipes and digital videos for their convenience and accuracy. Social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube are now becoming hubs for a wide range of content related to Bengali cuisine, offering everything from detailed recipe tutorials to live cooking sessions. The fusion of traditional methods with modern technology is revolutionizing the way recipes are passed down and shared in West Bengal.

Some interviewees, especially younger individuals, have mixed feelings about the transition towards digital recipes. While they acknowledge the convenience of finding recipes online and reaching a wider audience, there is a fear that the personal touch and storytelling aspect of sharing recipes may be diminished. One young woman expressed her concerns by stating, "Digital recipes are clear and straightforward, but they lack the emotional depth and family history that comes from hearing my grandmother's stories while she cooked. The warmth and context are missing when viewed on a screen." It is evident that while technology has its benefits, there is a longing for the traditional, intimate connection that comes from sharing recipes in person.

Participant observation at a contemporary cooking workshop in Kolkata highlighted the ongoing tension between tradition and technology. The workshop

seamlessly integrated digital displays and printed recipe booklets with the instructor's emphasis on sharing personal stories and family traditions related to the dishes being prepared. This innovative hybrid approach underscores the evolving nature of culinary culture, where digital technology plays a crucial role while community members strive to uphold the oral tradition.

4.4 Negotiating Tradition and Modernity

The findings suggest that the passing down of Bengali recipes is not simply a battle between tradition and modernity, but rather a complex interplay between the two. Traditional oral transmission methods are undergoing a transformation: some families are now utilizing audio devices or smartphones to document the stories behind their recipes, ensuring that the narrative is preserved while embracing digital technology. This innovative approach allows for the emotional and communal elements of oral tradition to be upheld, even as the method of transmission evolves.

Furthermore, digital platforms have created new opportunities for intercultural exchange. For example, online groups dedicated to Bengali cuisine allow diaspora communities to share recipes and stories, ensuring that the tradition continues even when physical proximity is lost. This broadened scope not only reinforces cultural identity among Bengali expatriates but also introduces non-Bengalis to the rich heritage of Bengali food.

The resilience of oral culture in the face of digital modernity can be seen as a form of “cultural bricolage” (Levi-Strauss, 1966), where elements of the old and new are combined creatively to sustain cultural practices. Traditional recipes are no longer confined to the private sphere of the family kitchen; they are now part of a larger digital

narrative that reaches global audiences. Nevertheless, the core value—transmission through personal storytelling—remains central.

4.5 Theoretical Implications

From a sociological perspective, the oral transmission of Bengali recipes provides a compelling case study of cultural persistence and adaptation. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of habitus and cultural capital, one can argue that the knowledge of traditional recipes is a form of cultural capital that enhances social status within the community. The ability to recall and share a family recipe with authenticity is a marker of belonging and pride in one's cultural heritage.

Moreover, the process aligns with Merton's (1948) notion of self-fulfilling prophecies in that the collective belief in the value and authenticity of orally transmitted recipes reinforces the practice itself. As families and communities continue to uphold these practices, the very act of oral transmission becomes validated, ensuring that Bengali culinary heritage is continuously reproduced.

The digital challenge of our modern world raises important questions about the transformation of cultural identity. As digital media continue to play a larger role in cultural transmission, there is a concern that standardized and depersonalized content may erode the rich and context-dependent nature of traditional practices. Scholars, such as Appadurai (1996), have argued that the “global cultural economy” often prioritizes uniformity over diversity, leading to worries about cultural homogenization. However, evidence from West Bengal suggests that local communities are not simply passive recipients of global influences - they are active agents in negotiating and reshaping their cultural traditions. This highlights the resilience and

adaptability of cultural identities in the face of digital challenges.

5. Conclusion

The oral transmission of Bengali recipes in West Bengal is not just about passing down cooking techniques - it's a way of keeping traditions alive, connecting communities, and navigating the ever-changing world we live in. By sharing recipes through storytelling, families are able to preserve their histories, emotions, and values. This age-old practice of passing down recipes has stood the test of time, proving that cultural resilience can thrive even in the digital age.

This qualitative study, based on semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and archival research, uncovers the intriguing relationship between digital technology and traditional practices. While the digital age brings its own set of challenges, it also opens up exciting opportunities for the evolution of age-old customs. Despite the younger generations' growing reliance on digital resources, they still hold a deep appreciation for the storytelling and emotional depth that comes with oral transmission. In fact, the innovative practice of recording family recipes through audio technology showcases how tradition and modernity can harmoniously coexist and enhance each other. In a world where technology is constantly changing the way we interact with our heritage, it's refreshing to see that the essence of tradition can still thrive in the digital age.

From a theoretical standpoint, the persistence of oral culinary traditions in Bengali households underscores the interplay between habitus, cultural capital, and self-fulfilling cultural practices. It also raises important questions about how modern communication technologies may reshape—not erase—long-standing cultural practices. The findings of this study not only contribute

to our understanding of cultural transmission and culinary sociology but also offer broader insights into how communities navigate the tensions between preservation and innovation in the digital age.

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MYTHS RETOLD: FEMINIST REINTERPRETATIONS OF ORAL TRADITIONS IN SELECTED INDIAN TEXTS

Sowmya A N

Abstract

For centuries, women have played a pivotal role in upholding the traditions of society, often serving as custodians of cultural narratives and oral traditions. However, these traditions have frequently relegated women to roles of subservience and sacrifice, reflecting broader patriarchal values. Aristotle's philosophical assertions on the inferiority of women, which justified their exclusion from positions of power and intellectual pursuits, mirror the marginalization of women in Indian mythological texts such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. These epics, celebrated as cultural cornerstones, often portray women as passive bearers of virtue and symbols of familial honour, their roles confined within the bounds of tradition.

*Despite this historical marginalization, contemporary feminist reinterpretations of these texts challenge traditional narratives and reframe women's roles within the cultural fabric of society. This paper examines feminist retellings of oral traditions as presented in *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* by Kavita Kane, which reimagine women not as mere upholders of tradition but as active agents of cultural transformation. By examining these texts, this paper reveals how feminist reinterpretations of mythological storytelling disrupt patriarchal narratives, transforming women's roles from passive participants in the perpetuation of societal traditions to active voices challenging and reshaping cultural norms.*

Keywords: *Feminist Reinterpretations, Oral Traditions, Gender and Power, Mythological Storytelling*

Introduction

Oral traditions in India have long functioned as mechanisms of cultural transmission, preserving narratives that define social structures and gender roles. Women have historically played an integral role in these traditions, yet their agency has often been undermined by the patriarchal nature of storytelling. Traditional epics such as the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* have celebrated male heroism while confining female characters to roles of duty, sacrifice, and obedience. However, feminist reinterpretations of these narratives challenge these restrictive portrayals, offering a subversive critique of gender norms and redefining women's voices in the cultural discourse.

This paper examines how contemporary feminist retellings of mythological epics

deconstruct traditional oral narratives to provide alternative perspectives on women's roles. Through an analysis of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* and Kavita Kane's *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen*, this paper argues that feminist reinterpretations of mythological storytelling enable a reclamation of female agency, transforming women from passive figures into active participants in shaping their destinies.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning Indian-American author, poet, and professor known for her works that center on the experiences of South Asian women. Born in Kolkata, India, she moved to the United States for higher education and obtained her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. Divakaruni's literary works often explore themes of immigration,

identity, feminism, and mythology, blending historical narratives with modern sensibilities. *The Palace of Illusions* (2008) is one of her most celebrated novels, offering a feminist retelling of the *Mahabharata* through the perspective of Draupadi. By giving Draupadi a strong, assertive voice, Divakaruni reclaims the narrative space traditionally dominated by male perspectives, emphasizing female agency, power, and resistance against patriarchal norms.

Draupadi in *The Palace of Illusions* reimagines the *Mahabharata* through the eyes of Draupadi, presenting her as a complex and assertive woman who actively engages with her fate. Unlike traditional retellings, which emphasize her role as the cause of the Kurukshetra war, Divakaruni's narrative highlights Draupadi's inner struggles, her intellect, and her resistance to societal expectations. The novel foregrounds Draupadi's emotions, desires, and ambitions, portraying her as a woman who refuses to remain silent in the face of injustice. This feminist reinterpretation challenges the notion that women in mythology are mere pawns in a larger patriarchal framework and instead portrays them as powerful agents of change.

Draupadi's rejection of traditional norms is evident from the beginning of the novel. She renames herself Panchali to assert her identity beyond being the daughter of Drupada. Her ability to challenge patriarchal structures is highlighted in her refusal to be a silent wife to the Pandavas, instead seeking autonomy in a male-dominated world. Divakaruni crafts Draupadi as a woman with desires and agency, making her a deeply relatable figure for modern feminist readers.

One of the most compelling aspects of Divakaruni's portrayal of Draupadi is her relationship with Karna. Unlike traditional tellings where Draupadi and Karna are depicted as adversaries, *The Palace of Illusions*

explores an unspoken attraction between them. Karna emerges as a tragic hero, an underdog with secret strengths, whose honor and loyalty place him in direct opposition to Draupadi's fate. This complex portrayal adds depth to Draupadi's character, showing her internal conflicts and desires that go beyond the rigid structures imposed upon her. The novel highlights Karna's nobility and tragedy, making him a central figure in Draupadi's emotional world.

Kavita Kane is a renowned Indian author recognized for her feminist retellings of Indian mythological narratives. With a background in journalism and a postgraduate degree in English literature and mass communications, Kane transitioned into fiction writing to highlight the neglected voices of mythological women. *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* (2013) was her debut novel and received critical acclaim for its unique perspective on the *Mahabharata*. By narrating the story through Uruvi, a character largely absent from mainstream retellings, Kane redefines female agency in a rigidly structured patriarchal world. Her works consistently foreground women's perspectives, challenging traditional portrayals and offering fresh, empowering interpretations of mythological heroines.

Uruvi in *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* Kavita Kane's *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* provides another feminist reinterpretation by narrating the *Mahabharata* from the perspective of Uruvi, Karna's wife. Unlike traditional accounts that marginalize Karna's domestic life, Kane's novel centers Uruvi as a woman of intellect and agency who challenges the rigid caste and gender hierarchies of her time. Uruvi represents a radical departure from the passive female figures in mythological texts, portraying a woman who chooses her own path despite societal condemnation.

A critical analysis of the novel highlights Uruvi as a pillar of support to Karna, demonstrating the humanistic aspects of her character. Her unwavering loyalty, courage, and intelligence redefine her role from a mere consort to a woman who actively shapes the narrative of her husband's life. Her education, healing abilities, and self-determination make her a strong, independent figure, offering a feminist counter-narrative to conventional portrayals of mythological women. Kane presents Uruvi as a woman who does not merely suffer but actively negotiates her space within a rigidly structured world, a significant theme in feminist discourse.

Conclusion

Feminist reinterpretations of mythological storytelling provide a powerful means of challenging entrenched patriarchal norms and offering alternative perspectives on women's agency. By centering female protagonists and highlighting their struggles, contemporary retellings of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* subvert traditional gender roles and provide a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences in oral traditions.

This paper has demonstrated that feminist retellings such as *The Palace of Illusions* and *Karna's Wife: The Outcast Queen* not only reclaim women's voices but also reframe historical narratives to reflect the complexities of female agency. By examining

these narratives, we gain insight into how oral traditions can serve as both instruments of oppression and vehicles for resistance, ultimately shaping the discourse on gender and power in contemporary Indian literature.

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A STUDY OF ORAL ECOLOGICAL NARRATIVES IN ASSAMESE LULLABIES: AN ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

Kakoli Bonya Gogoi

Abstract

Oral ecological literature refers to stories, songs and folklore that embody ecological consciousness and highlight the interdependence between humans and nature. Lullabies, in this context, serve as a gentle medium to introduce children to environmental values, often portraying elements of nature in a soothing and familiar manner. Assamese lullabies, locally known as “Nisukoni Geet” frequently incorporate images of rivers, birds, trees and rural landscapes which reflect the deep bond between Assamese culture and its rich biodiversity. Assamese lullabies not only celebrate nature but also instill a sense of ecological responsibility. By introducing children to elements of the environment in an affectionate and familiar way, they lay the foundation for nature conservation by associating trees, rivers and animals with comfort and security and nurturing in them a sense of responsibility towards protecting them. Many lullabies reflect the simplicity of rural life, encouraging sustainable practices such as farming, fishing, and coexisting with nature, thereby fostering a sustainable living. Cultural and environmental awareness is instilled among the children as they learn about their surroundings through lullabies; they develop pride in their cultural and natural heritage, motivating them to preserve it. This paper tries to study how Assamese lullabies, as a form of oral ecological literature, beautifully blend the themes of motherhood, comfort and environmental consciousness. This study aims to analyze how the lullabies act as early lessons in ecology, fostering a bond between children and nature from infancy. In an era of rapid environmental degradation, reviving and preserving these lullabies can serve as a gentle yet profound way to sustain ecological wisdom across generations.

Keywords: *oral ecological literature, lullabies, environmental awareness, sustainable living, cultural awareness*

Introduction

The term lullaby is believed to have come from two Middle English words ‘lullen’ meaning ‘to lull’ and ‘by(e)’ meaning in a sense ‘near’. It is generally a soothing sound or song that lulls babies to sleep. Lullabies are among the earliest forms of oral literature that a child is exposed to, creating an emotional and cultural bridge between generations. Studies confirm that lullabies, specially sung by the mother or any female, contain therapeutic values that help them sleep and feed better and also regulate their cardiac and respiratory functions. Lullabies also help in developing their communication skills, stimulate their language and cognitive behaviors. One can find a reflection of the respective societies in these lullabies, varying from region to region. Lullabies are also used to pass down cultural knowledge from generation to generation.

In Assamese culture, lullabies are popularly known as ‘Nisukoni Geet’ or ‘Dhai Naam’. They are an integral part of Assamese folk songs. These “Nisukoni Geet” or lullabies are deeply intertwined with nature, not only soothing children but subtly conveying ecological values and observations. These songs are rich in environmental metaphors, seasonal rhythms, and harmonious human-nature relationships, reflecting the community’s close connection with its surroundings. The study of Assamese lullabies from an environmental perspective helps us decode how traditional societies perceived and interacted with their natural surroundings. It opens up a window into understanding how oral narratives can function as ecological texts, conveying messages about biodiversity, seasonal changes, animal behavior and sustainable living. This

paper aims to explore the ecological narratives in Assamese lullabies, examining how they reflect an organic relationship between humans and nature. It aims to uncover how nature is portrayed, revered and understood in these gentle songs, offering insights into traditional environmental consciousness that has relevance even today.

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to analyze Assamese lullabies as carriers of ecological knowledge. Moreover, it also aims to identify environmental imagery and symbolism in selected lullabies and interpret the cultural relationship with nature as expressed in these songs. Lastly, attempt would be made to examine their significance in fostering ecological awareness in traditional Assamese society.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach, analyzing popular Assamese lullabies drawn from oral sources and folk collections. The selected songs are interpreted thematically to identify ecological elements, such as references to flora, fauna, weather and landscape, and to decode their symbolic meaning. Additionally, discussions with elderly Assamese speakers and folk musicians enrich the contextual understanding of these lullabies.

Assamese lullabies often blur the line between the natural and human world, depicting a world that thrives on co-existence and nurturing relationship. The following lullabies illustrate these ecological narratives:

1. *Amare Moina xubo e,*

Barite bogori rubo e,

Barire bogori poki xoribo,

Moinai butoli kbabo

Paraphrase in English: Our little child will sleep, he will grow jujube trees in the garden,

the jujube from the garden will ripe, Our little child will pick them up and eat them

This lullaby creates a metaphorical link between the child and the natural world, where the act of sleeping, a sign of peace and growth, is paralleled with the growth of a bogori (jujube) tree. The bogori is a hardy fruit-bearing plant, valued in Assamese households. Its mention here not only situates the lullaby in a domestic agrarian context but also represents abundance, resilience and sustainability. By associating a child's rest with the thriving of a tree, the song teaches that personal well-being and natural harmony are interconnected. It promotes a gentle lesson in co-existence.

2. *Xiali e nahibi rati*

Tur kan kati logam bati

Xialir murore moruwa phul

Xiali palegoi rotonpur

Paraphrase in English: O vixen, do not come at night, or we shall cut your ears. The vixen wearing a morua flower on her head has reached Ratanpur.

This lullaby references the xiyali (vixen), a common figure in rural Assamese folklore. While the line may seem like a protective invocation, warning the animal not to disturb the child, it also reflects the human-animal interaction in village life. The fox is not demonized but acknowledged as a commonplace part of the nightscape. It subtly reinforces the understanding that humans share their environment with other creatures. The fox's presence at night depicts natural rhythms and coexistence, even with potentially dangerous animals.

3. *Lai hale jale abeli botahe*

Lofa hale jale pate,

Amare moina balise jalise

Kali duporore pate

Paraphrase in English: The mustard greens sway in the afternoon breeze, the mallow leaves sway softly, Our little one is sleeping soundly under the shade of the afternoon sun

This lullaby vividly paints a pastoral landscape. The lai xaak (mustard) and lofa xaak (Chinese Mallow) fields common sight of Assamese rural scenery, especially during winter and spring. Both lai xaak and lofa xaak are integral parts of Assamese cuisine, particularly in winter. The sight of mustard leaves and mallow leaves swaying in the breeze is not just poetic, it reflects an agricultural rhythm and a sensory connection with land. The reference to time (abeli meaning afternoon) and the gentle botah (breeze) also suggests the passage of time in harmony with the seasonal changes. This lullaby, like many Assamese folk songs, reflects the serene and natural beauty of Assam's rural life. It captures the peaceful atmosphere of an afternoon, with the gentle breeze and the rustling leaves, creating a soothing environment for the child to sleep.

4. *Mur bupai xoru*

Rakhe bore goru

Esari heruai kande

Lukor dhane khabo

Kubai kilabo

Lornai anibo goru

Paraphrase in English: Our little child will graze the cattle, he will lose the whip and cry, the cattle will eat the paddy of other people's field and the little child will bring back home the cattle

This lullaby offers a vivid portrayal of rural life in Assam, emphasizing the integral role of cattle in the daily existence of Assamese farmers. The mention of cows underscores their significance in agricultural practices, highlighting that the economy of Assam is predominantly agrarian. The song

paints a picture of a young child, possibly a shepherd, entrusted with the responsibility of grazing the cattle. When the child loses focus, the cows stray into neighboring fields and consume paddy from other people's fields. This trespassing leads to the rightful owner chasing the cows away. In response, the young shepherd brings the cattle back home, ensuring they are safely returned. Through this narrative, the lullaby not only soothes the child but also subtly imparts lessons about responsibility, the interconnectedness of rural life and the challenges faced by farmers in maintaining their livelihoods. It reflects the deep bond between humans and nature, characteristic of Assamese culture.

5. *Aamare moina hubo*

Xunali dhanoni dabo

Poka dhanor sira kbundi dim

Moinai bati vorai vorai khabo

Paraphrase in English: Our little one will sleep, he will harvest the golden paddy field, I will grind the paddy and prepare sira, the little one will eat bowl full of sira

The above lullaby talks about the food source of Assamese people which is procured through the means of agriculture. It introduces the child to the entire process of preparing sira, a traditional Assamese food item, from harvesting the paddy to grinding it into flattened rice flakes, culminating in the final dish served in a bowl. This depiction underscores the deep connection between Assamese society and its agricultural practices, reflecting the community's reliance on farming for sustenance and cultural identity.

6. *Amar moina xule xule*

Jogot nijan jan

Run nidibi baabor paroi

Mou nagabi gaan

Paraphrase in English: Our little one is peacefully sleeping, while the world around is silent and still. O pigeons, refrain from cooing; O bees, cease your humming

This lullaby reflects the deep connection between Assamese culture and nature. The mother's plea for silence from the pigeons and bees underscores the tranquil environment she wishes for her child. It highlights the harmonious coexistence of humans with the natural world, where even the smallest creatures are considered part of the familial ecosystem. Such lullabies not only soothe children but also impart cultural values and a sense of belonging to the natural world.

Conclusion

Assamese lullabies are more than just soothing songs sung to infants. They are a unique blend of poetic art and ecological wisdom, offering insights into how traditional societies perceived and lived with nature. By embedding environmental knowledge in accessible and emotionally resonant forms, these lullabies contribute to the cultural transmission of ecological values.

In an age where environmental degradation is a pressing concern, revisiting oral traditions like Assamese lullabies can inspire a more rooted and emotional

approach to ecological thinking. These songs not only celebrate the beauty of nature but also remind us of our responsibilities toward it. Recognizing and preserving such oral ecological narratives can be a meaningful step in nurturing an environmentally conscious society.

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পৰম্পৰাগত অসমীয়া মালিতাত আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ
উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যক্তি আৰু ইতিহাসৰ প্ৰতিফলনঃ এক পৰ্যালোচনা।

গীতালি চাংমাই
গৌৰৱ শইকীয়া

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্যৰ এক উল্লেখযোগ্য সম্পদ হ'ল ঐতিহাসিক বেলাড বা মালিতা সমূহ। যুগ যুগ ধৰি মুখে মুখে প্ৰচলিত লেখক পৰিচয়হীন মালিতাসমূহ কেৱল সহজ সৰল অনাখৰী চহা জনসাধাৰণৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনৰ কাহিনী সমৃদ্ধই নহয়, এনে বহু কাব্য কাহিনীত আছে ইতিহাসৰ পৰশ। ফুলকোঁৱৰ গীত, মণিকোঁৱৰৰ গীত, নাহৰ গীত, চিকণ সৰিয়হৰ গীত, হৰদত্ত-বীৰদত্তৰ গীত, জয়মতী কুৱঁৰীৰ গীত আৰু অন্যান্য, এই সকলোবোৰতে আছে বুৰঞ্জীৰ আচৌৰ। এই মালিতাসমূহত প্ৰকাশ পোৱা ঐতিহাসিক কাহিনীবোৰে এই ব্যক্তিসকলৰ বীৰত্ব, নেতৃত্বগুণ আৰু নৈতিক মূল্যবোধৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি সেই সময়ৰ সমাজিক আৰু ৰাজনৈতিক পৰিসৰলৈকে দৃষ্টিপাত কৰে। ঐতিহাসিক দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে বিচাৰ কৰিলে এই কাব্য কাহিনী বোৰৰ সত্যাসত্যতা নিৰূপণ কৰিব পৰা যায়, জানিব পৰা যায় পৰম্পৰাগত বুৰঞ্জীত এলাগী হৈ ৰৈ যোৱা কাহিনী তথা অলেখ তথ্য। সেয়েহে এই মালিতাসমূহ কেৱল অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ আপুৰুগীয়া সম্পদ নহয় বৰঞ্চ ইতিহাস সংৰক্ষণ আৰু ঐতিহ্যৰ এক প্ৰাণৱন্ত প্ৰতীক। এইক্ষেত্ৰত ইতিহাসবিদ লীলা গগৈ দেৱৰ ভাষাৰেই কব পৰা যায় “কাব্যই হওঁক বা কথাই হওঁক তাৰ বুকুত বুৰঞ্জীৰ কঠীয়া পাব পাৰো।” সচাকৈয়ে, ইতিহাস আৰু লৌকিকতাত একত্ৰিত কৰি ৰচনা কৰা মালিতাত অজৰ অমৰ হৈ ৰোৱা কাব্য কাহিনীবোৰ ঐতিহাসিক মূল্য অপৰিসীম। উক্ত গৱেষণা পত্ৰত অসমীয়া সমাজত প্ৰচলিত মালিতাত মধ্যযুগৰ আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যক্তিৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব কেনেদৰে উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে আৰু ইয়াৰ ঐতিহাসিক তাৎপৰ্য বিশ্লেষণ কৰা হৈছে।

বীজ শব্দঃ- ইতিহাস, মালিতা, মধ্যযুগ, অসমীয়া সাহিত্য, আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰ।

আৰম্ভণি :

মালিতা অসমীয়া সাহিত্য তথা ইতিহাসৰ আপুৰুগীয়া সম্পদ। ইংৰাজী বেলাডৰ সমাৰ্থক হিচাপে ব্যৱহৃত “মালিতা” প্ৰকৃততে অসমীয়া শব্দ ‘মালা’ৰ পৰা উদ্ভৱ হৈছে, অৰ্থাৎ ফুলৰ মালাৰ দৰেই এটাৰ পাছত আনটোকৈ ক্ৰমানুসাৰে গাঁথি যোৱা গীতিব্যঞ্জক কাহিনীবোৰকেই মালিতা আখ্যা দিব পাৰি (Gogoi, 1992)। এই মালিতা সমূহক “অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্যৰ ৰূপৰেখা” গ্ৰন্থত ড॰ লীলা গগৈদেৱে দুটা ভাগত বিভক্ত কৰিছে এনেদৰে—

১. বুৰঞ্জীমূলক মালিতা আৰু

২. পৌৰাণিক কাহিনীমূলক মালিতা।

মধ্যযুগৰ অসমৰ আহোম ৰাজত্বকালত, ৰজাঘৰৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাত ব্যাপক ৰূপত বুৰঞ্জী চৰ্চাৰ পৰম্পৰাই সাময়িকভাৱে জন্ম দিছিল অন্য বহু বুৰঞ্জীভিত্তিক কথাকাহিনী, কিম্বদন্তী তথা অন্যান্য লৌকিক গীত মাতৰ, এই সমূহত অংকিত হৈছিল সমসাময়িক বুৰঞ্জীৰ পাতত উপেক্ষিত হৈ ৰোৱা বহু তথ্য, তথা বুৰঞ্জীয়ে ঢুকি পাবলৈ অক্ষম হোৱা এনে কিছু কাহিনী, ব্যক্তিৰ যুগমীয়া কীৰ্তি অথবা কু-কীৰ্তি যাৰ ঐতিহাসিক মূল্য অপৰিসীম (Chetia, 2001)। একেদৰে পুৰণি কাহিনীমূলক মালিতাসমূহতো ইতিহাসৰ পৰশ পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। নিৰ্ভাঁজ অসমীয়া

ভাষা আৰু সহজ-সৰল উপস্থাপন শৈলীৰ এই সকলোবোৰ মালিতাতেই জনসাধাৰণৰ স্বত্বস্বত্ব দুখ, ক্ষোভ অথবা আনন্দৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশ, ইত্যাদিৰ চিত্ৰ পৰিস্ফুট হয়। আনকি বহুসময়ত মুখ বাগৰি এই মালিতাসমূহৰ ৰূপৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনো হোৱা দেখা যায়।

অধ্যয়নৰ লক্ষ্য আৰু উদ্দেশ্য :

১) মধ্যযুগীয় অসমৰ ইতিহাস চৰ্চাত মালিতাৰ গুৰুত্ব নিৰ্ণয়।

২) পৰম্পৰাগত অসমীয়া মালিতাত আহোম যুগৰ ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যক্তিৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব বিশ্লেষণ।

৩) অসমীয়া মালিতাত মধ্যযুগীয় সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত সাধাৰণ লোকৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত ক্ষোভ, আৰেগ তথা অনুভূতিৰ ঐতিহাসিক চিত্ৰায়ণ।

৪) অসমীয়া মালিতাত আহোম যুগৰ নাৰীৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব, সামাজিক আৰু ৰাজনৈতিক ভূমিকা নিৰ্ধাৰণ।

অধ্যয়ন প্ৰণালী :

উক্ত গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ প্ৰস্তুতিৰ বাবে উপযোগী হোৱাকৈ বিভিন্ন গৌণ সমল যেনে কিতাপ, আলোচনী, প্ৰবন্ধ, ইণ্টাৰনেট আদি উৎসৰ পৰা তথ্য সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছে।

মূল আলোচনা :

নাহৰৰ গীত : মধ্যযুগৰ আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ স্বৰ্গদেউ চুখামফা বা খোৰা ৰজাৰ শাসনৰ সময়ছোৱাত (১৫৫২-১৬০৩) সংঘটিত এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাৰ বিষয়ে সুন্দৰ কাব্যিক গীতত ৰচিত তথা উপলব্ধি 'নাহৰৰ গীত' এক বুৰঞ্জীমূলক মালিতা বা বেলাডৰ উৎকৃষ্ট উদাহৰণ। উক্ত বেলাডত বুৰঞ্জীত অৱহেলিত আৰু মৌখিক ৰূপত প্ৰচলিত এক অনুপম কাহিনীৰ সবিশেষ বৰ্ণনা দাঙি ধৰা হৈছে। উক্ত বৰ্ণনাত প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে সেই সময়ৰ সামাজিক,

ৰাজনৈতিক আৰু অৰ্থনৈতিক জীৱন, ৰাজপৰিয়ালৰ অলিখিত গাঁথা, সাধাৰণ শ্ৰেণীৰ লোকৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব, স্বজনপ্ৰীতি, প্ৰশাসনিক পদোন্নতি, গোপন অভিসাৰ, প্ৰেম, ঈৰ্ষা আৰু ষড়যন্ত্ৰ ইত্যাদি। এই গীতটি সৰ্বমুঠ পাঁচটা সৰু সৰু খণ্ডত ৰচিত আৰু ইয়াৰ লগতে বুৰঞ্জীমূলক মালিতা হ'লেও এই গীতৰ কাহিনী যে সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে অতিৰঞ্জিত বা কল্পনাপ্ৰসূত নহয় তাৰ প্ৰমাণ হৈছে উক্ত গীতটি হৰকান্ত সদৰামিন বাঁহগড়ীয়া বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ বুৰঞ্জীতো লিখিত ৰূপত উপলব্ধ (Chetia, 2001)।

মালিতাটোৰ কাহিনীভাগ দৰাচলতে ইয়াৰ মুখ্য চৰিত্ৰ নাহৰক কেন্দ্ৰ হিচাপে লৈ সৃষ্ট আৰু ইয়াক বৰ্ণোৱা কাহিনীমতে নাহৰ নামৰ এজন যুৱকক সৰুতে ঘাটমাউৰা হোৱাত আইতাকে তুলিতালি ডাঙৰ-দীঘল কৰে আৰু পৰৱৰ্তীকালত নিজৰ জীৱিকা নিৰ্বাহৰ কাৰণে আইতাকৰ দুঃচিন্তাকো উপেক্ষা কৰি নাহৰে মহং বা লোণৰ ব্যৱসায়ত ধৰে। অনহাতে সেই সময়ছোৱাতে আহোম স্বৰ্গদেউ চুখামফাৰ দুগৰাকী কুঁৱৰী সৰু মেচলৌ আৰু বৰ মেচলৌৰ লিগিৰী কাঞ্চনৰ লগত নাহৰৰ গোপণ প্ৰণয় ঘটে, কিন্তু দুই গৰাকী কুঁৱৰীৰ মৃত্যু হোৱাত ৰজাই লিগিৰী কাঞ্চনকে বিয়া পাতি কুঁৱৰী কৰে আৰু কুঁৱৰীয়েও নিজৰ পুত্ৰসন্তান নোহোৱাত নাহৰক তোলনীয়া পুত্ৰৰ মৰ্যদা দি কোঁৱৰ সন্মান দিয়ে। কোঁৱৰ হোৱাৰ পাছতেই নাহৰে ৰাজ্যৰ উত্তৰকূল শাসন কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰাৰ লগতে কল্যাণমূলক কামো ৰাজ্যত আৰম্ভ কৰে (Gogoi, 1992)। কিন্তু পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ছোৱাত কুঁৱৰীৰ অনুগ্ৰহত নাহৰৰ পদমৰ্যদা আৰু ক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি পোৱাত নাহৰ স্বেচ্ছাচাৰী আৰু অত্যাচাৰী হ'বলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে। ইয়াতে ৰুষ্ট হৈ প্ৰশাসনৰ ডা-ডাঙৰীয়াসকলে বৰগোহাঁইৰ দ্বাৰা ৰজাক গোচৰ দিয়াই নাহৰক ইয়াৰ উপযুক্ত শাস্তি হিচাপে মৃত্যুদণ্ড বিহি নামচাঙৰ পৰা আহোতে বৰদুৱাৰ পথতে নিশংসভাৱে হত্যা কৰে (Gogoi, 1992)।

কাউৰীয়া কৰিলে কোৱা,
বৰগোহাঁই দেউতাই নাহৰক কটাই
হোৱা ভাতক কৰিলে চুৱা।
সৰিয়হ ববৰে বতৰ,
বৰদুৱাৰ মুখতে নাহৰক কটালে
কাৰনো জগালে জগৰ।।
কাউৰী কাউৰী অজাতি কাউৰী
কি খাই বোলালি ঠোঁট
বৰদুৱাৰ মুখতে নাহৰক কাটিলে
তাকে খাই বোলালো ঠোঁট।।
(Chetia, 2001, পৃ.১০৫)

“নাহৰৰ গীত” যদিও এক বুৰঞ্জীমূলক মালিতা কিন্তু তথাপিও সেই সময়ছোৱাৰ অসমৰ আৰ্থ-সামাজিক ইতিহাসৰ বিষয়ে জ্ঞাত হোৱাৰ ই এক নিৰ্ভৰযোগ্য সাহিত্যিক উৎসও; যিহেতু এই মালিতাত বুৰঞ্জীৰ ঘটনাবাজিৰ লগতে আহোম প্ৰশাসনৰ লগত জড়িত বিষয়ববীয়াৰ ক্ষমতা, কাৰ্যকলাপ, দৈনন্দিন জীৱনশৈলী, বাণিজ্য, স্বজনপ্ৰীতি, সাধাৰণ নাৰীৰো সময়ৰ সোঁতত সলনি হোৱা সামাজিক স্থান, নাৰীৰ মানসিকতা, গোপণ প্ৰেম, ঈৰ্ষা, ৰাজকাৰেঙৰ আভ্যন্তৰীণ বিষয়, সাধাৰণ লোকৰ আবেগ ইত্যাদি সকলো দিশেই এই মালিতাত সুন্দৰকৈ প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে।

বৰফুকনৰ গীত :

আই সৰেচতী, দেৱী পাৰেবতী,
তোমালৈ বঢ়াই যাওঁ শৰাই
পাহৰা বনকে সোঁৱৰাই দি যাবা
যেনে বৰাধানৰ কৰাই।
(Bhuyan, 1954, P.45)

এনেদৰে দেৱী সৰস্বতী আৰু পাৰ্বতীৰ বন্দনাৰে আৰম্ভ হোৱা ঐতিহাসিক বৰফুকনৰ গীতত ধাৰাবাহিকভাৱে বৰ্ণিত আছে ১৭৩৭ শকৰ ভাদ মাহৰ পৰা ১৭৪৭ শকৰ মাঘ মাহলৈকে প্ৰায় দহ বছৰৰ আহোম যুগৰ ইতিহাসৰ বিক্ষিপ্ত ঘটনাৱলীৰ পূৰ্ণ বিৱৰণ, এক কথাত সেই সময়ছোৱাৰ ৰাজনৈতিক দৃশ্যপটৰ যেন এক জীৱন্ত দলিল। পদ্য আকাৰে বৰ্ণিত বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ মুখ্য চৰিত্ৰ হ'ল ৰঙাচিলা বৰুৱাৰ ঘৰৰ ঘূণাই ওৰফে বদন চন্দ্ৰ বৰফুকন, যাৰ ক্ষুদ্ৰ স্বার্থ পূৰণৰ অভিপ্ৰায় ইতিহাসৰ গতি সলনি কৰি অসমৰ স্বাধীনতাৰ বেলি চিৰদিনলৈ মাৰ যোৱাইছিল। উজনিৰ পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁই আৰু নামনিৰ বদন চন্দ্ৰ বৰফুকনৰ মাজত ক্ষমতাৰ গভীৰ সংঘাত আৰু তাৰ ফলশ্ৰুতিতেই বদনে মান সেনাৰ সাহায্যত অসমভূমি আক্ৰমণ কৰি ৰক্তৰঞ্জিত কৰিছিল, তাৰেই বিতং বিৱৰণ আৰু মানৰ অমানুসিক অত্যাচাৰত ভিত্তিগ্ৰস্ত জনসাধাৰণৰ বেদনাৰ বৰ্হিপ্ৰকাশ বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ মুখ্য বিষয়বস্তু। সেইসময়ৰ অস্থিৰ ৰাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্ৰখনত পিজৌ গাভৰু, ৰঙিলী কুঁৱৰী, আহোম ৰাজমাও আৰু ৰূপচিং বঙালৰ দৰে বেতনভোগী হত্যাকাৰী ব্যক্তিত্বৰ ভূমিকাৰ বিষয়েও বৰফুকনৰ গীতত উল্লেখ আছে (Bhuyan, 1954)।

বৰফুকনৰ গীতত উল্লেখিত ঐতিহাসিক চৰিত্ৰৰ অৱলোকনঃ

(ক) ৰাজমন্ত্ৰী পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁই : ৰাজমন্ত্ৰী পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁই আৰু বদন চন্দ্ৰ বৰফুকনৰ মাজত থকা সংঘাতৰ কথাৰে আৰম্ভ হৈছে বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ কাহিনীভাগ,

সত্য, দোৱাপৰ, ত্ৰোতা কলি
তিনি চাৰি যুগ গ'ল
অসমৰ দেশত দেউতা, মন্ত্ৰী নাইকিয়া
বৰগোহাঁই অবতাৰ হ'ল।

চাৰি দিশলৈ চাই, দেশে বুঢ়াগোহাঁইয়ে শতৰু নাই

কিনো ক'ম পাচে ?

ভাটীৰ বৰফুকন শতৰু আছে

পৰ্বতীয়া ফুকনক অনালে মাতি

কোনো বোলো নে ?

ভাটীৰ বৰফুকনক ধৰি আনি দে।

(Bhuyan, 1954, PP.46-47)

উল্লেখযোগ্য যে, পূৰ্ণানন্দ আৰু বদনৰ মাজত ক্ষমতাৰ বাবে সংঘাত পূৰ্বৰ পৰা চলি আছিল, সেই সময়তে বদনে কামৰূপৰ পৰা সংগৃহীত এক বুজন পৰিমাণৰ ৰাজহ আত্মসাৎ কৰাৰ লগতে তেওঁৰ পুত্ৰ কেইজনে হাতীক ভাং খুৱাই বলিয়া কৰি প্ৰজাৰ ঘৰ ভাঙি ৰং চোৱাৰ দৰে অপকৰ্মত লিপ্ত হোৱাৰ কথা বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ কানতো পৰিছিল (Bhuyan, 1954)। বদনক ৰাজমন্ত্ৰী পূৰ্ণানন্দই ধৰিবলৈ পৰ্বতীয়া ফুকনক প্ৰেৰণ কৰাৰ কথা জানিব পাৰি শীঘ্ৰেই বদনৰ জীয়ৰী আৰু বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ বোৱাৰী পিজৌ গাভৰুৱে আগতীয়াকৈ দেউতাকক বতৰা দিয়াত বৰফুকন ভটিয়াই গৈ প্ৰথমে কলিকতা আৰু পিছত ব্ৰহ্মদেশ পায়গৈ, আৰু ব্ৰহ্ম ৰজাৰ সাহায্যত মান সেনাসহিতে অসম আক্ৰমণ কৰিবলৈ আগবাঢ়ি অহাৰ বতৰা পাই চিন্তিত বুঢ়াগোহাঁইয়ে পুত্ৰসকলক মাতি আনি কৈছিল—

কি হৈছে চাবি,

আপোনাৰ দেশক বোপাই, পালি পাচি খাবি।

সকলো কথাখিনি হ'ল,

ইমান দিনত মোৰ চাউল তুতি গ'ল।

চাবে-দিয়া গাখীৰত মোলান পৰিলে

সোন্দাকল মৰহি গ'ল।

ইয়াৰ পিছত বুঢ়াগোহাঁই ডাঙৰীয়াৰ মৃত্যু হয় আৰু উক্ত মালিতাত তেওঁৰ মৃত্যুক বৰ্ণোৱা হৈছে

এনেদৰে—

কালহীৰা চেলেকি বৰগোহাঁই নাৰকী

ৰাতিয়ে সৰকি গ'ল। (Bhuyan, 1954, P.69)

অৰ্থাৎ উক্ত মালিতাত পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁইক দেশখন চাৰখাৰ কৰাৰ থলী নিৰ্মাণ কৰাৰ মুখ্য চৰিত্ৰ হিচাপে প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিছে আৰু শাসনতন্ত্ৰ বিদেশীৰ হাতলৈ যোৱাত বৰগোহাঁইক নাৰকী বুলি অভিযোগ কৰিছে। অৱশ্যে, এঠাইত—“ৰাজ্যৰ বৈৰী বৰফুকনে ঘৰত লগাইছে জুই” বুলিও উল্লেখ কৰিছে (Gogoi, 1992)।

পিজৌ গাভৰু :

বৰফুকনৰ গীতত উল্লেখিত দ্বিতীয়টো ঐতিহাসিক চৰিত্ৰ হ'ল পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ বোৱাৰ আৰু বদনৰ জীয়ৰী পিজৌ গাভৰু। পৰীয়াৰ দ্বাৰা আগতীয়াকৈ শত্ৰুৰূপে পিতৃক ধৰিবৰ বাবে মানুহ পঠিওৱাৰ সংবাদ পাই সেই সম্পৰ্কত তাৎক্ষণিকতাৰে বাৰ্তা পঠাবৰ বাবে নিৰক্ষৰ পিজৌৱে স্বামী ঢেকিয়ালফুকনক এখন চিঠি লিখিবৰ বাবে ঠেহপেচ ধৰি সৈমান কৰোৱায়—

কাতৰ কৰোঁ লেখা নিদিলে বঙহৰ দেউ

টেটু কাটি মৰোঁ।

কান্দোনত নোৱাৰি ঢেকিয়াল ফুকনে

পাটত লাফে মাৰি উঠে,

ঘিউৰ চাকি লগাই ঢেকিয়াল ফুকনে

চিঠিখন লিখিয়েই দিলে।

(Bhuyan, 1954, P.50)

উক্ত মালিতাৰ পৰা এটা কথা স্পষ্ট হয় যে ইতিমধ্যে বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ শাসন ব্যৱস্থা প্ৰায় সোলোক-ঢোলোক হৈ পৰিছিল, কিয়নো ৰাজদ্রোহৰ অপৰাধত দণ্ডিত অপৰাধী জীয়েকৰ পৰা ৰাজমন্ত্ৰীয়ে জাৰি কৰা

গোপন সংবাদ গোপনে ৰাখিবলৈ ব্যৰ্থ হৈছিল। দ্বিতীয়তে পূৰ্ণানন্দৰ পুত্ৰ ওৰেশনাথ আহোম মন্ত্ৰী সভাৰ এজন উচ্চ খাপৰ বিষয়া আছিল, তদুপৰি ৰাজদ্রোহীক ধৰিবলৈ যোৱাৰ দৰে গোপন বাতৰি নিজ হাতেৰে লিখি পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ উদ্দেশ্য সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে ব্যৰ্থ কৰি তুলিছিল (Bhuyan, 1954)। সি যি কি নহওঁক আগতীয়া বাৰ্তা পোৱাৰ বাবে প্ৰকৃততে বদনৰ তাৎক্ষণিক ভাৱে দেশ এৰি পলায়ন কৰাতো সম্ভৱপৰ হৈছিল আৰু পিজৌ গাভৰুৰ উদ্দেশ্যও সফল হৈছিল।

বদন চন্দ্ৰ বৰফুকন :

বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ মুখ্য চৰিত্ৰটোৱেই হ'ল ঘৃণাই অৰ্থাৎ বদন চন্দ্ৰ বৰফুকন। স্বাৰ্থান্বেষী বদনে কেৱল নিজৰ কথা চিন্তি দেশৰ বৃহৎ স্বাৰ্থক জলাঞ্জলী দিবলৈ কুণ্ঠাবোধ কৰা নাছিল। জীয়ৰী পিজৌৰ বাৰ্তাৰ কিংকৰ্তব্যবিমোৰ বদনে প্ৰথমে কলিকতালৈ আৰু পিছলৈ ব্ৰহ্মদেশত গৈ ব্ৰহ্মৰাজৰ সাহায্য ভিক্ষা কৰে, সেয়া মালিতাটোত বৰ্ণোৱা আছে এনেদৰে—

এ দেউ ৰল,

চিৰি-লুইতে ফুকনদেউ ভটীয়াই গ'ল

পৰ্বতীয়া ফুকনে চেলেঙী নাৱেৰে

দিলে পাচে পাচে খেদা

নগৰৰ হ'ল ৰাজ পোনাই গৈ পালেগৈ কলিকতা
ৰাজ।

(Bhuyan, 1954, P.56)

ৰঙিলী কুঁৱৰী :

কাজেই বৰফুকন ভটীয়াই গৈ ব্ৰহ্মদেশ পালেগৈ ঘাটতেই তেওঁ সৌভাগ্যক্ৰমে মান ৰজাৰ অসমীয়া কুঁৱৰী ৰঙিলীৰ সৈতে সাক্ষাৎ হয়। পূৰ্ণানন্দ বুঢ়াগোহাঁইয়ে স্বাৰ্থপৰতাৰে মিত্ৰতাৰ খাতিৰত এই ৰঙিলীক চিংফৌগাম বিচানাস্কক উপহাৰ হিচাপে

আগবঢ়াইছিল, কিন্তু তেওঁ এইগৰাকী কুঁৱৰীক নিজে নাৰাখি ব্ৰহ্মৰাজ বদৌপায়াক দিয়ে। ৰঙিলী আছিল আহোমৰ দুৱৰা বংশৰ আৰু বদনো একে বংশৰ হোৱা হেতুকে সম্বন্ধত দুয়ো ককায়েক ভনীয়েক হ'ল। ৰঙিলীৰ সৌন্দৰ্যৰ কথা বৰফুকনৰ গীতত অজ্ঞাত কবিয়ে অকুপণালীৰে বৰ্ণনা কৰিছে এনেদৰে—

আঙুলি দেখোন পাঁজিশেৰি

বাঁহৰ মকাল গাটি দেখোন তোমাৰ কেতেকীৰ
কঁকাল

নধৰিবা দোষ, পূৰ্ণ চন্দ্ৰ যেন তোমাৰ এই মুখ।।

(Bhuyan, 1954, P.61)

ৰঙিলীয়ে আদৰেৰে আপোন ককায়েকক বান ৰজাৰ প্ৰসাদলৈ নিলে, তাতেই বদনে অসমত ৰজাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে বুঢ়াগোহাঁইয়েহে শাসন ব্যৱস্থা পৰিচালিত কৰিছে সেই কথা মান ৰজাক জানিবলৈ দিয়ে,

অসমৰ দেশত দেউতা, মন্ত্ৰী নাইকীয়া

অকল বুঢ়াগোহাঁই আছে।

আমাক মাৰে হাই দেখে বুঢ়াগোহাঁই সাৰথি নাই।

(Bhuyan, 1954, P.66)

ৰঙিলীৰ কাবৌ-কাকুতিত মান ৰজাই সৈন্য সহিতে অসম আক্ৰমণ কৰিবলৈ প্ৰেৰণ কৰে, মান সৈন্যই অসমত ধ্বংস যজ্ঞ চলায়, অসমীয়া প্ৰজাৰ ওপৰত চলাই অমানুষিক অত্যাচাৰ, সেয়া উক্ত মালিতাৰ পৰা জানিব পাৰি এনেদৰে—

মাৰে থিয় কিল ধন দে বুলি।

কঁকালৰ উলিয়াই ৰেট,

ধন নাপায় কতোৰ ভাঙিলে পেট।

পেট ফালি চালে, কলাডিল উলিয়াই খৰিকা দি
খালে

ই কথা ব'ল কটা মানুহৰ তেজেৰে

চেউনি আলি ৰঙা হৈ গ'ল।

(Bhuyan, 1954, P.72)

ৰাজমাও :

বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ অন্য এটা চৰিত্ৰ হ'ল চন্দ্ৰকান্ত সিংহৰ মাতৃ ৰাজমাও। বুঢ়াগোহাঁইৰ মৃত্যুৰ পাছত বদন ৰাজমন্ত্রী হ'ল, ৰাজমাওৰে বদনৰ প্ৰতাপ সহিব নোৱাৰি মন্ত্ৰণা কৰি ৰূপচিং বঙালক বদনক হত্যা কৰাৰ দায়িত্ব অৰ্পণ কৰে,

কাউৰীয়ে কৰিব কা, ৰামকৃষ্ণ বোলোতে মূৰত
পানী ঢালোতে

ৰূপচিং মাৰিলে দা।

(Gogoi, 1955, P.16)

বদন হত্যাৰ পাছত পুনৰ অসমত দ্বিতীয়বাৰৰ বাবে মানৰ আক্ৰমণৰ টো উঠিল, অসমীয়া প্ৰজাৰ মনত আকৌ ভীতিৰ সঞ্চাৰ হ'ল। মান অহা বতৰা পাই ৰাজমাও আৰু ৰূপচিং বঙাল উজনি এৰি পলাল। বৰফুকনৰ গীতৰ অঙ্গাত কবিয়ে সেয়েহে ইয়াৰ বাবে ৰাজমাওক জগৰীয়া কৰি 'পাখৰী' বুলিছে, আৰু লিখিছে,

ৰূপচিং বঙাল আৰু ৰাজমাও পাখৰী

ৰাতিয়ে খবৰ পাই পলাল।

ছয় বছৰকাল মানৰ অত্যাচাৰৰ অন্তত ইংৰাজ আহিল আৰু উক্ত মালিতাত ইংৰাজ অহা দেখি ৰাইজৰ মন ভাল লাগিছে বুলি কৈছে যদিও কবিয়ে শেষত অত্যন্ত দুখেৰে "আসাম দেশ গুচি বঙাল দেশ হ'ল" বুলি মালিতাৰ সামৰণি মাৰিছে। এনেদৰেই উক্ত মালিতাত আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যক্তি আৰু ৰাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসৰ বিৱৰ্তন ঘটাই দেখিবলৈ পোৱা গৈছে। বৰফুকনৰ গীত সম্পৰ্কে লীলা গগৈদেৱে তেওঁৰ "অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ৰূপৰেখা"

গ্ৰন্থত উল্লেখ কৰিছে যে কাব্যিক কল্পনাৰ ৰহন সানি মালিতাটোত উপস্থাপন কৰা হৈছে যদিও বুৰঞ্জীৰ বিকৃতি ঘটাই (Gogoi, 1992)।

চিকন সৰিয়হৰ গীত :

শিৱসাগৰ জিলাৰ বেতবাৰী মৌজাৰ অন্তৰ্গত চেঙেলীবাৰীত বৰ্তমানেও অসংৰক্ষিত অৱস্থাত সাতটা বৃহৎ আকৃতিৰ আহোম যুগৰ মৈদাম দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। ইয়াৰ ইতিহাস খুঁচৰিলে পোৱা যায় জনসাধাৰণৰ মাজত প্ৰচলিত এটি মালিতা "চিকন সৰিয়হৰ গীত"। এই মৈদামকেইটাৰ লগত জড়িত এই গীতটিত ঐতিহাসিক কাহিনীৰ পূৰ্ণ বিৱৰণ আছে। মালিতাটোত বৰ্ণোৱা হৈছে এনেদৰে,

এশাৰী পুতিলোঁ বাৰুকৈ বৰছা,

লুটিয়াই পুতিলো শেল।

হেলন, পেলন, সাঁচন (চান) বয়ন,

চিকন সৰিয়হে কৰিছে,

বাকচু নগৰত মেল।

টঙীত পৰিবৰ টুনী, অতি তেওঁৰ ৰম্যে সতায়ৈ

বজাৰ লগাবলৈ গ'ল।

সেইনো কথা শুনি স্বৰ্গী মহাৰজা

গোটালে বিষয়া ফুকন।

অতি তমেগমে, চিকনৰ সাত ভাই

জখলা উবুৰিয়াই ধৰোঁ।

(Gogoi, 1992, P.205-207)

চিকন সৰিয়হ আহোম স্বৰ্গদেউ জয়ধ্বজ সিংহৰ শত্ৰুৰেণা নাওবৈছা ফুকনৰ পুত্ৰ আছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ সাতজন ককাই-ভাই আছিল যথাক্ৰমে— চান, বয়ন, হেলন, পেলন, চিকন-সৰিয়হ আৰু মৌপীয়া। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে অপুত্ৰক অৱস্থাত স্বৰ্গদেউ জয়ধ্বজ

সিংহ স্বৰ্গী হোৱাত চিকন-সৰিয়হে যুদ্ধ কৰি হ'লেও আহোম ৰাজপাত ল'বৰ বাবে সাত ভাই-ককাই সৈতে অভিসন্ধি কৰিছিল, কিন্তু দুৰ্ভাগ্যবশতঃ তেওঁলোকৰ এই ষড়যন্ত্ৰৰ কথা ৰমাই বাৰীছোৱা আৰু সনাতন কটকীয়ে জানিব পাৰি ৰজাৰ ঘৰত খবৰ দিয়ে। সেয়েহে নতুনকৈ সিংহাসনত আৰোহণ কৰা স্বৰ্গদেউ চক্ৰধ্বজ সিংহই বুদ্ধি কৰি আটাইকে মাতি আনি গোটেই কেইজনকে হত্যা কৰে (Buragohan, 1974)। চিকন-সৰিয়হকে ধৰি সাতোজন ককাই-ভাইক ৰাজদ্রোহৰ অপৰাধত হত্যা কৰাৰ পিছতে তেওঁলোকৰ অঞ্চলত যি শোকৰ ছাঁ পৰিছিল, তাৰ ফলশ্ৰুতিতেই এই মালিতাৰ ৰচনা হৈছিল। এই সম্পূৰ্ণ কাহিনীটো চিকন-সৰিয়হৰ গীতত সুন্দৰকৈ বৰ্ণনা কৰা আছে, অৱশ্যে এই সম্পূৰ্ণ মালিতাটো উদ্ধাৰ কৰিব পাৰিলে অসম বুৰঞ্জীত ৰৈ যোৱা আৰু বহু নজনা কথা জানিব পৰা যাব।

উপসংহাৰ :

মধ্যযুগীয় অসমৰ আহোম ৰাজতন্ত্ৰৰ বুৰঞ্জী-সাহিত্যত ভালকৈ লিপিবদ্ধ নোহোৱা তথা বহুলভাৱে চৰ্চিত নোহোৱা বিভিন্ন বিস্ময়কৰ ঘটনাৰাজি সমূহৰ বিষয়ে জনাৰ আটাইতকৈ উল্লেখযোগ্য সমল সমূহৰ ভিতৰত মুখে মুখে প্ৰচলিত বেলাড বা মালিতাসমূহৰ গুৰুত্ব অপৰিসীম। অৱশ্যে বহু ক্ষেত্ৰত এনে মালিতাসমূহ মৌখিকৰূপত প্ৰচলিত হোৱাৰ কাৰণে কম-বেছি পৰিমাণে অতিৰঞ্জিত হ'লেও ইয়াৰ ঐতিহাসিক সত্যতাক সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে নুই কৰিব নোৱাৰি।

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বিহ্নামত গণিত প্ৰসংগ : এটি বিশ্লেষণাত্মক আলোচনা

মালা বৰদলৈ

সংক্ষিপ্ত সাৰ

অসমীয়া ভাষা অতি চহকী ভাষা। অসমীয়া মানুহে জোখমাপ ল'বৰ বাবে শূণ্যৰ পৰা কোটিলৈকে গণনা কৰাৰ বাহিৰেও ভিন ভিন বস্তুৰ জোখমাপ ল'বলৈ বিভিন্ন সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। অকল সংখ্যা বা সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিয়েই নহয় অসমীয়া মানুহে বেলেগ বেলেগ বস্তুৰ জোখমাপ ল'বৰ বাবে বহু সময়ত বিভিন্ন উপায় অৱলম্বন কৰে। তাৰ ভিতৰত চন্দ্ৰ-সূৰ্য্যৰ গতি নিৰীক্ষণ কৰি, প্ৰকৃতিৰ বিভিন্ন পৰিৱৰ্তন চাই, ডাঙৰ-সৰু, দীঘল-ছুটি, ওখ-চাপৰ, ঠেক-বহল আদি বস্তুৰ বিভিন্ন আকৃতি চাই জোখমাপ কৰে বা গণিত নিৰূপণ কৰে।

বিহ্ন অসমৰ জাতীয় উৎসৱ। বিহ্ন তিনিটা। ইয়াৰে ৰঙালী বিহ্ন বা বহাগ বিহ্ন অসমীয়াৰ অতি মৰমৰ অতি আপোন। এই বিহ্নৰ লগত জড়িত অনেক বিহ্নাম আছে। অনামি লোককবিয়ে ৰচনা কৰা বিহ্নামসমূহ অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ অমূল্য সম্পদ। প্ৰকৃতি জগতৰ লগত নিবিড় সম্পৰ্ক থকা চহা কবিসকলে ৰচনা কৰা বিভিন্ন মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ দৰে বিহ্নামতো অসমীয়া মানুহে দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত বিভিন্ন বস্তুৰ কিদৰে জোখমাপ লৈছিল তাৰ আভাস বহু বিহ্নামত পোৱা যায়।

আমাৰ আলোচনা পত্ৰখনত অসমীয়া মানুহে দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত কিদৰে বিভিন্ন জোখমাপ লৈছিল আৰু বিহ্নামসমূহত তাৰ প্ৰতিফলন কিদৰে ঘটিছিল সেই বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ'ব।

বীজ শব্দ : বিহ্ন, গণিত, সংখ্যা, সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দ, তোলা, গুছি, অনা।

০০ অৱতৰণিকা

গণিত মানে হিচাপ-নিকাচ, গণিত হ'ল পৰিমাণ, গণিত মানে পৰিবৰ্তন আৰু স্থান বিষয়ক গৱেষণা, গণিত এক শৃংখল, গণিত জ্ঞানৰ এক ক্ষেত্ৰ। পুৰাণৰ পৰা গধূলিলৈ, গধূলিৰ পৰা পুৱালৈ কি জীৱ জগত, কি জড় জগত সকলো গণিতৰ আৱৰ্ত্তত সোমাই থাকে, জ্যামিতিৰ লগত সম্পৃক্ত হৈ থাকে। সেইবাবেই এক নিৰ্দিষ্ট সময়ত গছত ফুল ফুলে, গুটি লাগে, গছৰ পাত সৰে, কুঁহিপাত ওলায়, একেজোপা গছত সদায় একেবিধ ফুলেই ফুলে, একেবিধ গুটিয়েই লাগে। এইদৰে গাণিতিক শৃংখলা মানি চলা বাবেই সময় মতে সূৰ্য্য উদয় হয়, অস্ত যায়; চন্দ্ৰৰ বিভিন্ন দশাও একেই সময় মানিয়েই হয়, সময়ৰ গণিত মানিয়েই ঋতু পৰিবৰ্তন হয়, আনহে নালাগে সাগৰত জোৰাৰৰ গতি

নিয়মীয়া ছন্দত সম্পাদিত হয় একেই গণিত মানি। একেদৰে “ফুলৰ সজ্জা, পাতৰ বিন্যাস, ডাৱৰৰ আকৃতি, সমুদ্ৰৰ আৰ্হি, জীৱ-জন্তু, মানুহৰ সুসংগবদ্ধ আকাৰ আকৃতি, নানা মনোমোহা আৰু বৈচিত্ৰ্যময় ৰূপৰ আঁৰত জ্যামিতি লুকাই থাকে।”^১ সেয়ে “তাহানিতে গেলিলিওয়ে কৈছিল প্ৰকৃতিৰ বৃহৎ কিতাপখন গণিতৰ ভাষাতেই লিখা।”^২ এক কথাত ক'ব পাৰি সৃষ্টিৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ পৰাই এইদৰে গণিতৰ শৃংখলা মানি চলা বাবেই বিশ্ব প্ৰকৃতি আজি পৰ্য্যন্ত বৰ্ত্তি আছে। এই বিশ্বজগতৰ শ্ৰেষ্ঠ জীৱ বুলি পৰিচিত প্ৰত্যেকজন মানুহৰ জীৱন বৃত্তও গণিতৰ আৱৰ্ত্তত আবৃত্ত হৈ আছে। প্ৰতিজন মানুহৰ জীৱণৰ কোঁহে-কোঁহে, আঁহে-আঁহে গণিতৰ হিচাপ-নিকাচ সোমাই আছে। পুৰাণৰ পৰা গধূলিলৈ, গধূলিৰ পৰা পুৱালৈ জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈ

শিক্ষিত অশিক্ষিত সকলো মানুহৰ গণিতৰ লগত আছে এক অভিন্ন সম্পৰ্ক। সাহিত্যত সমাজ জীৱন প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। মাটি পানী বায়ুৰ লগত সম্পৰ্ক থকা লোক জীৱন, লোক সাহিত্যতো গণিতৰ প্ৰভাৱ আছে। গণিতৰ প্ৰসংগ স্বতঃস্ফূৰ্তভাৱে আহি পৰে। অসমীয়া লোক সাহিত্যৰ অন্যতম এবিধ সোণালী সঁফুৰা ‘বিহুনাংম’। বিহু অসমৰ প্ৰধান উৎসৱ, জাতীয় উৎসৱ। বিহু তিনিবিধ যদিও ৰঙালী বা বহাগ বিহু অসমীয়া মানুহৰ অতিকৈ আপোন, অতিকৈ চেনেহৰ। বিহুনাংমত আছে— “অতিকৈ চেনেহৰ মুগাৰে মছৰা, তাতেকৈ চেনেহৰ মাকো, তাতেকৈ চেনেহৰ বহাগৰ বিহুটি নেপাতি কেনেকৈ থাকে।” তিনি বিহুক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি ভিন ভিন বিহুনাংম ৰচিত হৈছে যদিও বহাগ বিহু বা ৰঙালী বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত বিহুনাংমেই সৰহ। আমাৰ আলোচনাত ৰঙালী বিহুৰ লগত জড়িত তেনে কেইটামান বিহুনাংমক নিৰ্বাচন কৰি “বিহুনাংমত গণিত প্ৰসংগ : এটি বিশ্লেষণাত্মক আলোচনা” শীৰ্ষক গৱেষণা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

০০.১ উদ্দেশ্য :

“বিহুনাংমত গণিত প্ৰসংগ : এটি বিশ্লেষণাত্মক আলোচনা” বিষয়টো অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ উদ্দেশ্য হ’ল—

(ক) অসমীয়া মানুহৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱন গণিতৰ নিয়ম শৃংখলা মানি কি দৰে পৰিচালিত হৈছে আৰু অসমীয়া লোক সাহিত্যৰ অন্যতম সোণালী সঁফুৰা বিহুনাংমত তাৰ আভাস কি দৰে পাব পাৰি সেই বিষয়ে অধ্যয়ন কৰা।

(খ) বিভিন্ন বস্তুৰ জোখমাপ ল’বলৈ অসমীয়া মানুহে সংখ্যা আৰু সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দৰ বাহিৰেও কিদৰে স্বকীয়া পদ্ধতিৰে জোখমাপ লয় সেই বিষয়সমূহ পোহৰলৈ অনা।

(গ) অসমীয়া মানুহে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা বহুতো সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দ বৰ্তমান লাহে লাহে অব্যৱহৃত হৈ পৰিছে। একালত জোখমাপত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হেৰাই যোৱা সেই

শব্দসমূহকো পোহৰলৈ অনাৰ উদ্দেশ্যে বিষয়টো নিৰ্বাচন কৰা হৈছে।

০০.২ অধ্যয়নৰ গুৰুত্ব :

অসমীয়া মানুহে শূণ্যৰ পৰা কোটিলৈকে সংখ্যাৰ গণনা কৰাৰ উপৰিও এই ভাষাত আকাৰ-আকৃতি অনুসৰি ভিন ভিন বস্তুৰ জোখমাপ ল’বলৈ বেলেগে বেলেগ জোখমাপ বুজোৱা শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে আৰু এনে ধৰণৰ প্ৰচুৰ শব্দৰে অসমীয়া ভাষা চহকী। অকল ইমানে নহয় অসমীয়া মানুহে চন্দ্ৰ, সূৰ্যৰ দশা চাই, প্ৰকৃতি জগতত হোৱা বিভিন্ন পৰিৱৰ্তন লক্ষ্য কৰিও দৈনন্দিন জীৱন পৰিচালিত কৰি আহিছে, জীৱনৰ গণিত নিৰূপণ কৰি আহিছে। লগতে এই ভাষাত থকা কিছুমান শব্দ পোনপটীয়াকৈ সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দ নহয় যদিও সেইসমূহ শব্দই বহুসময়ত ব্যাক্যৰ বিভিন্ন ঠাইত বহি কিছুমান জোখমাপৰ ধাৰণা দিয়ে আৰু সাহিত্যত সেই আটাইবোৰ পদ্ধতি প্ৰতিফলন হোৱা দেখা যায়। বিহুনাংম সমূহো এই ক্ষেত্ৰত ব্যতিক্ৰম নহয়। বিহুনাংমৰ অধ্যয়নৰ মাজেৰে অসমীয়া মানুহে পূৰাৰ পৰা গধূলিলৈকে, জন্মৰ পৰা মৃত্যুলৈ বিভিন্ন সময়ত কি দৰে গণিতৰ নিয়ম-শৃংখলা মানি চলিছে জানিব পাৰি। আমাৰ এই অধ্যয়নত বিহুনাংমৰ মাধ্যমেৰে অসমীয়া মানুহৰ জীৱন-যাত্ৰাত গণিতৰ কি দৰে প্ৰয়োগ হৈছে তাক পোহৰলৈ অনাৰ ওপৰত গুৰুত্ব আৰোপ কৰা হ’ব।

০০.৩ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি :

আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰোতে ঘাইকৈ বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক দুয়োটা পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হ’ব। তথ্য আহৰণৰ বাবে মুখ্য আৰু গৌণ দুই ধৰণৰ সমল সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছে। এইক্ষেত্ৰত পুথিভঁৰালৰ সহায় লোৱা হ’ব আৰু সৰুৰে পৰা শুনিবলৈ পোৱা বিভিন্ন বিহুনাংমক গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনত ঠাই দিয়া হৈছে। অৱশ্যে আমাৰ গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ সীমিত পৰিসৰলৈ

চাই এইক্ষেত্ৰত নিৰ্দিষ্ট কেইটামান বিহ্নামকহে নিৰ্বাচন কৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

১.০০ বিষয়ৰ বিশ্লেষণ :

(১) বিহ্নামত সংখ্যা আৰু সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ :

(ক) পোনপটীয়াকৈ শূণ্যৰ পৰা কোটিলৈক সংখ্যাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ থকা বিহ্নাম। অসমীয়া মানুহে দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত শূণ্যৰ পৰা কোটিলৈকে যিবোৰ সংখ্যা ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আহিছে সেই সংখ্যাসমূহ বহুসময়ত পোনপটীয়াকৈ সাহিত্যত ব্যৱহৃত হোৱা দেখা যায়। বিহ্নামতো এক, দুই, তিনি, চাৰি, পাঁচ, দহ, বিশ, আশী, শ, হাজাৰ আদি বিভিন্ন সংখ্যা পোনপটীয়াকৈ ব্যৱহাৰ হৈছে। তাৰে দুটামান বিহ্নাম, যেনে—

এক : “বহাগৰ বিহুতে গছে পাত সলালে
ডালত বহি বিনালে কুলি
এখনি হাঁচতি দিয়া মোৰ ভনীটি
বিহুৱা আহিছে বুলি।”

“গামোচা ববলই তাতশাল পাতি লৈ
বহি বই কৰিলোঁ বাতি
তাৰে এখন গামোচা নিদিলে ঘনুচা
চোতালত পুৱাই যাম ৰাতি।”

“এডুখৰি গামোচা বৈ থৈ আহিছোঁ
পদুম ফুল এপাহি বাছি”

“এবটল গোকতলে আনি দিয়া চেনাই অ’
ম’হৰ শিঙৰ আনিবা ফণি।”

দুই : “ধনশিৰী দলংখন ভেটিলে ঐ চেনাইকণ
লোহাৰ ঐ শলখা মাৰি
তোমাকে ঐ আমাকে ভেটিলে ঐ সমাজে

দুটি দেহ দুফালে কৰি।”

“ধনে ধনে কৰি ধনকে ঘটিলোঁ
পৰম যতন কৰি

ধন গ’ল উচলি দেহ গ’ল পিছলি
লগত গ’ল দুচলি খৰি।”

“চৰায়ো নহ’লোঁ তোমাক চাবলৈ
দুপাশে দুপাখি লৈ”

“তামোলটি কাটিলোঁ দুখনি কৰিলোঁ
ৰংপুৰ বজাৰৰ পাণ

পথাৰে পথাৰে বিচাৰি ফুৰিলোঁ
ক’তে দাই আছিল ধান।”

“চাইকেলৰ পেডেল ঐ জান
আৰু নো কিমান মাৰিমে

দুভৰিৰে ছেঙেল ঐ জান
আৰু নো কিমান ছিঙিমে?”

(পৃ.১৯, জনমভূমি ৰঙালী বিহু সংখ্যা, ২০১৬)

তিনি : “চাওঁ তিনি বেলি খৰিকা মঙলখন
মাতো তিনি বেলি গণক
চাওঁ তিনি বেলি পদূলি মূৰলৈ
তথাপি নেদেখো ধনক।”

“থুৰীয়াই কাটিলা তামোল তিনিখনি
নুৰিয়াই বাঞ্চিলা পাণ

পথাৰে পথাৰে উকিয়াই ফুৰিলোঁ
ক’তে দাই আছিল ধান।”

“পদূলি মূৰৰে তামোল তিনিজুপি
ৰঙালী মদাৰৰ পান
হাতৰে বাঢ়নী দিওঁ দলিমাৰি

শুনি যাওঁ ধনৰে নাম ।”

চাৰি : “এডালি কাটিলে আহে চাৰিডাল
লুইতৰ খাগৰি খৰি
মোৰ ধনে মাতিলে আহে চাৰিজনী
ডিঙিত ধৰাধৰি কৰি ।”

“নাচনীৰ কুৰুটা গুদাম ঐ চাৰিটা
চাৰিকো চাৰিয়ে চৰে
আমাৰ নাচনী জাকি মাৰি ওলালে
সমাজৰ মাজৰে পৰা ।”

“ইবাগৰ সিবাগৰ মাৰোঁ চাৰিবাগৰ
কিনো কোৱা কথাযাৰি
ভাঙি কথা কোৱা মিছা নেমাতিবা
নথ’বা মোকে ঐ ৰাখি ।”

“কিনো কাপোৰখনি ফুলে জকেমকি
উৰি যায় বতাহৰ লগত
নেখায় চাৰিসাজি থাকিব পাৰোঁ মই
বহাগৰ বিহুৰে লগত ।”

পাঁচ : “ঘাহীয়াল বৰুৱাৰ পাঁচজনী জীয়েক
তাৰে সৰুজনী কাজী
আলেঙে আলেঙে চাই থৈ আহিছোঁ
ধৰিব নেজানে পাঁজি ।”

ছয় : “পুৱালীৰ ব’দলি বাঁহ কাটি আনি
ছমাহ ধোঁৱা চাঙত ৰাখিম
অহাটো বহাগত গগনা বনাই লৈ
তোমাক বজাবলৈ ধৰিম ।”

“তোমাৰ তিনিখনি আমাৰ তিনিখনি
ছখনি কাপোৰৰ জাপ

তোমাৰ তিনিখনি লোৱা বাছি বাছি
কুকুৰাই দিছেহি ডাক ।”

সাত : “সাদিনৰ বাটতে তোমালৈ মনত পৰি
শৰীৰ পৰি আহে মোৰ
দিনৰে দিনটো তোমালৈ ধাউতি
ৰাতি পুৰি মাৰে গা ।”

“বঙাল বঙাল কিনো ঐ বঙাল
বঙালে আছিলে চাই
সাতৰাজ মাৰি একেৰাজ কৰিলে
ল’লে যোৰহাটত ঠাই ।”

আঠ : “শুৱাই কি নুশুৱায় সোণৰ পোৱালমণি
বণিয়াই বণিয়াই চাওঁ
আঠতোলা সোণৰ বিৰি গঢ়াই দিয়া
বিহু মাৰিবলৈ যাওঁ ।”

দহ : “আউনী পাণৰে গুছি নাপাতিবা
নহয় জাতিপাণৰ মান
আনৰে নাচনী নাচৰ দহেজনী
নহয় আমাৰ নাচনীৰ মান ।”

বাৰ : “আজি বাৰমাহে হুঁচৰি গোৱা নাই
হুঁচৰি ভটীয়াই গ’ল
হাতমেলি মোঁ নাচিম বুলিছিলোঁ
হাতমূৰ ঠৰঙা হ’ল ।”

“আজি বাৰমাহে হুঁচৰি গোৱা নাই
ডিঙি চেৰ চেৰ কৰে
ঢোলত ভালে কৰি কোবাব নোৱাৰে
কাষৰে পাজৰে পৰে ।”

“নাচনী নাচিলে পৃথিৱী লৰিলে

মাটিত বাৰ আঙুল চিন
এখনি হাঁচতি বাইজক নিদিলে
বিহুৰাৰ থাকি গ'ল ঋণ।”

তেৰ : “এটা বাঁহৰে তেৰটা কামী
বহাগৰ বিহুতে আহিছোঁ আমি।”

ষোল্ল : “ছেৱালী লেলেংগা ষোল্ল বছৰীয়া
কোনেনো বুলিব ভাল?”
“আহুৰে শালিয়ে মৰণা মাৰিলোঁ
জোকাৰি পেলোলো খেৰ
উজনি ৰাজ্যতে টোলোঠা পালোগৈ
ষোল্ল হাত এমুঠন বেৰ।”

আশী : “আগত জোৰে দিয়া চিমলাই চুৰিয়া
আশী নম্বৰীয়া সূতা
ভাটিলে ভটিয়াই যাবলৈ ওলালা
মোৰ লাগি আছে চিন্তা।”

শ : “দেউতাৰ বৰেঘৰ দেখোঁতে ভয়ংকৰ
শৰণ খেৰ মেলি চায়
নশ গাঁথনি মুগাৰে মঁহৰ
সৰিয়হ পিছলি যায়।”
“অজালকৈ বাঁহৰে বজাল সমনীয়া
অজালকৈ বাঁহৰে বজাল
নশ নকুৰি চিপাহী গোটাইছে
ৰাতিলে পাতিছে সজাল।”

হাজাৰ : “মাকো পদুমী জীয়েকো পদুমী
বিহাতো পদুমৰ চকা
তোমাৰ ধনেৰে কিনো দল বন্ধাই যাম
বচনে এহেজাৰ টকা।”

কেতিয়াবা বিভিন্ন সংখ্যা একেটি বিহু নামতে
প্ৰয়োগ কৰিও কিছুমান ছাঁৰি তথা বিহু নাম ৰচনা কৰা
দেখা গৈছে। যেনে—

“প্ৰথমে প্ৰণামো দেৱী সৰস্বতী
দ্বিতীয় প্ৰণামো হৰি
তৃতীয় প্ৰণামো গাঁৱৰ বুঢ়ামেথা
ধৰি যাওঁ নামৰে গুৰি।”
“একেটি দেহাৰে দুটি মন চৰাই
দুয়োৰে দুটি বৰণ
নেদেখি থাকিলে থাকিব পাৰে মই
দেখিলে লাগি যায় মৰম।”
“গগণা আৰণি গগণা পুৰণি
গগণা কিহেৰে বাওঁ
দুফালে দুচাটি মাজতে এচাটি
মুগাসূতা লগায়ে বাওঁ।”
“আঠীয়া কলৰে দুডালি ঠাৰি ঐ
ছাঁ পাই লগালো তাঁত
তোৰে মাত শুনি ছিগিলে এডালি
কিয় দিয়ে গলি মাত।” ইত্যাদি

এইদৰে বিভিন্ন সংখ্যাৰ উল্লেখ থকা অসংখ্য
বিহু নাম অসমীয়া ভাষাত আছে।

(খ) সংখ্যাৰাচক শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ থকা বিহু নামৰ
গণিত :

অসমীয়া মানুহে বেলেগ বেলেগ বস্তুৰ জোখ-
মাপ কৰিবৰ বাবে বেলেগ বেলেগ সংখ্যাৰাচক শব্দ
ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আহিছে। যেনে— সোণ-ৰূপ আদিৰ
জোখমাপ কৰোঁতে ধান, ৰতি, অনা, তোলা বা ভৰি,
সেৰ, আধলি আদি শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। বিহু নামত
এনেধৰণৰ গণিতো দেখা যায়। বিশেষকৈ ‘তোলা’

শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ বেছি। যেনে—

“এতোলা সোণৰে বিৰী গঢ়াই দিম
গা চাই আনি দিম ঢোলা”

“কতীয়া মুগাৰে বিহা বই ল’ৰা
গাৰু দিম শিমলুৰ তুলা।”

“ওঁৰে গছতে মৌৰে বাহ ল’লে
ককাই পাৰি দিয়া খাওঁ

এতোলা সোণৰে বিৰি গঢ়াই দিয়া
ৰাতি বিহু চাবলৈ যাওঁ।”

“ডিঙিতে গেজেৰা মুখনি চকলা
কাণতে এতোলা সোণ

জীৱনে মৰণে নেৰিবা লাহৰী
নেপাহৰো তোমাৰে গুণ।”

ধান-চাউল, মাটি-বাৰীৰ জোখমাপৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো
অসমীয়া মানুহে লোচা, কঠা, বিঘা, পুৰা, টাৰ আদি
শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা দেখা যায়। বিহুনাংমত তাৰ উদাহৰণো
আছে। যেনে—

“চাউল চাৰিপুৰা ক’তনো এৰিলা
চিৰা চাৰিপুৰা পাই

আমাক ঐ লাহৰী ক’তনো এৰিলা
জীৱনৰ লগৰী পাই।”

ইয়াৰ বাহিৰেও ধান-চাউল আদি শস্যৰ জোখ-
মাপৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অসমীয়া মানুহে সেৰ, পোৰা, মোন
আদি শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে।

“আধেৰা বাটিতে চাউল (মাটিমাহ) বাটি তিয়ালো
উফন্দি এবাটি হ’ল

গাঁৱৰ ডেকা ল’ৰা খাবলৈ মাতিলোঁ
আটাইবোৰ জহনী গ’ল।”

অসমীয়া মানুহে অকল গোটা বস্তু জোখ-
মাপতেই সেৰ, পোৰা, মোন আদি শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ নকৰে,
জুলীয়া বস্তুৰ জোখ-মাপতো সেৰ, পোৰা আদি শব্দৰ
ব্যৱহাৰ হয়। যেনে- এপোৰা গাখীৰ, এসেৰ মিঠাতেল,
এমোন দৈ গাখীৰ আদি। বিহুনাংমত আছে—

“গধূলিৰে পৰা পুৰালৈ লগালো
এপোৰা তেলৰে চাকি

চাৰি পাটী এৰি টোপনি নধৰে
দুখতে পুৰালে ৰাতি।”

আকৌ পাণৰ জোখমাখৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত খিলা, যোৰ,
গুছি আদি শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ অসমীয়া ভাষাত আছে—

“আউনী পাণৰে গুছি নাপাতিবা
নহয় জাতিপাণৰ মান

আনৰে নাচনী নাচৰ দহেজনী
নহয় আমাৰ নাচনীৰ মান।”

মুদ্ৰাৰ জোখৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আকৌ অনা, আখলি,
সিকি, টকা, মোহৰ আদি শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আছে।
বিহুনাংমসমূহতো এনে কিছুমান শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ নথকা
নহয়। বিহুনাংম আৰু হুঁচৰিত থকা এনে গণিতৰ উদাহৰণ
যেনে—

“গেলা কোমোৰাৰে পানী
চাৰিঅনা পইচা কেলেই লাগিছে
শিয়ালে লৈ যক টানি।”

“ৰজালৈ এটকা দিয়া অ’ দেউতা, প্ৰজালৈ এটকা দিয়া
আমি ল’ৰাহঁতে ধেমালি কৰিছোঁ, তাৰবাবে এটকা দিয়া।”

“হুঁচৰি বাই ও দলৌ চৰাই
ৰূপ চাৰিটকা তামোল শৰাই।”

“আমি যে হুঁচৰি গাওঁ ঘূৰি ঘূৰি
খুঁচৰি খুঁচৰি খাম

ডিঙি ফালি ফালি বাগকে টানিছোঁ
 জানো দহেটকা পাম।”
 “আবেলি বেলিকা পানী লৈ গৈছিলোঁ
 মতা ম’হৰ গুৱালে মাতো
 মাতোতে মাদলি কথাটোত আধলি
 সমক্ষত মণিধাৰ লাগে।”
 “পোৱালী হাতীৰে শুঁৰ ঐ গৃহস্থ
 পোৱালী হাতীৰে শুঁৰ
 একুৰি চিকাৰুপ নেপাব লাগিলে
 চোতালখন কৰি যাম লুৰ।”

এই মুদ্ৰাবোৰ কেতিয়াবা সোণ, কেতিয়াবা ৰূপ,
 কেতিয়াবা তামৰেও বনোৱা হয়। বিহ্নামত আছে—

“ৰূপৰ চাৰিটকা তামোল শৰাই
 হুঁচৰি বাই ঐ চেপা নিলে চোৰে
 কেনেকৈ পাতিছিল বাপেৰে পুতেৰ।”

অসমীয়া মানুহে সময়ৰ জোখ-মাপ ল’বলৈ
 বিভিন্ন শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। তাৰ ভিতৰত ক্ষণ, বাৰ,
 বেলা, দিন, সপ্তাহ, পক্ষ, মাহ, ঋতু, বছৰ আদি।
 এনেবোৰ শব্দৰ উল্লেখৰেও অসমীয়া ভাষাত বহুতো
 বিহ্নাম ৰচনা হোৱা দেখা যায়। তাৰ ভিতৰত—

“বাৰেকৈ লেখিবা ক্ষণেকৈ গণিবা
 তোমাক কাহানিকৈ পাম”

“তুমি চোৱা আমালৈ আমি চাওঁ তোমালৈ
 চাইনো চোন কৰিবা কি?”

এদিন এবেলা ৰাখিব নোৱাৰে
 কোনোবা কাৰোবাৰ জী।”

“তোমাৰে আমাৰে এনুৱা পীৰিতি
 ক’লে নপৰে ওৰ

এমাহৰ বাটলৈ যদি মনত পৰে
 দেহা পুৰি মৰে মোৰ।”
 “পূৱালী ৰ’দালি বাঁহ কাটি আনি
 ছমাহ ধোঁৱা চাঙত ৰাখিম
 অহাতো বহাগত গগনা বনাইলৈ
 তোমাক বজাবলৈ ধৰিম।”
 “গধূলি গধূলি গোন্ধাই টঙেলতি
 গধূলি ছিটিকা পাতো
 এদিন নেদেখিলে থাকিব নোৱাৰো
 এবছৰ কেনেকৈ থাকোঁ।”

অসমীয়া ভাষাত দুইমাহৰ মাজৰ শব্দক বুজাবলৈ
 দোমাহী শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। এনে ধৰণৰ জোখ-
 মাপ থকা এফাঁকি বিহ্নামৰ উদাহৰণ—

“লাও দিব হেদালি জিকা দিবৰ জেং
 বছৰেকৰ দোমাহীত ফুৰিবৰ নিয়ম।”

অসমীয়া ভাষাত সময়ৰ জোখমাপত কেতিয়াবা
 তামোল এখনৰ বাট, বেলিমূৰৰ ওপৰত উঠাৰ সময়,
 গধূলি সময়, মাজনিশা, এইবেলি, যোৱাবেলি,
 আজি, কালি, পৰহি আদি শব্দও ব্যৱহাৰ হয়।
 অসমীয়া ভাষাত ৰচিত বহু বিহ্নামত এইসমূহ শব্দৰ
 প্ৰয়োগ আছে যি আমাক কোনো এক নিৰ্দিষ্ট সময়ৰ
 জোখমাপ বুজাত সহায় কৰে। যেনে—

“ৰাতি মাজে নিশা বৰে ঘৰ এৰি যাম
 এৰি যাম পেটৰে ভাত।”

“গধূলি পৰতে বহি মই আছিলোঁ
 বাদুলিয়ে পকা কল খায়

তোমালৈ মনতে পৰে ঘনে ঘনে
 তোমাৰহে মনতে নাই।”

“কালি যোৱা ৰাতি সপোনত দেখিলোঁ
 বহি বৈ আছিল তাত।”
 “ধনলৈ কৰিলি মনত্ৰ লাহৰী
 ধনলৈ কৰিলি মন
 ৰাতি দুপৰলৈ পীৰিতি কৰিলি
 দেহাৰো মাৰিলি কণ।”
 “আমাকে নিবলৈ যদি মন আছে
 এইবেলি বৰঘৰ সাজ।”
 “কাঁহৰে বাটিটি ঘিটিঙাই বাজিলে
 নেজানি বুলিলোঁ কোন
 আহিব দিছিলোঁ ফুটেকৈ গধূলি
 ভটিয়াই গ’লগৈ জোন।”
 “ৰাতি দুপৰলৈ কাটি সূত লাহি
 ধনলৈ বিহুৱান বলোঁ
 ৰঙাকৈ আঁচুৰে বাছি পানেকটা
 টিপতে লুকুৱাই থলোঁ।”
 “বেলি মাৰে গ’লে কাঠনি জাৰণি
 ঘিলা মাৰে গ’ল ফাঁকত
 চিঠিৰে ভিতৰত যি কথা লিখিছো
 সি কথা ৰাখিবা মনত।”
 “আজি গধূলিকৈ আহিবা চেনাইটি
 পদূলিত নোপোৱা মোক
 পৰহিলৈ গধূলি আহিবা চেনাইটি
 ফালি থ’ম বেৰেৰে চুক।” ইত্যাদি
 (গ) গোট বুজোৱা শব্দৰ গণিত থকা বিহু :
 অসমীয়া ভাষাত গোট বুজোৱা বহুতো
 সংখ্যাৰাচক শব্দ আছে। তাৰ ভিতৰত যোৰ, যুৰি,

হাল শব্দই দুটাক বুজায়। বিহুনামত তেনে শব্দৰ উল্লেখ
 আছে এনেদৰে—

“মোক নিন্দা কৰি খাবা কত কাল
 যুৰীয়া ভঁৰালৰ ভাত
 কেতিয়াবা চেনাইটি এনেদিন আহিব
 মাতিয়ো নাপাবা মাত।”
 “বাঁহৰে আগতে কপৌ চৰাই হালি
 ধেনু নেমাৰিবা টানি
 শতৰু ছোৱালীত চকু ঐ নিদিবা
 দেহক নকৰিবা পানী।”
 “কথা মাৰে গ’লে ইৰুচি সিকুচি
 ঘিলা মাৰে গ’লে ফাকত
 তোমাৰে আমাৰে কথা মাৰে গ’লে
 যুৰীয়া জামুকৰ তলত।”
 “হাবিত জুই লাগিলে কুকুহা উৰিলে
 দৰিকৈ খুঁচৰি খায়
 বনৰ পশুপক্ষী ফুৰে যোৰে পাতি
 আমাৰ যোৰ পাতোতা নাই।”

সেইদৰে সৰু চাৰিটা বস্তুৰ লেখ ল’বলৈ ব্যৱহাৰ
 কৰা হয় গঙা, অঁৰা, হালি আদি শব্দ। যেনে- তামোল
 চাৰি অঁৰা। অৱশ্যে মুগা লেখৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পাঁচটাই
 একঅঁৰা হয়। বিহুনামত তেনে গণিতৰো প্ৰসংগ
 আছে—

“চৰায়ে তুলিলে ছঅঁৰা পোৱালী
 গছৰ ডাল শুৱনি কৰি
 আমাকো তুলিলে আমাৰ আই বোপায়ে
 লোকৰ ঘৰ শুৱনি কৰি।”
 “চৰাই হৈ চৰিমগৈ ছঅঁৰা পুখুৰীত

লাওঁ হৈ লাগিমগৈ চালত
মাখি ৰূপে ধৰি চুমা খাই আহিমগৈ
তোমাৰ কুমলীয়া গালত।”
“আলিটি কাটি যাওঁ চেপাটি পাতি যাওঁ
মাগুৰ মাছ এহালি পাওঁ
নিজেও নাখাও মই লোককো নিদিও মই
চেনাইলৈ সামৰি থাওঁ।”

সেইদৰে বিশটা বুজোৱা শব্দৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কুৰি
ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। বিহুনাংমত তাৰ উদাহৰণ
এনেধৰণৰ—

“দুখৰ ভাই ককাই হ’লো ঐ দুখীয়া
সাজি ল’ব নোৱাৰো ঘৰ
পটীয়া পাটীকৈ কিনিব নোৱাৰো
তাতে কৰে ছকুৰি দৰ।”
“ওপৰৰ পৰা তললৈ হালিলে
মামৈ তামোলৰ থোক
লাগে চাৰিকুৰি ভৰিব পৰো মই
এৰিব নোৱাৰো তোক।”
“নাহৰ চেনামুৱা যায়নো বেহাবলৈ
ছকুৰি কুকুৰাৰ ভাৰ
দিহিং নৈৰে পানী কৰে তলে বলে
ঘাট্টেয়ে নকৰায় পাৰ।”
“তিনিকৈ পৰীয়া দলৌ কাণেমাৰি
ছকুৰি কুকুৰাৰ ভাৰ
জনমে জনমে শুজিব নোৱাৰো
যুৰিয়া তামোলৰ ধাৰ।”

অসমীয়া ভাষাত ক্ৰমাত হেৰাই যোৱালৈ ধৰা
আন এটি সংখ্যাবাচক সংখ্যা এবুৰি। এই এবুৰি শব্দই

ছঅঁৰা অৰ্থাৎ ছকিৰা বুজায় (হেমকোষ, পৃ.১৯৩)।
বিহুনাংমত আছে—

“ঘিলা খেলিবৰে লাই হেৰ’ মৰুৱা
ঘিলা খেলিবৰে লাই
ছবুৰি জিকিলে লাই হেৰ’ মৰুৱা
আজিলৈ মৰণে নাই।”

(ঘ) অনিৰ্দিষ্ট সংখ্যা বুজোৱা শব্দ :

অসমীয়া ভাষাত অনিৰ্দিষ্ট সংখ্যা বুজোৱা বা
সমূহ বুজোৱা কিছুমান শব্দ আছে আৰু সেই শব্দৰো
প্ৰয়োগ লোক কবিসকলে কৰিছিল। বিহুনাংমত তেনে
গণিতৰো প্ৰয়োগ হৈছে এনেদৰে—

“ববও নাজানে কাটিবও নাজানে
লোকৰ শালে শালে ফুৰে
ৰান্ধিবও নাজানে বাঢ়িবও নাজানে
খৰি মুঠা মুঠে পোৰে।
“বিহু বিৰিণা পাত ঐ লাহৰী
বিহু বিৰিণা পাত
গাভৰু ছোৱালী নাচে জুমা জুমে
চ’তৰ বিহু লাগিছে গাত।”
“বৰ বিলৰ পাৰতে বৰবগ চৰিলে
উৰিল গ’ল বগলীৰ জাক
চেনাইৰ মৰমত মৰিব পাৰো মই
মাৰি যাওঁ নাচোনৰ পাক।”
“আলিয়ে আলিয়ে ম’হে লালী পাতে
গুৱাল বা কেহেলৈ গ’ল”
“আহুধান দাবলৈ আমনি লাহৰী
তলে লেউ লেউ জোক
আহুধানৰ তলিতে নোজোকবি লাহৰী

এনেয়ে পাৰি যেন মোক।”

ধান-চাউলৰ খোজ-মাপৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কেতিয়াবা চিৰা, থোক, মুঠি, ডাঙৰী, ভাৰ আদি শব্দও ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা দেখা যায়। যেনে— এচিৰা ধান, এঠোক ধান, এমুঠি ধান, এমুঠি চাউল ইত্যাদি। বিহু নামত এনেবোৰ শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আছে এনেদৰে—

“ইলাই পথাৰতে চিলাই ধান দালে
ঘিলাচকলীয়া মুঠি

তোলৈ চাই বাঙলী বান্ধি যাওঁ ডাঙৰী
গৰা চপাই বান্ধি যাওঁ নাওঁ।”

“ধানে দাই এৰিলি থোকে ঐ লাহৰী
ধানে দাই এৰিলি থোক

ধানে দায়ে গ’লা পাছলৈ নাচালা
এৰি গ’লা চেনেহৰ থোক।”

“বৰাধান এভাৰি দাং ঐ বান্ধৈ
বৰাধান এভাৰি দাং

বাৰেকৈ লেখিবা ক্ষণেকৈ গণিবা
তোমাক কাহানিকৈ পাম।”

অকল ইমাহেই নহয়, অসমীয়া মানুহে ধান, চাউল, মাহ আদি বিভিন্ন শস্যৰ জোখমাপ কেতিয়াবা দোন, পাচি, খৰাহি, ডুলি আদিৰেও লৈছিল। কিন্তু এই পাচি, খৰাহি, ডুলি আদিৰ জোখ নিৰ্দিষ্ট নহয়। বেলেগে বেলেগ আকাৰ অনুসৰি সেইবোৰৰ জোখ বেলেগ বেলেগ হয়। সেয়ে এখৰাহী চাউল বা এপাচি ধান বুলি ক’লে পাচি, খৰাহিৰ আকাৰ অনুসৰি জোখমাপ বেলেগ বেলেগ হয়। বিহু নামত এনে গণিতো আছে।

কেতিয়াবা অন্যান্য বস্তুও ইয়াৰ সহায়ত জোখা হৈছিল। যেনে- এখৰাহি তামোল, এপাচি শাক ইত্যাদি। বিহু নাম আছে—

“হাত মেলি নাপালো অ’ সোণ মইনা

তামোল খৰাহি অ’”

ঠিক সেইদৰে গছত একেলগে থুপ খাই লগা ফলমূলক বুজাবলৈ অসমীয়া ভাষাত থোক শব্দ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। এই থোকবোৰৰ ফলমূলৰ জোখমাপো অনিৰ্দিষ্টসংখ্যক। যেনে- তামোল থোক, নাৰিকল থোক, কল থোক আদি। উদাহৰণ স্বৰূপে—

“কুমলীয়া তামোলৰ থোকে ঐ চেনাইখন
কুমলীয়া তামোলৰ থোক

যিয়ে দিব পাৰিব মিনা কৰা গেজেৰা
সিয়ে নিব পাৰিব মোক।”

“দেখিবলৈ শুননি তোমাৰ বুকুখনি
কুমলীয়া তামোলৰ থোক

মিচিকিয়া হাঁহিটি লাহৰী ওঁঠতে
কোন মতে এৰি যাওঁ তোক।”

(২) মানুহৰ শৰীৰৰ বিভিন্ন অংগৰে দীঘ-প্ৰস্থ জোখাৰ গণিত :

অসমীয়া মানুহে কোনো বস্তুৰ দীঘ, প্ৰস্থ, উচ্চতা আদি জুখিবলৈ কেতিয়াবা নিজৰ শৰীৰৰ বিভিন্ন অংগৰ সহায় লৈছিল। যেনে- এপাব, এক আঙুল, এবেকেত, এহাত, এমুঠি, এমুঠন, এভৰি, এবুকু, এককাল, একাঠু, এঠেং, এডিঙি, এমূৰ আদি। এনেবোৰ শব্দৰ উল্লিখন থকা বিহু নামৰ উদাহৰণ হ’ল—

“দিখৌ নৈ পাৰৰে থোৰালি ঢেকীয়া
নিতৌ চাৰি আঙুল বাঢ়ে

তোলৈ লাহৰী মনত ঐ পৰিলে
ৰাতিও টোপনি নাহে।”

“স্বৰ্গদেও আনিলে চুতীয়া কাড়ী ঐ

বুকু বহল বহল চাই
 এঠেঙা ভিৰায়ে মাৰে শৰ ধনু
 হেদামত সৰকি যায়।”
 “দিচাঙৰ এবুকু পানী ঐ চেনাইটি
 দিহিঙৰ এবুকু পানী
 সূতা পকোৱাদি পকাই পকাই সুখিলোঁ
 মনৰ কথা নক’লা ভাঙি।”
 “হাতৰে লাহৰে খাৰুযোৰ পিন্ধিলা
 ভৰিৰে লাহৰে পাৰি
 গলধনত পেলাই খোপাটি বান্ধিলা
 এহাত-এমুঠন কৰি।”
 “চাইনো চাই বুলিবা বাট ঐ লাহৰী
 চাইনো চাই বুলিবা বাট
 পানী একাঠুৱা কাঁচুটি দাঙিবা
 পিছলি পৰিবা তাত।”
 “হাতলৈ কি চাবা হাতীৰে শুঁৰে যেন
 ভৰিৰনো কি চাবা গোট
 মুখলৈ কি চাবা দোলা দাপোণ যেন
 এখামোচ কঁকালৰ গোট।”
 সেইদৰে দুহাত দীঘল বুজাবলৈ একঠীয়া শব্দ
 ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। বিহু নামত দুহাত দীঘল হাঁচতিৰ বৰ্ণনা
 আছে এনেদৰে—
 “একঠীয়া হাঁচতি আমাকো নালাগে
 সমনীয়াৰ বিয়ালৈ থক”

(৩) প্ৰকৃতিৰ ৰেহকপ চাই নিৰ্ণয় কৰা গণিতৰ
 উল্লেখ থকা বিহু নাম :

মন কৰিবলগীয়া যে বিহু নামৰ ৰচক অনামি
 লোককবিসকল প্ৰকৃতিৰ বুকুত ডাঙৰ-দীঘল হোৱা

মাটি-পানী-বায়ুৰ লগত আজন্ম সম্পৰ্ক থকা মানুহ।
 তেওঁলোকৰ আছে চন্দ্ৰ, পৃথিৱীৰ অৱস্থান, সূৰ্য্যৰ
 উদয়-অস্ত যোৱাৰ সময়ৰ সঠিক জ্ঞান। তেওঁলোকে
 অনবৰতে খবৰ ৰাখে প্ৰকৃতিৰ প্ৰতিজোপা গছ-বিৰিখ,
 নৈ-নিজৰা, জান-জুৰি, ফুল-ফল, পৰ্বত-পাহাৰ, পশু-
 পক্ষীৰ গতিবিধি আলোচনাকৈ। অসমৰ প্ৰতিটো ঋতুতে
 প্ৰকৃতিৰ বিভিন্ন পৰিবৰ্তন ঘটে। প্ৰতিটো ঋতুৰে নিজৰ
 নিজৰ জোখ-মাপ অনুসৰি, নিজৰ বৈশিষ্ট্য অনুসৰি
 পৰিবৰ্তন হয়। প্ৰকৃতিৰ এই গণিতৰে লোককবি
 চিৰপৰিচিত। প্ৰকৃতিত ঘটা প্ৰতিটো পৰিবৰ্তনে লোক
 জীৱনক নিজৰ নিজৰ দায়িত্ব আৰু কৰ্তব্যবোধ সম্পৰ্কে
 সচেতন কৰে। বিহু অহাৰ বাতৰি, বসন্ত অহাৰ বাতৰিও
 অসমীয়া মানুহে প্ৰকৃতি জগতৰ পৰাই লাভ কৰে।
 কাৰণ এই ঋতুতে শীতত লঠা হোৱা গছ-বিৰিখত
 নতুন নতুন কুঁহিপাত ওলায়, কুলিৰ দৰে পৰিভ্ৰমী চৰাই
 আহি সুললিত কণ্ঠৰে অসমীয়া ডেকা-গাভৰুৰ মনপ্ৰাণ
 জুৰ পেলাই, কমোৱা তুলাবোৰ ফাটি বতাহত উৰি ফুৰে
 তাকে দেখি অসমীয়া ডেকা-গাভৰুৰ চঞ্চল যৌৱন
 জাগে, মন যায় কমোৱা তুলাৰ দৰে উৰি ফুৰিবলৈ,
 লগে লগে ঢোল, পেঁপাৰ মাতত অসমৰ আকাশ-বতাহ
 হয় মুখৰিত। বিহু নামত ইয়াৰ বৰ্ণনা আছে এনেদৰে—

“কুউ কুউ কৰি কুলিয়ে মাতিলে
 গছেও সলালে পাত
 নাহৰ ফুলিলে কপৌফুল ফুলিলে
 বিহু বিহু লাগিছে গাত।”
 “মাধুৰী আঁহতৰ কুঁহিপাত ওলালে
 মনে নধৰা হয় হিয়াত
 ডেকা গাভৰুৰ আগমন ঘটিল
 মাধুৰী আঁহতৰ তল।” ইত্যাদি

সেইদৰে চন্দ্ৰ-সূৰ্য্যৰ বিভিন্ন দশাৰ মাজতো
 অসমীয়া মানুহে গাণিতিক জোখ-মাপ উলিয়াব জানে।
 উদাহৰণ স্বৰূপে কেতিয়াবা যদি সৌন্দৰ্য্যৰে পৰিপূৰ্ণ

প্ৰেয়সীক পূৰ্ণচন্দ্ৰ ৰূপৰ লগত তুলনা কৰিছে,
কেতিয়াবা আকৌ কাঁচিজোনৰ লগত কৃপণ গৃহস্থক
তুলনা কৰি গাইছে—

“সোৰণশিৰী বালিতে কেঁচাসোণ জিলিকে

আকাশত জিলিকে জোন

তোৰচোন নিচিনা নোলাব হ’বলা

যেন পূৰ্ণিমাৰ জোন।”

“জোনো কেঁকোঁৰা বেলিও কেঁকোঁৰা

কেঁকোঁৰা সৰগৰ তৰা

আমাৰ কাৰণে গিৰিহঁত কেঁকোঁৰা

ওলাইনাহে ভিতৰৰ পৰা।”

কেতিয়াবা আকৌ সময়ৰ অংক কৰিছে
এনেদৰে—

“কাঁহৰে বাটিটি ঘিটিঙাই বাজিলে

নেজানি বুলিলোঁ কোন

আহিব দিছিলোঁ ফুটেকৈ গধূলি

ভটিয়াই গ’লগৈ জোন।”

প্ৰকৃতিৰ নদ-নদী, জান-জুৰি, পাহাৰ-পৰ্বতৰ গঠন
আকৃতি চাইও অসমীয়া লোক কবিয়ে কিছুমান জোখ-
মাপ কৰিছিল। যেনে—

“লৰুৱা বিলখন জাঁপমাৰি ডেই যাম

ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ কেনেকৈ ডেম

ইপিনৰে পৰা বাঁমৈ হাত মেলিবি

মকৰা জোৰা দি যাম।”

ওপৰৰ বিহুনা ফাঁকিত ‘লৰুৱা বিল’ৰ আকৃতিত
ঠেক বাবে সহজে জাঁপ মাৰি যাব পাৰি কিন্তু ‘ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ’
আকৃতিত বহল বাবে জাঁপ মাৰি পাৰ হ’ব নোৱাৰি।
অৰ্থাৎ বহল-ঠেকৰ গণিত।

(৪) বাক্যত বিভিন্ন প্ৰসংগত ব্যৱহৃত বিভিন্ন শব্দৰ
গণিত আৰু বিহুনাৰ সেইসমূহৰ প্ৰয়োগ :

অসমীয়া ভাষাত ব্যৱহৃত এনে কিছুমান শব্দ
আছে যিবোৰ সংখ্যাবাচক শব্দ নহ’লেও বাক্যত
ব্যৱহৃত শব্দবোৰে আমাৰ মনত একো একোটা জোখ-
মাপৰ ধাৰণা দিয়ে। তাৰ ভিতৰত আগ, গুৰি, ডাঙৰ,
সৰু, চিঞা, বহল, দীঘল, চুটি, ঠেক, মিহি, ঢপলা,
ভমকা, খৰকৈ, লাহেকৈ আদি শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰেও
বেলেগ বেলেগ জোখমাখৰ ধাৰণা মনলৈ আনি দিয়ে।
বিহুনাৰসমূহত এনে ধৰণৰ গণিতৰো বহুল প্ৰয়োগ ঘটা
দেখা যায়।

“আগলি বাঁহৰে লাহৰী গগনা

বহি তাঁতৰ পাতত বাওঁ।”

“ঢোলে ভালে কৰি বাৰি ঐ ঢুলীয়া

ঢোলে ভালে কৰি বাৰি

খৰকৈ নেবাৰি উদাকৈ নেবাৰি

নাচনীৰ ছেৰতে বাৰি।”

“শকতকৈ কলাফুল কঁকাল খামুচীয়া

বহলকৈ চেনাইৰে বুকু

এনুৱা চেনাই তোক কেনেকৈ পাহৰিম

সদায়ে সপোনত দেখোঁ।”

“হাতৰে আঙুলি লোহোৰা লুথৰি

ভৰিৰে আঙুলি ঘন

কি খুৱাই মাৰে তোকনো তুলিলে

চাই থাকিবৰে মন।”

“দেখিবলৈ শুৱনি তোমাৰ বুকুখনি

কুমলীয়া তামোলৰ থোক

মিচিকিয়া হাঁহিটি লাহৰী ওঁঠতে

কোন সতে এৰি যাওঁ তোক।”

“দীঘলকৈ বিহুৱান লগাইছিলো চেনাই
পিতাইৰ দীঘলীয়া চোতাল
বিহুৰে দিনাখন দিবলৈ নেপালো
কিনো জুয়ে লগা কঁপাল।”

“সৰুতে শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণই গৰু চৰাইছিল
হাততে এছাৰি লৈ
ডাঙৰহৈ শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণই ৰুক্মিণীক মুহিলে
হাততে বাঁহীটি লৈ।”

“ভমকা ফুলীয়া বিহুৱান এখনি
থেছো তোমালৈ সাঁচি
বিহুতে নাহালে মোৰে বধ লাগিব
বুকুৰ ধন নাযাবা ভুলি।”

“মিকিৰৰ বৰচাঙতে বজায় বৰেকাঁহী
ভৈয়ামত বজাইছে ঢোল”

অসমীয়া ভাষাত বিভিন্ন শব্দৰে সময়ৰ জোখমাপ
লোৱা হয় যদিও কেতিয়াবা অন্য ধৰণেৰেও সময়ৰ
জোখ-মাপ লোৱাৰ পদ্ধতি অসমীয়া ভাষাত আছে
আৰু লোক কবিয়ে ৰচনা কৰা বিহুনামত তাৰ
প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে এনেদৰে—

“তুমি যে আছাগৈ ৰংপুৰ নগৰত
মোকে ঘৰত এৰি

শনিবাৰে আবেলি চাই ৰঙ বাটলৈ
লাচনি পাচনি কৰি।”— ইয়াত
সপ্তাহৰ সাতোটা বাৰৰ ভিতৰত শনিবাৰটোৰ কথা
নিৰ্দিষ্টকৈ কোৱা হৈছে। অৰ্থাৎ সপ্তাহৰ শেষৰ আগৰ
(ষষ্ঠ) দিনটোৰ জোখ দিয়া হৈছে।

একেদৰে মাহৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত —

“আজি কি এমাহে কাতি ঐ দেউতা
কালি এমাহে কাতি”

সেইদৰে তলৰ বিহুনামটোত সাতবিহুৰ ভিতৰত
বিশেষকৈ গৰুবিহুৰ দিনটোৰ হিচাপ নিৰূপণ কৰা হৈছে।

“চ’তে চকৰি বহাগত বগৰি
জেঠতে আমনা ধান
গৰুবিহুৰ দিনাখন শৰাই আগবঢ়াবা
তেহে পাবা বৈকুণ্ঠত স্থান।”

সেইদৰে কেতিয়াবা কোনো সময়ৰ কথা
নিৰ্দিষ্টকৈ কৈ নিদিলেও বাক্যত ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱা কিছুমান
শব্দৰ পৰা সেই সময়ৰ জোখ নিৰূপণ কৰিব পাৰি।
বিহুনামত এনে গণিতো আছে। যেনে—

“শোৱাপাটীত পৰি টোপনি অহা নাই
মোৰে কথা ভাবিছা ৰৈ”— ইয়াত
নিশ্চয় ৰাতিৰ কথা কোৱা বুলি ধৰিব পাৰি।

অসমীয়া ভাষাত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা এনে কিছুমান শব্দ
আছে যি শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰে একো একোজন মানুহৰ ভিন্ন
ভিন্ন বয়সৰ জোখ তথা গণিত নিৰূপণত সহায় কৰে।
বিহুনামত ব্যৱহৃত হোৱা তেনেকুৱা দুটিমান শব্দ,
যেনে—

“এৰি গ’লে এৰাপাত নেলাগে লাহৰী
বেলি গ’লে নেলাগে ভাত
যৌৱন ভাটি দিলে পীৰিতি নেলাগে
বহনা নেথাকে গাত।”

“গাভৰু কালতে নিওতা নহ’লে
বুঢ়ী হ’লে নিবনো কোনে?”

“কিনো দায়ে জগৰ লগালোঁ পিতাই ঐ
নিদিলে জীয়েকী কালত।”

“মইনো শান্তি হোৱা বেছি দিন হোৱা নাই
গুচা নাই হালধিৰ বোল।”

“লোকে বিয়া কৰায় কুমলীয়া ছোৱালী

আমি বিয়া কৰাওঁ বুঢ়ী
যৌৱনৰ শুৱনি সোণালী পীৰিতি
এৰিলে পাবলৈ টান।”

কেতিয়াবা একোটা বাক্যত প্ৰকাশিত কিছুমান
ভাৱ-ভংগীয়েও কিছুমান জোখ-মাপৰ ধাৰণা দিয়ে।
যেনে—

“বতাহ বৰষুণে ওন্দোলাই আনিছে
তৰি থৈ আহিছোঁ তাত।
মোৰ ঐ চেনাইটি মিছা নামাতিবা
কেইটা সৰিছে দাঁত।”

ওপৰৰ বিজ্ঞানম ফাঁকিত পোনচাটেই বৃদ্ধ বয়সৰ
কথা কোৱা হোৱা নাই যদিও ‘দাঁত সৰা’ শব্দৰ ব্যৱহাৰে
বৃদ্ধ বয়সৰ জোখ বুজাইছে।

অসমীয়া ভাষাত এনে কিছুমান সম্বন্ধবাচক শব্দ
আছে যি পোনপটীয়াকৈ নহ’লেও আওপকীয়াকৈ
একো একোটা বয়সৰ গণিতৰ প্ৰসংগ আনে। যেনে—

“পথাৰে পথাৰে ক’লে যোৱা মইনা
লগত ভনীয়েকক লৈ”— উক্ত
বিজ্ঞানমটোত উল্লেখ থকা ভনীয়েক শব্দই চেনেহীতকৈ
এগৰাকী কম বয়সৰ ছোৱালীক বুজাইছে।
সেইদৰে—

“পিলিঙা দেখিয়ে তুমি যে জোকাইছা
বাই সমনীয়া তুমি”

একেদৰে ভাত ৰান্ধিবলৈ ৰ’দ দিয়া ধান কুটাবৰ
বাবে শুকুৱাৰ একোটা জোখ আছে। যেতিয়া ধান আধা
শুকান হয় তেতিয়া তাক কোৱা হয় লেচিয়া। বিজ্ঞানম
আছে—

“আঁৰৈ ধান লেচিয়া বানিবি কেতিয়া
কুলাত কৈ চালনী ঘন

চকুৰে চাইছে মুখেৰে নেমাতে
কাঁলে কৰিছ মন।”

অসমীয়া মানুহৰ প্ৰধান খেতি ধান। এই ধান
সাধাৰণতে আঘোণ পকে। কিন্তু কেতিয়াবা আহিন-
কাতিটো কিছুমান ধান পকিছিল। সেই ধানক কোৱা
হয় অমনা ধান। বিজ্ঞানমত অমনা ধানৰ উল্লেখ আছে—

“চ’তে চকৰি বহাগত বগৰী
জেঠতে অমনা ধান
চ’তৰ বিহু দিনাখন শৰাই আগবঢ়াৱা
তেহে পাবা বৈকুণ্ঠত থান।”

আকৌ কতীয়া মুগা বুলিলে কাতি মাহত তৈয়াৰ
কৰা মুগাৰ কথা বুজা হয়। বিজ্ঞানম আছে—

“মূৰেৰে শুৱনি ৰঙা ফুলৰ গামোচা
মাজত পাণে কটা বঁটা
গাৰে শুৱনি ফটহ চোলাটি
কতীয়া মুগাৰে সূতা।”

সামৰণি :

অসমীয়া বিহু তিনিটা। ইয়াৰে বহাগ বিহু আকৌ
সাতদিনীয়া। কাতি বিহু এদিনীয়া। মাঘ বিহু দুদিনীয়াকৈ
উদ্‌যাপিত হয়, বহাগ বিহুৰ লগত সাতশাক খোৱাৰ,
ঠাই বিশেষে এশ এবিধ শাক খোৱাৰো পৰম্পৰা আছে।
আকৌ বিহুৰ লগত সম্পৰ্কিত বিভিন্ন বাদ্য, সাজ-
পোচাক, অলংকাৰ আদিৰ মাজতো একো একোটা
জোখমাপ আছে। যেনে— ঢোল একোটাৰ জোখ
দীঘলে প্ৰায় ৪৫ ছেণ্টিমিটাৰ আৰু ব্যাস প্ৰায় ৩০
ছেণ্টিমিটাৰ; সুতুলী দুটা ফুটাযুক্ত; টকা বাঁহৰ এপাপৰে
সজা হয়; অলংকাৰৰ ভিতৰত সাতসৰী হাৰ আকৌ
সাতটা মূল্যবান মণিৰে গঢ়া; বিভিন্ন বস্ত্ৰৰ ভিতৰত ৰিহা
দীঘলে আঠহাত; বহলে ডেৰ হাত; চেলেং ছহাত দীঘল,
তিনিহাত বহল; গামোচা-হাঁচতি আদিৰো ভিন ভিন

জোখ আছে। বিহ্নামত উল্লেখিত বহুতো অসমীয়া উপাধি বৰুৱা, শইকীয়া ইত্যাদিৰ মাজতো গণিতৰ ধাৰণা প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে।

লোক-কবিয়ে ৰচনা কৰা বিহ্নামসমূহৰ সময় নিৰূপণ কৰা টান যদিও বিহ্নামত ব্যৱহৃত কিছুমান শব্দই, যেনে— স্বৰ্গদেউ, ডা-ডাঙৰীয়া, বঙাল, ইংৰাজ, ৰে'লৰ আলি, মটৰ গাড়ী, চাইকেল, কোম্পানীৰ জাহাজ আদি শব্দই অসমৰ ইতিহাসৰ একো একোটা সময়ৰ গণিতৰ ধাৰণা স্পষ্ট কৰে।

অকল ইমানেই নহয় ইয়াত ঠেং, ভৰি, আঁঠু, হাত আদি শব্দই দুটা; বুকু, কঁকাল, ডিঙি আদিয়ে এটা, আঙুলি বুলিলে হাতৰ দহটা ভৰিৰ দহটাকৈ শৰীৰৰ বিভিন্ন অংগই এটাৰ জোখ দিয়ে। ইয়ো পৰোক্ষভাৱে এক প্ৰকাৰ গণিত।

এইদৰে আলোচনা কৰিলে দেখা যায় যে প্ৰায়বোৰ বিহ্নামত গণিতৰ জোখ-মাপ আছে। অসমীয়া লোকজীৱনৰ লগত আজন্ম সম্পৰ্ক থকা বহুতো অনামী কবিয়ে বিহ্নাম ৰচনা কৰি অসমীয়া লোক সাহিত্যৰ ভঁৰাল চহকী কৰি গৈছে। এই বিহ্নামসমূহৰ বহুতো বিহ্নাম হয়তো এতিয়াও পোহৰলৈ অহা নাই, বহু বিহ্নাম আকৌ একো একোটা প্ৰজন্মৰ লগতে চিৰদিনৰ বাবে হেৰাই গৈছে। অৱশ্যে লীলা গগৈ, নকুল চন্দ্ৰ ভূঞা, ডিম্বেশ্বৰ নেওগ, প্ৰফুল্ল দত্ত গোস্বামী প্ৰমুখ্যে কেইবাগৰাকী মহান অসমীয়াৰ প্ৰচেষ্টাত অসমৰ অৰঙে-দৰঙে সিঁচৰিত হৈ থকা বহু বিহ্নাম সংৰক্ষিত হৈছে। বৰ্তমানেও সংৰক্ষিত নোহোৱা অসমৰ চুকে-কোণে সিঁচৰিত হৈ থকা বিহ্নামসমূহৰ উদ্ধাৰ হ'লে অসমীয়া মানুহে দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা গাণিতিক জোখ-মাপৰ বহু তথ্য হয়তো পোহৰলৈ আহিব। সেয়ে এইক্ষেত্ৰত নিশ্চয়কৈ গৱেষণাৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আছে।

পাদটীকা :

(১) প্ৰান্তিক, ১-১৫ ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী ২০২১, পৃ.৩২।

(২) প্ৰাগুক্ত, পৃ.৩২।

গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী :

১। গগৈ, চাও লোকেশ্বৰ, *অসমৰ লোকসংস্কৃতি* (২য়), ত্ৰাণ্তিকাল প্ৰকাশন, এম. জি. ৰোড, নগাঁও, ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী ২০১১।

২। গগৈ, চাও লোকেশ্বৰ, *অসমৰ লোকসংস্কৃতি* (৩য়), ত্ৰাণ্তিকাল প্ৰকাশন, এম. জি. ৰোড, নগাঁও, ডিচেম্বৰ ২০১৩।

৩। গগৈ, লীলা, *বিহ্ন, এটি সমীক্ষা*, বনলতা, নতুন বজাৰ, ডিব্ৰুগড় ১, চতুৰ্থ সংস্কৰণ, ২০১০।

৪। গগৈ, লীলা, *অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ ৰূপৰেখা*, বনলতা, নতুন বজাৰ, ডিব্ৰুগড় ১, পুনৰ মুদ্ৰণ, ২০২১।

৫। গন্ধীয়া, জয়কান্ত, *হঁচৰি, মুকলি বিহ্ন আৰু বিহ্ন নাচ*, বনলতা, নতুন বজাৰ, ডিব্ৰুগড় ১, চতুৰ্থ সংস্কৰণ, ২০১৮।

৬। দাস, নাৰায়ণ, পৰমানন্দ ৰাজবংশী, সম্পা., *অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ কণিকা*, চন্দ্ৰ প্ৰকাশ, পাণবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী ১, পৰিবৰ্ধিত আৰু সংশোধিত সংস্কৰণ ২০০৬।

৭। নাথ, প্ৰফুল্ল কুমাৰ, সম্পা., *বৃহত্তৰ অসমৰ বৰ্ণিত সংস্কৃতি*, ৰেখা প্ৰকাশন, গোপাল ৰোড, পাণবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী ১, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, নবেম্বৰ ২০১৯।

৮। বৰুৱা, প্ৰফুল্ল কুমাৰ, সম্পা., *অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্য*, সুৰভি সাহিত্য কুটীৰ, থানা চাৰিআলি, ডিব্ৰুগড়, চেপ্তেম্বৰ ২০০১।

৯। মিলি, ৰত্নেশ্বৰ, মমী শৰ্মা, *অসমীয়া ভাষা সাহিত্য সংস্কৃতি*, অলিম্পিয়া প্ৰকাশন, ৰাজগড়, গুৱাহাটী ৩, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, নবেম্বৰ ২০১৬।

১০। মিলি, বত্বেশ্বৰ, পূণ্যলতা গৌহাই, সম্পা., অসমৰ লোক-কলা, দগো ৰাংছাং গৱেষণা সমিতি, কিৰণ প্ৰকাশন, ডি কে মাৰ্কেট কমপ্লেক্স, ধেমাজি ৭৮৭০৫৭ আৰু বিদ্যা মহল, পানবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী ১, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, জানুৱাৰী ২০১৪।

১১। হাজৰিকা প্ৰদ্যুৎ (সম্পা.) ড° লীলা গগৈৰ ৰচনাৱলী (প্ৰথম খণ্ড), বনলতা, ডিব্ৰুগড় ১, গুৱাহাটী ১, প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ, অক্টোবৰ, ২০১১।

১২। হুছেইন, আব্দুল, সুৰেন্দ্ৰ নাথ ডেকা, মুকলি বিহু, বিহুনাচৰ নিয়মাৱলী, বনলতা, গুৱাহাটী ১, ডিব্ৰুগড় ১, তৃতীয় পৰিৱৰ্তিত, প্ৰকাশ এপ্ৰিল ২০১৮।

আলোচনী :

১। সাতসৰী, মে' ২০২২, সম্পা. অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা পূজাৰী।

২। সাতসৰী, মে' ২০২৩, সম্পা. অনুৰাধা শৰ্মা পূজাৰী।

৩। বাৰ্তা পথিলী, জুলাই ২০১৭, মুখ্য সম্পা. খগেশ্বৰ পেগু, সম্পা. ব্ৰজেন্দ্ৰনাথ ডেকা, সহ সম্পা. নিকুমণি হুছেইন।

৪। প্ৰান্তিক, ১-১৫ ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী, কাৰ্যকৰী সম্পা. ইমৰাণ হুছেইন, সম্পা. প্ৰদীপ বৰুৱা, সহঃসম্পা. বলেন দত্ত।

অসমৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ
সংৰক্ষণৰ উপায় আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তা
(দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ বিশেষ উল্লেখনেৰে)

ড° পল্লৱী সন্দিকৈ

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীসমূহৰ ভিতৰত অন্যতম দেউৰীসকল। অসমত বসবাস কৰা দেউৰীসকল মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত যথেষ্ট চহকী। তেওঁলোকে মুখে মুখে গাই অহা লোকগীত, ফকৰা-যোজনা আৰু সাধুকথাৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ জাতিৰ ইতিহাস, ধৰ্মীয় লোক-বিশ্বাস, নিয়ম-নীতি, ডেকা-গাভৰুৰ প্ৰণয়ৰ অভিব্যক্তি, দৈনন্দিন জীৱনৰ সুখ-দুখ, কৃষিকাৰ্য, জীৱ-জন্তু আদিৰ লগত জড়িত সকলো দিশসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকগীতসমূহ অতীজৰে পৰাই তেওঁলোকৰ মুখে মুখে পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে বাগৰি আহিছে। পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে বাগৰি অহা এই লোকসাহিত্যসমূহো সময়ৰ লগে লগে নতুন ৰূপ লৈছেহি। বৰ্তমানৰ গোলকীকৰণে দেউৰী নৱ-প্ৰজন্মক আধুনিকতাৰ ফালে ঢাল খুৱাইছে, ইয়াৰ ফলশ্ৰুতিত তেওঁলোকৰ সৰহসংখ্যকে নিজৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ সম্পৰ্কে ভালদৰে জ্ঞাত নহয়। যাৰ ফলত তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ কালক্ৰমত হেৰাই যোৱাৰ উপক্ৰম হৈছে। এই আলোচনা পত্ৰত তেওঁলোকৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ কেনেদৰে সংৰক্ষণ কৰিব পাৰি আৰু ইয়াৰ সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ল'বলগীয়া পদক্ষেপসমূহৰ সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা হ'ব।

পদ্ধতি : আলোচনা পত্ৰখনত মূলতঃ বৰ্ণনাত্মক পদ্ধতি গ্ৰহণ কৰা হ'ব।

বীজ শব্দ : দেউৰী, লোকসাহিত্য, সম্প্ৰসাৰণ।

০.০ প্ৰস্তাৱনা

০.১ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয়

লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ হৈছে এনে এবিধ সাহিত্য য'ত জনসাধাৰণৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত ঘটি থকা মনৰ অভিব্যক্তিসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটে। লিখিত সাহিত্য সৃষ্টিৰ পূৰ্বে লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ বা মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ জনসাধাৰণৰ মুখে মুখে প্ৰচলিত আছিল। আদিম যুগত মানুহে অৰণ্যত বাস কৰোঁতে তেওঁলোকৰ মুখে মুখে এনেধৰণৰ সাহিত্যসমূহ সৃষ্টি হৈছিল। তেওঁলোকে যেতিয়া দলবদ্ধভাৱে বাস কৰিবলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰিলে, সেইসময়ত তেওঁলোকে অৰণ্যৰ কঠিনতাৰ পৰা ওলাই আহি জীৱিকা নিৰ্বাহৰ বাবে কৃষিকাৰ্যত মনোনিবেশ কৰিবলৈ ধৰিলে। সেই সময়তে তেওঁলোকৰ কৃষিকৰ্ম বা আন সমূহীয়া কাৰ্য কৰোঁতে লোকগীত, ফকৰা-

যোজনা, মালিতা, গীত আদিৰ সৃষ্টি হৈছিল বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। এই লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ মাজত সেই সময়ৰ নিৰক্ষৰ লোকসকলৰ জীৱনৰ অভিব্যক্তি, ধৰ্মীয় বিশ্বাস, আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ, ৰীতি-নীতি আদি জড়িত হৈ আছে। পুৰুষানুক্ৰমে মুখে মুখে বাগৰি অহা এই মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহে নতুন ৰূপ লৈছেহি।

লোকসাহিত্যৰ ইংৰাজী প্ৰতিশব্দ হৈছে *Folk-Literature*। 'Folk' বা 'লোক' শব্দটোৱে সাধাৰণতে চহা আৰু গাঁৱৰ নিৰক্ষৰ লোকক বুজায়। এনে 'লোক' শব্দই প্ৰাচীন জনগোষ্ঠী, নিম্নস্তৰৰ জনগোষ্ঠী, নিৰক্ষৰ জনগোষ্ঠী আদিক বুজায়। গতিকে, এই লোকসকলৰ মাজত মুখে মুখে প্ৰচলিত হৈ আহি তেওঁলোকৰ মনৰ ভাৱসমূহ প্ৰকাশ কৰা গীতসমূহকে লোকসাহিত্য বুলিব পাৰি। একপ্ৰকাৰে ক'বলৈ গ'লে লোক-সাহিত্য

হ'ল লোকজীৱনৰ বাঙলয় প্ৰকাশ^১।

সত্যেন্দ্ৰনাথ শৰ্মাই অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্যক
তিনিটা ভাগত ভাগ কৰি দেখুৱাইছে এনেদৰে^২

ক) লোকগীত

খ) ফকৰা-যোজনা আৰু প্ৰবচন

গ) সাধুকথা।

অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ দৰে জনগোষ্ঠীয়
লোকসমূহৰ মাজতো এনে লোকসাহিত্য বা মৌখিক
সাহিত্য পোৱা যায়। অসমত বসবাস কৰা দেউৰী
লোকসকলো মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত যথেষ্ট
চহকী। তেওঁলোকে মুখে মুখে গাই অহা লোকগীত,
ফকৰা-যোজনা আৰু সাধুকথাৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ
জাতিৰ ইতিহাস, ধৰ্মীয় লোক-বিশ্বাস, নিয়ম-নীতি,
ডেকা-গাভৰুৰ প্ৰণয়ৰ অভিব্যক্তি, দৈনন্দিন জীৱনৰ
সুখ-দুখ, কৃষিকাৰ্য, জীৱ-জন্তু আদি সম্পৰ্কীয় সকলো
দিশৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটে এই লোকসাহিত্যসমূহত।
তেওঁলোকৰ লোক-সঙ্গীতবোৰৰ ভিতৰত^৩

১) আবৰৰ গীত

২) লহ'ৰীয়া গীত

৩) ছৰাই বাঙলী

৪) চিংপাই বেগাবা

৫) দুচিয়া পাতিয়া

৬) যাঁ-দেগাবা

৭) বিহুগীত

৮) হুঁচৰি গীত ইত্যাদিয়ে প্ৰধান।

দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকগীতসমূহ অতীজৰে পৰাই

তেওঁলোকৰ মুখে মুখে পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে বাগৰি
আহিছে। পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে মুখ বাগৰি অহা
দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সময়ৰ লগে লগে
নতুন ৰূপ লৈছেহি। বৰ্তমানৰ গোলকীকৰণে দেউৰী
নৰ-প্ৰজন্মক আধুনিকতাৰ ফালে ঢাল খুৱাইছে, ইয়াৰ
ফলশ্ৰুতিত তেওঁলোকৰ সৰহ সংখ্যকে তেওঁলোকৰ
লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ সম্পৰ্কে ভালদৰে অৱগত নহয়।
যাৰ ফলত তেওঁলোকৰ বহুমূলীয়া লোকসাহিত্যৰ যি
ভঁৰাল সেইয়া কালক্ৰমত হেৰাই যোৱাৰ উপক্ৰম হৈছে
বুলি ভাবিবৰ থল আছে। এনেবোৰ কাৰণতে
দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ
প্ৰয়োজন আহি পৰিছে বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। এই আলোচনাত
দেউৰী মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণৰ উপায়
সম্পৰ্কে এক চমু আলোচনা আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছে।

০.২ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য আৰু গুৰুত্ব

অসমৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসাহিত্যৰ সংৰক্ষণৰ
উপায় আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তা (দেউৰী
জনগোষ্ঠীৰ বিশেষ উল্লেখৰে)- শীৰ্ষক বিষয়টি
অধ্যয়ন কৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে নিম্নলিখিত দিশকেইটা
পোহৰলৈ আহিব।

➤ দেউৰীসকলৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ
সংৰক্ষণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সহায়ক হ'ব।

➤ দেউৰী লোকসাহিত্য সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত
ল'লগীয়া পদক্ষেপসমূহ পোহৰলৈ আহিব।

➤ এনেধৰণৰ অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে দেউৰী
লোকসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু
সম্প্ৰচাৰৰ সম্পৰ্কত তেওঁলোকৰ মাজতো সচেতনতা
বৃদ্ধি কৰাত সহায়ক হ'ব।

১) নগেন শইকীয়া, 'লোকমন আৰু লোকসাহিত্য', অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্য, প্ৰঃ দ কুমাৰ বৰুৱা (সম্পা.), পৃ. ০৫

২) সত্যেন্দ্ৰনাথ শৰ্মা, অসমীয়া সাহিত্যৰ সমীক্ষাত্মক ইতিবৃত্ত, পৃ. ১৯

৩) শশীধৰ দেউৰী, দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠী আৰু জীৱনধাৰা, অসমৰ জনগোষ্ঠী, বসন্তকুমাৰ দলে (সম্পা.), পৃ. ২০৪

০.৩ অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰ

লোকসাহিত্যৰ পৰিসৰ যথেষ্ট ব্যাপক। জাতি-জনগোষ্ঠী অনুসৰি প্ৰত্যেকৰে লোক-সাহিত্যৰ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সন্তানৰনীয়তাৰ সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহক সামৰি লৈ আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে। বিষয়টি অধ্যয়ন কৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে সমলসমূহ বিষয়ৰ লগত সম্পৰ্কিত বিভিন্ন গ্ৰন্থ, আলোচনী, ইণ্টাৰনেট আদিৰ পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছে।

০.৪ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি

অসমৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসাহিত্যৰ সংৰক্ষণৰ উপায় আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ সন্তানৰনীয়তা (দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ বিশেষ উল্লেখৰে) -শীৰ্ষক বিষয়টি বৰ্ণনাত্মক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লৈ আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে।

১.০ মূল বিষয়বস্তুৰ আলোচনা :

দেউৰীসকলৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্য বা লোকসাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰখনত চহকী বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। তেওঁলোকৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ অসমীয়া আৰু দেউৰী এই দুয়োটা ভাষাতেই প্ৰচলন আছে। তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যৰ সাধুকথা, বুৰঞ্জীমূলক গীত, হুৰাই ৰাঙলী, হুচৰি চাজেবা, টোকাৰী গীত, আইনাম, বিয়ানাম, মালিতাৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ ধৰ্মীয় লোক-বিশ্বাস, মনৰ অভিব্যক্তিসমূহৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। কিন্তু সময়ৰ পৰিৱৰ্তনত এই সাহিত্যসমূহৰ বহুতো নাইকীয়া হৈ যাবলৈ ধৰিছে। বিশেষকৈ তেওঁলোকৰ নৱপ্ৰজন্মৰ বহুতে এই ক্ষেত্ৰত সজাগ নহয়। উচ্চ শিক্ষাৰ প্ৰৱণতা আৰু আধুনিকতাৰ প্ৰভাৱে তেওঁলোকৰ সাহিত্যসমূহৰ প্ৰতি আওকাণ কৰা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। এই লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ কেৱল পুৰণি চাম আৰু নিজ সাহিত্যৰ প্ৰতি সচেতন প্ৰতিজন লোকেই নিজৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিক জীয়াই ৰাখিবলৈ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ পদক্ষেপ লোৱা দেখা যায়। দেউৰীসকলেও বৰ্তমানে এই

প্ৰচেষ্টাসমূহ গ্ৰহণ কৰা দেখা যায়।

১.১ দেউৰী লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ কৰাৰ উপায় আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ সন্তানৰনীয়তা

➤ দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকৰ লোকগীতসমূহ বাণীবদ্ধ কৰি সংৰক্ষণ কৰিব পাৰি। অৱশ্যে বৰ্তমান সময়ত তেওঁলোকৰ লোকগীতসমূহ বাণীবদ্ধ কৰি উলিয়াইছে যদিও তেওঁলোকৰ যি পুৰণি টোকাৰী গীত, বনগীতসমূহৰ সকলোবিলাক সংৰক্ষিত হৈ থকা নাই। বৰ্তমান সময়ত তেওঁলোকৰ এই টোকাৰী গীতসমূহ দুই-এঠাইত দেউৰীসকলৰ পুৰণি চাম লোকৰ মাজত প্ৰচলন হৈ আছে যদিও সেয়া অসমীয়া ভাষাতহে গোৱা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়।

➤ দেউৰীসকলৰ বৰ্তমানৰ যুৱ-প্ৰজন্ম তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যৰ প্ৰতি সজাগ নহয়। নগৰকেন্দ্ৰীক আৰু পাশ্চাত্যৰ প্ৰভাৱৰ ফলতে তেওঁলোকে নিজৰ লোকসাহিত্যৰ প্ৰতি আওকাণ কৰা যেন বোধ হয়। বৰ্তমানৰ যুৱ-প্ৰজন্মৰ খুউব কম সংখ্যকৰ মাজতহে এই বিষয়ত সজাগ হোৱা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। বৰ্তমানৰ প্ৰযুক্তিবিদ্যাৰ দ্ৰুত প্ৰসাৰণৰ ফলত নগৰমুখী আৰু পাশ্চাত্য ধ্যান-ধাৰণাৰ প্ৰতি আকৰ্ষিত দেউৰীসকলৰ যুৱ-প্ৰজন্মৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আৰু গুৰুত্ব সম্পৰ্কে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি কৰিব লাগিব। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত দেউৰী ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অভিজ্ঞ আৰু সচেতন লোকে দায়িত্ব লোৱা উচিত।

➤ অসমৰ অন্যান্য জনগোষ্ঠী বড়ো, মিচিং, কাৰ্বি আদি ভাষাৰ লোকগীতসমূহ লিখিত ৰূপত সংৰক্ষণ কৰাৰ যি অহৰহ প্ৰচেষ্টা চলাইছে সেইয়া দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বহু বেছি পৰিমাণে হোৱা নাই বুলি ক'ব পাৰি। অৱশ্যে একেবাৰে নোহোৱাকৈও থকা নাই। বিংশ শতিকাৰ দশকলৈকে দেউৰীসকলৰ মাজেত বহুতো লোকগীতৰ চৰ্চা হৈছিল। সেই

সময়ছোৱাত ভীমবৰ দেউৰীয়ে লিখিত ৰূপত সেই সময়ৰ পৰিৱেশ, ঘটনা সম্বলিত ‘ভীমবৰ গীত’ নামেৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰি উলিয়াইছিল। ইয়াৰ পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত দুই-এজনে এই বিষয়ত চিন্তা-চৰ্চা কৰা দেখা যায় যদিও সেয়া একেবাৰে কম। দেউৰী লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ কৰিবৰ বাবে দেউৰীসকলৰ নতুন যুৱচামে পুৰণিসকলৰ সহায় লৈ এইক্ষেত্ৰত নিৰ্দিষ্ট কিছুমান পদক্ষেপ লোৱা উচিত।

➤ আধুনিক মানসিকতা আৰু নগৰমুখী প্ৰৱণতাই তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ বিপন্ন কৰি তুলিছে। দেউৰীসকলৰ কেৱল ডিবঙ্গীয়া ফৈদৰ লোকসকলৰ মাজতহে দেউৰী ভাষাটো জীয়াই আছে। বাকী তিনিওটা ফৈদৰ লোকসকলে অসমীয়া ভাষাকেই মাতৃভাষা হিচাপে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰি আহিছে। ভাষাৰ এনে বিপন্ন অৱস্থাৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ অসমীয়া ভাষাতেই গোৱা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। তেওঁলোকক ভাষিক ক্ষেত্ৰত প্ৰথমতে সজাগতা সৃষ্টি কৰিব লাগিব। নিজৰ মাতৃভাষাৰ জৰিয়তেহে তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ গুৰুত্ব সম্পৰ্কে জ্ঞাত হ’ব আৰু সংৰক্ষণ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত উমৈহতীয়া প্ৰচেষ্টা হাতত ল’ব পাৰিব।

➤ দেউৰীসকলৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ যেনে-লোকগীত, সাধুকথা, কিংবদন্তী, প্ৰবাদ-প্ৰবচন আদি তথ্যচিত্ৰ, কথাছবি, বাটৰ নাট আদিৰ প্ৰচাৰ আৰু প্ৰসাৰৰ জৰিয়তে সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণ কৰিব পাৰি। সাধুকথাসমূহ আজিকালি কিতাপ নপঢ়িলেও ইউটিউবৰ জৰিয়তেও শুনা দেখা যায়। ইউটিউবত যদি কাৰ্টুন আদিৰ জৰিয়তে কোনো সচেতন দেউৰী ভাষা জনা-বুজা লোকে পুৰণি দেউৰী সাধুকথাসমূহ প্ৰচাৰ কৰিব পাৰে তেন্তে শিশু অৱস্থাৰ পৰাই নিজ ভাষা-সাহিত্যৰ লগত পৰিচয় পাবলৈ সুযোগ পাব।

➤ দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকৰ সচেতন

লোকসকলে দেউৰী জনবসতি থকা ঠাইসমূহত ভাষা, সাহিত্য, সংস্কৃতিৰ সম্পৰ্কে এমহীয়া, তিনিমহীয়া বা ছমহীয়া, শিবিৰ পাতি প্ৰশিক্ষণ দিয়াই তেওঁলোকক অনুপ্ৰেৰণা যোগাব পাৰি। বৰ্তমান সময়ত তেওঁলোকৰ ভাষাটোৰ সংৰক্ষণৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকৰ শিক্ষিত আৰু ভাষাটোৰ সচেতন লোকসকলে ঠায়ে ঠায়ে এনে প্ৰশিক্ষণ শিবিৰ পতা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। ডিব্ৰুগড় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়তো দেউৰী ভাষাৰ এনে প্ৰশিক্ষণ শিবিৰ অনুষ্ঠিত হৈছে।

➤ বৰ্তমানৰ তথ্য-প্ৰযুক্তিৰ যুগত চ’ছিয়েল মিডিয়া (Social Media) সমূহে এই ক্ষেত্ৰত এক বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে। ইণ্টাৰনেট (Internet)ৰ দ্ৰুত প্ৰসাৰৰ ফলত আজিৰ যুগত সহজে এঠাইৰ পৰা আনঠাইলৈ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ সম্প্ৰসাৰণ কৰিব পাৰি। গতিকে, দেউৰীসকলৰ যিসকল নৱপ্ৰজন্ম তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ প্ৰতি আগ্ৰহী তেওঁলোকে ফেচবুক (Facebook), ইউটিউব (YouTube) আদিত একোটা পেজ বা লিংক খুলি তাত তেওঁলোকৰ হেৰাই যাবলৈ ধৰা লোকসাহিত্যসমূহক প্ৰচাৰ কৰাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰিব লাগে। ইয়াৰ ফলত তেওঁলোকৰ নৱপ্ৰজন্মই নিজৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ সম্পৰ্কে জানিবলৈ আগ্ৰহী হ’ব আৰু লগতে অন্য জাতি-জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলেও জানিব পাৰিব।

➤ বৰ্তমান সময়ত অসমীয়া গীতৰ লগত জনগোষ্ঠীয় গীতসমূহ সংযোজন কৰা দেখা যায়। তিৰা, ৰাভা, মিচিং, বড়ো আদি অন্যান্য জনগোষ্ঠীয় মৌখিক গীতসমূহৰ সুৰ, ভাষা সংযোজন কৰি উলিওৱা দেখা গৈছে। দেউৰীসকলৰ গীতকো তেনেদৰে অসমীয়া গীতৰ লগত সংযোজন কৰা দেখা গৈছে। সামাজিক মাধ্যমৰ জৰিয়তে এনেধৰণৰ হেৰাই যাবলৈ ধৰা জনগোষ্ঠীয় সংস্কৃতিসমূহ বিশ্বৰ আগত চিনাকী কৰাই দিয়াত সহায় কৰিছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, অসমৰ বিশিষ্ট

কণ্ঠশিল্পী কল্পনা পাটোৱাৰীৰে অসমৰ প্ৰায়বোৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকগীতসমূহ চৰ্চা কৰি আহিছে আৰু সমাজৰ আগলৈ উলিয়াই আনি বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীয় হেৰাই যোৱা লোকগীতসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। তেওঁ উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ বিভিন্ন সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ গীতসমূহকো তেনেদৰে সংৰক্ষণ কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰাৰ মানসেৰে সামাজিক মাধ্যমত লোকগীতসমূহ প্ৰচাৰ কৰিছিল। সেই গীতসমূহৰ ভিতৰত দেউৰীসকলৰ গীতো অন্যতম আছিল। তেওঁৰ সেই গীতসমূহৰ চৰ্চাৰ কথা দেশৰ বাহিৰলৈও প্ৰসাৰিত হৈছিল। যাৰ ফলশ্ৰুতিত ২০১৮ বৰ্ষত অষ্ট্ৰেলিয়াত অনুষ্ঠিত হোৱা কমন্‌ৱেলথ্ গেমছৰ সামৰণী অনুষ্ঠানত গীত পৰিবেশন কৰাৰ সুযোগ লাভ কৰিছিল। তাত পৰিবেশন কৰা দেউৰী গীতে সকলোৰে মাজত জনপ্ৰিয়তা লাভ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। কল্পনা পাটোৱাৰীৰ দৰে প্ৰতিজন সচেতন শিল্পীসকলে যদি এনেধৰণৰ পদক্ষেপ হাতত লৈ কাম কৰে তেন্তে হেৰাই যাবলৈ ধৰা জনগোষ্ঠীয় মৌখিক গীতসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু প্ৰসাৰ কৰাত সুবিধা হ'ব। তেনেদৰে বৰ্তমানৰ নৱ-প্ৰজন্মৰ চিনাকী কণ্ঠশিল্পী নিতুল দাধৰাৰ এটি গীতত দেউৰীসকলৰ গীতৰ সুৰ, ভাষাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা দেখা গৈছে। যিয়ে সামাজিক মাধ্যমত যথেষ্ট সমাদৰ লাভ কৰিছে। দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকৰ উপৰি বিভিন্ন ভাষিক জনগোষ্ঠীয়ে দেউৰী গীত, ভাষা, সুৰ, সাজ-পাৰৰ লগত চিনাকী হৈছে। এনেদৰে যদি দেউৰী ভাষা-সংস্কৃতি ভালদৰে জনা-বুজা লোকে গীতসমূহ উলিয়াই অনাত বিভিন্ন পদক্ষেপ গ্ৰহণ কৰে তেন্তে দেউৰীসকলৰ হেৰাই যাব ধৰা মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ লগতে ভাষা-সংস্কৃতিসমূহ নৱপ্ৰজন্মৰ মাজত জীয়াই ৰখাত সহায়ক হ'ব।

➤ উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ লোকসংস্কৃতিৰ সমল সংৰক্ষণৰ বাবে ২০০৯ চনতে নগাওঁত গঠিত হোৱা লোক-সংস্কৃতি গৱেষণা কেন্দ্ৰই জনগোষ্ঠীয়

লোকসংস্কৃতিসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ বাবে বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ পদক্ষেপ হাতত লোৱা দেখা গৈছে। এই গৱেষণা কেন্দ্ৰই দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসংস্কৃতিসমূহ সংৰক্ষণৰ বাবে গৱেষণামূলক প্ৰবন্ধ-পাতি ইংৰাজী আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাত প্ৰকাশ কৰা দেখা যায়।

➤ বৰ্তমান সময়ত অসম চৰকাৰে হেৰাই যাবলৈ ধৰা সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিক জীয়াই ৰাখিবলৈ বিভিন্নধৰণৰ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ পদক্ষেপ হাতত লোৱা দেখা গৈছে। ২০২৩ চনত বিহুৰে 'গিনিজ বুক অৱ ৰেকৰ্ডছ'ত স্থান লাভ কৰিছিল চৰকাৰৰ অহৰহ প্ৰচেষ্টাত। অসমীয়া জাতিৰ জাতীয় বিহুৰে দেশ-বিদেশৰ সকলো ঠাইতে সমাদৰ লাভ কৰিছিল আৰু অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ পৰিচয় দাঙি ধৰিছিল। এনেদৰেই যদি অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীসমূহৰ লগতে দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ ভাষা, লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ প্ৰচাৰ কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত চৰকাৰে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ পদক্ষেপ হাতত লয়, তেন্তে বিশ্বৰ সকলো ঠাইতে এই ক্ষুদ্ৰ জনগোষ্ঠীটোৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য সম্পৰ্কে জ্ঞাত হ'ব। লগতে এনেধৰণৰ পদক্ষেপে দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ নৱপ্ৰজন্মকো উৎসাহিত কৰাৰ লগতে নিজৰ ভাষা, সাহিত্য, সংস্কৃতি চৰ্চাত অনুপ্ৰেৰণা যোগাব আৰু এইক্ষেত্ৰত অধিক সচেতন হৈ উঠিব।

২.০ উপসংহাৰ

লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ মাজত একোটা জাতিৰ ইতিহাস জড়িত কাহিনী, মনৰ ভাব-অনুভূতি, আশা-আকাংক্ষাসমূহৰ বহিঃপ্ৰকাশ ঘটে। এই সাহিত্যসমূহৰ মাজত ধৰ্মীয় বিশ্বাসো জড়িত হৈ থাকে। দেউৰীসকলৰো লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ মাজত তেওঁলোকৰ সামাজিক জীৱন, সংস্কৃতি, তেওঁলোকৰ সমাজৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি, কৃষিকাৰ্যৰ লগত জড়িত লোক-বিশ্বাস, অন্তৰৰ আবেগ-অনুভূতিৰ প্ৰকাশ ঘটে। বৰ্তমান আধুনিকতাৰ প্ৰভাৱৰ ফলত সময়ৰ সোঁতত

তেওঁলোকৰ মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহ ক্ৰমে হেৰাই যোৱাৰ উপক্ৰম হৈছে। অৱশ্যে, ইয়াৰ ভিতৰতো দুই-এজন সচেতন লোকে তেওঁলোকৰ সাহিত্যসমূহৰ বিহীনতা, বিয়ানাম, আইনাম আদি লিখিত আৰু বাণীবদ্ধ কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। ইউটিউবত তেওঁলোকৰ গীতসমূহৰ ভি.ডি.অ. প্ৰচাৰৰ জৰিয়তে লোকগীতসমূহ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ চেষ্টা চলাইছে। এই ব্যৱস্থাক তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহ সংৰক্ষণৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এক যোগাত্মক দিশ বুলিব পাৰি। কিন্তু তেওঁলোকৰ নৱ-প্ৰজন্ম লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ প্ৰতি আগ্ৰহী নহয় আৰু তেওঁলোকৰ ভাষাটোৰ দৰেই সংস্কৃতি, লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ প্ৰতি অৱহেলা কৰা যেন বোধ হয়। এইক্ষেত্ৰত দেউৰী জনগোষ্ঠীৰ সাহিত্য সভা, তেওঁলোকৰ অনুষ্ঠানসমূহে পদক্ষেপ গ্ৰহণ কৰা উচিত। লগতে সৰুৰে পৰাই পিতৃ-মাতৃসকলে নিজৰ সন্তানক তেওঁলোকৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিৰ সম্পৰ্কে জনোৱা উচিত। কাৰণ, সেই শিশুসকলেই এদিন ডাঙৰ হৈ তেওঁলোকৰ ভাষা-সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতিক জীয়াই ৰাখিব লাগিব। নহ'লে সময়ৰ দ্ৰুত গতিত এদিন দেউৰীসকলৰ এই সকলোবোৰ ইতিহাস হৈ ৰ'ব। এই

আলোচনাত দেউৰীসকলৰ লোকসাহিত্যসমূহৰ সংৰক্ষণ আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তা সম্পৰ্কেহে থুলমূল আভাস দিয়া হ'ল। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত ব্যাপক অধ্যয়নৰ থল আছে বুলি ক'ব পাৰি।

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ড° ৰিঞ্জুমণি হাজৰিকা

সংক্ষিপ্ত-সাৰ :

‘বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই’ শীৰ্ষক অনূদিত অসমীয়া উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল হৈছে মাৰাঠী উপন্যাস ‘ঝাড়ঝাড়াটি’। মূল উপন্যাসখনৰ লেখক বিশ্বাস পাটিলৰ শৈশৱ আৰু কৰ্মজীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ আধাৰত ৰচিত উপন্যাসখন মূলতঃ বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধৰ ফলত বিতাড়িত মানুহৰ জীৱন সংগ্ৰামৰ এক দলিলস্বৰূপ। জলসিঞ্চন প্ৰকল্পই এখন বিশাল গাঁওৰ লোকজীৱন চৰ্যাৰপৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি লোকগাঁথালৈকে এক বৃহৎ পৰিৱৰ্তন আনিছিল। জীৱনৰ ঘাই শিপা বিছিন্ন কৰি উদ্যোগিকৰণে মৌখিক সাংস্কৃতিক পৰম্পৰা বিচ্ছিন্নতাৰ এক ভয়াবহ মানসিক অৱস্থাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰাৰ উদাহৰণ উপন্যাসখনৰ পাতে পাতে প্ৰতিফলিত। নদীবান্ধ নিৰ্মাণ কাৰ্যই এচাম মানুহক জন্মৰপৰা একাত্ম হৈ থকা পৰিবেশৰপৰা বিতাড়িত কৰি অন্য ঠাইত পুনৰ সংস্থাপিত হ’বলৈ বাধ্য কৰিছিল। এখন ঠাইৰ স্থানীয় ভৌগোলিক, সামাজিক, প্ৰাকৃতিক পৰিবেশ নিৰ্ভৰ কৰে নদীক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি গঢ় লৈ উঠা লোক গীত-মাত-কথাসমূহ যেন এনে পৰিবেশত অসহায় হৈ পৰে; তেনে এক উপলব্ধি উপন্যাসখনে কৰোৱায়। তদুপৰি উপন্যাসখনৰ মৌখিক গীত মাতসমূহত আধুনিক উদ্যোগীকৰণৰ প্ৰভাৱো লেখকে সুন্দৰভাৱে উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। প্ৰকৃততে সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতৰ মৌখিক গীত-মাত-কথাসমূহে ক’বাত এক যুগসূত্ৰ ধৰি ৰাখিছে। ভিন্ন ভাৰতীয় ভাষাৰ সাহিত্যৰ সূক্ষ্ম অধ্যয়নে ভাৰতীয় মৌখিক গীত-মাতসমূহৰ ভাৰতীয়তা বা সমৰূপতা নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰে। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত অনুবাদে এক বিশেষ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰে। অসমীয়া ভাষা, সাহিত্য, সংস্কৃতিয়েও ভিন্ন ভিন্ন সমাজ সংস্কৃতিৰ লগত পৰিচয় হোৱাৰ বা নিজকে তুলনা কৰি চোৱাৰ এক পৰিবেশ অনুবাদ সাহিত্যৰ জড়িততেই লাভ কৰিছে। গতিকে অনূদিত ‘বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই’ শীৰ্ষক উপন্যাসখনৰ আধাৰত এই আলোচনা পত্ৰত মাৰাঠী মৌখিক সংস্কৃতিৰ এক পৰিচয় প্ৰাপ্তিৰ লগতে নদীবান্ধ সৃষ্ট বিপৰ্যয়ৰ সাৰ্বজনীনতা অসমীয়া পাঠক সমাজে কেনেদৰে অনুধাৱন কৰিব পাৰিব সেই দিশৰ এক বিশ্লেষণ আগবঢ়োৱা হ’ব।

বীজ শব্দ : মৌখিক সংস্কৃতি, লোক গীত-মাত, অনূদিত, উদ্যোগিকৰণ, ভাৰতীয়তা।

১.০ অৱতৰণিকা

১.১ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয়

লোককথা বা মৌখিক সাহিত্য সাধাৰণ চহা মানুহৰ অভিজ্ঞতা, বিশ্বাস আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক মূল্যবোধৰ আধাৰত গঢ় লৈ উঠা এটা ধাৰা। প্ৰজন্মৰ পাছত প্ৰজন্ম ধৰি মুখে মুখে প্ৰচলিত মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহে সমাজৰ ঐতিহ্য আৰু সামাজিক সম্পৰ্কৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটায়। মৌখিক সাহিত্য বা লোককথাসমূহৰ বীজ বা সাৰ অংশ সাধাৰণতে কোনো এখন ঠাইৰ ভৌগোলিক,

প্ৰাকৃতিক, সামাজিক-সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিমণ্ডলত গঢ় লৈ উঠে। উক্ত পৰিমণ্ডললৈ অহা প্ৰাকৃতিক বা মানৱ সৃষ্ট যিকোনো পৰিৱেশেই স্বাভাৱিকতেই সেই পৰিমণ্ডলত সৃষ্ট লোককথাসমূহৰ সাৰ অংশত প্ৰভাৱিত কৰে। এনেক্ষেত্ৰত লোককথাসমূহে নিজস্বতা হেৰুৱাও পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। আলোচিত অনূদিত উপন্যাস *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই* নদীবান্ধে বিতাড়িত কৰা এখন বিশাল গাঁৱৰ জীৱনৰ লোকগাথা। বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধ বা উদ্যোগীকৰণে পশ্চিম মহাৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ গাঁওসমূহৰ লোকসকলক ঘাই শিপাৰ পৰা বিছিন্ন হৈ অন্য ঠাইত পুনৰ সংস্থাপিত হ’বলৈ

বাধ্য কৰিছিল। ফলস্বৰূপে, চহা-গাঁৱলীয়া লোকসকলৰ জীৱনলৈ নামি অহা বিপৰ্যয়ৰ অবৰ্ণনীয় অৱস্থাক মূল লেখক বিশ্বাস পাটিলে লোককথাসমূহৰ আধাৰত সূক্ষ্ম আৱেদনেৰে সৈতে ব্যাখ্যা কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে। প্ৰকৃততে, সমগ্ৰ ভাৰতীয় লোককথা বা মৌখিক গীত-মাতসমূহৰ মাজত এক গভীৰ যোগসূত্ৰ থাকে, যাৰ সন্ধান বিচাৰি উলিওৱাত সহায় কৰে অনুবাদে। গতিকে অনুদিত উপন্যাসখনে বহুসময়ত অসমীয়া সমাজ-সংস্কৃতিৰ মৌলিক লোককথাসমূহৰ লগত মাৰাঠী লোককথাৰ তুলনা কৰি চোৱাৰো এক পৰিৱেশ প্ৰদান কৰিছে। তদুপৰি উপন্যাসখনৰ পাতে পাতে প্ৰতিফলিত মাৰাঠী লোককথাসমূহে এক মহান ধ্ৰুপদী সাহিত্যৰ সৃষ্টিত কেনেধৰণৰ অবিহণা যোগাইছে সিও এক বিচাৰ্যৰ বিষয়। গতিকে অনুদিত অসমীয়া উপন্যাস *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*ত প্ৰতিফলিত মাৰাঠী লোককথাৰ বিশ্লেষণে বহুকেইটা নতুন দিশত আলোকপাত কৰাৰ অৱকাশ আছে।

১.২ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য

“অনুদিত উপন্যাস *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*ত প্ৰতিফলিত মাৰাঠী লোককথা : এক বিশ্লেষণ” শীৰ্ষক আলোচনা পত্ৰৰ অধ্যয়নৰ উদ্দেশ্য বহুমাত্ৰিক –

■ এই আলোচনাৰ জৰিয়তে মাৰাঠী লোককথাসমূহৰ সৃষ্টিৰ আঁৰত জড়িত কিছুমান প্ৰসংগ-অনুষংগৰ বিচাৰ বা সন্ধান কৰাটোও এক উদ্দেশ্য। এই অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে মাৰাঠী লোককথা বা মৌখিক সাহিত্যসমূহৰ এক পৰিচয় পোৱা যাব।

■ আলোচনা পত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে মানৱসৃষ্ট বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধ আৰু প্ৰাকৃতিক বিভিন্ন কাৰকে মৌখিক বা লোককথাক কেনেদৰে প্ৰভাৱিত কৰিব পাৰে সেই দিশৰ বিচাৰ কৰা হ’ব।

■ সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে তুলনাৰ জৰিয়তে ভাৰতীয় লোককথাসমূহৰ ভাৰতীয়তা বোধগম্য বা নিৰূপণ কৰাও অন্য এক উদ্দেশ্য।

১.৩ অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতি আৰু পৰিসৰ

আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰোঁতে বিশ্লেষণাত্মক, বৰ্ণনাত্মক, তুলনামূলক পদ্ধতিৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে। অনুবাদ অধ্যয়নৰ নব্য দৃষ্টিভংগীৰে অনুবাদৰ মূল্যায়নৰ কিছু পদ্ধতিৰ সহায়তো আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে।

মাৰাঠী লোককথা বা মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ বিশাল ক্ষেত্ৰখন আলোচনাৰ সীমিত পৰিসৰত আলোচনা কৰা সম্ভৱ নহয়। গতিকে, অসমীয়ালৈ অনুদিত এখন উপন্যাসৰ আধাৰত আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰা হৈছে। অধ্যয়নৰ পৰিসৰত সামৰা গ্ৰন্থখন হৈছে মাৰাঠী লেখক বিশ্বাস পাটিলৰ *ঝाड़ाबाड़ा* তীৰ্থক উপন্যাসৰ পংকজ ঠাকুৰে কৰা অসমীয়া অনুবাদ *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*।

২.০ অনুদিত উপন্যাসখনৰ বিষয়বস্তুৰ পৰিচয়

বাঘজাই নামৰ নদীখনৰ বুকুত স্থাপিত এটা বৃহৎ জলসিঞ্চনৰ বান্ধে নদীখনৰ লগতে কেইবাখনো গাঁৱৰৰ মানুহৰ জীৱনো কেনেদৰে বিদীৰ্ণ কৰিছিল তাৰ বাস্তৱ ছবি উপন্যাসখনত পোৱা যায়। বৰ্তমান সোৱণশিৰি নদীত নিৰ্মিয়মান বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধ প্ৰকল্পক লৈ উত্তাল হৈ থকা অসমৰ পৰিস্থিতিত এই উপন্যাসখনৰ অনুবাদ সময়োপযোগী হৈছে। বাঘজাই নদীত স্থাপিত বান্ধৰ ফলত এঘাৰ হাজাৰ মানুহ, পাঁচখন গাঁও নিশ্চিহ্ন হৈছিল, চাৰিখন গাঁও আংশিকভাৱে ক্ষতিগ্ৰস্ত হৈছিল। কিন্তু চৰকাৰে ক্ষুদ্ৰ মানুহৰ বৃহৎ লোকচানত গুৰুত্ব নিদি সিংগাৰে পাটিল নামৰ লোকসভাৰ সাংসদজন বাস কৰা খৈৰাপুৰ অঞ্চলত জলসিঞ্চনৰ ব্যৱস্থাতহে গুৰুত্ব দিছিল। সিংগাড়ে পাটিলৰ পুত্ৰই স্থাপন কৰা চেনিকল এটাৰ বাবেই যেন চৰকাৰে বৃহৎ জলসিঞ্চন প্ৰকল্পটো

নিৰ্মাণ কৰিছিল। আনহাতে বিতাড়িত লোকসকলক ক্ষতিপূৰণৰ নামত ন্যূনতম সা-সুবিধাখিনিও দিয়া হোৱা নাছিল। অনুৰ্বৰ নতুন অঞ্চল এটাত স্থাপন কৰা লোকসকলে খোৱা পানী নাপাইছিল। শ দাহৰ বাবে শ্মশান নাছিল, পূৰ্বৰ মাটিৰ মালিকে খেতি কৰিবলৈ নিদিছিল; পুলিছৰ অত্যাচাৰ ইত্যাদি নানা বিপৰ্যয়ৰ সমুখীন হৈছিল। তথাপি তেওঁলোকে উন্নয়নৰ বিৰুদ্ধে প্ৰতিবাদ কৰা নাছিল। মাত্ৰ মানুহৰ দৰে জীয়াই থকাৰ সুবিধাখিনি বিচাৰি চৰকাৰক আবেদন কৰিছিল। কিন্তু চৰকাৰে কেৱল প্ৰতিপত্তিশালীসকলকহে গুৰুত্ব দিছিল। ধন-জন-স্থান সকলো হেৰুৱা বিতাড়িত মানুহখিনিয়ে মাথো চৰকাৰৰ মিছা প্ৰতিশ্ৰুতিত ক্ষন্তেকৰ বাবে ভোল হৈ অলীক সপোন দেখিছিল আৰু পাছত স্বপ্নভংগ হৈ বাস্তৱৰ কঠিন জীৱনক আকোঁৱালি লব লগা হৈছিল।

৩.০ বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাইত প্ৰতিফলিত মাৰাঠী লোককথাৰ বহুমাত্ৰিক বিশ্লেষণ :

অনুদিত উপন্যাসখনৰ মূল লেখক বিশ্বাস পাটিলে উপন্যাসখনৰ জন্মৰ আঁৰৰ কাহিনীত যিসমূহ অভিজ্ঞতা লিখিছে, তাৰ আধাৰতে এটা কথা উপলব্ধ যে, উপন্যাসখন মাৰাঠী লোকসমাজৰ এক দলিল স্বৰূপ। পুনেৰ জিলা উপায়ুক্ত কাৰ্যালয়ত পুনঃসংস্থাপন বিষয়া হিচাপে নিয়োজিত বিশ্বাস পাটিলে চাকৰি জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতাৰ আধাৰত উপন্যাসখন লিখি উলিয়াইছিল। লেখকে ইচ্ছাকৃতভাৱে উপন্যাসখনত থলুৱা গীত-মাতৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰাত গুৰুত্ব দিছে। উপন্যাসখনৰ জন্মৰ আঁৰৰ কাহিনীত লেখকে এই বিষয়ে উল্লেখ কৰিছে –

বাড়াবাড়তিৰ ভাষা হ'ল এক সম্পদ; ইয়াত উল্লেখ কৰা গীত-মাতবোৰ সৰুতে পূৰ্ণিমাৰ নিশাবোৰত মাৰ কোলাত বহি উমলি থাকোঁতেই অনেকবাৰ শুনিছিলোঁ। হাল বাই থাকোঁতে হালোৱাবোৰে এছাৰিৰে সাৰৌপ সাৰৌপকৈ কোবাই হালখন আগুৱাই নিওঁতে এছাৰিৰ

কোবৰ লগতে বেছ বছা বছা শব্দৰে পৰা গালিবোৰ মোৰ মনত কিছুমান ধৰ্মীয় স্তোত্ৰ যেনহে লাগিছিল আৰু তাৰ অনুৰণন মোৰ কাণত আজিও বাজি আছে। লোকগীত, ভ্ৰাম্যমান দলবোৰে গাই ফুৰা মালিতাবোৰে গাঁৱত বহা মেলবোৰত শুনা বিভিন্ন মিশ্ৰিত ভাষা আৰু দোৱানবোৰে মোৰ মাৰাঠী ভাষা-জ্ঞানৰ ভেটি বেছ সমৃদ্ধ কৰি তুলিছিল। উপন্যাসখনত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা ফকৰা যোজনা, জতুৱা ঠাঁচ আৰু বিভিন্ন প্ৰকাশভংগীবোৰ গাঁৱলীয়া অঞ্চলত সচৰাচৰ যিদৰে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। তেনেদৰেই বখা হৈছে। ইয়াত ব্যৱহৃত কিছুমান শব্দ কিন্তু মাৰাঠী অভিধানত পোৱা নাযায় ৮

বিষয়বস্তুৰ গুৰুত্ব, কথনভংগীৰ স্বকীয়তা আৰু ইয়াত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা ভাষাত নিহিত হৈ থকা কেঁচা মাটিৰ গোন্ধে উপন্যাসখনক এক বিশেষ মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। অসমীয়া অনুবাদকে অনুবাদত যথাসম্ভৱ সেইসমূহ মূলানুকৈ ৰাখিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰিছে।

উপন্যাসখনৰ পাতে পাতে জাঙ্গলি নামৰ পশ্চিম মহাৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ বিশাল গাঁও এখনৰ জনবিশ্বাস আৰু লোকগাথা প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে 'দেৱবন' নামৰ পোন্ধৰ একৰ বিস্তৃত জংঘল, ফল-মূল আৰু জীৱ-জন্তুৰে ভৰপূৰ জংঘলখনৰ পৰিসৰ দিনকদিনে বৃদ্ধি হৈ গৈছিল। প্ৰচলিত জনবিশ্বাসমতে, কোনোৱে দেৱবনৰ গছত কুঠাৰেৰে ঘপিয়ালে তাৰ গোটেই পৰিয়ালটো উছন হৈ যায়। ফলস্বৰূপে চোৰাং চিকাৰীও সেই হাবিখনত সোমাবলৈ ভয় কৰে। এনেধৰণৰ জনবিশ্বাসে প্ৰকাৰান্তে পৰিৱেশ সংৰক্ষণত বিশেষ ভূমিকা গ্ৰহণ কৰিছিল। কিন্তু নদীবান্ধৰ নিৰ্মাণকাৰ্যই এনেধৰণৰ জনবিশ্বাসৰ মূৰতে কুঠাৰ মাৰি গোটেই সমাজখনক উছন কৰিছিল। সম্ভৱতঃ এনে পৰিৱেশ উপস্থানৰ বাবেই লেখকে এই জনবিশ্বাসক উপন্যাসৰ পাতলৈ টানি আনিছিল।

জাঙলিৰ প্ৰতিজন লোকে দেৱী কালুবাইক ভৰসা কৰিয়েই জীয়াই আছিল। গাঁওখনৰ চকটোত থকা দেৱী কালুবাইৰ পীঠৰ বিশাল শিলাখণ্ডটোত পূজা-পাতল কৰিলেই সমগ্ৰ গাঁৱৰ মানুহৰ মংগল হয় বুলি ভবা লোকবিশ্বাস সেই গাঁৱৰ মানুহৰ মনত প্ৰজন্মৰ পাছত প্ৰজন্ম ধৰি প্ৰোথিত হৈ আহিছিল। তেনেস্থলত নদীবান্ধ নিৰ্মাণে যেতিয়া এই গাঁৱৰ মানুহখিনিক অন্য ঠাইত সংস্থাপিত কৰিছিলগৈ, তেওঁলোকৰ কুলদেৱীক অকলে এৰি থৈ যাব লগা অৱস্থাৰ সৃষ্টি হৈছিল। মূৰৰ ওপৰত কালুবাইৰ আশীৰ্বাদ নোহোৱাকৈ অন্য এখন ঠাইত থাকিবলৈ বাধ্য হোৱা মানুহখিনিৰ অসহায়, নিৰাপত্তাহীন অৱস্থাই প্ৰকৃততে বহু কথাবেই ইংগিত দিয়ে। মানুহৰ লোকবিশ্বাসত সনা ই এক দুৰ্দান্ত আঘাত। বিতাড়িত মানুহখিনিয়ে কালুবাইক হৃদয়ত কঢ়িয়াই ফুৰিছিল কিন্তু যি পবিত্ৰ স্থানত তেওঁৰ পীঠ আছিল সেই স্থান তেওঁলোকে হেৰুৱাইছিল; লগতে হেৰুৱাইছিল কালুবাইৰ লগত জড়িত পূজা-পাতলৰ ৰীতি-নীতি, গীত-মাত আদি। লেখকে নদীবান্ধে অনা বিপৰ্য্যয়ে মানুহৰ বিশ্বাস আৰু ধৰ্মত কেনেদৰে প্ৰভাৱ পেলাইছে কালুবাইৰ প্ৰসংগেৰে উপন্যাসখনৰ প্ৰথমৰপৰা শেষলৈকে ভিন্ন ৰূপেৰে উপস্থাপন কৰিছে।

উপন্যাসখনত প্ৰতিফলিত কিছুমান লোকবিশ্বাসৰ লগত অসমীয়া লোকবিশ্বাসৰ সাদৃশ্য আছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, মুখ নালাগিবৰ বাবে ৰঙা জলকীয়া আৰু নিমখ জুইত পেলাই দিয়া পৰম্পৰা মিল লক্ষণীয়। তেনেদৰে, সন্তান আৰু পৰিয়ালৰ মংগলৰ বাবে দেৱ-দেৱীলৈ মননতে দান-দক্ষিণা আগ বঢ়োৱা সদৃশ লোকবিশ্বাস এটাও উপন্যাসখনত পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। আভাদায় নামৰ নাৰীগৰাকীয়ে কালুবাইলৈ বুলি এক প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰিছিল এনেদৰে — “আই কালুবাই, মোৰ গাঁওখন, মোৰ মানুহটো, মোৰ সন্তানকেইটাক ৰক্ষা কৰা। ৰঙচুৱা ঠেঙৰ চাৰিটা ৰঙা কুকুৰা তোমাৰ চৰণত

উৰ্হগা কৰিম। আই, আমাক নিঠৰুৱা নকৰিবা।”^২ দেও-ভূতৰ কোপদৃষ্টিত পৰা ৰক্ষা পাবলৈ মাৰাঠি লোকসকলেও এমুঠি সৰিয়হৰ গুটি আৰু নিমখ নাইবা এমুঠি ৰঙা জলকীয়া জুইত ছটিয়াই দিছিল। পুৱা-গধূলি দুৱাৰদলিৰ বাহিৰে-ভিতৰে অঙঠা ছটিয়াইছিল। এনেবোৰ লোকবিশ্বাসে ভাৰতীয় মানুহৰ মন প্ৰতিফলিত আৰু প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰে। তেনেদৰে নামকৰণ উৎসৱ, জন্মৰ চুলিখিনি দেৱীলৈ উছৰ্গা কৰা কাৰ্যও সৰ্বভাৰতীয় স্তৰত পৰিলক্ষিত।

বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধটোৰ ফলত জাঙলি নামৰ গাঁওখনৰ লোকবিশ্বাস আৰু লোককথাসমূহৰ প্ৰায়েভাগেই এৰি থৈ যাবলৈ গাঁওবাসী বাধ্য হৈছিল। মাৰাঠী লোকসমাজৰ এক সুন্দৰ জনবিশ্বাস আছিল যে, গাঁওখনৰ পোহনীয়া জীৱ-জন্তুক ছত্ৰছায়া দিবলৈ এগৰাকী দেৱী আছে আৰু সেই দেৱীৰ থানখন হ’ল তানজাইৰ থান। উপন্যাসখনৰ এটা মূল চৰিত্ৰ হাইবতিয়ে সেই ঠাই এৰি অন্য ঠাইলৈ যোৱাৰ আগত তানজাই থানলৈ গৈ শেষবাৰৰ বাবে দেৱী সেৱা কৰা বৰ্ণনা হৃদয় বিদাৰক। গৰখীয়া ল’ৰাহঁতে কৰীয়া বোটলা ধনেৰে নিমখত দিয়া মাছৰ প্ৰসাদ দেৱীৰ চৰণত অৰ্পণ কৰে। প্ৰসাদখিনি সিহঁতৰ মাজতেই ভাগ-বাটোৱাৰ কৰি লয়। তাৰপাছত দেৱীৰ পাদতলত আচাৰি ফলা নাৰিকল এফাল লৈ গৰখীয়াহঁতৰ মাজতেই এটাই হাবিলৈ দৌৰ মাৰে। বাকীবোৰে তাৰ পিছে পিছে খেদি চিঞৰি যায় — “বাঘ, বাঘ, ধুম ধুম, বাঘ বাঘ, পলোৱা পলোৱা”। তাক নাৰিকলৰ টুকুৰাটো খোৱাৰপৰা বঞ্চিত কৰিব খোজে। এই ক্ৰিয়া-কাণ্ড শেষ হোৱাৰ পাছত সকলোৰে মনটো পাতল যেন অনুভৱ কৰে। নদীবান্ধৰ আতংকই বহুৰি কৰি অহা এই পূজাত বিৰতি আনিছিল। হতাশ হৈ পৰা ডেকা গৰখীয়াসকলে গাঁওখনৰ লগতে সেই লোকবিশ্বাসকো এৰিবলগীয়া হৈছিল। সেয়ে সেৱা কৰি হাইবাতিয়ে প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰিছিল — “আই, সেই ঠাইখনত আমাৰ জীৱ-জন্তুবোৰক যেন নিৰাপদে ৰাখা।”^৩

উপন্যাসখনত জনসমাজৰ প্ৰচলিত প্ৰবাদ কিছুমানো উল্লেখ কৰিছে। এটা পৰ্বতৰ দুটা চূড়া — বালু আৰু বাপুৰ সৃষ্টিৰ আঁৰৰ যি প্ৰবাদ প্ৰচলিত হৈ আছে তাক সবিস্তাৰ ৰূপত উপন্যাসখনত উল্লেখ কৰিছে। বাঘজাই নদীখনৰ জন্ম কাহিনীও সেই চূড়া দুটাৰ সৃষ্টিৰ লগত জড়িত। প্ৰবাদসৃষ্ট বাঘজাই নদীখনক বিদীৰ্ণ কৰি গঢ় লৈ উঠা নদীবান্ধটোৱে নদীকেন্দ্ৰিক লোকসভ্যতা আৰু লোককথাত যথেষ্ট প্ৰভাৱিত কৰিছিল যাৰ ফলত জাম্বুলি গাঁওবাসীয়ে লোকজীৱনৰ সকলো সমল হেৰুৱাব লগাত পৰিছিল। লোকজীৱনৰ উপাদানসমূহৰপৰা আতৰি খৰাং, বানপীড়িত অনুৰ্বৰ অঞ্চল এটাত নতুনকৈ বসতি কৰিবলৈ লোৱা জাম্বুলীবাসীয়ে জীয়াই থকাৰ ন্যূনতম সা-সুবিধাখিনিৰপৰাও বঞ্চিত হৈছে। সভ্যতা-সংস্কৃতি দুৱৈৰ কথা, মানুহ হিচাপে স্বীকৃতি লাভৰ পৰাও তেওঁলোক লাঞ্চিত হৈছে। উপন্যাসখনত বহুতো লোকগীত-মাতৰ উল্লেখ আছে। তাৰ বহুখিনি বালু আৰু বাপুৰ প্ৰবাদটোৰ লগত জড়িত। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে-

ক'লা আমজোপাৰ তলত

বালুৱে মাতে বাপুক

ডাৱৰৰ চকু জাপ খায়

চকুপানী সৰি যায়

মোৰ মৰমৰ ভাই

কোন হাবিতনো তোক বিচাৰি পায়?*

মাৰাঠি লোকসমাজত প্ৰচলিত মালিতা কিছুমানো কাহিনীৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতাৰে লেখকে উপস্থাপন কৰিছে।

মোৰ চেনেহৰ সুন্দৰ স্বামী

ক'ত তোমাৰ সুশীতল ছাঁ?

অ' মোৰ আদৰৰ স্বামী

নিয়তিয়ে মোৰ আঁচলত তুলি

দিছে এটুকুৰা শিল

গাঁওখনৰ সীমাৰ সিপাৰে

ৰথখন চলাই নিলোঁ

চকাবোৰ নুঘুৰে আৰু

বৰষুণজাক আহিলেই

মোৰ ঘৰখন উটি গ'ল

কিহৰ পাপৰ এই পৰিণতি?

গাঁওখনৰ সীমাৰ সিপাৰে

ৰথখন চলাই নিলোঁ

চকৰি নুঘুৰে আৰু

ৰাজপাট হেৰাল

ঘৰখনো নৰ'ল

কোবাল বতাহৰ প্ৰহৰীয়ে

তোমাৰ দুৱাৰত আজিও পহৰা দিয়ে।*

বিতাড়িত লোকখিনিয়ে লোকজীৱনৰ স্মৃতি বুকুত বান্ধি থোৱাৰ লগতে কিছুসংখ্যক উপাদানৰ টোপোলা বান্ধি নিয়াৰো প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে, যি উপন্যাসখনত এক উপহাস হৈ থিয় দিছে। আভাদায়ে বান্ধি নিয়া টোপোলাটোৰ ভিতৰত এটাত আছিল — “লাডুৱা দেৱতাৰ এটা মূৰ্তি, আই কালুৰাইৰ তামৰ সাঁচ এটি, যোৱা অমাৱস্যাতে এজন সন্ন্যাসীয়ে দিয়া এটা নাৰিকল, খাজুৰি মন্দিৰৰ পৰা অনা নিৰ্মালি, পূজাৰ বাবে অনা ভস্ম অকনমান, ৰঙা-ক'লা ফাকু অকনমান, হাতৰ মুঠিতে ল'ব পৰা এখন ধৰ্মবাণীৰ পুথি, সৰু তাল এযোৰ।” নিজৰ সমাজ-সংস্কৃতি, লোকবিশ্বাস, মাত কথা এৰি যাবলৈ ওলৰা চহা জীৱনৰ মৰ্ম-বেদনা এই অংশই উপলব্ধি কৰোৱায়।

এখন ঠাইৰপৰা আঁতৰি অন্য এখন ঠাইত সংস্থাপিত লোকসকলে নিজৰ কৃষ্টি-সংস্কৃতি আৰু

লোকবিশ্বাস বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধটোৰ বাবেই হেৰুৱাব লগা হৈছিল। প্ৰথম বাৰৰ বাবে গা-ভাৰী এগৰাকী নাৰীক সন্তান প্ৰসৱৰ বাবে দেউতাকৰ ঘৰলৈ নিৰ্দিষ্ট ৰীতি-নীতিৰে লৈ যোৱা এক সুন্দৰ পৰম্পৰা মাৰাঠী লোকবিশ্বাসত আছিল। কিন্তু হাইবতিৰ পত্নীৰ তেনে সময়ত সময়ে গৰকা এটা সামাজিক নিয়ম ভাঙিবলৈ তেওঁলোক বাধ্য হ'ল। লগতে হেৰাই গ'ল সেই সময়ত পৰিৱেশন কৰা লোকগীতসমূহো —

আহা আইহঁত, বাৰীৰ সীমাৰ আমগছৰ তললৈ
চোৱাহিচোন, মাকেনো হ'বলগীয়া শহুৰক
আদৰে কেনেকৈ
এখনি ৰেচমী কাপোৰ
ভাৰী জোঁৱাইক দিবলৈ।^৭

লোকসাহিত্য সদায়ে পৰিৱৰ্তনশীল। সমসাময়িক সমাজ-সংস্কৃতিৰ ভিন্ন প্ৰসংগই লোকগীত, মাত-কথাত স্থান পায়। অন্য অৰ্থত লোকসাহিত্যসমূহে সমকালীন সমাজ অধ্যয়নৰো এক পৰিৱেশ প্ৰদান কৰে। মাৰাঠী জাভলি গাঁৱৰ মানুহখিনিৰ লোকজীৱন জোকাৰি যোৱা বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধটোৰ নেতিবাচক প্ৰভাৱ তেওঁলোকৰ লোকগীতসমূহতো সোমাই পৰিছিল। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে—

শহুৰ ঘৰৰ বাটটো যে কাঁইটেৰে সজোৱা
দেউতাৰ ঘৰৰ বাটটো কল-নাৰিকলৰ ছাঁৰে আৱৰা
ফলৰ বাগানবোৰ ডুব গ'ল, পানীৰ ৰাজত্ব হ'ল
বুকুত বান্ধটো লৈ মৃত্যুক জানো জিনিব পাৰি?^৮
নদীবান্ধ, বৰষুণ আৰু শীতৰ প্ৰকোপে জুৰুলা
কৰা লোকসকলে শাওণ মাহৰ ফটফটীয়া অথচ
অনুমান কৰিব নোৱৰা বতৰৰ নতুন লোকগীত সৃষ্টি
কৰাও দেখা গ'ল —

দৌৰা, দৌৰা, মানানজী
তোমাৰ পিছতেই আছোঁ আমি।^৯

উপন্যাসখনত কাহিনীৰ লগত সংগতিপূৰ্ণভাৱে কৃষিভিত্তিক আৰু ঋতুকালীন লোকগীত কিছুমানো পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। যেনে :

মাঘ আহিলেই আৱৰ্জনা দ'ম খাই পৰে
মাঘ নাহিলেই আকাশলৈ দৃষ্টি যায়।^{১০}

০০০

যেতিয়া হস্তৰ বৰষুণ সৰে
ঘৰৰ চাল-বেৰৰ পতন ঘটে।^{১১}

উপন্যাসখনত মৌখিক বা লোকসাহিত্যই সুকীয়া আৰু বিশেষ ভূমিকা যে গ্ৰহণ কৰিছে, ওপৰৰ আলোচনাই সেয়া স্পষ্ট কৰিছে। কোনো এক ভাষাৰ জতুৱা ৰূপসমূহো লোকসমাজৰ আধাৰতে গঢ় লৈ উঠে বা লোকসাহিত্যৰ অংগ। উপন্যাসখনৰ অনুবাদে তেনে কিছুমান জতুৱা ৰূপৰ পৰিচয়ো অসমীয়া পাঠকক দিছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে—

লাঠি নলগালে ভূত নমৰে। পৃ. ৮৫
গাখীৰ উতলি বাগৰি যোৱাৰ পাঠত জুইত পানী
ছটিয়াই কি লাভ হ'ব? পৃ. ১২৩
বাঁহী যাৰ হাতত থাকে, তেওঁহে সুৰ উলিয়াব
পাৰে। পৃ. ১৫৫

৪.০ উপসংহাৰ

“অনুদিত উপন্যাস *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*ত প্ৰতিফলিত মাৰাঠী লোককথা : এক বিশ্লেষণ” শীৰ্ষক আলোচনা পত্ৰৰ আধাৰত কেইবাটাও সিদ্ধান্তত উপনীত হ'ব পাৰি—

■ পশ্চিম মহাৰাষ্ট্ৰৰ এখন বিশাল গাঁৱৰ জীৱন চৰ্যাৰ লগত জড়িত লোকগীত-মাতসমূহ নিজস্ব ৰং-গুণেৰে পৰিপুষ্ট আৰু ভাৰতীয় লোককথাসমূহৰ সমৰূপৰ পৰিচয়জ্ঞাপক।

■ মূল উপন্যাসখনত লেখকে নিজৰ শৈশৱকালৰ স্মৃতি আৰু অভিজ্ঞতাৰ আধাৰত কাহিনীৰ লগত সংপৃক্ত ভাৱে সুন্দৰ শৈলীৰে লিখিত সাহিত্যত মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰ সংযোগ সাধন কৰাত সফল হৈছে।

■ উদ্যোগিক বিকাশৰ সংঘৰ্ষত বিপৰ্যস্ত এক গ্ৰামীণ সংস্কৃতিৰ লোককথাত পৰিৱৰ্তিত পৰিৱেশে পেলোৱা নেতিবাচক প্ৰভাৱ মৌখিক সাহিত্যৰদ্বাৰা বিশ্বাসযোগ্যৰূপত উপস্থাপন কৰিছে।

■ মাৰাঠী লোককথাসমূহৰ সৃষ্টিৰ লগত জড়িত প্ৰবাদ-প্ৰবচন, মালিতা, ইত্যাদিৰ বিস্তীৰ্ণ বিৱৰণ উপন্যাসখনত সন্নিৱিষ্ট। কিন্তু ই মূল কাহিনীত বিস্তাৰত ব্যাঘাত জন্মোৱা নাই। বৰঞ্চ, মূলভাবক অধিক স্পষ্ট আৰু সৰল কৰাতহে সহায় কৰিছে।

■ উপন্যাসখনৰ লোককৃষ্টি, লোককথাসমূহলৈ বৃহৎ নদীবান্ধে অনা নেতিবাচক প্ৰভাৱসমূহে অসমৰ পাঠক সমাজকো ভয়াবহ ভৱিষ্যতৰ এক ইংগিত প্ৰদান কৰিছে। কাৰণ, উপন্যাসখনত বৰ্ণিত সদৃশ পৰিৱেশ বৰ্তমানৰ অসমতা পৰিলক্ষিত।

প্ৰসংগ-সূত্ৰ :

- ^১ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ২২
- ^২ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ৩১
- ^৩ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ৫৮
- ^৪ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ১১৭
- ^৫ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ১৬১
- ^৬ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ১৬০
- ^৭ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ১৯৮
- ^৮ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ২০৭
- ^৯ পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ২১৬
- ^{১০} পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ২১৮
- ^{১১} পংকজ ঠাকুৰ (অনু.). *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. পৃ. ২১৯

প্ৰাসংগিক গ্ৰন্থ :

পাটিল, বিশ্বাস. *বিদীৰ্ণ বাঘজাই*. অনু. পংকজ ঠাকুৰ. নতুন দিল্লী : সাহিত্য অকাদেমি, ২০১০

সামাজিক আচৰণ সাঁচ দিয়াৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সাধুকথাৰ ভূমিকা অন্বেষণ
(অসমীয়া সমাজৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটত অসমীয়া লোককথাৰ উল্লিখনেৰে)

ড° সচিন্দানন্দ শইকীয়া

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

সাধু কোৱাৰ পৰম্পৰাই দীৰ্ঘদিন ধৰি পৃথিৱীৰ বিষয়ে লাভ কৰা অভিজ্ঞতাক উপলব্ধি কৰি, সাংস্কৃতিক মূল্যবোধক গঢ় দি, সামাজিক নীতি-নিয়মক প্ৰভাৱিত কৰি সমাজ একোখনৰ আচৰণৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন ঘটাব পাৰে। সাধু কোৱা পৰম্পৰাই সমাজ একোখনৰ আচৰণক গঢ় দিয়াত, সমাজৰ মূল্যবোধ, ৰীতি-নীতি আৰু বিশ্বাসসমূহ প্ৰকাশ কৰাত এক সাৰ্বজনীন ভাষাৰ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আতিছে। এই অধ্যয়নত সামাজিক আচৰণক প্ৰভাৱিত কৰা, সাংস্কৃতিক নীতি-নিয়মসমূহক প্ৰসাৰিত কৰা আৰু সামাজিক পৰিৱৰ্তনক উপলব্ধি কৰাত সাধু কোৱাৰ ভূমিকা সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে। মিথ, কিংবদন্তি, লোককথা, আৰু সমসাময়িক আখ্যানকে ধৰি বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ সাধু কোৱা পৰম্পৰাৰ সমালোচনাত্মক বিশ্লেষণৰ জৰিয়তে এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনে সাধু কোৱাৰ পৰা কেনেকৈ সামাজিক নীতি-নিয়ম আৰু মূল্যবোধক শক্তিশালী কৰা হৈছে, কেনেকৈ প্ৰভাৱশালী আখ্যানক প্ৰত্যাহ্বান জনোৱা হৈছে আৰু সামাজিক পৰিৱৰ্তনক উপলব্ধি কৰোৱা হৈছে, কেনেকৈ সহানুভূতি, বুজাবুজি, আৰু সহনশীলতাক বৃদ্ধি কৰাইছে, কেনেকৈ ব্যক্তিগত আৰু সামূহিক পৰিচয় গঢ় দিয়া হৈছে সেই সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে।

বীজশব্দ: সাধুকথা, সামাজিক আচৰণ, সমাজ, সংস্কৃতি, আখ্যান, সামাজিক পৰিৱেশ

১। বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয়

লক্ষ্মীনাথ বেজবৰুৱাই বুঢ়ী আইৰ সাধু-ৰ পাতনিত লিখিছিল- “প্ৰত্যেক জাতিৰ আৰু প্ৰত্যেক দেশৰ সুকীয়া ভাষা থকাৰে সুকীয়া সাধু-কথা (Folklore) আছে। ভাষা যেনেকৈ কোনো এটা জাতিৰ জাতীয় জীৱনৰ গুৰিপৰা আত্মপ্ৰকাশ আৰু আত্মজীৱনচৰিত, পুৰণি সাধুকথাবোৰো সেইদৰে জাতীয় জীৱনৰ পুৰণি কালৰে পৰা আত্মপ্ৰকাশ আৰু আত্ম-জীৱন চৰিত। কোনো এটা জাতিৰ ভিতৰুৱা শিক্ষিত-অশিক্ষিত, সভ্য-অসভ্য, জ্ঞানী-অজ্ঞানী সকলো মানুহৰে চৰণৰ ছাপ যেনেকৈ সেই জাতিৰ নিজা ভাষাত মচ নোখোৱাকৈ থাকি যায়, জাতীয় পুৰণিকলীয়া সাধুবিলাকতো সেইদৰে সেই জাতিৰ ভিতৰুৱা সকলো শ্ৰেণীৰ মানুহৰ পুৰণি আচাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ, ৰীতি-নীতি, চিন্তা-কল্পনা আদিৰ সাঁচ মচ নোখোৱাকৈ থাকি যায়। সেইদেখি মানুহৰ জাতীয় জীৱনত অনিখিত পুৰণি

বুৰঞ্জী জানিবৰ নিমিত্তে “ফাইল’লজি” (Philology) অৰ্থাৎ ভাষাতত্ত্ব আৰু মাইথ’লজি (Mythology) অৰ্থাৎ পুৰাণতত্ত্ব যেনেকুৱা লাগতিয়াল, ফকল’ৰ (Folklore) অৰ্থাৎ সাধুকথাতত্ত্বও তেনেকুৱা লাগতিয়াল।” (১৯১১) বেজবৰুৱাৰ এই উক্তিৰ আধাৰতে সাধুকথাৰ সামাজিক ভূমিকা আলোচনাৰ চিন্তাৰ উদ্বেগ ঘটে। এই আলোচনাত সাধুকথাই কিদৰে সামাজিক আচৰণ গঢ় দিয়াত সহায় কৰে সেই সম্পৰ্কে আলোকপাত কৰা হৈছে।

২। অধ্যয়ন পদ্ধতি

লোককথাৰ অধ্যয়নে দেশৰ পৰিকল্পনাকাৰী সকলক শিশুৰ মানসিক উৎকৰ্ষ সাধনৰ বাবে নীতি নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰাত উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা পালন কৰিব পাৰে। গতিকে প্ৰস্তাৱিত অধ্যয়নে লোককথাৰ সামাজিক ভূমিকা সম্পৰ্কে গুৰুত্ব প্ৰধান কৰা হৈছে। “সামাজিক

আচৰণ সাঁচ দিয়াৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সাধুকথাৰ ভূমিকা অন্বেষণ”ৰ আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ বোধাত্মক পদ্ধতি (Cognitive Method) ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হৈছে। এই অধ্যয়নে অসমীয়া লোকসমাজৰ প্ৰেক্ষাপটত অসমীয়া সাধুকথাক সামৰি লোৱা হৈছে।

৩। মূল আলোচনা

সামাজিক প্ৰাণী হিচাপে এটি শিশুক প্ৰস্তুত কৰে সাধুকথা বা লোককথাই। অসমৰ প্ৰসঙ্গত সাধুকথা বা লোককথাৰ সামাজিক ভূমিকা সম্পৰ্কে আলোচনা কৰিলে দেখা যায় যে লোককথাৰ ফালৰ পৰা অসম নিঃসন্দেহে আটাইতকৈ চহকী ভাৰতীয় ৰাজ্য। কাৰণ বিভিন্ন সময়ত বিভিন্ন দিশৰ পৰা অহা বৃহৎ সংখ্যক লোকৰ গৃহভূমি অসম। অসমীয়া মানুহে নিজৰ পৰম্পৰা, আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ আৰু ৰীতি-নীতি অতি বৈচিত্ৰময় ৰূপত পালন কৰি আহিছে। অসমীয়া লোককথাই অসমীয়া পৰম্পৰা, নৈতিকতা আৰু ৰীতি-নীতিৰ গঢ় দিয়াত অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে আৰু পৰৱৰ্তী প্ৰজন্মৰ দিকদৰ্শন কৰাত সহায়ক হৈ থাকিব। অসমীয়া লোককথাৰ মৌলিক শিক্ষাই মানুহক জীৱনৰ সমস্যাৰ সৈতে মোকামিলা কৰাত সহায় কৰি আহিছে। সেয়ে লোককথাই অসমীয়া সমাজৰ বাবে প্ৰাথমিক শিক্ষাৰ উদ্দেশ্য সাধন কৰি অহা বুলিও ক’ব পাৰি। লোককথাই প্ৰজান কৰা নৈতিকতাক অসমীয়া মানুহে প্ৰতিটো জটিল পৰিস্থিতিত সদায় মনত ৰাখি আহিছে। আগতে লোককথাৰ প্ৰভাৱ আছিল উল্লেখযোগ্য, কাৰণ তথ্য, বাতৰি বা মনোৰঞ্জন লাভ কৰিবলৈ কোনো বৈদ্যুতিক যন্ত্ৰ, গণমাধ্যম, ৰেডিঅ’, টিভি আদি নাছিল। আনকি কিতাপবোৰো সাধাৰণ মানুহৰ বাবে সাধাৰণ নাছিল। গতিকে, বেছিভাগ মানুহেই নিজৰ সন্তানক নৈতিক ধাৰণা, নিজৰ সংস্কৃতি, আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ, ধৰ্ম শিকাবলৈ আৰু তেওঁলোকক মনোৰঞ্জন দিবলৈ কাহিনী ক’বলগীয়া হৈছিল। লোককথাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ সদায় কেৱল

নৈতিকতাৰ পাঠ, মূল্যবোধ শিক্ষা, জ্ঞান শিশুলৈ প্ৰেৰণ কৰাতেই নহয়, মাতৃভাষা আৰু সংস্কৃতিক পৰৱৰ্তী প্ৰজন্মলৈ স্থানান্তৰিত কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰতো ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হৈছিল। মানুহৰ সংস্কৃতি সাধাৰণতেই ইয়াৰ লোককথাত প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। লোককথা এখন সমাজত প্ৰচলিত মতাদৰ্শৰ সূচক। এইদৰে যিকোনো জনগোষ্ঠী বা একোটা অঞ্চলৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ অনুসন্ধানৰ বাবেও ই উপযুক্ত উৎস। সমাজৰ স্বৰূপ উপলব্ধিৰ বাবে সংস্কৃতি অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ।

সংস্কৃতি হৈছে মূল্যবোধ আৰু নৈতিকতা, চিন্তা আৰু কাৰ্য্যৰ এক জটিল ব্যৱস্থা যিটো সমাজৰ সদস্যসকলে যথাযথভাৱে গ্ৰহণ কৰে আৰু সাধাৰণতে অনুসৰণ কৰে। ছাৰ এডৱাৰ্ড টাইলাৰে দিয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ ধ্ৰুপদী সংজ্ঞা অনুসৰি, “সংস্কৃতি হৈছে এক জটিল সমগ্ৰিক জ্ঞান, বিশ্বাস, শিল্প, নৈতিকতা, আইন, ৰীতি-নীতি আৰু সমাজৰ সদস্য হিচাপে মানুহে আহৰণ কৰা আন যিকোনো সামৰঞ্জ্য আৰু অভ্যাসক সামৰি লয়।” (Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Tyler 1871, 1) সামাজিক প্ৰক্ৰিয়াক সুচাৰুৰূপে চলাব বাবে সংস্কৃতি অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। সংস্কৃতিয়েই মানুহক মানুহ কৰি তোলে, তেওঁৰ আচৰণ নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰে আৰু তেওঁক জীয়াই থাকিবলৈ এক সম্পূৰ্ণ ‘ডিজাইন’ বা জীৱনশৈলী প্ৰদান কৰে। ইয়াৰ বাহিৰেও এফালে সংস্কৃতিয়ে যুগ যুগ ধৰি চলি অহা ৰীতি-নীতি আৰু অনুষ্ঠানসমূহক অক্ষত ৰাখিছে যদিও আনফালে ই নতুন প্ৰয়োজন আৰু নতুন প্ৰচেষ্টাক আকৌৱালি আহিছে। নতুনত্ব আৰু অভিযোজনৰ প্ৰতি ইতিবাচক মনোভাৱ নাথাকিলে এটা সংস্কৃতি গতিশীল হৈ নাথাকে আৰু ই সম্পদৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে দায়বদ্ধতাত পৰিণত হয়। গতিকে সংস্কৃতি অতীতৰ পৰা আহে, বৰ্তমানৰ লগত নিজকে খাপ খুৱাই লৈ

ভৱিষ্যতক গঢ় দিবলৈ আগবাঢ়ি যায়। (Horton & Hunt 52)

বহুল ভাৰতীয় সংস্কৃতিৰ এক খণ্ড অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ চৰিত্ৰ জটিল। ইয়াত ধৰ্মীয় সহনশীলতা, সামাজিক সম্প্ৰীতি, প্ৰেম, মমতা আৰু ভাতৃত্ববোধৰ মিশ্ৰণ দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। অধ্যাপক নৰ্থৰ্পে (Northrop) তেওঁৰ গ্ৰন্থ দ্য মিটিং গ্ৰাউণ্ড অৱ দ্য ইষ্ট এণ্ড ৱেষ্ট (The Meeting Ground of the East and the West)ত উচিত মন্তব্য কৰিছে যে- সাধাৰণতে মানৱ জাতিৰ বাবে এনে এখন সমাজ লাভ কৰাটো সম্ভৱ হ'ব লাগে য'ত বৈজ্ঞানিকভাৱে উন্নত আৰু তাত্ত্বিকভাৱে পৰিচালিত পশ্চিমীয়া জাতিসমূহৰ উচ্চ জীৱন ধাৰণৰ মানদণ্ডৰ সৈতে প্ৰাচ্যৰ ঋষিমুনিসকলৰ উদাৰতা, মমতা, সুন্দৰৰ প্ৰতি সাৰ্বজনীন সংবেদনশীলতা, স্থায়ী সমতা আৰু আত্মাৰ প্ৰশান্তিৰ আনন্দৰ সংমিশ্ৰণ ঘটিব লাগে। (Chatterji et al 1)

সংস্কৃতিক পিতৃৰ পৰা পুত্ৰলৈ উত্তৰাধিকাৰ সূত্ৰে আগবঢ়াই নিব নোৱাৰি। প্ৰতিটো প্ৰজন্মই সঠিক মূল্যায়নৰ পিছত সেইবোৰৰ লগত নিজকে খাপ খুৱাবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰি নতুনকৈ সাজ দি লয়। কেৰ'ল বয়ছ ডেভিছে (Carole Boyce Davies) লিখিছে- মৌখিক পৰম্পৰাই লিখিত ৰূপত আখ্যান শৈলীৰ অধ্যয়নৰ বাবে এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ সংযোগসূত্ৰ প্ৰদান কৰাই নহয়, এটা গোটৰ নান্দনিক আৰু মনো-সামাজিক গতিশীলতাক স্পষ্টভাৱে নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰাতো ই প্ৰাথমিক কাৰকৰ ভূমিকা লয় (১৬৬)। মানুহৰ সংস্কৃতি সাধাৰণতে ইয়াৰ লোককথাৰ প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। লোককথা হৈছে বহু ভিন্ন সংস্কৃতিৰ লোকে বিকশিত কৰা কাহিনী আৰু ইয়াৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰাকৃতিক পৰিঘটনা বা ঐতিহাসিক তাৎপৰ্যপূৰ্ণ ঘটনাৰ ব্যাখ্যা কৰা হয়। সকলো সংস্কৃতিৰ লোককথাৰ সংকলন আছে। সাক্ষৰতাৰ আগমনলৈকে এই কাহিনীবোৰ

মৌখিকভাৱে প্ৰচাৰিত হৈছিল। প্ৰতিটো সংস্কৃতিয়েই নিজৰ লোককথাক ভিন্ন ৰূপত সজাই তুলিব পাৰে। লোককথাই মানুহক ব্যক্তিগত আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক দুয়োটা দিশতে ভিন্ন দৃষ্টিকোণেৰে জীৱনটোক চাবলৈ, অনুভৱ কৰিবলৈ আৰু বুজিবলৈ সহায় কৰে। এই কাহিনীবোৰ বহু প্ৰজন্মৰ পিছত প্ৰজন্ম ধৰি চলি আহিছে আৰু ই এক প্ৰকাৰৰ সামূহিক প্ৰজ্ঞাৰ পৰিচায়ক।

অসমীয়া মানুহৰ পৰিয়ালত সম্পৰ্কৰ বান্ধোন দৃষ্টান্তমূলক, কাৰণ অসমীয়া মানুহৰ মাজত সাধু কোৱাৰ দৰে অভ্যাস এতিয়াও আছে। যিটোৱে পৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলক আন সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰভাৱক আকৌৱালি লোৱাৰ পাছতো পৰম্পৰাগত আচৰণ আৰু মূল্যবোধ বজাই ৰখিবলৈ সোঁৱৰাই থাকে। পৰিয়ালেই হৈছে লোককথাৰ সামাজিক ভিত্তি। অৱশ্যে এই দুটা বেলেগ কথা, লোককথাৰ সামাজিক ভিত্তি হিচাপে পৰিয়াল আৰু পৰিয়ালৰ সামাজিক ভিত্তি হিচাপে লোককথা। আমেৰিকাৰ পৰিয়ালৰ লোককথা আৰু অন্যান্য ৰচনাত জেইটলিনৰ (*A Celebration of American Family Folklore*) সংগ্ৰহে এই কথা স্পষ্ট কৰে যে পৰম্পৰাগত প্ৰকাশভংগীয়ে পাৰিবাৰিক সম্পৰ্ক আৰু মূল্যবোধ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা আৰু তাক বৰ্তাই ৰখাৰ মূল কাম কৰে। জেইটলিন আৰু তেওঁৰ সহযোগীসকলে (Steve Zeitlin, Amy Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker) (১৯৯২) ইংগিত দিয়ে যে পৰিয়ালসমূহে পৰম্পৰাক জীয়াই ৰাখিবলৈ নিজৰ বিশ্বাসৰ সৈতে মিল থকা ছবি আৰু চাৰিত্ৰিক বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ বাছি লয়। পৰিয়ালসমূহে এই পৰম্পৰাসমূহ নিজক উপস্থাপন কৰিবলৈ, ইজনৰ সৈতে সিজনক সংযুক্ত কৰি ৰাখিবলৈ আৰু উল্লেখযোগ্য সাময়িক পৰিঘটনাসমূহৰ বুজ লবলৈ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে যাতে পাৰিবাৰিক সম্প্ৰীতি আৰু পৰম্পৰাসমূহ অটুত থাকে। ট'লকেনে (Toelken) এইটোও দৃঢ়তাৰে কয় যে পৰম্পৰাৰ এই

প্ৰকাশভংগীয়ে পাৰিয়ালৰ মাজত ‘আমাৰ’ ধৰাণা গঢ়ি তোলে আৰু ই আমাক আন পাৰিয়ালৰ পৰা পৃথক বুলি বুজাই দিয়ে। যিহেতু পাৰিয়াল হৈছে সাধাৰণতে ব্যক্তিয়ে চিনি পোৱা প্ৰথমটো গোট, সেয়েহে পাৰিবাৰিক পৰম্পৰাৰ জৰিয়তে আহৰণ কৰা অভ্যাসে উপলব্ধি আৰু অভিজ্ঞতাক স্বাভাৱিক আৰু প্ৰগাঢ় কৰি তুলে।

অসমীয়া মানুহৰ পাৰিবাৰিক সম্পৰ্ক আৰু আচৰণৰ সাংস্কৃতিক বৈধকৰণ (culture validation) কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পৰম্পৰাগত অসমীয়া লোককথাৰ ভূমিকা অনুধাৱন কৰিবলৈ মই সাধাৰণ সংস্কৃতি বৈধকৰণ মটিফ (culture validation motifs) থকা লোককথাৰ লগতে পাৰিয়ালৰ আনুভূতিক স্তৰক বৃদ্ধি কৰিব পৰা পৰিস্থিতিসমূহৰ ওপৰত গুৰুত্ব দিছোঁ। অসমীয়া চহা সমাজখনত পিতৃ-মাতৃ বা ঘৰৰ আন আন প্ৰাপ্তবয়স্ক লোকসকল পথাৰত বা খেতিখোলাৰ কামত ব্যস্ত থাকৰ সময়ত ঘৰৰ বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠসকলে ওৰে দিনতো ল’ৰা-ছোৱালীকেইটিৰ সৈতে ঘৰতে থাকে। বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠসকলে শিশুক সাধুকথা কৈ সিহঁতক প্ৰাপ্তবয়স্ক জীৱনৰ বাবে প্ৰস্তুত কৰে, কিয়নো সাধুকথা হৈছে এনে কাহিনী য’ত তেওঁলোকে জীৱনত লাভ কৰা অভিজ্ঞতা, অনুভৱ আদিৰ বৰ্ণনা। সাধুকথাই কেৱল বেয়া বস্তুৰ পৰা হ’ব পৰা বিপদৰ বিষয়ে সতৰ্ক কৰি দিয়াই নহয় সিহঁতক উদাৰতা, মমকা, সহানুভূতি আদি সাৰ্বজনীন মূল্যবোধৰ কৰ্ষণ কৰিবলৈ উপদেশ দিয়ে। তদুপৰি ই পাৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলৰ ইজনে সিজনক বুজি পোৱাত আৰু তাদাত্ম্য জাগ্ৰত কৰাত সহায় কৰে। এই কাহিনীবোৰৰ জৰিয়তে শিশুৱে পৰিস্থিতিৰ লগত নিজকে খাপ খোৱাবলৈ, বিপদৰ পৰা নিজকে আঁতৰাই ৰাখিবলৈ, মূল্যবোধ আৰু নৈতিকতা আহৰণ, বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠৰ প্ৰতি সন্মান আৰু পৰম্পৰাগতভাৱে গোটাই অহা শ-হাজাৰ বছৰীয়া

অভিজ্ঞতাৰ জৰিয়তে নিজকে ভৱিষ্যত জীৱনৰ বাবে সাজু কৰি তোলে।

অসমীয়া সমাজৰ পাৰিবাৰিক সম্পৰ্কবোৰক বিভিন্ন সাধুকথাই প্ৰতিপন্ন (validate) কৰি আহিছে। তেনে কেইটিমান সাধুকথা হৈছে পিতৃ-মাতৃ আৰু সন্তান, ভাই-ভনী, ককাই-ভাই, স্বামী-স্ত্ৰীৰ মাজৰ পাৰিবাৰিক বন্ধন সম্পৰ্কে শিশুক আভাস দিয়া কেইটিমান আদৰ্শ কাহিনী হ’ল- (১) পিতৃ-কন্যা ‘তেজীমালা’, (২) পিতা-পুত্ৰ ‘এটা বুঢ়া আৰু পাঁচ পুতেক’ (৩) ভাই-ভনী ‘পানেশৈ’ (৪) ককাই-ভাই ‘দুই ৰাজপুত্ৰ’, (৫) স্বামী-স্ত্ৰী ‘নোমল আৰু সোণপাহী’ (৬) মাতৃ আৰু কন্যা ‘তুলা আৰু তেজা’। (বুঢ়ী আইৰ সাধু)

৪। সামৰণি

সামৰণিত আমি ক’ব পাৰি যে এই লোককথাবোৰে প্ৰায়ে উদ্ভেজনা মুক্ত কৰি পাৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলক নিজৰ জীৱনৰ আৰু সমাজৰ সৈতে, বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতিৰ সৈতে খাপ খুৱাবলৈ প্ৰস্তুত কৰে। লোককথাই মানুহক জীৱনটো চাবলৈ, অনুভৱ কৰিবলৈ আৰু বুজিবলৈ সহায় কৰে ব্যক্তিগত আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক দুয়োটা দিশতে, ভিন্ন দৃষ্টিকোণৰ পৰা। অসমৰ কৃষিভিত্তিক গ্ৰাম্য সমাজৰ মানুহৰ নিজস্ব জীৱন আৰু সংস্কৃতি আছে যিবোৰ লোককথাৰ জৰিয়তে পাছৰ প্ৰজন্মলৈ প্ৰক্ষেপ কৰা হয়। চহা মানুহবোৰ নিৰক্ষৰ হ’লেও যে জীৱনমুখী আছিল সেই কথা লোককথাবোৰেই প্ৰতিপন্ন কৰে। তেওঁলোকৰ লোকসাহিত্য তেওঁলোকৰ জীৱন প্ৰকাশৰ মাধ্যম হৈ পৰিছিল আৰু ই অসমীয়া সমাজ জীৱনৰ এক অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংগ হৈ পৰিছিল। আজিৰ তাৰিখতো শিশুক মূল্যবোধ শিক্ষা আৰু নীতি শিক্ষা প্ৰদানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পাঠ্যপুথিত সাধুকথাৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্তি এক উল্লেখযোগ্য পদক্ষেপ হ’ব পাৰে।

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অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক-উৎসৱঃ এক অৱলোকন

চুইটী বিশ্বাস

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকল ইংৰাজৰ দিনত বিহাৰ, মধ্য প্ৰদেশ, অন্ধ্ৰপ্ৰদেশ, বংগ আৰু উৰিষ্যাৰ বিভিন্ন স্থানৰপৰা সাম্ৰাজ্যবাদী উদ্যোগ-নীতিৰ ফলত ছিন্নমূল হোৱা এক আদিবাসী লোক। এই চাহ জনজাতিৰ লোকসকলে আদিম পিতৃভূমিত যিবোৰ উৎসৱ পালন কৰি আহিছিল, সেই উৎসৱবিলাক অসমতো সময় অনুসৰি পালন কৰিবলৈ ধৰে।

চাহ জনজাতিসকলৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ এক বিশেষ তাৎপৰ্য আছে। তাৰ আঁতৰিচাৰি গলে এক বিশাল পৰিসৰপোৱা যায়। কিয়নো চাহ জনজাতিৰ উৎসৱ বিলাকৰ ভিতৰত কৰম পূজা, টুচু পূজা আৰু চহৰাই পৰৱৰ্তী আদিয়েই প্ৰধান। এই উৎসৱবিলাক মূলতঃ কৃষি জীৱনৰ লগত জড়িত। এই জনজাতিৰ সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনত বিভিন্ন লোক উৎসৱত পৰিৱেশিত লোকগীত সমূহে তেওঁলোকৰ জীৱনৰ বৰ্ণনায়; উৎসৱ মুখৰ কলাত্মক দিশটোক প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিছে। এনে লোক উৎসৱ সমূহৰ ভিতৰত কৰম পূজা, টুচু পূজা, চহৰাই পৰৱৰ্তী, চাৰুল পৰৱৰ্তী, দুৰ্গা পূজা, মনসা পূজা, ফাগুৱা পৰৱৰ্তী আদি উল্লেখযোগ্য। এই পৰৱৰ্তী বা পূজা সমূহৰ মাজেদি অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনৰ আভাস পোৱা যায়।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ উমৈহতীয়া জীৱনৰ অভিজ্ঞতা আৰু সৃষ্টিশীলতাৰ এক ৰূপ প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে। বুমুৰ, নিচুকনি গীত আৰু ওমলা গীত আদিৰ মাজেদি চাহ শ্ৰমিক সকলৰ সমাজৰ বহুমুখী বৈচিত্ৰ্যময় প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। স্থান ভেদে এইবোৰ গীতৰ সুৰ, পৰিৱেশন প্ৰণালী আৰু নৃত্য ভঙ্গিমাৰ পাৰ্থক্য পৰিলক্ষিত হোৱা দেখা যায়।

আধুনিক অসমীয়া সংগীত জগতখনতো চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী লোকগীতৰ প্ৰভাৱ মন কৰিব লগীয়া। হিন্দী গীতৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পাঞ্জাবী লোকগীতৰ প্ৰভাৱে যিদৰে এক নতুন আধুনিক সংগীতৰ ধাৰা সৃষ্টি কৰিছে সেইদৰে অসমীয়া আধুনিক সংগীত জগতত লোকগীতৰ সুৰ, তাল, লয়ৰ প্ৰয়োগে এক সুকীয়া মাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে। সধাৰণতে লোকগীত আধাৰিত আধুনিক অসমীয়া সংগীতত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসংগীতৰ প্ৰভাৱ সুস্পষ্ট। ঐক্য আৰু সংহতি, ভালপোৱাৰ এনাজৰীডাল শক্তিমন্ত কৰাটো চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ সাৰ্বজনীন লোক উৎসৱৰ প্ৰধান বৈশিষ্ট্য। উল্লেখিত উৎসৱ সমূহৰ আধাৰতে “অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱঃ এক অৱলোকন” শীৰ্ষক প্ৰস্তুত কৰা আলোচনা পত্ৰখনি এক বিশ্লেষণাত্মক দৃষ্টিৰে আলোচনা দাঙি ধৰা হৈছে।

বীজশব্দ : জনগোষ্ঠী, লোক, উৎসৱ, পৰৱৰ্তী, নাৰী, পূজা, সমাজ - জীৱন।

০.০ অৱতৰণিকা

উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ বিভিন্ন জাতি-জনজাতিয়ে বিবিধ উৎসৱ পালন কৰে। লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ অন্তৰ্গত বিভিন্ন বাচিক কলা, ধৰ্মীয় কৃত্য (ritual) আৰু উৎসৱ

অনুষ্ঠানৰ লগত সম্পৰ্ক যুক্ত। উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানবোৰ ধৰ্মীয় বিশ্বাসৰ সক্ৰিয় আৰু নিৰীক্ষণীয় অভিব্যক্তি। পৰম্পৰাগত ভাৱে কৃষিজীৱী সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাৰ আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ, পূজা-পাৰ্বন, ৰীতি-নীতি, গীত-মাত আদি

মুখ্য উপাদানসমূহক লৈ ৰাইজে পৰস্পৰে যিবিলাক অনুষ্ঠান সময় সাপেক্ষে উদ্যাপন কৰে তাকেই উৎসৱ বুলি কোৱা হয়। কৃষিভূমিত গাৰ ঘাম মাটিত পেলাই কৰা শ্ৰমৰ মূল্য পোৱাৰ আনন্দ-উল্লাসত মানুহে উৎসৱ আয়োজন কৰে। প্ৰসংগতে উল্লেখ কৰাৰ প্ৰয়োজন যে নিজ দেশৰ ঋতু পৰিৱৰ্তন, ভৌগোলিক অৱস্থান, প্ৰকৃতি আদিৰ লগত উৎসৱ- অনুষ্ঠানৰ সম্পৰ্ক বিৰাজমান। এই নিৰ্দিষ্ট দিশ সমূহৰ প্ৰতি লক্ষ্য ৰাখিয়েই বিশেষজ্ঞসকলে উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানক বিভিন্ন শ্ৰেণীত ভাগ কৰিছে।

পৰস্পৰাগত লোক-সমাজ আৰু লোক-জীৱনক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি গঢ়ি উঠা আমাৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজখন গোলকিকৰণ কৰাল গ্ৰাসৰপৰা ৰক্ষা কৰিয়েই হয়তো অদ্যপি নিয়ন্ত্ৰ সাংস্কৃতিক পৰম্পৰা আৰু পৰিচয়েৰে স্বকীয় ৰূপত সগৌৰৱেৰে অৱস্থান কৰি আহিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ এক অন্যতম উপাদান উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান। লোক-জীৱনৰ আনন্দ-বিনোদন আৰু মংগল কামনাৰে বছৰৰ বিভিন্ন ঋতু, মাহ আৰু দিনৰ লগত সংগতি ৰাখি পালন কৰি অহা এনে উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহে নৈতিক শিক্ষা প্ৰদান, সংস্কৃতিৰ মন্যকৰণ আদিৰ দৰে সামাজিক প্ৰকাৰ্যসমূহ সম্পাদন কৰি সমাজ জীৱনক একত্ৰিত কৰাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত উল্লেখনীয় ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে। কিয়নো উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহে নৃত্য-গীতৰ সহযোগত নিৰ্দিষ্ট জনগোষ্ঠীসমূহৰ নান্দনিক আত্মপ্ৰকাশ ডাঙি ধৰে। একোটা জনগোষ্ঠীৰ ৰীতি-নীতি, ধ্যান-ধাৰণা, আশা-আকাংক্ষা আৰু আদৰ্শৰ প্ৰতিচ্ছবি উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ দাপোনত স্পষ্টৰূপত জিলিকি উঠে। এই প্ৰসঙ্গতে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ এক বিশেষ প্ৰাসংগিকতা আছে।

০.১ বিষয়ৰ পৰিচয়

অসমৰ লোক-উৎসৱ বুলিলে অসমৰ গাঁৱে-ভূঞা, পাহাৰে-ভৈয়ামে, জনসাধাৰণৰ মাজত পৰিয়াল কেন্দ্ৰিক, গাঁও কেন্দ্ৰিক, সমাজকেন্দ্ৰিক অৰ্থাৎ এই

দিশবোৰক কেন্দ্ৰকৰি প্ৰচলিত আৰু অনুষ্ঠিত উৎসৱ-পৰৱসমূহক বুজা যায়। এটা নিৰ্দিষ্ট সময়ৰ ভিতৰত পৰস্পৰাগত ভাৱে পৰিয়াল বা লোক সমাজে উদ্যাপন কৰা লোক-সংস্কৃতিৰ এটা প্ৰধান অংগ লোকাচাৰ সমূহৰ এটা নিৰ্দিষ্ট ভাগক লোক উৎসৱ বুজায়। লোক উৎসৱ সমূহ পতাৰ সময় আৰু উদ্দেশ্য নিৰ্দিষ্ট। লোক উৎসৱসমূহ এদিনতে সৃষ্টি নহয়, ই অতীতৰ পৰা পৰস্পৰাগত ভাৱে চলি থকা এটা সামাজিক লোকাচাৰ। অসম আৰু ইয়াৰ আশে-পাশে বিস্তীৰ্ণ অঞ্চলত নিৰ্ধাৰিত মাহ আৰু দিনত গঞা বা সমাজকেন্দ্ৰিক অনুষ্ঠানৰূপে সম্পন্ন হয়। এইবোৰৰ উৎপত্তি বা আৰম্ভণি, আয়োজন আৰু সমাপন সম্বন্ধ নানা আঞ্চলিক তথ্য জনবিশ্বাস চলি আছে। বেছিভাগ উৎসৱ পাৰ্বনেই ধৰ্মীয়ফালতকৈও লোকপ্ৰিয় মেলা, দোকান-পোহাৰ আদি লোকানুষ্ঠানৰ বাবেহে বেছি আকৰ্ষণীয় হৈ পৰে।

ভাৰতৰ উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰা প্ৰত্যেকটো জনগোষ্ঠীৰ দৰে অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰো এক নিজস্ব সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিচয়। তেওঁলোকৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ এক নিজা বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে। বৃহত্তৰ অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্ৰ্যমই আৰু বাৰেবৰনীয়া ৰূপ প্ৰদান কৰাত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ প্ৰভুত অৰিহণা আছে। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে অসমত বসবাস কৰা চাহ জনজাতিৰ লোকসকল প্ৰায়ে নিজক আদিবাসী বুলি ক'ব বিচাৰে। জনগোষ্ঠী একোটাৰ ধ্যান, মানসিক ৰুচি-অভিৰুচি, লোক বিশ্বাস আদিৰ একক প্ৰতিফলন হৈছে লোক উৎসৱ। ইয়াৰ লগত সামাজিক আচৰণ জড়িত থকাৰ কথা Max Muller, Andrew Lang, Jame Frazer আদি পণ্ডিতে কয়। অসমৰ লোক-জীৱনৰ লগত জঞ্জতি উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান বুলিলে কৃষি, উৰ্বৰতা, বিশ্বাস, দেৱ-দেৱী আদিৰ প্ৰসংগ মনলৈ আহে। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক সকলে পালন কৰা উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহক সাধাৰণতে কেইবাটাও ভাগত ভগাই আলোচনা কৰিব পাৰি। jrne- কৃষিভিত্তিক উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, লোক

পৰম্পৰা ভিত্তিক উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, প্ৰাচীন ভাৰতীয় ঐতিহ্যৰ বিভিন্ন দেৱ-দেৱীৰ সন্তুষ্টিৰ অৰ্থে অনুষ্ঠিত কৰা উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠান ইত্যাদি ভিন্ন ভাগত আলোচনা কৰিব পাৰি।

অসমৰ চাহ জনজাতিৰ লোকসকল ইংৰাজৰ দিনতে বিহাৰ, মধ্য প্ৰদেশ, অন্ধ্ৰ প্ৰদেশ, বংগ আৰু উৰিষ্যাৰ বিভিন্ন স্থানৰপৰা সাম্ৰাজ্যবাদী উদ্যোগ-নীতিৰ ফলত ছিন্নমূল হোৱা আদিবাসী লোক। তেওঁলোক আদিম পিতৃ ভূমিত যিবোৰ উৎসৱ পালন কৰি আহিছিল, সেই উৎসৱবিলাক অসমতো পালন কৰিবলৈ ধৰিলে। যেনে কৰম পৰব বা কৰম পূজা, টুচু পূজা, ক্ষেত পূজা, সঁহৰাই পৰব, গ্ৰাম পূজা, বীৰ পূজা, চাৰুল পূজা, মংলা পূজা, ফাগুনৰ পৰব, দুৰ্গা পূজা, মনসা পূজা, ত্ৰিনাথ পূজা ইত্যাদি লোক উৎসৱসমূহে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনত বিভিন্ন লোক উৎসৱত পৰিৱেশিত লোকগীত সমূহে তেওঁলোকৰ জীৱনৰ বৰ্ণময়; উৎসৱ মুখৰ কলাত্মক দিশটোক প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিছে।

০.২ বিষয়ৰ উদ্দেশ্য

অসমৰ প্ৰাকৃতিক বিচিত্ৰতাৰ লগে লগে আদিবাসী লোকসকলৰ নানা বৰণীয়া সমাবেশ সমানে কৌতূহলপূৰ্ণ। সভ্যতাৰ পোহৰ পোৱাৰ লগে লগে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলৰ মাজলৈ পৰিবৰ্তনৰ ধল নামি আহিল। জীৱন ধাৰণৰ গতি সলনি হ'বলৈ ধৰিলে। সমাজৰ নিয়ম শৃংখলা বান্ধি দিয়া হ'ল। পৃথিৱীৰ আন আন মানৱ জাতিৰ যিদৰে নিজা নিজা সংস্কৃতি আৰু গীত-মাত আছে ঠিক সেইদৰে ভাৰতৰ বিভিন্ন ৰাজ্যৰ পৰা অসমলৈ আহি একগোট হৈ থাকি চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী নাম পোৱা লোকসকলৰ নিজা নিজা গীত মাত আছে।

ঝুমুইৰ, ঘেৰা, সহৰাই, নিচুকনি আদি গীতৰ মাজেদি চাহ শ্ৰমিক সকলৰ সমাজৰ বহুমুখী বৈচিত্ৰ্যময় জীৱনৰ কিদৰে প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে আৰু স্থানভেদে এইবোৰ গীতৰ সুৰ পৰিৱেশন প্ৰণালী আৰু

নৃত্য ভঙ্গিমাৰ পাৰ্থক্য কিদৰে পৰিলক্ষিত হয়, লোক উৎসৱসমূহৰ লগত কিদৰে লোক বিশ্বাসসমূহ এতিয়াও জড়িত হৈ আছে, নিজস্ব স্বকীয়তা ৰক্ষা কৰি কিদৰে নিজৰ দায়িত্ব অনুযায়ী উৎসৱ সমূহ জীয়াই ৰাখিব পাৰে সেই উদ্দেশ্যৰে এটি ক্ষুদ্ৰ প্ৰচেষ্টা আলোচনাৰ মাধ্যমেৰে দিশসমূহ বিচাৰ কৰা হৈছে।

• হুজুৰি অসমত বসবাস কৰা চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী সকলৰ লোক উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানৰ স্বৰূপ উদঞ্জঘাটন কৰি সাংস্কৃতিক সমাহাৰণৰ প্ৰক্ৰিয়া বিভিন্ন দিশক উন্মোচিত কৰা।

• হুচাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ উৎসৱ - অনুষ্ঠান বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহক বিজ্ঞানসন্মতৰূপত উদঞ্জঘাটন কৰা।

• আধুনিক সময়ত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ সামাজিক উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানলৈ অহা পৰিবৰ্তনৰসমূহৰ আলোচনা কৰি তাৰ কাৰণ আৰু কাৰক সমূহ উদঞ্জঘাটন কৰা।

• চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানৰ স্বকীয়তাক নিৰূপণ কৰা।

০.৩ বিষয়ৰ গুৰুত্ব

ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ ভিন ভিন ঠাইৰ জাতি সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ সংমিশ্ৰণত গঢ় লৈ উঠা চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজৰ সংস্কৃতি বৈচিত্ৰপূৰ্ণ। বিবিধতৰে ভৰা এনে সমাজ-সংস্কৃতি অধ্যয়নৰ গুৰুত্ব আছে। লগতে তেওঁলোকৰ উমৈহতীয়া জীৱনত হৈ থকা উৎসৱ পাৰ্বনৰ প্ৰতি সমাজ জীৱনটোৰ কাৰণে যিখিনি দায়িত্ব সেইবোৰ অভিজ্ঞতা আৰু সৃষ্টিশীল মণীষাৰ স্বৰূপ ভিন্ন লোক উৎসৱ বিলাকত কিদৰে প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে তাৰ এক বিশেষ গুৰুত্ব আছে।

০.৪ বিষয়ৰ পৰিসৰ

অসমত ভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোক সকলৰ মাজত প্ৰতিফলিত হৈ থকা ভিন্ন লোক উৎসৱ বিলাকৰ মাজত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোক উৎসৱসমূহক কেইবাটাও ভাগত বিভক্ত কৰি ঐতিহাসিক পৰম্পৰা অনুযায়ী

সাম্প্ৰতিক সময়ত তেওঁলোকে পালন কৰা উৎসৱ সমূহ আলোচনা পত্ৰখনৰ অৰ্থাৎ আলোচনাৰ পৰিসৰ হিচাপে ঋতুকালীন উৎসৱ, সংস্কাৰ মূলক উৎসৱ, ধৰ্মীয় উৎসৱ ইত্যাদি ভাগত বিভক্ত কৰি অসমৰ মাজতে প্ৰচলিত হৈ থকা উৎসৱ সমূহৰ মাজতে সীমাবদ্ধ কৰা হৈছে।

০.৫ বিষয়ৰ পদ্ধতি

আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰোঁতে বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতি প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হৈছে যদিও প্ৰয়োজন সাপেক্ষে তুলনামূলক পদ্ধতিও প্ৰয়োগ কৰা হৈছে।

০.৬ তথ্য আহৰণৰ উৎস

আলোচনা পত্ৰখন প্ৰস্তুত কৰোঁতে বিষয়টোৰ লগত সংগতি ৰাখি ভিন্ন গ্ৰন্থ-আলোচনী, গৱেষণা পত্ৰিকা আদিৰ সহায় লোৱা হৈছে আৰু অলপ কম পৰিমাণে হ'লেও ক্ষেত্ৰভিত্তিক অধ্যয়ন কৰি অভিজ্ঞ লোকসকলৰ পৰা তথ্য সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছে।

১.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ ঐতিহাসিক পটভূমি আৰু বৰ্তমানৰ অৱস্থান

প্ৰাক্-ঐতিহাসিক কালৰে পৰা সাম্প্ৰতিক সময় পৰ্যন্ত ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ উপত্যকালৈ ভিন্ ভিন্ জনসমষ্টিৰ আগমন ঘটিছে। মানৱ প্ৰব্ৰজনৰ উনবিংশ শতিকাৰ মাজভাগৰ পৰা ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন প্ৰদেশত বসবাস কৰা ভিন্ন ভিন্ন সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ বহুসংখ্যক লোকৰ আগমন ঘটে। অৱশ্যে এই লোকসকলৰ অসম আগমনৰ লগত এক প্ৰকাৰৰ বাধ্যতামূলকতা আৰু জোৰ জবৰদস্তিৰ প্ৰসংগহে জড়িত হৈ আছিল। কাৰণ তেওঁলোকক বৃটিছ শাসকসকলে ভাৰতবৰ্ষত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰা চাহ উদ্যোগৰ শ্ৰমিক হিচাপে আমদানি কৰিছিল। এই লোকসকলৰ বহুসংখ্যকেই আছিল যুঁজাৰু প্ৰকৃতিৰ মংগোলীয়সকলৰ লগত তিষ্ঠিব নোৱাৰি বা আন কোনো প্ৰাকৃতিক কাৰণত ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ উপত্যকাৰ পৰা আঁতৰি যাবলগীয়া হোৱা অষ্ট্ৰেলীয় প্ৰজাতিৰে বংশধৰ।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ সংস্কৃতিত মংগোলীয়, দ্ৰাবিড় আৰু আৰ্য সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰভাৱো পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। অসমৰ চাহ বাগিচাসমূহত বহু বছৰ ধৰি একেলগে বসবাস কৰাৰ সময়ত বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতি আৰু পৰিৱেশজনিত কাৰণত এওঁলোকৰ মাজৰ ভিন্নতাসমূহ ক্ৰমে ক্ৰমে অন্তঃনিহিত হ'বলৈ ধৰে। কালক্ৰমত এওঁলোকে সকলোৱেই 'চাহ বাগিচাৰ বনুৱা' হিচাপে পৰিচিত হৈ পৰে। কিন্তু সাম্প্ৰতিক কালত অসমৰ চাহ-জনগোষ্ঠী বুলিলে চাহ শিল্প উদ্যোগত কামকৰা লোকসকলক বুজা যায়। অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজৰ যিসকলে চাহ বাগিচাত বসবাস কৰে সেই সকলক চাহ শ্ৰমিক আৰু যিসকলে বস্তি অঞ্চলত বসবাস কৰে সেই সকলক প্ৰান্তৰ চাহ শ্ৰমিক বুলি কোৱা হয়।

১৮২৩ চনতে অসমত চাহ খেতিৰ সম্ভাৱনীয়তা গঢ় লৈ উঠিছিল। ইষ্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানীৰ বিষয়া ৰবাৰ্ট ব্ৰাচক চিংফৌ গামে চাহ পুলি দিছিল। তাৰ পিছৰে ইংৰাজ শাসন কালত অসমত চাহখেতিৰ সূচনা হয়। চাহ খেতি কৰিবলৈ প্ৰথমতে চীন দেশৰ পৰা বনুৱা অনা হৈছিল। কিন্তু চীনা বনুৱাৰ আমদানি এক ব্যয়বহুল প্ৰক্ৰিয়া আছিল। ১৮৪৩ চনৰ পৰা চীনা বনুৱাৰ দ্বাৰা চাহ খেতি কৰা বাদ দিয়া হ'ল। থলুৱা বনুৱা নিযুক্তি দিয়া হ'ল যদিও আশানুৰূপ খেতি ন'হল। মেজৰ জেনকিন্স চাহাবে ১৮৩৭ চনতেই অসমৰ বাহিৰৰ ঘন জনবসতিপূৰ্ণ অঞ্চলৰ পৰা বনুৱা অনাৰ পৰামৰ্শ দিছিল। পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ত ১৮৫৯ চনত প্লেণ্টাৰ্চ এচোছিয়েশ্যনৰ গঠন হয়। এই সংগঠনৰ যোগেদি বিহাৰ, উৰিষ্যা, মধ্যপ্ৰদেশ, অন্ধ্ৰ প্ৰদেশ, তামিলনাডু, পশ্চিমবংগ আদি ভাৰতবৰ্ষত অন্যান্য ৰাজ্যৰ পৰা বনুৱাৰ আমদানি কৰা হ'ল। দুটা পদ্ধতিৰে অসমত চাহ বনুৱা নিযুক্তি দিয়া হৈছিল —

(ক) ঠিকাভিত্তিক নিযুক্তি (১৮৫৯ চনৰ পৰা ১৯১৫ চনলৈকে)

(খ) চৰ্দাৰী নিযুক্তি (১৮৭০ চনৰ পৰা ১৯৫৯ চনলৈকে)

এনেদৰে চাহ খেতক উদ্দেশ্য কৰি ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলৰ পৰা অসমলৈ অহা লোকসকলেই কালক্ৰমত চাহ বনুৱাৰ পৰা চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰূপে পৰিচিত হ'ল। প্ৰথম অৱস্থাত থলুৱা অসমীয়াসকলে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলক 'কুলী' (শাৰীৰিক শ্ৰম কৰা লোক) আৰু 'বঙালী' (বাহিৰৰ পৰা অহা) বুলিছিল। অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ পঠশালা অধিবেশনৰ সভাপতি মহেন্দ্ৰ বৰাই এই লোকসকলক 'চাহপতীয়া' বুলি উল্লেখ কৰিছিল। সেয়ে এই লোকসকলক কোনো কোনোৱে ভাৰত বৰ্ষৰ আদিম অধিবাসী অৰ্থত 'আদিবাসী' বুলি ক'ব বিচাৰে। ইংৰাজ শাসনৰ অন্ত পৰিল যদিও চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকল অসমতে বৃহত্তৰ অসমীয়া জাতিৰ অংশীদাৰ ৰূপে থাকি গ'ল। বৰ্তমান অসমত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলৰ মাজত ৯৬ টা ভাষিক-সাংস্কৃতিক সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লোক পোৱা যায়। ২০০৫ চনত অসম বিধান সভাত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীক অনুসূচিত জনজাতিকৰণৰ প্ৰস্তাৱ আগবঢ়োৱা হৈছিল। বৰ্তমান তেওঁলোকৰ প্ৰধান ভাষা হৈছে চাদ্ৰী ভাষা। লোকপিয়ল অনুসৰি বৰ্তমান অসমত পঁয়সত্তৰ লাখ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক বসবাস কৰে। প্ৰায় ৮৫০ খন চাহ কোম্পানী অধিকৃত চাহ বাগিচা আছে।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলক ভাৰত বৰ্ষৰ বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলৰ পৰা সংগ্ৰহ কৰা হৈছিল। তাৰ ভিতৰত বৰ্তমান পশ্চিমবংগৰ পুৰুলিয়া, বাঁকুৰা, মেদিনীপুৰ, বীৰভূম; ঝাৰখণ্ডৰ হাজাৰিবাগ, চাইবাসা, ৰাঁচী; ছট্টিশগড়ৰ বিলাসপুৰ আৰু জগদলপুৰ; উৰিষ্যাৰ সম্বলপুৰ; বিহাৰৰ কিশানগঞ্জ আৰু ভাগলপুৰ; তামিলনাডুৰ নাচিক আদি ঠাইৰ নাম উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি।

বৰ্তমান সময়ত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকল সাধাৰণতে উজনি অসম আৰু ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ উপত্যকাৰ উত্তৰ পাৰৰ বেছিকৈ চাহ বাগিচা থকা অঞ্চলত পোৱা যায়। ডিব্ৰুগড় জিলা, তিনিচুকীয়া জিলা, চৰাইদেউ জিলা, যোৰহাট জিলা, গোলাঘাট, নগাঁও, শোণিতপুৰ, ওদালগুৰি, কোকৰাঝাৰ আদি জিলাত জনবসতি আছে। ইয়াৰ লগতে বৰাক উপত্যকাৰ কাছাৰ জিলা, কৰিমগঞ্জ আৰু হাইলাকান্দি জিলাতো তেওঁলোকৰ বসতি আছে। পঁয়সত্তৰ লাখ মানুহৰ ভিতৰত প্ৰায় চল্লিশ লাখ মানুহ চাহ বাগিচাৰ ভিতৰৰ পৰিসৰত অৱস্থিত আৱাসিক এলেকাৰ আৱাসত অৱস্থান কৰি আছে।

২.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ সামাজিক জীৱন আৰু সংস্কৃতি

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ সমাজখন কেইবাটাও সৰু সৰু গোটত বিভক্ত। সেয়েহে তেওঁলোকৰ সামাজিক বীতি-নীতিসমূহ গোট বা সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে বেলেগ বেলেগ ধৰণৰ। তথাপি কিছুমান ক্ষেত্ৰত এইবোৰৰ সাধাৰণ মিল পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। আন যিকোনো সমাজৰ দৰেই সামাজিক নীতি-নিয়ম সমূহৰ সৰহভাগেই জন্ম, বিবাহ আৰু মৃত্যুৰ লগত সম্পৰ্কিত। কিয়নো লোক-সংস্কৃতি হৈছে জনগোষ্ঠী এটা বা সমাজ এখনৰ জীৱন পদ্ধতি। এই জীৱন পদ্ধতিত ৰুচিবোধ, বিশ্বাস, গীত-মাত, আচাৰ আচৰণ আদি থাকে।

সভ্যতাৰ পোহৰে সেই অতীতৰ সময়ত কোনোধৰণৰ প্ৰভাৱ বিস্তাৰ কৰিব পৰা নাছিল বাবেই তেওঁলোকে যি মন যায় তাকে কৰিছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ মাজত উচ্ছৃংখলতা বিৰাজ কৰিছিল। সভ্যতাৰ পোহৰ পোৱাৰ লগে লগে মানুহৰ মাজলৈ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ ধল নামি আহিল। জীৱন ধাৰণৰ গতি সলনি হ'ল। সমাজৰ নিয়ম শৃংখলা বান্ধি দিয়া হ'ল। পুৰুষসকলে ঘৰৰ বাহিৰৰ কাম-কাজ আৰু মহিলা সকলে ঘৰৰ ভিতৰৰ কাম-

কাজ চোৱা-চিতাৰ দায়িত্ব ল'লে। তেওঁলোকে জুই ধৰিবলৈ শিকিলে আৰু চিকাৰ কৰি অনা জীৱ-জন্তুৰ মাংস জুইত পুৰি খাবলৈ শিকিলে। খেতি-কৰি শস্য উৎপাদন কৰিবলৈ শিকিলে। মনত আনন্দ লাগিলে তেওঁলোকে দল বান্ধি নৃত্য কৰিবলৈ আৰু বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰ বজাবলৈ শিকিলে। সমাজখন সভ্যতাৰ পোহৰে আলোকিত হ'ল। ঘৰ-বাৰী সাজি বসবাস কৰিবলৈ শিকিলে। সন্তানৰ লালন-পালনৰ দায়িত্ব মহিলা গৰাকীৰ উপৰত ন্যস্ত কৰা হ'ল। বিভিন্ন আচাৰ-ব্যৱহাৰ নীতি-নিয়মৰ লগতে জ্যেষ্ঠজনক সন্মান কৰা আৰু কনিষ্ঠজনক মৰম কৰা আদি নিয়ম বিলাক সমাজত বান্ধি দিয়া হ'ল। সাধাৰণতে এই নীতি নিয়ম বিলাক পুৰুষতকৈ মহিলাসকলেই বিশেষভাৱে পালন কৰিবলৈ ল'লে আৰু তেওঁলোকে নিজৰ সন্তানকো নীতি-শিক্ষা দিবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰিলে। এইদৰে গৃহ শিক্ষাৰ আৰম্ভণি হ'ল।

এখন সমাজ তথা এখন দেশ প্ৰগতিৰ পথত আগুৱাই যাবলৈ হ'লে প্ৰতিজন ব্যক্তি, প্ৰতিটো পৰিয়াল সচেতন সজাগ হৈ সু-নাগৰিক হ'ব লাগিব। তেহে দেশৰ, সমাজৰ বৃদ্ধি হ'ব। প্ৰকৃততে সাঁচা অৰ্থত ক'বলৈ হ'লে চাহ বাগিচাৰ শ্ৰমিকসকলৰ উশৃংখলতাৰ মূল কাৰণ সামাজিক জীৱনযাত্ৰত শিক্ষাৰ অভাৱ। বৰ্তমান যুগটো কোন দিশে ধাৰমান হৈছে তেওঁলোকে এতিয়াও নাজানে। এলাম্বুকলীয়া ৰীতি-নীতিকে সাৰটি পৰিয়াল পোহপাল দিয়াত ব্যস্ত। সেয়েহে তেওঁলোকৰ সতি-সন্ততি সকলো সেই একেটা বাটেৰে বাট বুলিছে।

সভ্যতাৰ পোহৰ পৰাৰ আগতে সমাজত নাৰীৰ কি বিশেষ স্থান নাছিল। তেওঁলোকে সমাজত নিজৰ স্থান সম্পৰ্কে বুজ লোৱাৰ জ্ঞানকনো তেওঁলোকৰ মাজত নাছিল। অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় নাৰী সকলে অতীজৰে পৰা চাহ বাগিচাত কাম কৰিয়ে জীৱন নিৰ্বাহ কৰি আহিছে। অতীতত মাক-দেউতাক সকলে নিজৰ কন্যা সন্তানটিক সুৰক্ষা দিয়াটো এটা সমস্যা হৈ

পৰিছিল। এই সমস্যাৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা পাবৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকে কন্যাসন্তানটিক এটি কম বয়সতে বিয়া দিয়াৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰিছিল। এই বাল্য বিবাহ প্ৰথা বহু দিনলৈকে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজত প্ৰচলিত হৈ আছিল। এতিয়া অৱশ্যে এই সমস্যাখিনি বহুখিনি দূৰ হ'ল।

চাহ শ্ৰমিক নাৰী আক্ষৰিক জ্ঞান নাছিল যদিও তেওঁলোকৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ ভঁৰালটো অতিকৈ চহকী আছিল। কিয়নো সামাজিক অনুষ্ঠান অৰ্থাৎ লোক উৎসৱ সমূহ নিজে আয়োজন কৰি আগভাগ লৈছিল আৰু উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানবোৰত অংশ গ্ৰহণ কৰি নিজেও উৎফুল্লিত হৈছে আনকো আনন্দ দিব পাৰিছিল। তেওঁলোকৰ মাজত প্ৰচলিত লোক উৎসৱ সমূহৰ মাজত প্ৰচলিত ৰীতি-নীতিসমূহ, আৰু উৎসৱ সমূহৰ লগত অন্তৰ্গত হৈ থকা বিশ্বাস সমূহ যিমানদূৰ সম্ভৱ ধৰি ৰাখিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা দেখা পোৱা যায়। সংস্কৃতি নোহোৱাকৈ এখন সমাজ কেতিয়াও সম্পূৰ্ণ হ'ব নোৱাৰে। সেয়ে সংস্কৃতিক জীয়াই ৰাখিব পৰিলেহে সমাজখনৰ অস্তিত্ব নিশ্চয় থাকিব। গতিকে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ সামাজিক জীৱন যাত্ৰাত প্ৰচলিত উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানৰ মাজেৰে ঐক্য আৰু সম্প্ৰীতিৰ বান্ধোন দৃঢ় থাকিলেহে সমাজ জীৱন আৰু সংস্কৃতিৰ বৰ্তি থাকিব।

৩.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱ আৰু ইয়াৰ শ্ৰেণী বিভাজন

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে পালন কৰা উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান সমূহক কেইবাটাও ভাগত বিভক্ত কৰি আলোচনা কৰিব পাৰি। লোক উৎসৱ সমূহ তলত আলোচনা কৰা হৈছে।

(১) ঋতুকালীন উৎসৱ

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজ খনত কেইবাটাও ভাষিক-নৃগোষ্ঠীয় লোকৰ সমন্বয় পোৱা যায়। ঋতু অনুসৰি ভিন্ন ভিন্ন উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ আয়োজন কৰে। বিশেষকৈ

বসন্ত ঋতু গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। কিয়নো অন্যান্য জনগোষ্ঠীৰ দৰে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলে ব'হাগ বিহু পালন কৰে। এই ব'হাগ বিহু তেওঁলোকৰ প্ৰধান বসন্ত উৎসৱ বা ঋতুকালীন উৎসৱ। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজখনত ঋতুকালীন উৎসৱসমূহ প্ৰধানকৈ কৃষিৰ লগত জড়িত। কৃষিৰ উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি, ফচল প্ৰাপ্তিৰ আনন্দ আদিয়ে কৃষিভিত্তিক উৎসৱৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে পালনকৰা কৃষিভিত্তিক উৎসৱসমূহ হ'ল-

- (১) কৰম পূজা বা কৰম পৰব
- (২) সহৰাই পৰব
- (৩) ক্ষেত পূজা
- (৪) ইংখুৰ পূজা ইত্যাদি।

কৰম পূজা

কৰম পূজা চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ প্ৰধান উৎসৱ। জনগোষ্ঠীটোৱে পালন কৰা পূজা-পৰব সমূহৰ ভিতৰত কৰম পূজাৰ গুৰুত্ব আটাইতকৈ বেছি। ভাদ মাহৰ শুক্লা একাদশী তিথিত জীতিয়া কৰম, আহিন মাহৰ বিজয়া দশমীৰ দিনা বুড়ী কৰম আৰু আঘোণৰ পূৰ্ণিমাৰ দিনা ৰাস ঝুমুৰ উদ্‌যাপন কৰা হয়। ইয়াৰ ভিতৰত জীতিয়া কৰমেই বেছি সমাৰোহেৰে উদ্‌যাপন কৰা হয়। কৰম পূজা শস্য বৃদ্ধিৰ কামনাৰে কৰা উৎসৱ। বাঁহৰ নতুন খৰাহিত বালি, মাটিৰ মিশ্ৰণত বীজ ৰোপণ কৰে। বীজৰোৰ ধান, মাটিমাহ, মুণ্ডমাহ, বুটমাহ আদিৰে হয়। বীজ ৰোপণ কৰা খৰাহিটো নৈৰ ঘাটত ৰাখে। সেইদিনাৰ পৰাই পূজা আৰম্ভ হয়। তিনি চাৰিদিনৰ ভিতৰত গজালি মেলে। এই গজালি মেলা বীজক ঝাৰা বুলি কয় আৰু এই কৰম উৎসৱৰ বাবে 'ঝাৰা' তোলাটোৱেই আটাইতকৈ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ কাৰ্য।

নৈ বা পুখুৰী পাৰৰ এডোখৰ নিৰ্দিষ্ট স্থান চাফ-চিকুন কৰি তাতে কৰম গছৰ ডাল পুতি "ঝাৰা" ৰাখি নিতৌ পূজা কৰে। পূজাৰ শেষ দিনা "ঝাৰা" তুলি

কৰমডালত অৰ্পণ কৰা হয়। কৰম পূজাৰ মূল ব্যক্তি কহনী বুঢ়াই পূজা আগবঢ়োৱা বা "ঝাৰা" ৰখা গাভৰু হ'ওঁৰ আগত ধৰমা-কৰমাৰ কাহিনী কয়। কাহিনীৰ শেষত কৰমতীসকলক নিজৰ নিজৰ মনোকামনা ব্যক্ত কৰিবলৈ কয়। ইয়াৰ পিছতে নৃত্য-গীত আদিৰ বাবে 'অখড়া' (নৃত্য-গীত কৰা ঠাই) মুকলি কৰি দিয়া হয়। পূজাতে ঝুপান উঠা বছৰটোৰ কৃষি সম্পৰ্কীয় শুভাশুভ নিৰ্ণয় কৰে। "ঝাৰা"ৰ বীজৰ গজালিৰ ভিত্তিটো কৃষি কৰ্মৰ ফচল প্ৰাপ্তিৰ ধাৰণা হয়।

কৰম পূজাৰ ইতিহাস ঝুমুইৰ গীতত এইদৰে গোৱা হয় -

“আগে ঝুমুইৰ কাহ ছিল
তবে ঝুমুইৰ কাহা হৈল,
আগে ঝুমুইৰ অযোধ্যা নগৰে
আগে হইল দুনিয়া সংসাৰে।”

টুচু পূজা

টুচু পূজা বা টুচু পৰব চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ নাৰীৰ জীৱনৰ আদৰ্শৰ ভেঁটি। এই উৎসৱো মূলত কৃষি জীৱনৰ লগত জড়িত। মনসা, লক্ষ্মী, সৰস্বতী সকলো দেৱীয়েই যেন টুচুৰ মাজেদিয়েই আত্মপ্ৰকাশ কৰে। বেছিভাগ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকে টুচু দেৱীক সদাশিৱৰ কন্যা মনসা বা শীতলা হিচাপে মান কৰে।

মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনাই টুচু পৰব পালন কৰে। মকৰ সংক্ৰান্তিৰ এই উৎসৱ কৃষিৰ ফচল প্ৰাপ্তিৰ আনন্দ উৎসৱ। ঐতিহাসিক ভাৱে টুচু পূজাৰ প্ৰচলন মুছলমান সকলৰ ৰাজত্ব কালত, কুৰ্মী ৰজা কৰ্ণদেৱৰ পুত্ৰ সীতাৰামৰ পত্নী, কুলদা বা নৈৰখ ৰজাৰ ৰাজকুমাৰী টুচু বা ৰুক্মিণী দেৱীৰ আত্মত্যাগৰ কাহিনীৰ লগত জড়িত। টুচু পূজা স্বৰূপাৰ্থত সতী পূজা। আদৰ্শ নাৰীৰ পূজা। কিস্তদন্তিৰ লগত সাঙোৰ খাই আছে নিৰ্যাতিত কৰ্ণদেৱ, সীতাৰামৰ লগতে পৰম চৰিত্ৰটোৰ টুচুৰ নিৰ্মম গাথা। এইটোও লগতে প্ৰতিয়মান হয় যে টুচুক পূজা

কৰাৰ জৰিয়তে ইতিহাসৰ অতি সুদীৰ্ঘকাল ধৰি প্ৰপীড়িত সম্প্ৰদায় এটাই টুচু পূজাৰ জৰিয়তে সঞ্জীৱিত কৰি ৰাখিবৰ বাবে যত্ন কৰিছে মধুৰ প্ৰেম, পৱিত্ৰতা, নিষ্ঠা আৰু আত্মত্যাগৰ আদৰ্শ।

টুচু নামৰ এগৰাকী লৌকিক দেৱীক নিৰ্দিষ্ট কোনো এজনৰ ঘৰত প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰে। পুহ মাহত সংক্ৰান্তিৰ দিনা দেৱী প্ৰতিষ্ঠা হয়। টুচুৰ সৌন্দৰ্য্য, পৱিত্ৰতা, মহত্ব, আত্মত্যাগ, আৰু সতীত্বৰ আদৰ্শ স্মৰণ কৰাই টুচু পূজাৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য। আৰু এই স্মৰণ কাৰ্যৰ ঐতিহাসিক অভিনৱত্বৰে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে প্ৰকৃততে ইতিহাসৰ টুচু দেৱীক ৰূপান্তৰিত কৰিছে সীতা, সাৱিত্ৰীৰ পৰ্যায়লৈ। সন্ধ্যা টুচুক স্মৰণ কৰি গোৱা গীতসমূহ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক সকলৰ লোক গীতৰ বৰ্ণাঢ্য সমল। সন্ধ্যা আৰতি কৰে অতি পৱিত্ৰতাভাৱে-

“ তেল দিলাম শলিতা দিলাম

স্বৰ্গে দিলাম বাতি গ’।”

টুচুক এইদৰে আহ্বান কৰি জাত জাত গীতেৰে বন্দনা কৰা হয় সকলো দেৱীৰ। টুচু গীত সমূহ ভৱনাৰ ফালৰ পৰা অতি পৱিত্ৰ লোকগীত। লোক গীতৰ মাজেৰে সীতাৰাম আৰু ৰুক্মিণীৰ প্ৰেমগাথা আৰু আত্মত্যাগৰ কাহিনী জীয়াই থকাৰ উপৰি ই দিছে লোক সাহিত্য আৰু লোক-কৃষ্টিক এক জীৱন্ত বৰ্ণাধ্যতা। টুচু পূজাৰ গীত সমূহ বিহুগীতৰ কথা আৰু মৰ্ম, সুৰ সোমাই পৰিছে। ই টুচু গীতক সমন্বয়ৰ এক নতুন যাত্ৰা প্ৰদান কৰিছে টুচু উৎসৱ হৈ পৰিছে সমন্বয়ৰ মোহন ‘পৰৱ’ মাঘ বিহু-টুচু পৰৱ একেলগে অনুষ্ঠিত কৰি অসমীয়া ৰাইজে এই পৰৱক দান কৰিছে এক সমন্বিত উৎসৱৰ অসমীয়া ৰূপ।

মকৰ সংক্ৰান্তিৰ দিনলৈকে প্ৰায় এমাহ গধূলি টুচুক পূজা-অৰ্চনা কৰা হয়। সেই দিনাই পূজাৰ অন্তত টুচুক বিসৰ্জন দিয়ে। এমাহ টুচুৰ গুণ-গান কৰে, টুচু বন্দনা, আদৰা, জাগৰণী, ঘুমোৱা, বৰ বিচৰা, বিবাহ আদি

বিষয়ক গীত-মাত গোৱা হয়। বিসৰ্জনৰ দিনা টুচুক গাওঁ ফুৰাবলৈ নিয়া হয়। মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনা হোৱা বাবে এই উৎসৱত খোৱা-বোৱাৰ পয়োভৰ বেছি। অৱশ্যে উদ্দেশ্যগত দিশৰ পৰা লোক-বিশ্বাস অনুসৰি ৰোগ-নিৰাময় সম্পৰ্ক জড়িত হৈ আছে আৰু কিস্মদন্তী অনুসৰি স্বাক্ষৰ টুচুগীতৰ মাজে মাজে থাকি গৈছে যেনে-

“জল্কে যাব জল্কে যাব

জল ঘাটে শুধু বালি,

হামদেৰ টুচুকে বিহা দিব

যাৰ ঘৰে সনাৰ বালি।”

লোক-পৰম্পৰা ভিত্তিক উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠান

এই লোকসকলে পূৰ্বৰ লোক-পৰম্পৰা ভিত্তিক নানা ধৰণৰ পূজা-পাতল আৰু উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ ঐতিহ্য লগত লৈ আহিছিল। সেই সমূহৰ বেছি ভাগৰ লগতেই ভিন ভিন অপশক্তিৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা পোৱাৰ কামনা জড়িত হৈ আছে। লোকপৰম্পৰা ভিত্তিক উৎসৱসমূহ হ’ল, চাৰুল পূজা, গ্ৰাম পূজা, বীৰ পূজা, চাকল উৎসৱ, ধৰম পূজা, কুড়াল বাগদেউ পূজা, মংলা পূজা ইত্যাদি। এই উৎসৱ সমূহৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰা হ’ল-

চাৰুল পৰৱ

চাৰুল পৰৱৰ সময় চ’ত মাহ। চ’ত মাহৰ পঞ্চমী, সপ্তমী, বা নৱমী তিথিত চাৰুল পৰৱ পালন কৰা হয়। চাৰুল পূজা কিছুমানে দুদিনীয়া কৰে আৰু কিছুমানে এদিনীয়া কৰে। এই পৰৱত লক্ষ্মীক পূজা কৰা, ন-খোৱা আৰু ফুলৰ পূজা কৰা প্ৰথাই এই কথা প্ৰমাণিত কৰে যে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ প্ৰাচীন পৰম্পৰাত কৃষিৰ শস্য চপোৱাৰ সময় আধোণ মাহতকৈ কিছু পিছত মাঘ বিহুত ন-খোৱা কাৰ্যৰ জাক-জমকতা অনুষ্ঠিত নহৈ চ’তমহীয়া হোৱাটোৱে শীতকালীন শস্যৰ খেতি কৰাৰ ঐতিহ্যকে প্ৰতিপন্ন কৰে। দুদিনকৈ চাৰুল পূজা

কৰিলে প্ৰথম দিনা ন-খোৱা উৎসৱ দ্বিতীয় দিনা ফুল-পূজা আৰু লক্ষ্মী পূজাৰ আয়োজন কৰা হয়। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে এই সময়ত ন-বিধ শাকেৰে খোৱাৰ এটা পৰম্পৰা আছে। ন-খোৱাৰ লগতে ন-বস্ত্ৰ পৰিধান আৰু ন-বস্ত্ৰ দান কৰাটোও নিয়ম। এই লোক উৎসৱৰ প্ৰধান কাৰকৰ হ'ল বয়োজেষ্ঠ সকল। তেওঁলোকে বছৰটোৰ বাবে মংগল কামনা কৰি আশীৰ্বাদ কৰ্ম সম্পাদন কৰে। এই পূজাত ঘৰৰ গৃহস্তই উপবাসে থাকি গাঁৱৰ দেৱতাৰ নামত মাহে ঘৰ অৰ্থাৎ গোঁসাই ঘৰত বলি দিয়ে। অপায়-অমংগল দূৰ কৰিবৰ কাৰণে বলি দিয়াৰ প্ৰথাটো অতি প্ৰাচীন বুলিব পাৰি।

চাকল উৎসৱ

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ ভিন ভিন সম্প্ৰদায় বা পৰিয়ালৰ মাজত চাকল উৎসৱ নিজা নিজা ধৰণে পালন কৰা দেখা যায়। মুণ্ডা আৰু খড়িয়াসকলে এই উৎসৱক 'বেওছাৰলী' বোলে। তেওঁলোকে ব'হাগ মাহত সোণাৰ ফুল ফুলিবৰ সময়ত এই উৎসৱ আয়োজন কৰে। বহুতে আকৌ আষাঢ় মাহত পালন কৰে বাবে এই পূজাক আষাঢ়ী পূজাও বুলি কয়। এই উৎসৱৰ মূলতঃ প্ৰকৃতিৰ ঋতুগত পৰিৱৰ্তন আৰু কৃষি কাৰ্যৰ লগত সম্পৰ্কিত। খাদ্য ভোজনৰ বৰ্ণাঢ্যতা, ঈশ্বৰৰ আৰাধনা আৰু সৰু-ৰা বলি বিধান এই উৎসৱৰ অংগ।

গ্ৰাম পূজা

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজৰ লোক-বিশ্বাস অনুসৰি গাওঁখনক অপায়-অমংগলৰ পৰা উদ্ধাৰ কৰা দেৱতা জনেই গাঁও দেৱতা। এই দেৱতাৰ পূজাই হৈছে গ্ৰাম পূজা। বহাগৰ পৰা শাওন মাহৰ ভিতৰত এই পূজা পালন কৰা হয়। বুপান উঠা ব্যক্তিজনে গাওঁখিনিৰ আগন্তুক বৰ্ষটোৰ অপায়-অমংগল চোৱা-চিতা কৰে। প্ৰসাদ বিতৰণ কৰে। পূজাৰ শেষত পূজাখলীতে সমজুৱা ভাৱে ভোজ-ভাতৰ আয়োজন কৰে। পূজাৰ অন্তত পূজাৰীয়ে গাঁওখনক অপায়-অমংগলৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা পাবৰ বাবে বান্ধে আৰু সেইদিনা ঘৰে ঘৰে জাবৰ-

জোঁথৰবোৰ আঁতৰত পেলাই অপায়-অমংগল দূৰ কৰে।

মনসা পূজা

সমূহীয়া ভাৱে অথবা ব্যক্তিগতভাৱে ঘৰুৱা জীৱনটো চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলে এই পূজা পালন কৰে। শাওন মাহৰ নাগ পঞ্চমীৰ দিনা মনসা পূজা পালন কৰা হয়। পূজাত মনসা পূৰাণ, পদ্ম পূৰাণ আদি পাঠ কৰা হয়। পূজাত অংশগ্ৰহণকাৰী সকলৰ কাৰোবাৰ বুপান উঠে। তেওঁ অপায়-অমংগল, শুভ-অশুভ নিৰ্ণয় কৰে। এই পূজাত পদুমফুলৰ পাত অপৰিহাৰ্য।

সহৰাই পৰৱ

গৰয়া পূজাৰে আন এটি নাম সহৰাই পৰৱ। ইয়াক গো-সেৱা পূজাও বোলা হয়। কাতি মাহৰ অমাৱস্যাৰ পাছত ন-জোন ওলোৱাৰ দিনা এই পূজা হয়। গৰুক গা-পা ধুৱাই, তেল-হালধি, ৰুটি আদি খোৱাই গোহালিত পঞ্চদেৱতাৰ থাপনা পাতি পূজা কৰে। পূজাৰ তিনি বা পাঁচদিনৰ আগৰে পৰাই গৃহস্তই গো-জাগৰণ জাহলী গীত গায়।

বাহা পৰৱ

চাওতাল সম্প্ৰদায় সকলে পালন কৰা এক অন্যতম উৎসৱ হৈছে 'বাহা'পৰৱ। ফাগুন মাহৰ শুক্লা পঞ্চমীৰ দিনা পুৱাৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰা হয়। কোনো কোনো ঠাইত এই উৎসৱ পালন কৰা হয় প্ৰায় এমাহ বহাগ বিহুৰ সময় লৈকে। বহাগ পৰৱ হৈছে বসন্ত উৎসৱ। পৰম্পৰাগত ভাৱে মাৰাংবুৰু (ভগৱানৰ) শ্ৰীচৰণত অৰ্চনা কৰা হয় বাহা পৰৱত। বসন্ত কালীন উৎসৱ বাহা পৰৱ চাওতাল সকলৰ সম্পূৰ্ণ নিজা উৎসৱ। এই উৎসৱ চাওতাল সকলৰ বলিষ্ঠ ঐতিহ্যকে কেৱল প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰে তেনে নহয়, ই বসন্ত কালীন ভাৰতত সকলো জনগোষ্ঠীৰে মাজত সৃষ্টি হোৱা নৃত্য-গীত আৰু আনন্দ-উলাহৰ সাৰ্বজনীনতাকে প্ৰতিয়মান কৰে।

এই কেইবিধ উৎসৱৰ উপৰিও চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজত ধৰ্মীয় উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বনবোৰৰ ভিতৰত দুৰ্গাপূজা, শিৱৰাত্ৰী, কালী পূজা, গণেশ পূজা, ইত্যাদি পূজা পালন কৰে। এই উৎসৱবোৰৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য হৈছে ধৰ্মীয় দেৱ-দেৱীৰ উপাসনা। নিজৰ লগতে সামূহিক মংগল কামনা কৰা হয়। খৃষ্টান ধৰ্মালম্বী সকলে কিন্তু বৰদিনহে প্ৰধান উৎসৱ ৰূপে পালন কৰে।

(২) সংস্কাৰমূলক উৎসৱ

জন্ম, মৃত্যু আৰু বিবাহ আদি সামাজিক সংস্কাৰমূলক আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহকো উৎসৱৰ শাৰীতে থোৱা হয়। সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজত এই তিনিওবিধ উৎসৱৰ লগত আচাৰ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহ সম্পূৰ্ণ পৃথক।

জন্ম সম্পৰ্কীয় সংস্কাৰ অনুষ্ঠানসমূহ ছয় বা ন দিনৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ হয়। ছয়দিনৰ দিনা ষষ্ঠীদেৱীৰ নামত শিল পূজা পতা হয়। নত্যা অনুষ্ঠিত হয় নদিনৰ পৰা। সেইদিনা নৱজাতকৰ চুলি কটোৱা হয়। গা ধুওৱা হয় আৰু একৈশ দিনৰ দিনা চুৰা আঁতৰাই দিয়া হয়। পৰবৰ্তী সময়ত নামকৰণ, কাণবিক্ষিত, মুখযজুঠানী আদি পালন কৰা হয়।

বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠানত বিবাহ সংক্ৰান্তীয় গীত পৰিৱেশন কৰে, অৰ্থাৎ চাদী বা বিহা গীত পৰিৱেশন কৰে। সেন্দুৰ প্ৰদানৰ যোগেদি বিবাহৰ মূল কাৰ্যসূচী সম্পন্ন হয়।

(৩) অন্যান্য উৎসৱ

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজ খনত সম্প্ৰদায়সমূহৰ ভিতৰত কেইটামান সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ একক বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পন্ন উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বন পোৱা যায়। এই বিষয়ে চমুকৈ আলোচনা কৰা হ'ল।

মুণ্ডা সকলৰ উপাস্য দেৱতা সূৰ্য বা সিং ৰোংগা, মাৰাং বুকু (গিৰি দেৱতা), ইকিৰ ৰোংগা (পানী দেৱতা) আদিৰো পূজা অৰ্চনা কৰে।

উৰাং সকলে বেমাৰ-আজাৰৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা পাবলৈ

সূৰ্যাহী বা ধৰম পূজা পাতে। এই পূজা ঘটোৱাল, কণ্ড আদি কেইবাটাও সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ মূল পূজা।

চাওঁৰা সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লোকে আদিম কালৰে পৰা কৃষি কৰ্মৰ লগত জড়িত। গতিকে এই সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ কেইবাটাও কৃষি ভিত্তিক উৎসৱ আছে যেনে - আম পূজা, খামাল পূজা আদি।

হনুমানৰ উপাসক হৈছে ভুঁইয়া সম্প্ৰদায়। তেওঁলোকে প্ৰধানকৈ বীৰপূজা পালন কৰে। ফাগুন-চ'তমাহত এই পূজা পালন কৰা হয়। মাল-পাহাৰীয়া সকলে জমিন পূজা বা ধৰিত্ৰী পূজা পাতে। বাইগা সম্প্ৰদায়ে দৰজা পূজা পাতে। ইয়াক নাডু পূজাও কোৱা হয়।

এনেদৰে সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে বহুতো পূজা-পাৰ্বন, অনুষ্ঠান পূজা যায়। যিবিলাকৰ কেৱল সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ ভিতৰতে আবদ্ধ। অৱশ্যে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰূপে ৰূপত পৰিচিত হোৱাৰ পাছৰে পৰা সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে এইবিলাক লোক উৎসৱৰ পালনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত শিথিলতা দেখা যায়।

উল্লেখিত উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানবোৰত বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰৰ ব্যৱহাৰ এক বিশেষভাৱে আকৰ্ষণৰ দিশ। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক সকলে সাংস্কৃতিক কাৰ্য-ক্ৰমনিকাসমূহত নানাবিধ বাদ্য-যন্ত্ৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। প্ৰায়ভাগ বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰই অসমৰ থলুৱা বাদ্যযন্ত্ৰৰ অন্তৰ্গত। সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানবোৰত বেলেগ বেলেগ বাদ্য যন্ত্ৰৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে দুৰ্গাপূজাত জয়ঢোল, সৰ্বমঙ্গলা পূজাত হাজড়ীঢোল, পাল্লা নাচত খোল, তাল, কৰতাল, কৰম পূজাত মাদল, ঢোল, তাল, বাঁহী, নাম কীৰ্তনৰ সময়ত শংখ, ঘণ্টা, মৃদংগ, ঢুলুকী, হাৰমনিয়াম আদি ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে।

৪.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ সামাজিক গুৰুত্ব

লোকবিশ্বাস, পৰম্পৰাৰ বাহক উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানসমূহৰ এক সামাজিক গুৰুত্ব আছে।

সেইবিলাক এনেধৰণৰ- সামাজিক একতা স্থাপন, অৱসৰ বিনোদন, ব্যক্তিৰ সামাজিককৰণ, সামাজিক নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ, নীতিশিক্ষা প্ৰদান, সংস্কৃতি সংৰক্ষণ ইত্যাদি। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজত এশৰো অধিক সম্প্ৰদায়, জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক বিদ্যমান। তেনে ক্ষেত্ৰত জনগোষ্ঠীটোৰ সামাজিক একতাৰ প্ৰসংগটো অত্যন্ত গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বিষয়। উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠান সমূহ হৈছে এনে একতাৰ ধাৰক আৰু বাহক। কৰম পূজা, বিহু, টুচু পূজা আদিয়ে এক সু-সংহত সামাজিক ঐক্য স্থাপন কৰা দেখা যায়।

কৃষিকৰ্ম আৰু অন্যান্য শ্ৰমৰ লগত জড়িত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলৰ মাজত উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বনে হৈ পৰে এক উল্লেখনীয় অৱসৰ বিনোদন। ফাগুৱা পৰৱৰ দৰে অনুষ্ঠানৰ বিনোদনে সুকীয়া। বুমুৰ গীত-নৃত্যই এই বিনোদন অধিক আকৰ্ষণীয় কৰে। সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে থকা সুকীয়া ভাষিক, সামাজিক বিভেদ সমূহ আঁতৰাই সকলো লোককে সমাজিকীকৰণ কৰাত উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বনৰ গুৰুত্ব আছে। সমাজ একোখন সুন্দৰ হোৱাৰ মূলতে হ'ল শৃংখলা। উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠানৰ লগত জড়িত ধৰা-বন্ধা আচাৰ-ৰীতিয়ে সমাজখনক শৃংখলাবদ্ধ ভাৱে নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি ৰাখে। এটা কথা উল্লেখযোগ্য যে সম্প্ৰদায় ভেদে অলেখ বিভাজন থাকিলেও বুমুৰ গীত, নৃত্যই, কৰম পূজাই চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীক সুনিয়ন্ত্ৰিত কৰি ৰাখিছে। ধৰ্মীয় নীতি-শিক্ষা, ঘৰুৱা জীৱন, সামাজিক জীৱন সম্পৰ্কীয় নীতিশিক্ষা উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰজন্মৰ পৰা প্ৰজন্মলৈ প্ৰবাহিত হয়। এনেদৰে লোক উৎসৱসমূহ পালনৰ যোগেদে জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজখনৰ সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্যও সংৰক্ষিত হয়।

গতিকে সমাজ একোখনৰ সমন্বয়ৰ মূল ভেঁটি হৈছে উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান। এইবিলাকৰ পালন, সংৰক্ষণ, পৰিৱৰ্তনে জনগোষ্ঠীটোক শক্তিশালী কৰে। এইয়াই হৈছে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ সামাজিক গুৰুত্ব।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোকসকলৰ সমাজ জীৱনটোত এক বিশেষ প্ৰাসংগিক থকা বিষয় হৈছে বুমুৰ। বুমুৰ অবিহনে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজৰ কল্পনাই কৰিব নোৱাৰি। অসমৰ আনবোৰ লোকসংগীতৰ দৰে, চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ বুমুৰ অসমীয়া সংগীতৰ এক অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংগ। এই গীত সমূহক চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰতীক তথা জাতীয় গীত বুলিব পাৰি। কিয়নো বুমুৰ নৃত্য-গীতৰ অবিহনে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ জাতীয় জীৱনৰ মূল্যায়ন সম্ভৱ নহয়। এই জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ মাজত প্ৰচলিত আনবোৰ লোকগীতৰ তুলনাত বুমুৰ গীতৰ সমাদৰ বেছি। যিকোনো লোক সংগীতৰ দৰে এইবোৰো 'অখ্যাত কবিৰ বিখ্যাত ৰচনা' সেয়ে মহেন্দ্ৰ বৰাই চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে "বুমুৰৰ সুৰটো মাথোঁ বুকুত বান্ধি" অসমলৈ অহা বুলি মন্তব্য কৰিছে। নিতান্ত স্বাভাৱিকভাৱেই অসমলৈ অহাৰ পিছতো কিছুমান গীত মুখে মুখে ৰচনা কৰি তেওঁলোকে গাইছিল। এইসমূহ গীতত ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন-শোষণৰ পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত বিপৰ্য্যস্ত শ্ৰমিকসকলৰ জীৱনকথাই গুৰুত্বলাভ কৰিছে। বুমুৰ নাচৰ গীতৰ এটি উদাহৰণ হৈছে -

“ঢোল বাজে মাদল বাজে

বাজে কৰতাল

সখী ৰে...য়ে

চায়েৰ গাচে সনাৰ পাতা

হায়ৰে কপাল।”...

৫.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱত লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰসংগ

বেছিভাগ উৎসৱৰেই কৃষিৰ লগত সম্বন্ধ আছে। লোকবিশ্বাসৰ আধাৰতে হওঁক বা অন্ধবিশ্বাসৰ বশৱৰ্তী হৈয়ে হওঁক আমাৰ কৃষক আৰু শ্ৰমিক সমাজৰ

লোকসকলে খেতি চপোৱাৰ আগে-পিছে উৎসৱবিলাক পালন কৰা দেখা যায়।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ আৰু আকৰ্ষণীয় উৎসৱ হৈছে কৰম পূজা বা কৰম পৰৱ। ধৰ্মীয় আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক দুয়োটা দিশৰ পৰাই কৰম পূজাই প্ৰাধান্য লাভ কৰি আহিছে। যিহেতু এই উৎসৱত নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা বেছি। এই উৎসৱত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ প্ৰধান লোক বিশ্বাস “চিকামৰলীয়া গছ”জোপাকে দেৱতাকপে পূজা কৰা হয়। এই পূজাত ফল-মূল, মাটিমাহ, মতৰ, বুট-মণ্ড আদি বেদীত উছৰ্গা কৰি কুমাৰীসকলে সাতদিন জাৰা ধৰি ব্ৰত পালন কৰে, পূজা কৰে আৰু কৰম পূজাত তেওঁলোকে যি নৃত্য-গীতেৰে মনৰ বাঞ্ছা পূৰণ হোৱাটো কামনা কৰে। ভাদ হৈছে ভৰ্ষন মাহ। কৃষিৰ বীজ ৰোপন আৰু প্ৰতিপালনৰ মাহ আৰু সেই মাহতে যে গুটি ধৰে সেই কথা চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোকসকলে বিশ্বাস কৰে।

মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনা টুচু পৰৱ পালন কৰে। মাঘ বিহুৰ দিনা হোৱাৰ বাবে এই উৎসৱত খোৱা-বোৱাৰ পয়োভৰ বেছি। অৱশ্যে উদ্দেশ্যগত দিশৰ পৰা লোক-বিশ্বাস অনুসৰি ৰোগ-নিৰাময় সম্পৰ্ক জড়িত হৈ আছে।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী সকলৰ মাজত ধৰ্মীয় অনুষ্ঠানৰ পৰিমাণ অধিক। লৌকিক-অলৌকিক কেইবাগৰাকী দেৱতাক পূজা কৰা হয় আৰু এইবিলাকৰ লগত ধৰ্ম, ভক্তি, আদি লোক-বিশ্বাস জড়িত হৈ আছে।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজৰ লোক-বিশ্বাস অনুসৰি গাঁওখনক আপায়-অমংগলৰ পৰা উদ্ধাৰ কৰা দেৱতাজনেই হৈছে গাঁও দেৱতা। এই দেৱতাৰ পূজাই হৈছে গ্ৰাম পূজা। গ্ৰাম পূজা পালন কৰাৰ প্ৰধান উদ্দেশ্য হৈছে গাঁওখনক অপায় অমংগলৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ বাবে পূজাৰীয়ে পূজাৰ অন্তত গাওঁ খন বান্ধি দিয়াটো।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ বিশেষ এটা সম্প্ৰদায় হৈছে বাইগা সম্প্ৰদায়। তেওঁলোকে দৰজা পূজা পাতে।

ইয়াক নাডু পূজাও বুলি কোৱা হয়। এই পূজা পতাৰ মূল বিশ্বাস হৈছে গৃহ মংগল।

আকৌ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোক সকলে দুৰ্গা পূজা পালনত বিশ্বাস কৰে যে দেৱী মা সৰ্বশক্তিমান। সেয়ে তেওঁলোকে পৰম্পৰাগত ৰীতি নীতিৰে দেৱী গোসাঁনীক পূজা অৰ্চনা কৰি আনন্দ পোৱাৰ লগতে মানসিক শক্তিও লাভ কৰে। দেৱীৰ আশীস শিৰত লৈ জীয়াই থকাৰ প্ৰেৰণা পায়।

এনেদৰেই চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ মাজত লোক বিশ্বাস জড়িত হৈ আছে। যিহেতু লোক বিশ্বাস আছে বাবেই প্ৰতি বছৰে লোক উৎসৱসমূহ পালন কৰি আহিছে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলে। গতিকে লোক উৎসৱৰ লগত লোকবিশ্বাসৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতা নিশ্চয় আছে। যিবিলাক কেতিয়াও সমাজ খনৰ পৰা আঁতৰাই দিব নোৱাৰি।

৬.০ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱত নাৰীৰ প্ৰসংগ

অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় নাৰীসকলে অতীজৰে পৰা চাহ বাগিচাত কাম কৰিয়ে জীৱন নিৰ্বাহ কৰি আহিছে। আধুনিক সভ্যতাৰ বতাহে চাহ বাগিচাৰ নাৰীসকলকো চুই গৈছে; আধুনিক সভ্যতাৰ দাপোনত নিজকে চাবলৈ তেওঁলোকে প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় নাৰীয়ে মুকুলি মুৰীয়াকৈ নিজৰ প্ৰতিভা বিকাশ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে। নাৰী বিলাকে উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠান সমূহত বিহুগীত আৰু নৃত্য পৰিৱেশন কৰি অধিক প্ৰশংসিত হৈছে।

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ কৰম পৰবটো গাভৰুসকলে চিকামৰলীয়া গছৰ তলত সৰস্বতী দেৱীক আৰাধনা কৰি পূজা-অৰ্চনা আৰম্ভ কৰে -

“আখড়া বন্দনা কৰি সৰস্বতী মাই গো বন্দি

আস সবাই খেলিব বুমুৰি

হায়, মদনে বুমুইৰ লাগল ভাৰি।

হাতে লেলাই গামছা, খান্দে লেলাই মানৰি
গাঞেক বেটি বহু সবে লেলাই ঘেৰি,
হায়, মদনে বুমুইৰ লাগল ভাৰি।”

চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় লোক সকলে পৰম্পৰাগত ভাৱে দুৰ্গোৎসৱৰ ৰীতি-নীতিসমূহ পালন কৰি অহা দেখা যায়। দেৱী মাক আদৰ্শ জনাবৰ বাবে নাৰী সকলে ঘৰ-দুৱাৰ মচি-কাছি পৰিষ্কাৰ-পৰিচন্ন কৰি দুৰ্গা মাৰ বাবে যেন অপেক্ষা কৰি থাকে। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ প্ৰধান উৎসৱ টুচু পূজা। এই টুচু পূজাত নাৰীসকলৰ প্ৰধান ভূমিকা আছে। কিয়নো এই পৰৱৰ্তী চাহ শ্ৰমিক নাৰীসকলেই আগভাগ লয়। ই প্ৰকৃততে নাৰীসকলেই উৎসৱ। এই পূজাত নাৰী সকলে নিয়ম নীতিৰ মাজেৰে ঐক্যবদ্ধ হৈ গীত গায় আৰু গীতৰ লহৰে লহৰে নৃত্য কৰা দেখা যায়। এই পৰবৰ গীতত নাৰীৰ কণ্ঠ গীতবিলাক বৰ আকৰ্ষণীয় -

“পৌষ মাচে টুচু আনব
চন্দন কাঠৰ চড়লে
যদি টুচু দয়া কৰে
ৰাখিম চনাৰ মন্দিৰে।”

আকৌ লক্ষ্মী পূজা, মনসা পূজা, শীতলা পূজা, কালী পূজা আদিতো ভিন্ন নীতি-নিয়ম বিলাকৰ মাজত নাৰীৰ প্ৰসংগ ফুটি উঠা দেখা যায়। বিয়ানাম, আইনাম, ধাইনাম, ভিন্ন পূজা পৰৱৰ্তী গোৱা গীতবোৰৰ সৌন্দৰ্য আৰু মাধুৰ্য সঁচাকৈ মনকৰিবলগীয়া। চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় বেছিভাগ গীত-মাত নাৰীপ্ৰধান। এনেবোৰ গীত মাত কেৱল নাৰীৰ কণ্ঠত গোৱা হয়। সেয়ে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱৰ মাজত নাৰীৰ প্ৰসংগ মনকৰিবলগীয়া।

৭.০ উপসংহাৰ

আলোচনাটি শেষ পৰ্যায়ত উপনীত হৈ ক’ব পাৰি যে চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে বছৰৰ বিভিন্ন সময়ত

বিভিন্ন উদ্দেশ্য লৈ পালন কৰা এই উৎসৱসমূহ ধৰ্মৰ নীতি-নিয়মৰে বন্ধা। বিচিত্ৰ আৰু বৈচিত্ৰময় চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ সমাজ-সংস্কৃতিৰ লগতে উৎসৱসমূহো সময়ৰ দ্ৰুত পৰিৱৰ্তনত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ প্ৰত্যেকটো দিশতে সুকীয়া সুকীয়াভাৱে অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ থল আছে।

জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানৰ বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্ৰসমূহৰ লগতে সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্ৰখনতো গোলকীকৰণৰ প্ৰভাৱ আৰু সাংস্কৃতিৰ আগ্ৰাসন আৰম্ভ হৈছে। চহা জীৱনত অভ্যস্ত লোকসকলৰ মাজতো অপ্ৰকট ৰূপত হ’লৈও ইয়াৰ প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছে। বিবিধ লোকসাংস্কৃতিক সমলেৰে ভৰপূৰ হৈ থকা বৈচিত্ৰসম্পন্ন চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোক উৎসৱ বিবিধ ধৰণেৰে সংৰক্ষণৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আহি পৰিছে। বহুদিন ধৰি কথিত ৰূপত উৎসৱ অনুষ্ঠানত পৰিৱেশিত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীসকলৰ লোকগীত মাতবোৰক লিখিত ৰূপত আৰু বাণীবদ্ধ ৰূপত সংৰক্ষণৰ আৱশ্যক। ইয়াৰ বাবে তেওঁলোকে নিজৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতি সচেতন হ’ব লাগিব আৰু এক জাতি বা জনগোষ্ঠী হিচাপে একতাৰ বান্ধোনত বান্ধ খাই থকাটো প্ৰয়োজন।

উপযুক্ত অধ্যয়ন তথা সংৰক্ষণৰ দ্বাৰাহে এই সমলসমূহ হেৰাই নোযোৱাকৈ জীয়াই ৰখাটো সম্ভৱ হ’ব এই ক্ষেত্ৰত সমগ্ৰ অসমবাসী সচেতন হোৱা প্ৰয়োজন। সংস্কৃতি চৰ্চা এই লোকসকলৰ বাবে কৰ্মপ্ৰেৰণাৰ উৎস। তেওঁলোকৰ মৌখিক লোকবিদ্যাৰ বিভিন্ন উপাদানে অসমীয়া লোকসাহিত্যৰ ভঁৰাল চহকী কৰি তুলিছে। আনহাতে মৌখিক গীত-মাতসমূহৰ মাজেদি চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ জীৱনৰ বিভিন্ন দিশ সাৰ্থক প্ৰকাশ ঘটিছে। এনে ঐতিহাসিক গুৰুত্বৰ উপৰিও, গীতসমূহৰ সাহিত্যিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক মূল্যও আপৰিসীম

সামগ্ৰিক সিদ্ধান্ত

(১) অসমৰ অন্য জনগোষ্ঠীসমূহৰ সৈতে দীৰ্ঘদিন

জুৰি থাকি অন্য কেতবোৰ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ পৰম্পৰা - অনুষ্ঠানৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰভাৱিত হৈছে।

(২) সংস্কৃতি চৰ্চা এই লোকসকলৰ বাবে কৰ্ম প্ৰেৰণাৰ উৎস।

(৩) অসমৰ সাংস্কৃতিক জীৱনৰ আৱৰ্তত দীৰ্ঘদিন থকাৰ পৰিপ্ৰেক্ষিতত চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলে তেওঁলোকৰ সংস্কৃতি প্ৰভাৱশালী অসমৰ জাতীয় সংস্কৃতিত লীন হৈ পৰিছে।

(৪) উপযুক্ত সংৰক্ষণৰ অভাৱত বহু সাংস্কৃতিক সমল ইতিমধ্যে পাহৰণিৰ গৰাহত লীন গৈছে। উপযুক্ত অধ্যয়ন তথা সংৰক্ষণৰ দ্বাৰাহে লোক উৎসৱৰ সমলসমূহ হেৰাই নোজোৱাকৈ জীয়াই ৰখাটো সম্ভৱ হ'ব।

(৫) ভিন্ন ভিন্ন সময়ত কিছু ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ধৰণে লোক উৎসৱসমূহ আয়োজিত কৰিলেও এই উৎসৱৰ মূল সূত্ৰ সাৰ্বজনীন।

(৬) কাঠি নৃত্য, চাওৰা নৃত্য আদিক সুচিন্তিতভাৱে মঞ্চোপযোগীকৈ সজাই - পৰাই লৈ পৰিৱেশন কৰিলে অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিয়ে আৰু অধিক বৰ্ণাঢ্য ৰূপ লাভ কৰিব।

(৭) মৌখিক গীত- মাতসমূহৰ মাজেদি চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লোকসকলৰ জীৱনৰ বিভিন্ন দিশৰ সাৰ্থক প্ৰকাশ ঘটিছে। এনে ঐতিহাসিক গুৰুত্বৰ

উপৰিও, গীতসমূহৰ সাহিত্যিক আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক মূল্যও অপৰিসীম।

গ্ৰন্থপঞ্জী

কুৰ্মী, সুশীল, চাহ বাগিচাৰ জীৱন আৰু সংস্কৃতি, ১৯৯১।

কোঁৱৰ, অৰ্পণা, উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ জনগোষ্ঠী সমাজ আৰু সংস্কৃতি, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড, ২০২৩।

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তাছা, হেমপ্ৰভা, চাহ জনগোষ্ঠীয় সমাজ আৰু সংস্কৃতি, ২০১৩।

বৰগোহাঞি, যতীন্দ্ৰ কুমাৰ, অসমৰ উৎসৱ আৰু পূজা (অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ ভৰত চন্দ্ৰ বৰুৱা সাহিত্য বঁটা প্ৰাপ্ত গ্ৰন্থ), ২০০৭।

বৰা, দেৱজিৎ, উত্তৰ-পূব ভাৰতৰ জনগোষ্ঠীয় উৎসৱ-অনুষ্ঠান, ২০১৫।

ভট্টাচাৰ্য, প্ৰমোদ চন্দ্ৰ, লোক উৎসৱ, তৃতীয় সংস্কৰণ, ২০১৩।

শুকদেৱ, অধিকাৰী, অসমৰ চাহ জনগোষ্ঠী আৰু লোকজীৱন, ২০১২।

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

ICSSR sponsored National Seminar

TRADITIONAL ORAL CULTURE OF INDIA: RELEVANCE OF ITS STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Date: 11th and 12th February, 2025

A Two Day ICSSR sponsored National Seminar on “Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of its Study in Contemporary Times” was organised by the Department of History and the Department of English, Khowang College, in collaboration with IQAC, Khowang College on 11th and 12th February, 2025 at Khowang College, Dibrugarh, Assam. The Seminar had a total of 4 technical sessions, two offline and two online, with 43 paper presenters and more than 50 participants combining both online and offline mode from all over India.

The inaugural session of the ICSSR sponsored National Seminar on “Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of its Study in Contemporary Times” was held on 11th February, 2025 at 9.30 am at the Conference Hall of Khowang College. Dr. Sajmina Akhtar, Convenor of the National Seminar, welcomed everyone present for the session. The session was inaugurated by the lighting of the lamp by Bipin Chandra Sharma, President of the Governing Body of Khowang College. It was followed by the felicitation of the members on the dais -

1. Professor Jiten Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, Dibrugarh University
2. Professor Girin Phukan, Retired Professor of the Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University and currently the Director of the Institute of Tai Studies and Research, Moran, Assam.
3. Dr. Manas Ray, Former Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Former Head, Department of Anthropology and Mass Communication, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan
4. Dr. Trailokya Dehingia, Principal, Khowang College.
5. Bipin Chandra Sharma, President, Khowang College.

Resource persons Professor Mridul Bordoloi, Head, Department of English, Dibrugarh University, Dr. Mandakini Baruah, Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University and Professor Rajib Handique, Department of History, Dibrugarh University as well as the dignitaries – Jintu Borah, Commissioner of Khowang Co-district, Dr. Tarun Gogoi, Principal, Moran Mahila Mahavidyalaya and Mrs. Ivelata Chutia, Principal, Moran Commerce College, were also felicitated at the event. The inaugural session was chaired by esteemed Professor Girin Phukan. Dr. Trailokya Dehingia gave the welcome address where he welcomed everyone and appreciated their noble presence in the National Seminar. The Book of Abstracts

was formally inaugurated in the event. Guest of eminence, Professor Jiten Hazarika, Vice Chancellor, Dibrugarh University, gave the inaugural speech and spoke on how relevant the chosen theme is in recent times where the Indian Knowledge System is gaining primary attention of academicians and educators of India. It was followed by the keynote address by the distinguished guest, Dr. Manas Ray. His knowledge and expertise on the chosen theme for the Seminar greatly enlightened the audience and helped gain new perspectives on the oral traditions and history of India. Respected Professor Girin Hazarika then spoke about how Indian history and oral culture are interconnected and explained with illustrations how oral history is the means of preservation of age-old customs, traditions and even beliefs.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS:

There were 4 technical sessions in total, out of which 2 sessions were held on 11th February, one in offline mode and one online. The 2 remaining sessions were held on 12th February, 2025 in a similar manner. Raktima Goswami, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Khowang College was the rapporteur for the offline session while Daisy Priya Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khowang College was the session conductor and rapporteur for the online sessions.

Technical session 1 (Offline) – 11-02-2025

Dr. Trailokya Dehingia acted as the chairperson of the session and Professor Rajib Handique was the resource person. The participants of this session mainly focused on the oral literature, especially from Assam.

1. **Paper Presenter:** Gongutree Gogoi, Assistant professor, Dept of English, Moran College
Paper Title: “From Voice to Verses: Story Telling and Indigenous identity in North East Indian poetry”

The paper basically highlighted on how the oral tales, in forms of storytelling, became a part of the verses within various communities in terms of poetry. She formulated how story telling holds a special place in poetry as a means of documentation through a bridge to connect the verses to facts in a written form. She further argued how poets attempt to keep the indigenous language and traditions alive as a resistance to the colonial powers by putting references of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya.

2. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Rinjumoni Hazarika, Assistant Professor, Dept of Assamese, Moran College

Paper Title: “Anudito Upanyash ‘Bidirno Baghjai’ Protifolit Marathi Lukokotha”

In her paper, the speaker adopted an analytical comparative outlook while using the plot of the novel to analyze how development isn’t a homogeneous experience for everyone. She portrayed two folds of development- both as a curse and a boon. In her paper, she distinctively tried to portray the experience of the affected people who have been displaced from the one region to another and in this process, how culture and tradition eventually

diminishes from them because of assimilation and adoption. She tried to connect her paper with in a different geographical plot i.e., Lakhimpur, along with the possible outcomes that could happen.

3. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Sajmina Akhtar, Associate Professor, Dept of History, Khowang College

Paper Title: “The Lost Songs: Marshiya and Sadi Geet”

The paper elaborately traced the whole journey of advent of the Muslims to India during the colonial period as tea garden labourers. They formed a separate community - “Jolha”, who were deeply engaged in Sadi Geet and Marshiyas, transmitted orally from generation to generation. Like other societies, the women of Jolha community also play a crucial role in upholding the tradition of society by preserving cultural values. Many cultural dictions, such as traditional weaving, embroidery, music, and cooking, are preserved by women. In this paper, the paper presenter made an attempt has been made to explore the songs especially the Marshiya songs and Sadi Geet related to the culture and religion of Jolha community in Assam.

4. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Pallavi Handique, Assistant Professor, Dept of Assamese, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Axom’r Jonogusthiyo Lokoxahityxamuh Xongrokhonr Upai aru Samprsan or Sambhabaniyata”

The paper tried to illuminate the necessity of the various tribes to preserve and propagate their language through various oral traditions and folk tales as part of their traditions. For the paper, she narrowed down her focus to the North Eastern region of Assam. She made a special reference of the Deori tribe and gradual diminishing of their cultural values within the fold of broader Assamese community, which eventually stand as a threat to the tribe. She concluded her paper with how modernization results with an unparallel negotiation.

5. **Paper Presenter:** Pompi Boruah, Assistant Professor, Dept. Of History, Sipajhar College and Punu Sonowal, Guest Faculty, Dept. of History, Khowang college

Paper Title: “Reappraising the Role of Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan through Assamese Oral Tradition”

The paper focused on the folk tales and songs as an important oral tradition to reconstruct the socio-economic history. Folk tales, songs, and other forms of oral tradition have been utilized for a very long time to convey people’s observations about life. The paper primarily discussed a few chosen oral traditions or stories that emphasize the roles of prominent figures like Joymoti Konwari and Badan Chandra Barphukan. These Oral traditions allow us to see how these historical figures were interpreted through popular imagination.

6. **Paper Presenter:** Kakoli Bonya Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khowang College

Paper Title: A Study of Oral Ecological Narratives in Assamese Lullabies: An Environmental Perspective

The paper focused on the oral narratives in the form of Assamese lullabies. Oral ecological literature refers to stories, songs and folklore that embody ecological consciousness and highlight the interdependence between humans and nature. Lullabies, in this context, serve as a gentle medium to introduce children to environmental values, often portraying elements of nature in a soothing and familiar manner. Assamese lullabies not only celebrate nature but also ingrain a sense of ecological responsibility. This paper dealt with the significance and importance of preserving the lullabies which are a part of the cultural identity.

Technical session 2 (Online) – 11-02-2025

The online session was chaired by Dr. Mandakini Boruah, Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University and Professor Mridul Bordoloi, Head, Department of English, Dibrugarh University, acted as the resource person. A total of 8 presenters presented their papers in the session. The paper presenters were from different parts of the country focusing on their own rich cultural heritage and literature.

1. **Paper presenter:** D.K Sandiya, Scholar, Govt. Polytechnic College, Sahibganj and Priyanka Gupta, Research Scholar, School of Sciences, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational (SAGE) University, Bhopal

Paper Title: “Aspects of Indian Astronomy and Astronomical Instruments: A Review”

This article delved into the fascinating history of Ancient Indian Astronomy, including the remarkable discoveries and innovative technology that have helped shape our understanding of the Universe. Nakshatras or moon mansions, played an important role in both astronomy and astrology. It was intricately connected to religion, philosophy, and culture. The author also focused on the pioneering achievements of Ancient Indian astronomers, from their origins in the Vedas to groundbreaking works like the Aryabhatiya and Brahmasphutasiddhanta.

2. **Paper Presenter:** T. Karthikeyan and E. Vijay, Students of II MA Economics PSG College of Arts & Science

Paper Title: “Folk Songs as a Window to India's Oral Cultural Heritage: With Special Reference to Tamil Nadu's Culture”

The paper dealt with the study of folk songs from Tamil Nadu. It explored the role of folk songs as a medium to preserve and transmit Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage, focusing on their linguistic, thematic, and performative dimensions. Tamil Nadu, with its vibrant traditions, showcases a deep connection between folk music and daily life, where songs narrate stories of love, labour, devotion, and resistance. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining ethnomusicology, anthropology, and cultural studies, this research highlighted how folk songs function as a dynamic cultural practice that evolves while retaining traditional values.

3. **Paper Presenter:** Sanjukta Chakraborty, Research Scholar Comparative Literature and Translation Studies Central University, Gujarat

Paper Title: “The Sun, Sisters and Suffering: Gendered Symbolism in Bengali Oral Narratives of Itu Puja”

This paper focused on the Itu Puja and analyzed it from the gender perspective. Itu Puja, also known as Ghot Puja, is a longstanding Bengali tradition deeply intertwined with the oral narrative of Brotokotha. The paper critiques patriarchy through the Bortokotha, at the heart of which is the tale of the two sisters, Umno and Jhumno, whose tragic story explores themes of punishment, endurance, and resilience. This paper delved into how the Brotokotha has shaped the gendered spaces of Bengali culture. Examining the portrayal of women in these oral traditions aims to shed light on the enduring impact of such narratives on cultural identity and collective consciousness.

4. **Paper Presenter:** Shameen Sultana, Student, MA 2nd Semester, Political Science, USTM

Paper Title: “Upholding Traditions: The Influence of Women in Society”

This paper focused on women and their essential role in preserving the culture of India. In the intricate tapestry of indigenous cultures worldwide, women have long held pivotal roles as custodians of traditional knowledge and guardians of cultural heritage. Rooted deeply in ancestral wisdom and passed down through generations, indigenous knowledge systems encompass a rich array of practices, beliefs, and insights that are integral to the identity and resilience of indigenous communities. This paper delved into the role of women as the preserver of culture.

5. **Paper Presenter:** Yogeshkumara M.V, Research Scholar, Department of English, P.G. Centre Hemangothri, University of Mysore

Paper Title: “Reimagining Mughal India: Women, Tradition and Narrative Imagination in Indu Sundaresan's Shadow Princess”

This paper dealt with the Mughal women, selecting Sundaresan's Shadow Princess as the text for analysis. Indu Sundaresan's Shadow Princess (2010) (part of her acclaimed Taj Trilogy) reimagines Mughal history, centring on the lives and contributions of women within Emperor Shah Jahan's royal household. The novel transcends documented historical accounts to present an intimate portrayal of the emotional, political, and cultural dynamics of the Mughal era. The paper examines how Sundaresan uses historical fiction to bridge the gap between documented history and imaginative storytelling.

6. **Paper Presenter:** Muthuraju M. Research Scholar, Department of English, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore

Paper Title: “Stories as Bridges: Exploring Adivasi Culture and Identity in Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's “The Adivasi Will Not Dance””

This paper examined the portrayal of Adivasi culture in Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015), a collection of ten short stories. Shekhar's narratives capture the complexities of Adivasi life, intertwining themes of resistance, displacement, and resilience within the framework of oral traditions. The paper explored the dual role of storytelling: as a means of cultural preservation and as a form of resistance that connects historical consciousness with contemporary identity. It highlights the challenges faced by Adivasi communities, including forced displacement and the disintegration of traditional norms, alongside their triumphs in sustaining oral traditions amid adversity.

7. **Paper Presenter:** Pradeepkumar S. Assistant Professor in English, DESSH, Regional, Institute of Education, (NCERT), Mysuru

Paper Title: "Folklore and Identity: Oral Traditions in Devanur Mahadev's *Kusumabale*"

This paper examined how Mahadeva, in his *Kusumabale*, employs folklore as a medium to challenge dominant historical and cultural discourses, offering a counter-narrative to hegemonic ideologies. It highlights the significance of oral traditions in fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity among marginalised groups, serving as a repository of collective memory and resistance. The author explored how oral traditions in *Kusumabale* become a site of cultural negotiation, bridging the past with the present. He also highlights how it reflected on the potential of folklore to address modern issues of identity, cultural preservation, and social justice.

8. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Megna Bose, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Government General Degree College, West Bengal

Paper Title: "Kitchen Chronicles: The Oral Journey of Bengali Flavours"

This paper explored the sociocultural dynamics of recipe transmission in Bengali households and the impact of modernity on this age-old practice. The transmission of Bengali recipes in West Bengal is a rich manifestation of oral culture that has been preserved across generations, playing a pivotal role in both the culinary and social fabric of the region. Through informal channels such as family gatherings, festivals, and community interactions, Bengali recipes are passed down orally, often with nuanced variations based on familial and regional preferences. In contemporary times, the rapid spread of digital technology poses a challenge to this oral tradition, with written recipes and online platforms gradually replacing face-to-face culinary storytelling. The author presented the paper exploring all these aspects.

These two sessions concluded the technical sessions for the first day of the ICSSR sponsored National Seminar.

Technical session 1 (Offline) – 12-02-2025

Technical session 3 on 12th February was chaired by Dr. Trailokya Dehingia and Dr. Binud Chandra Borah, Registrar, Majuli University of Culture acted as the resource person. A total

of 14 paper presenters presented their papers in the session.

1. **Paper Presenter:** Gitali Changmai and Gaurav Saikia, Ph. D Scholars, Nagaland University

Paper Title: “Porompogot Axomiya Malitat Ahom Rajnoitik Ullakhjyogya Byokti Aru Itihas Protifolon”

The paper made a political analysis of the works written during the Ahom reign, through various ballads and folk songs. Ballads and folk songs are a part of a community’s own culture and is generally passed down to the next generation through the oral tradition. The paper presenters focused on how these writings are not only for singing and entertainment, but also tends to portray a glimpses of Ahom administration and the political conspiracy, with personal references to badan Ch. Barphukan and his role in reification of women.

2. **Paper Presenter:** Pallabi Hazarika, Assistant Professor, dept of History, Khowang college

Paper Title: “Oral Health Tradition of the Tea Tribe with Special Reference to Borban Tea Estate, Sibsagar District, Assam”

The paper focused on the various practices that prevalent among the tea communities as a part of daily chores. It also dealt with the prominence of traditional health medicinal facilities to cure diseases with the existence of various superstitious belief systems deeply rooted within the society. It made the colonial medical facilities struggle a lot in paving its way within the mind of the tribe tribes. The author attempted to draw a parallel relation between ethos and medicine, culture and health and it was the basic highlight of her paper.

3. **Paper Presenter:** Tukhar Gogoi and Harshid Singh, UG students, DHSK College, Dibrugarh, Assam

Paper Title: “The Cores of the Brahmaputra: Exploring Assamese Oral tradition in Literature”

The paper made an attempt to draw a parallel relationship between the nature and the traditions, with a special reference to the mighty Brahmaputra. It explored how the oral traditions, deeply rooted in Assam’s heritage, have been preserved and revitalized through literature, bridging the past and present. It shows how oral traditions play a vital role in shaping cultural identity and raising awareness about the importance of protecting the environment in contemporary times. There are Assamese traditional songs which revolve around the river and its relevance in forming various socio-cultural patterns of livelihood. The paper highlighted how story telling holds an importance in reconstructing the history in the contemporary period.

4. **Paper Presenter:** Sweety Biswas, Guest faculty, Department of Assamese, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Sah Jonogustir Luko Utsav: Ek Obolukon”

The paper dealt with the festival celebrated by the Tea Tribe. The paper presenter initiated with a postulation of theory by Max Muller in describing the society and its culture, further proceeding with the responsibility of the tea community in maintaining the cultural values

amidst the process of globalization. The festival is a crucial aspect of the community and contributes to the perseverance of their cultural heritage. Inclusion of the gender was another highlight of the paper in being the carrier of the cultural values generation wise.

5. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Sachidananda Saikia, Assistant Professor, Department of Assamese, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Xamajik Axoron Hanj Diyar Khetrot Xadhukothar Bhumika Annekhon”

The paper dealt with the importance or significance of story-telling in preserving the cultural identity of a community. The paper held a unique dimension in portraying how story telling is a means of nurturing a child’s behaviour as a part of parenting. The information passed orally has a unique charm and has been the primary means through which the age-old tales and songs of a tribe are passed onto the next generation. Story-telling includes instilling a value-based ideas and culture in the mind of children. The distinction of psychological world and a fantasy world which in other words can be described as storytelling induced imagination.

6. **Paper Presenter:** Anindita Das, Research scholar, Assam University

Paper Title: “Poi Dunsì festival: A Nexus of Identity and Cultural Resilience among the Buddhist Communities in Assam”

The paper focused on the Poi Dunsì festival- a fascinating celebration deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the Tai Buddhist communities living in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The paper tried to unveil how oral traditions surrounding the festival serves as vessel for cultural preservation and identity formation in special reference to ‘Poi Dunsì’ festival amongst the Buddhist communities performing their traditional rites in the month of March as two days observation. Authors highlighted the oral traditions Maong Tai-Buddhist communities of Assam as a means for cultural resilience and identity maintenance.

7. **Paper Presenter:** Priyashree Konwar, Guest Faculty, Department of Education, Khowang College and Padma Dutta, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Pedagogy In the ancient Indian Vedic Education system and its transformation”

The paper highlighted the significance of the Vedic teaching methods in reconstructing the education systems and its evolution through “Shravan” and “Shrutis” as a nexus to the 8th national education policy of 2020. It explored the ancient teaching - learning methods and how these teaching methods evolved over time. The transformation is necessary to adopt contemporary needs including scientific inquiry, skill - based learning, inclusivity and technology - driven education. This study focused on how education was imparted in ancient India, how it changed over time and its relevance in modern education policies specially in NEP 2020.

8. **Paper Presenter:** Daisy Priya Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khowang College

Paper Title: “The Significance of Oral Literature in the Assamese Context”

The paper presenter highlighted the importance of the oral tradition in preserving the age-old traditions and customs of Assamese culture. Folk culture is rich and diverse as Assam serves as the meeting point of various communities with their own faiths, customs and cultures. Prior to writing and print, it is the oral tradition that served as a solitary means of communication and the maintenance of societies. It is through the oral literature that the emotions and feelings of the people are passed on from one generation to the next and preserved through passing centuries. The author focused on this aspect and stressed on why the oral tradition should not be forgotten as it is the means of preserving the culture of Assamese people and their identity.

9. **Paper Presenter:** Sukanya Sonowal, Ph. D scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS, Guwahati)

Paper Title: “Re-interpreting Bride Price: Insights from Oral tradition”

The paper highlighted the marriage rituals among the Singh Pho community, with special reference to Bride price. Bride price simple is the sum of money or livestock or any other material where the groom’s kin (relative) is obliged to transfer resources to the bride kin as an arrangement between corporate groups. The author tried to examine the process of knowledge production on how certain customs gains prominence over the another along with the backdrop of the contextualization of Bride process as a custom of maintenance of the assets as a part of feminine wealth. Marriage and Bride price is a socially and culturally significant issue and the paper explored this aspect.

10. **Paper Presenter:** Sujata Sonowal, Ph. D Scholar M.A; PhD Research Scholar, North Eastern Hill University (NEHU, Shillong)

Paper Title: “Tattoo as a Medium of Individuality and Oral Tradition in a Globalized Market”

The paper attempted to trace the origin of tattoos as a custom to a fashion in the global market. The work strongly analyzed the how in the time of globalization the real essence of tattoo as a marker of custom identity is gradually diminishing amidst the ongoing trend. Tattoos have been used for thousands of years as a symbol for all humanity. Tattoo as an art form, serve as a powerful means of expressing individuality. The body ornamentation specifically tattooing has always been related to the birth of symbolic thought due to its appearance early on in our cultural history. The author tried to show the transition of tattoo as a custom to a commercial entity.

11. **Paper Presenter:** Raktima Goswami, Assistant professor, Dept of History, Khowang College,

Paper Title: “Tracing through the traditional Spectrums: Societal Norms”.

The paper shed light on the intricacies of the oral traditions in the form of myths, superstitions and taboos as societal chores which requires a micro analytical study of these traditions. The idea of formulating a society is always composed with various other aspects in order to maintain the dynamic nature of the society, which approves the heterogeneous composition of various belief systems, rituals, social code and conduct, cultural patterns etc. Society emerged as a collective body once the sedentary life began, which also has a direct relationship with the land. The author also referred to various debates and discourses around the authenticity of the “oral sources” to further emphasize on the aim of the paper.

12. **Paper Presenter:** Nityananda Das, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Portrayal of women in Oral Literature with Reference to Dakar Bachan: A Subaltern Analysis”

The paper tried to emphasize on the question of women with a subaltern perspective. It analyzed how the women sacrifices were glorified and idolized as parameters in the socio-cultural level, along with their deprivation in the politics. The Oral literature was portrayed as a mechanism in degenerating the women status in the society. The paper was impressive on highlighting the various portrayals of women and how they are an important part of the society. It critiqued the way women were considered the objects of preserving the dignity of a family, but in the other hand were also considered inferior to men in the society.

13. **Paper Presenter:** Bijoy Langtang, Assistant Professor, Dept of Economics, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Oral narratives of Labour and Loss in Umrangshu Rat-hole Mines”

The paper explored the oral narratives of labor and loss in rathole mining, focusing on the economic repercussions following the closure of coal mines in Assam. Through oral history methodology, this paper delved into the lived experiences of affected individuals, capturing their voices and the emotional depth of their losses. The paper further proceeded with various oral narratives in portraying the lives of common people under the process of industrialization, along with the responses and resilience between the owners and the workers.

14. **Paper Presenter:** Nayana Borah, Librarian, Khowang College

Paper Title: “Digital Preservation of Indian Cultural Heritages: Approaches and the initiatives”

The paper focused on the necessity of the preservation of oral traditions through digital means by recording, tapping for the future generation through documentation. It is documentation which made these oral narratives a living source for the society in reconstructing the history. The advancements in the information and communication technologies witnessed in the last three decades are proving to be a boon for the preservation

of cultural heritage. The paper made an attempt to study the different approaches and initiatives for digital preservation of Indian cultural heritage using qualitative research methodology.

Technical session 1 (Online) – 12-02-2025

The online technical session on 12th February was chaired by Dr. Jitu Borah, Assistant Professor, Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University and Dr. Bikash Deka, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Dibrugarh University, acted as the resource person. A total of 13 papers were presented in the session.

1. **Paper Presenter:** Dr. Anilkumara S R Guest Faculty, DoS in English, University of Mysore

Paper Title: “Revisiting Folk Traditions in Manoj Das's Select Short Fiction”

In this paper, the author examined Manoj Das’ “Man Who Lifted the Mountain”, “He Who Rode the Tiger”, and “The Turtle from the Sky” from his collection *Man Who Lifted the Mountain and Other Fantasies*. Drawing inspiration from Indian oral traditions, especially the Panchatantra, Das employs allegory, humour, and extraordinary aspects of life to focus on the complexities of human emotions and societal dynamics. By revisiting these folk-inspired tales, the author attempted to point out their relevance in understanding cultural identity and addressing universal themes of morality, humility, and relevance of folklore in contemporary times.

2. **Paper Presenter:** Sowmya A N, Research Scholar, Centre for Women Studies, Bangalore University, Bengaluru

Paper Title: “Myths Retold: Feminist Reinterpretations of Oral Traditions in Indian Texts”

The paper presenter examined the feminist retellings of oral traditions as presented in *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana* by Devdutt Pattanaik, which re-imagine women not as mere upholders of tradition but as active agents of cultural transformation. The texts were selected to reveal how feminist reinterpretations of mythological storytelling disrupt patriarchal narratives, transforming women’s roles from passive participants in the perpetuation of societal traditions to active voices challenging and reshaping cultural norms. This discussion underscores the duality of women’s roles in upholding and reinterpreting traditions, emphasizing their significance as both preservers and reformers of societal values in contemporary contexts.

3. **Paper Presenter:** Bipul Bezbourah, Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Arunachal University of Studies, Arunachal Pradesh and Prof. (Dr.) Sumita Sarkar, Ph. D (TISS), Fellowship, LSE, Research Guide, Arunachal University of Studies, Arunachal Pradesh

Paper Title: “Preserving the Ancient Wisdom: An Exploration of Traditional Medicinal Practices Among the Mishing Community in Nongkhon, Namsai District, Arunachal Pradesh”

Drawing from ethnographic methods, interviews with community healers and field

observations, this paper highlighted the pivotal role of plant-based remedies, rituals and spiritual beliefs in the community's approach to health and well-being. The findings revealed the profound ecological knowledge embedded in these practices and their reliance on local biodiversity. However, the study also revealed the challenges posed by globalization, deforestation and the waning interest of younger generations. The paper emphasized the need for documentation and preservation of this ancient wisdom, advocating for collaborative efforts between the community, researchers and policymakers to integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary healthcare systems. This paper further contributed to the broader discourse on cultural preservation, sustainable healthcare and biodiversity conservation.

4. **Paper Presenter:** Asish Sarma Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of History, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong

Paper Title: “Voices from the Margins: A Study of Slavery in Pre-Modern Assam through Vernacular Sources”

The paper highlighted the significance of vernacular sources—such as oral histories, regional manuscripts like *Katha Guru Charit*, chronicles like the *Buranjis*, *Vamsawalis*, and other indigenous records—in understanding the socio-economic history of pre-modern Assam. By focusing on the institution of slavery and labour relations, this study reveals how these sources provide a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic structures and the voices of marginalized communities that shaped Assam's historical trajectory. Incorporating these vernacular sources into historical research not only addresses gaps in traditional methodologies but also deepens our understanding of Assam's rich and complex past.

5. **Paper Presenter:** Ardra M S, Neha Scaria, Research Scholars, Don Bosco Arts and Science College, Angadikadavu, Kannur, Kerala

Paper Title: “A Qualitative Study Based on Historical Values of Indian Society and Evolution in Social Work Profession”

The paper dealt with the historical values of India and its significance. This study assessed how the historical values of Indian society have impacted the development of social work in India. Social reformers play a vital role in bringing up nationalism by promoting cultural inclusivity, social justice and equitable society. The analysis of the paper presented revealed that the historical values of India have been detrimental in the evolution of social work profession. The paper was also beneficial to determine significance of historical values in the evolution of social work profession in India and this becomes instrumental in the modernization of social work profession in India.

6. **Paper Presenter:** Sharon LV Guite, Jisna Joy, MSW IV Semester, Department of Social Work, Don Bosco Arts and Science College, Angadikadavu

Paper Title: “A Study on the Challenges to the Overall Development of Women due to Language Barriers in Angadikadavu, Kerala”

The paper attempted an analysis into how women are affected due to the language barriers in Angadikadavu, Kerala. Language serves as a vital medium of communication, connecting people and fostering relationships that form the foundation of society. This foundation varies across different societal contexts. Language barriers have been shown to directly affect access to education, healthcare, and employment. However, limited attention has been given to the specific challenges faced in the overall development due to language barriers by rural women. This aspect is emphasized on by this paper. The paper also highlighted how language is both shaped by and shapes societal changes and institutional transformations.

7. **Paper Presenter:** Emon Sonowal, Ex-student, Department of English, Khowang College and Hema Hazarika, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Karimganj, College, Sribhum

Paper Title: “Echoes of the Ancestors: Unpacking the Rich Oral Heritage of the Sonowal Kachari”

This paper sought to explore and analyze the rich oral heritage of the Sonowal Kachari people, with an emphasis on the need of conserving this cultural legacy for next generations. A culture flourishes through the passing down of oral traditions, socio-cultural values, and collective memories. Oral culture encompasses the traditions and customs that are shared and preserved through verbal communication. The Sonowal Kacharis has rich cultural traits and unique socio-cultural and religious traditions that set that apart from other tribes in Assam. The rich oral heritage has been preserved and transmitted across generations. It is this aspect that this paper highlighted.

8. **Paper Presenter:** S. Sita Mahalakshmi, Assistant Professor, MNR College of Engineering & Technology and Dr. D. Parvatheepathi, Assistant Professor, MNR Rural PG College of Education, Telangana

Paper Title: “Preservation of Oral Culture in Modern India: Challenges, Initiatives, and Full Directions”

The aim of the paper was to explore the challenges faced in preserving oral culture in modern India, initiatives taken to safeguard this valuable aspect of Indian heritage, and future directions for its preservation. Oral culture has been an integral part of India’s cultural heritage, passing down stories, legends, and historical events from one generation to the next. The key themes included the significance of oral culture in Indian society and its relevance in modern times and the challenges faced in preserving oral culture, including urbanization, globalization, and technological advancements

9. **Paper Presenter:** Shireen Sardar, Ph. D, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Paper Title: “Echoes of Resistance: Colonial Suppression and Survival of Muslim Oral Traditions in Bengal”

This paper will thus explore the complex relationship between the British colonial state in Bengal and Muslim oral traditions. This paper will examine some of the oral traditions of Bengal, such as Jari Gaan, Puthi literature, Pir Kathas, Marsiyas, etc., to understand their significance and the colonial responses to them. Furthermore, the author emphasized on how oral traditions played a dual role in the colonial space - while the British viewed oral storytelling as a sign of "backwardness," they also recognized its power to mobilize anti-colonial sentiments. Thus, this paper analyzed the selective patronization and promotion of these oral traditions. The paper also discussed how Muslim oral traditions had a lasting impact on cultural memory and identity politics in postcolonial Bengal.

10. **Paper Presenter:** Joy Angeline, Research Scholar, PG & Research Department of English, Government Arts College, Coimbatore

Paper Title: "From Speech to Script: A Comparative Study of Oral and Written Narratives in Indian and Sri Lankan Contexts"

This study explored the transformation of oral narratives into written forms in Indian and Sri Lankan literature, focusing on the works of Perumal Murugan and Anuk Arudpragasam. Both authors draw extensively from oral traditions, embedding folk elements, regional dialects, and community histories into their writing. This paper examined the ways in which these authors retain the essence of oral storytelling while adapting it for contemporary literary forms. It also considers the challenges and creative possibilities involved in converting spoken traditions into written texts.

11. **Paper Presenter:** Mala Bordoloi, Assistant Professor, Chatiya College

Paper Title: "Bihunamot Ganit Prokhongo: Eti Bislekhonatomok Alusona"

This paper was interesting as it portrayed the use of mathematics with the art of song-making. There are many terms of mathematics which are used by the Assamese people in their daily lives. These terms eventually also blend into the tunes and melodies that are created. Bihu songs are a part of Assamese culture and every individual knows them. This paper analyzed how various terms from mathematics had also been included in Assamese Bihu songs and have been passed from one generation to the next with the help of the oral tradition.

12. **Paper Presenter:** Bishnu Prasad Gogoi, Research Scholar, Lovely Professional University, Punjab and Dr Sanjay Prasad Pandey, Associate Professor, Lovely Professional University, Punjab

Paper Title: "Narratives of Resistance and Tradition: Oral Culture in the Works of J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer"

This paper analyzed the works of two great writers- J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. Oral culture serves as a vital thread connecting history, identity, and resistance, particularly in societies grappling with colonial and postcolonial realities. This paper explored how J M Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer engage with oral traditions in selected novels. The author

highlighted Coetzee's fragmented narratives and allegorical style which reflect the fluidity of oral traditions. Gordimer's incorporation of colloquial speech and communal memory underscore their collective resonance which was discussed. Drawing parallels with India's diverse oral traditions, the paper emphasized literature as a bridge between the oral and the written, ensuring cultural survival amidst modernity's homogenizing forces.

13. **Paper Presenter:** Priyanka Konwar, Research Scholar, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, and Akshay Murali and Reshikesh V.V, Students, Don Bosco Arts and Science College, Angadikadavu, Kerala

Paper Title: "Language and The Social Work Practice: Empowering Marginalized Women Through Effective Communication"

The Valedictory Session was held on 12th February, 2025 at Khowang College Conference Hall. The session was chaired by Dr. Trailokya Dehingia, Principal, Khowang College. Other members on the dais were Dr. Binud Chandra Borah, Registrar, Majuli University of Culture, Dr. Jitu Borah, Assistant Professor, Department of Assamese, Dibrugarh University and Dr. Bikash Deka, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Dibrugarh University. Daisy Priya Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khowang College, delivered the Rapporteur's Report on the ICSSR sponsored Two Day National Seminar on "Traditional Oral Culture of India: Relevance of its Study in Contemporary Times". Kakoli Bonya Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khowang College and joint Convenor of the Seminar gave the Vote of thanks. The event concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

– Daisy Priya Gogoi
Raktima Goswami
(Rapporteurs)

Name and Address of the Paper Presenters

1. **Dr. Manas Ray, Ph.D., D.Litt.**
Former Professor of Cultural Anthropology
Former Head, Department of Anthropology & Mass Communications
Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan
2. **Anindita Das**
PhD Research Scholar
Centre for Tribal studies
Assam University, Diphu Campus
Karbi Anglong
3. **Ardra M. S.**
Student
MSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science College, Angadikadavu, Kerela
4. **Neha Scaria**
Student
MSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science College, Angadikadavu, Kerela
5. **Priyanka Konwar**
Research scholar
Arunachal University of Studies
6. **Asish Sarma**
Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of History,
North-Eastern Hill University,
Shillong
7. **Bijoy Langstang**
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Khowang College
Dibrugarh
8. **Bipul Bez**
Research Scholar
Department of Sociology
Arunachal University of Studies
Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh
9. **Prof. (Dr.) Sumita Sarkar**
PhD (TISS), Fellowship, LSE
Research Guide, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai
Arunachal Pradesh
10. **Bishnu Prasad Gogoi**
Research Scholar
Lovely Professional University
Punjab
11. **Dr. Sanjay Prasad Pandey**
Professor, School of Humanities
Lovely Professional University
Punjab
12. **D.K. Sondhiya**
Govt. Polytechnic College
Sahibganj
13. **Priyanka Gupta**
School of Sciences
Sanjeev Agrawal Global
Educational University, Bhopal
14. **Daisy Priya Gogoi**
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Khowang College
Dibrugarh
15. **Dr. Anilkumara S R**
Guest Faculty
DoS in English, Manasagangothri
University of Mysore

Name and Address of the Paper Presenters

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|--|---|
| 16. Emon Sonowal
Ex-student
Department of English
Khowang College
Dibrugarh | 24. Nayana Borah
Librarian
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 17. Hema Hazarika
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Karimganj College, Sribhumi
Assam | 25. Pallabi Sonowal
Guest Faculty
Department of Sociology
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 18. Gongutree Gogoi
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Moran College | 26. Dr. Padma Dutta
Associate Professor
Department of Education
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 19. Joy Angeline. J
Research Scholar
Department of English
Government Arts College
Coimbatore | 27. Priyashree Konwar
Guest Faculty
Department of Education
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 20. Akshay Murali
BSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science
College, Angadikadavu, Kerela | 28. Pallabi Hazarika
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 21. Reshikesh V. V
BSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science
College, Angadikadavu, Kerela | 29. Pompi Boruah
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Sipajhar College
Mangaldoi |
| 22. Prof. Dr. Sumita Sarkar
Research Supervisor
Dean PIMR, Indore | 30. Punu Sonowal
Guest Faculty
Department of History
Khowang College
Dibrugarh |
| 23. Muthuraju M
Research Scholar
Department of English,
Maharaja's College, Mysuru
University of Mysore | |

Name and Address of the Paper Presenters

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>31. Pradeepkumar S
Assistant Professor in English
DESSH, Regional Institute of
Education
(NCERT), Mysuru</p> | <p>37. Sharon LV Guite
Student
MSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science
College, Angadikadavu, Kerela</p> |
| <p>32. Raktima Goswami
Assistant Professor
Department of History
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> | <p>38. Jishna Joy
Student
MSW Final Year
Don Bosco Arts and Science
College, Angadikadavu, Kerela</p> |
| <p>33. Mrs. S. Sita Mahalakshmi(PhD)
Assistant Professor
MNR College of Engineering &
Technology
MNR Nagar
Fasalwadi, Sangareddy.
Research Scholar, KLEF
Vaddeswaram, Guntur</p> | <p>39. Sujata Sonowal
PhD Research Scholar
North Eastern Hill University
Shillong</p> |
| <p>34. Dr. D. Parvatheepathi
Assistant Professor
MNR Rural PG College of
Education
MNR Nagar
Fasalwadi, Sangareddy</p> | <p>40. Sukanya Sonowal
PhD Research Scholar
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Guwahati</p> |
| <p>35. Dr. Sajmina Akhtar
Associate Professor
Department of History
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> | <p>41. T. Karthikeyan
Student of II MA Economics
PSG College of Arts & Science
Civil Aerodrome Post
Avinashi Road
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu</p> |
| <p>36. Shameen Sultana
Student
Department Political Science
USTM, Meghalaya</p> | <p>42. E. Vijay
Student of II MA Economics
PSG College of Arts & Science
Civil Aerodrome Post
Avinashi Road
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu</p> |
| | <p>43. Tukhar Gogoi
Student
Department of English
Dibru College, Dibrugarh</p> |

Name and Address of the Paper Presenters

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>44. Harshit Singh
Student
Department of English
Dibru College
Dibrugarh</p> | <p>51. Gitalee Changmai
Research Scholar
Department of History
Nagaland University</p> |
| <p>45. Yogeshkumara M V
Research Scholar
Department of English
P.G. Centre Hemangothri
University of Mysore</p> | <p>52. Gaurab Saikia
Research Scholar
Department of History
Nagaland University</p> |
| <p>46. Shireen Sardar
PhD, Department of History
Jadavpur University, Kolkata</p> | <p>53. Mala Bordoloi
Assistant Professor
Department Assamese
Chatia College</p> |
| <p>47. Sanjukta Chakraborty
Department of Comparative
Literature and Translation Studies
Central University of Gujarat</p> | <p>54. Dr. Pallavi Handique
Assistant Professor
Department of Assamese
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> |
| <p>48. Dr. Megna Bose
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Government General Degree
College Salboni
Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal</p> | <p>55. Dr. Rinjumoni Hazarika
Assistant Professor
Department of Assamese
Moran College
Moran</p> |
| <p>49. Sowmya A N
Research Scholar
Centre for Women Studies
Bangalore University
Bengaluru</p> | <p>56. Dr. Sachidananda Saikia
Assistant Professor
Department of Assamese
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> |
| <p>50. Kakoli Bonya Gogoi
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> | <p>57. Sweety Biswas
Guest Faculty
Department of Assamese
Khowang College
Dibrugarh</p> |

Rational of the ICSSR sponsored National Seminar
TRADITIONAL ORAL CULTURE OF INDIA:
RELEVANCE OF ITS STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Date: 11th and 12th February, 2025

Oral culture means verbal communication among people and societies with dissimilar cultures. It involves intergenerational cultural transmission of values, attitudes and beliefs by word of mouth. Oral culture helps in understanding traditional norms and values of society related to tools and techniques of agriculture, midwifery, ecological knowledge, traditional medicine, celestial navigation, craft skills, climate and many other subjects. The NEP 2020 has also given impetus on the inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a crucial element of Indian education with "a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions". In the contemporary era characterized by rapid advancements in fields such as Nanotechnology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), the amalgamation of IKS with mainstream education is like infusing timeless wisdom into a modern package. The main objective of the proposed national seminar is to trace out the rich repository of oral cultures of diverse ethnic communities and to acquire and focus on a comprehensive knowledge of oral cultures of India.

Sub Theme of the Seminar

1. Rethinking history through oral culture
2. Women's role in upholding the traditions of society
3. Procuring the oral culture through Literature
4. Prevalent oral culture among various ethnic communities
5. The unlettered spoken words of the ethnic languages
6. Use of visualization and verbal mode in educating the pupil in ancient India
7. Role of storytelling as a powerful tool in the formation of a cultured society
8. Community-based oral health traditions in Rural India
9. Preservation of oral culture in modern India
10. Traditional knowledge, norms and values of Indian society
11. Any other relevant Topic.

ICSSR Sponsored National Seminar on
**Traditional Oral Culture of India:
Relevance of Its Study in Contemporary Times**

Organized by
Department of History and Department of English
In collaboration with
Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)
Khowang College

Programme Schedule

Date: 11/02/2025 (Tuesday)

Time	Programme
08.30 AM onwards	Registration & Breakfast
09.30 AM to 11.30 AM	Inaugural Session
11.30 AM to 11.45 AM	Tea Break
11.45 AM to 02.00 PM	Technical Session I
02.00 PM to 02.30 PM	Lunch Break
02.30 PM to 04.30 PM	Technical Session II

Date: 12/02/2025 (Wednesday)

Time	Programme
09.00 AM to 10.00 AM	Breakfast
10.00 AM to 12.00 PM	Technical Session III
12.00 PM to 12.15 PM	Tea Break
12.15 PM to 02.15 PM	Technical Session IV
02.15 PM to 03.00 PM	Lunch Break
03.00 PM to 04.30 PM	Valedictory Session


(Dr. Trailokya Dehingia)
Principal & Chairperson
Principal
Khowang College
Khowang Ghat

Seminar Organising Committee


Dr. Sajmina Akhtar
Kakoli Bonya Gogoi
Conveners
Conveners
ICSSR National Seminar
Khowang College