

## Folk Literature Of Assam: A Study Of Goalpara District

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### Abstract:

Folk literature of Goalpara district is a complete literature. The district is inhabited not by a particular group of people, but by people of different groups. They are Bodos, Rabhas, Rajbanshis, Garos, Konches, Brahmins, Kalitas, Jogis, Kaibarttas, Namu Sudras, and Muslims (in later years) etc. Each of the above named group of people has their individual culture and literature. They have common literature also. All the cultures are old and traditional. They are rich and racy. Goalparian Folk literature can easily claim an honourable place in the world literature platform. For that work an ardent, strong and continuous attempt is essentially needed. Goalparian Folk literature is complete in itself. With affirmation it can be said that Goalparian literature can complete any literature of the world. But its hopeful publications and propagations are not satisfactory. Goalparian Folk literature includes (i) Hymns, (ii) Songs relating to agriculture, (iii) Marriage Songs, (iv) ' Nam ' Songs, (v) Bihu Songs, (vi) Juvenile Songs and dances, (vii) Mantra Songs, (viii) Healing Songs, (ix) Dances, (x) Santankamana Geets, (xi) Tales, (xii) Stories, (xiii) Nature's Beauty—blessings, (xiv) Maxims, (xv) Boat man's Geet, (xvi) Dehatattba Geets, (xvii) Cowherd's Geets etc. After all Folk literature of Goalpara District has a good place. It is part and parcel of Assamese literature.

**Keywords:** Common Literature, Complete, Traditional, Affirmation, Bihu, Juvenile, Dehatattba, Cowherd's

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Before taking to discuss about the subject we should know about the meanings of the term 'Folk' and 'Culture'. When we would know the meanings of the terms then it would be easier to discuss or describe the subject. Apparently the subject is well known and so would not be hard or troublesome to describe. So, let us know first what the terms mean.

#### Folk:

According to 'The Little Oxford Dictionary' 'the term 'Folk' means nation, race; (pl) people in general ;people of specified class; relatives; traditional beliefs & culture; study of these. Next we should know about 'Culture'. What is culture?

#### Culture:

The same dictionary explains the meaning of the term as such: tillage; refinement; artificial; rearing of bees, fish, bacteria & c.

Man is the finest and the wisest creature of nature or of God. As appears man is mostly developed in all respects. Other beings, numberless in quantity, are doubtlessly creatures of some purposes, but they are everyway inferior to man. They merely live, eat, drink, play, procreate issue and die. They have nothing. They come bare and go bare and are forgotten.

#### Man:

From the day of birth man got a developed brain and an imaginative mind. From the beginning of his life he engaged himself in various works for finer and more joyful life. Those were his cultural activities. Culture gave him finer, more developed, more joyful, more pleasing, more secured life. He was benefitted. So, he continued his cultural activities.

According to nature's or God's provision, all animals lived in pairs----one male and the other female. The pairs increased their lineages which are still continuing. Their number increased and social life began. Ages and ages were passed societies of men increased in great numbers. In course of time societies of men spread all over the world. Men carried with them their cultural activities and habits to the places they had gone. None lived without culture. Cultures of all men are mostly similar, though there are some typical differences.

Men in groups spread all countries of the world. Thus group life began. Every group have culture same and similar. Their activities are religious, social, academic, agricultural, cooking, fire making, matrimonial, weaving, rearing of animals, bees etc., dancing, singing, birth rituals, funeral activities etc. etc. These are men's cultural activities.

Men's lives are full of culture. Any work helpful and joyful is cultural work. So, we may say that there is no man without culture. If there is any such man, he is man in name. A man having no culture may be compared to an animal. That is why Mahapurush Tulsidas said:

Sahitya Sangeet Kala bihina (সাহিত্য সংগীত কলাবিহীনা)

Sakhat Pasu Pussabihina(সাক্ষাৎ পশু পুচ্ছবিহীনা)

The saying means, 'He who has no literature, song and art is clearly an animal without tail.' So, we can say firmly that man singly or collectively must have culture. Cultures are literature's food materials. So, some hints of some cultures are given here.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of this paper are as follows---

- i. To study about the folk literature of Assam.
- ii. To study about the folk literature of Goalpara District.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on secondary data. The secondary data are collected from various published sources such as journals books and various other publications. Moreover, some important information is also collect from relevant websites.

## 4. DISCUSSION & RESULTS:

### 4.1 ASSAM'S FOLK LITERATURE:

As like as other countries, Assam is also rich enough in Folk Literature. It has already been started that Assam is home land of so many folks of tribes. From time immemorial every folk made and developed literature first verbally and later written. Initially their number was limited and size was slim, but in later days more and more ingredients or matters were added and a massive form was created.

It is seen that folk literature is not only fed with social ingredients, but also with unearthly or supernatural ingredients such as nature's influence, influences of sun god, moon god, air god, water god, forest god and goddess, river god and goddess, rain god, fire god, wealth goddess, learning goddess, goddess of diseases, goddesses of agriculture, power in some animals, virtues in some trees etc. etc.

Ancient people believed that if they are worshipped, they would be pleased with us and keep us in peace with their blessings. So, they began to worship them. Later they composed 'mantras' in the forms of songs and recited when needed to please the required god or goddess. They recited in full reverence and bowed down heads. They continued recitations until the particular god or goddess is pleased.

Writings of 'mantras' and 'bhakti pads' day after day increased and appeared huge literature. Afterwards people took up prose writing. Prose writings also became bulky literature. Writings continuing, but materials are not meagre. New discoveries are running. So new writings are also running. So, literature is incessantly getting greater and greater vigour.

So far as known folk tale is the most popular folk literature of mankind. Perhaps it is the most ancient literature: 'Folktale is the father of all fictions and folksong is the mother of all poetry. 'Folk

literature may be divided into two classes, namely (i) Creative Folk Prose literature, and (ii) Creative Folk Poetry literature.

It is not hard to imagine that ancient men used both prose and poetical language. Normally they used prosaic language and in emotional state poetical or musical language. In normal state also they used poetical or musical language. As for example languages of maxims, saying and proverbs. So, it can be said that man's natural love is musical and poetical languages. At every walk of life, in joy or sorrow, men experience happenings, good and bad, joyful and sorrowful. They express them in language, first in colloquial language. From mouth to mouth it spread and one and become aware of them. They are ingredients of literature and folk literature.

Assam is homeland of so many folks of people. Each folk or group is rich of folk literature. Each group has maxims, sayings, proverbs, songs, spells, anthems, prayers, curses, hymns, pathos, chivalry, hatred, love, praises, condemnation, optimism, pessimism etc. Expressions of these feelings in writing give form of literature. Literature created form ingredients of a particular folk are a folk literature of that folk.

It is stated above that Assam is a homeland of so many tribes or folks. Missing is one of the folks. In early times they lived in mountains of Arunachal Province. Later in some time they came down to the plains and took to live along the banks of the Brahmaputra River. They had their own culture when they had lived in the mountains. After coming to the plains, their culture was mingled with the culture of plain people. As for example their famous 'Ainitom Song' is a transformed form of river bank culture. The 'Arakura' song of the karbis relate to Jhum cultivation. 'Domahi Aloon' of them is another geet (song) of them. The Sonowal Kacharis and the Hajongs have also their own literature in their local languages.

Sonowal Kachari's Haidanggeets, Holi geets, Ainam ; Deori's Aisabah, Moran Motok's Aisabah, Religious Husori, Karom Pujargeets, Trinath Pujargeets, Tusu Pujargeets, Gram Pujargeets, Lakhimi Sobahargeets etc; Bhumijsgeets, Oria's Holiageets, Kabam Ni:tomgeets (Songs of sorrows), Dukhergeets etc. are fine ingredients of folk literature.

Prevalent 'mantras' (Spells) also contributions to folk literature. Mantras include varieties of matters covering human life from pre – birth to post – death periods. The mantras include such matters as curing of diseases, driving away of evil spirits, attracting and submitting of men and women, youths and virgins, enchantments, gaining lucks, increase of wealth's, defeating and driving away of enemies, winning war and getting kingdom, Defence of kingdom, gaining wife and husband, gaining issues etc. These matters do not concern some men or some sections of people only; rather they concern all people as a whole. Educated and uneducated alike believe and practice them. Some are believable and some are not, yet none is given up.

After all, the spell songs of Assam are a kind of special songs. In them we find a bulk of ideas and meditations of the society. In the folk songs many extensive and all-embracing reflections have taken place. The songs that indicate juvenile lusts and joys of the spring season have brought us new honour of the age. The Assamese 'Bihunams' and the pastoral songs express very suitably the vibrations and agitations of minds of the agriculturists grown up in the atmosphere of nature. It surprises when thought of.

Folk literature is as old as man is old. But it was not stopped in later or in modern ages. As for example we may cite some songs sung in the time of our freedom struggle. As for example;

‘Gangadhar Tiloke      Piriti Korile

Gandhio karisil Prem ;

Mukholoi Chaote Talmur Karile

Tomar he imanto bhem. ‘

‘Sibsagar Sivdoul

China juddha lagi gol;

Touangoloi jaboloi

Paharedi rasta hol. ‘

Marriage geets of Assam also hold a very important place in social life. These are highly suitable geets. These geets touch hearts of all categories of people----old and young, youths and virgins, young boys and girls etc. By way of the 'Vianams' we get a fine picture of old Assamese Societies, particularly of the women societies:

'Amare Aiti Nisoï Kumolia

Nisoï Kolapator thuri

Atiba Najane konkalor Kachuti

Melaba Najane Chuli '

'Padulir murote tamol tinijuli

Tar maje tarise tant,

Mako ghit ghitoni gamkharur bajani

Nusuni Aideur mat.

Sorute Aiti Makak Sudhile

Mor logot ki bastu diba? '

#### 4.2 FOLK LITERATURE OF GOALPARA DISTRICT:

Folk literature of Goalpara district is a part and parcel of folk literature of Assam. It is without any question true that folk literature of Assam is a rich literature. So also folk literature of Goalpara district is a rich folk literature. Some writers have in the meantime written some books on folk literature of Goalpara district. No doubt that they have done some pioneer works on the matter. But more have yet been uncollected and unwritten. It is our duty to collect them and write in books.

Goalpara district is replete with such culture as : Folk songs, festivals, songs sung in puja festivals, songs sung in reformatory acts, songs related to children, songs related to works, songs of attractions, songs on separations, songs on love or love songs, songs of pathos, ballad, songs of praise, songs of sorrows etc. These are folk literature or oral literature.

Another kind of folk literature is related to : popular faith and religion, festivals, reformatory activities, herbal and other medicines and treatments, charms of leisurely periods, sports and pastimes, people's crafts, people's arts, different dresses, different songs, different dances etc. etc.

Given below some examples of folk literature of tribal people:

**Bodo's:** Bagurumba songs, husband and wife's merrymaking songs, Saori songs, marriage songs etc.

**Rabha's:** Bayukh puja's song, forkantidongs of the Moitarys and Rangdanis, Langa King's song, Tukuria songs etc.

#### 4.3 NON-TRIBAL PEOPLE'S ORAL LITERATURE:

Popular songs, songs of Padmapurana, songs of Bansipurana, Bhasan Yatrasongs, songs of Charak puja, songs of Bas puja, songs of Madan kama, songs of Hudumdeo puja, Ainams, Mohoho or Arisongs, Holi songs, songs on kati Dol, songs of washerwomen, Marriage songs, songs of Annaprashan and Surakaran(1<sup>st</sup> meal and 1<sup>st</sup> Shaving), Nayanawari songs, Kushan -Kharatal-Satyapeergeet, Bhaoganor Bharigan, songs of Moinamoti or Moinamoti-Gopichand'ssongs, jai dhulia'sgeet, Palagan or Dotaragan (Keschabandi), playboat's songs, songs of tilling lands, songs of bear dance, cradle songs, SiboSibo songs, sports and plays songs, Beetle's songs, Peer-fakir's songs, twelve months songs, Bhaoaiya songs, Bhatiali songs, Dehbicharorgeet, Hasan king's geet, Bodo puran'sgeet, washermen'sgeet, Mahood fandi's geet, Moichaligeet etc. etc.

There are some other kinds of ingredients of folk literature of Goalpara district which, in a nutshell are:

Dictums or sayings, phrases, anthums, reproaching, Cursings, Nudities-slangs, astronomical matters, spells or mantras, words of enchantments, Daini mantras, Jhin and pari's mantras, Banmara mantras(Arrow-missile spell), thief resisting mantras, evil spirit driving mantras etc.

Some experience-based expressions are also there in folk literature: As for example:

(i) Mangole Yatra Budhe pao

Jaha ichcha Taha jao

(ii) Harmur Yatra

Ji Kare Bidhata

There are so many such expressions in folk literature of Goalpara district.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

Folk literature of Goalpara district is not extra a literature, but a part of Assamese Folk Literature. In ancient days every folk lived isolated from other folks. So, there was no cultural or literal mingling. But the modern age brings changes in various ways. For various needs men begin to live, work, travel, study, trade, learn etc. collectively. These interdependent habits and practices bring all folk close to each other. As a result mixed culture and mixed literature are growing and developing. So, we may conclude that literatures of all districts of Assam are literature and also Folk Literature of Assam. Because between dissimilarities there are similarities also.

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