

Understanding of Folk Literature with Reference to Bandna Parab and Vadu Parab

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ABSTRACT

Bengal has long served as India's folk culture's adobe. Folk culture, which includes a variety of music, dance, theatre, and painting, is representative of West Bengal's rural heritage. Folk refers to the "lok" or "people in general" as far as folk culture is concerned. Consequently, the ignorant common people of rural Bengal are the ones who generate, preserve, and foster folk culture. The roots of folk culture may be found in a wide range of human emotions, including those related to religion, holidays, education, health, emotion, love, marriage, and loneliness. Unfortunately, as time has gone on, urbanization, globalization, and westernization have increased, posing a significant threat to Bengali traditional culture today. *The current study has been conducted to explore the Folk music's of west Bengal, to study the folk dances of West Bengal and to study the relevance of Bandna Parab and Vadu Parab.*

KEYWORDS: Folk Culture, Vadu Parab, Bandna Parab, Developed, Maintained and Nurtured

INTRODUCTION

Folk culture often refers to a way of life that is practised by a small, homogenous rural population that lives relatively apart from other communities. It highlights the value of tradition above innovation and connects to a sense of place-based community. When aspects of a folk culture are reproduced or transported to a foreign country, they retain significant ties to the original location where they were first developed (Wikipedia, May'2012). West Bengali dances and music are renowned for their beauty and fervour around the world. Folk culture emerges as a consequence of specific physical, social, and economic traits that a group of people encounters (M. Hussain, 2012). The concept of culture region is a helpful beginning point for the study of traditional living patterns in many regions of the world since folk culture exhibits significant variances from folk place to place (J, Sen 2005). Folk culture has been incorporated into tourism-related products. It may be characterised as the collective legacy of a tightly knit

rural community's institutions, traditions, skills, clothes, and way of life.

It might be considered that this traditional culture can be perpetuated by providing assistance to the rural Bengali people, who are lovely at heart, agricultural in their economic system, and rustic in their cultural practises. They have been engaging in these artistic endeavours in tandem with sporadic labour in the agriculture sector and other endeavours.. They may not be thoroughly professional artists, but do not keep the stones unturned to hold on their folk culture legacy active. However, it has also been observed that reason behind is, that rural Bengal is influenced by material science & technology culture along with western cultural influences. On the other hand, various govt. & non-govt. organizations, print and electronic media has been making careful efforts to sustain folk culture, as it also plays a major role in showcasing the Cultural Tourism which forms the

How to cite this paper: Mr. Sudipta Mahato | Prof.(Dr.) Ujjwal Kumar Panda | Prof.(Dr.) Samirranjan Adhikari "Understanding of Folk Literature with Reference to Bandna Parab and Vadu Parab" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-6 | Issue-7, December 2022, pp.657-660, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd52411.pdf



IJTSRD52411

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epitome of West Bengal. Economic globalization, which made life more comfortable, has taken out the nativity smell from the so called rural Bengal.

Statement of the Problem: —Loko Sanskritil or Folk culture of Bengal is a difficult and complex subject to write due to its wide range of different subjects of diverse nature sometimes absolutely not related to each other like anthropology, psychology etc. which encompasses a variety of features like myths and mythologies, religion and magic, customs and traditions, fairs and festivals, oral literature, music and art. Folk culture refers to a culture traditionally practiced by a small, homogeneous, rural group living in relative isolation from other groups. Therefore the researcher has stated his problem as “Understanding of Folk Literature with Reference to Bandna Parab and Vadu Parab”

Objective: The study has been undertaken with the following objectives-

- To study the popular folk music of West Bengal
- To study the Popular folk dances of West Bengal
- To study the folk culture with reference to Bandna Parab and Vadu Parab

Popular Folk Music:-

Baul - The Baul tradition is a unique heritage of Bengali folk music that has been influenced by regional folk music of Bengal that includes – Gombhira, Bhawaiya, Kirtans, Gajan festival music. Folk music is often accompanied by a one-stringed instrument – the ektara. This form of music was developed by a group of mystic minstrels from Bengal who were considered to be a syncretism group with music in their blood. In 2005, they were declared as the “Masterpiece of the Oral & intangible Heritage of Humanity” by UNESCO. This music is considered to be the medium of interaction with an Almighty as similar to Sufi.

Bhawaiya – It is a musical form which is popular in Coochbihar, Jalpaiguri & North Dinajpur in West Bengal. This type of song is sung by the Coacharan, & sung while driving their cow drawn cart. The singers are known as ‘bandia’. The songs depict sorrow, pain, love, separation & even natural calamities.

Bhadu & Tusu - Bhadu songs mean songs of the month of Bhadra, which are sung during the rainy season. They are sung by unmarried girls. Tusu is a folk ritual in the district of Purulia, observed by the woman folk during the Bengali month of Paus after harvesting is over. Tusu – is an unorthodox harvest goddess. This is the most important regional festival of the Bankura, Bardhaman, Murshidabad, Birbhum & Purulia district.

Jhumur – It is generally sung by the tribal people. Its geographical extension can be drawn from greater Chhotanagpur to Deccan plateau in the south. Specially, Purulia exercise this musical form extensively. The song has universal character - Radha & Krishna. The episodes of Ramayana & Mahabharata are also introduced in their songs. Thus, Jhumur is also known as Ramlila jhumur & Bharatlila jhumur.

Popular folk dances:-

Jhapan dance – performed to seek the blessing of God so that wishes for children are fulfilled. It is also prepared after recovery from smallpox & chicken pox.

Gambhira dance – devotional folk dance performed during chalak festival in March-April & popular in North Bengal. It is a solo performance & participants wear a mask while performing.

Tusu Dance – tribal folk dance of Bhirbhum district. It is performed in the month of December/January, where girls worship the idol of Goddess Tusu to get a good groom.

Santhali Dance – a tribal folk dance that showcases immense vibrancy & cheerfulness. Both men & women of Santhali tribe perform to celebrate spring festival.

Lathi dance - performed to express different situations of human life like – remorse, celebration, anger, pain or love, usually in the first 10 days of Muslim festival of Muharram.

Bandna Parab

It is impossible to trace the root of Bandna Parab, but the academicians are agreed that it is too ancient. It started before the intrusion of Aryans. Later the Arya people continued this tradition in imitation of the mainlanders. Years ago God creates man. It is Lord Shiva who is regarded as the kindest and easily pleasurable. According to mythology from the beginning of civilization Lord Shiva takes the responsibility of men and he provides food for them. But with the passage of time, the population increases and he expresses his inability to provide food for everyone. So, he proposes to start agriculture for men. Lord Shiva provides them crops for agriculture. At this time men used to produce crops by their own effort. But soon they find it too hard. So they request Lord Shiva to find another alternative way. Then Lord Shiva provides them a group of cattle for cultivation on one condition that they would take care of them. They would not torture them.

In the beginning, the relation between man and cattle was good. But with the passage of time, it gradually

became worse. Soon it reached the zenith. The man used to beat when the cattle failed to fulfill the expectation of man. The cattle find no way but to raise complain to Lord Shiva to save their skin from the hand of man. Lord Shiva after knowing this became disappointed and decided to pay a visit to the earth on the new moon in the month of Kartik. Narad muni, the singer of heaven informed this news to the inhabitants of the earth. Then the man before omabossya (new moon) start washing and cleaning their house and cowsheds. They wash the cattle and the instruments in the pond and river. They smear oil and vermilion on their horns. They provide them enough food to eat. Man lightens the cowshed through earthen lamp and also arranges entertainment for the cattle. The group of 'ahira' singers entertains the cattle throughout the night.

Lord Shiva finally arrived and observed everything in detail. He became pleased after observing the healthy relationship between man and animal. Therefore, the complaint against Man proved as false. Next year the cattle sent the same complaint, the man again as a clever being followed the same procedure to please Lord Shiva. Thus, Man saved their skin from the curse of Rudra. Thus the tradition begins and even today People used to celebrate it.

Vadu

The stories of Vadu are mainly Kashipur centric. At that time Kashipur was the headquarter of 'Panchakot Raj', a royal family that ruled Manbhum. There are many stories regarding Vadu. But the most acceptable among them is that Vadu was the adopted daughter of Raja Nilmani Lal Singh Deo. One day during his reign he went hunting but he found nothing to hunt. He became disappointed. During his return to the palace, he saw a girl alone crying in the forest. He went there and asked the girl about her identity. But she told nothing. She was too beautiful. Her beauty and innocence compelled the King to adopt her. After their return to the palace, through a grand ceremony, the King gave her the name 'Vadraboti'. She was too intelligent and popular among the people of the Kingdom. But the sudden and premature death of the girl made both the king and common folk disappointed. They mourn for the girl for a month. It was the time of 'Vadra' as per the local calendar. King Nilmani Lal Singh Deo decided to immortalize 'Bhadraboti' so he started to worship her adopted girl throughout the 'Badra' (name of a month as per Bengali calendar). The common folks started to imitate the King. The 'Vadu Puja' started in Purulia.

Another opinion regarding the 'Vadu Parab' is that 'Bhadreswari or Bhadraboti' was the only daughter of King Nilmani Singh Deo. She was not less than a

deity in her look. Her beauty and sill became the reason for King's disappointment as he found it too hard to find a suitable groom for her beloved daughter. The King failed to arrange her marriage. So, she died as a damsel. The king to console him as well as the commoners of his kingdom started 'Vadu Parab'. They celebrated this only to keep her alive through their culture. People also believe that 'Vadu Parab' is the celebration of the victory of Panchakot Raj over the Kingdom of Chatna. The time period was the month of 'Vadra'. To celebrate this historic victory the King decided to start 'Vadu Parab' throughout the month. This story is also controversial as there is no specific year and the name of King in the record. Thus, in the kingdom of Panchakot started 'Vadu Parab'. These stories seem to be imaginary but these are not completely imaginary. The celebration of Vadu affects the culture of the kingdom of Panchakot now Purulia a lot. It is visible in the society of Purulia. Nowadays Vadu no more a deity, she becomes a part of the daily life of the people of Purulia and moreover, she becomes a member of their family. They celebrate this festival every year in the month of Vadra. One example is –

—O my mother, cruel mother,
You kept me in my husband's place
On the occasion of the harvest festival.
You don't know how I passed my hours of
sorrow,

.....
.....
You left me there where I had to undergo
An ordeal of fire, o my cruel mother.!

Vadu Parab at Present

Even today Vadu Parab is widely celebrated with pomp and show. It is mainly woman-centric. Though generally in the festivals of Purulia are both man and woman used to play an equal role. Vadu Parab is an exception. There is no particular mantra for Vadu puja. Women worship Vadu in their way through songs that they compose for Vadu. They consider Vadu as a 'sokhi' cum deity. The unmarried girls used to bring the idol of Vadu on the very first day of Vadra. From the very first day of Vadra to the end of the month the unmarried girls and married women used to gather together and sing songs. As it is celebrated throughout the month and song is the only medium to worship Vadu, so there exists many 'Vadu geet' (Vadu song). Through these songs, they express their inner feeling, their desire, and longings. Everyday used to draw various kinds of 'alpana' to decorate the floor where they establish Vadu.

Conclusion: It may be argued that the original rural Bengali people, who are agricultural in economics,

backward socially and rustic culturally yet lovely by heart, reserve the copy right of this ancient culture. They have been practising this style of painting for centuries alongside auxiliary labour in the agricultural sector and other pursuits that prevent them from becoming fully qualified artists. In actuality, the future survival of these creative forms is seriously in doubt since new generation artists are not emerging or even expressing interest in joining in the near future. Furthermore, under the effect of western cultural influences and more importantly material science and technological culture, rural Bengal has already overflowed to a dangerous degree. Even yet, it is important to recognise the assistance provided by several governmental and non-governmental organisations, print media, and electronic media who have worked diligently to ensure the survival of folk culture. The idea of globalisation, particularly economic globalisation, which improved quality of life and ease of access to demands, has really eliminated the nativity fragrance from the so-called rural Bengal. Therefore, there is no other later popular culture that eclipses the folk culture.

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