

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN ASSAMESE BALLAD

Aditya Saikia

Research Scholar, Department of Assamese,
Gauhati University.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the utmost necessities of environment in human life through Assamese Ballad which reflect environmental awareness. Different folk songs, stories, religion, believe were created to preserve environment long ago. It will be a proper evaluation of environmental responsibility, awareness of ancient Assamese society. In terms of bio-diversity preservation, the role played by Assamese society thorough Ballad is significant which scatters environmental awareness. The closeness among various animals with human being reflects the long association to have healthy environment for people.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of Assamese folk-literature are Ballad. Like other branches of folk-literature, these ballads are social creation and propagated orally.

'Ballad' is the Assamese equivalent to 'Akhyangeet'. To connote 'Assamese Ballad' the word 'Malita' is used. Moreover, to mean 'Malita' the word 'Geet' is used profusely. As for instance, 'Borphukanor Geet', 'Maniram Dewanor Geet', etc. The word 'Malita' is originated from 'Mala' and it is a fabulous oral songs or poem, which are interrelated consecutively like flowers in a garland. Here a story is described currently through a song. It has a particular tune. It is anonymous and a property of folk-people. Although lyricism is the chief characteristics of a 'Ballad', yet story is its heart. 'Ballad' is divided in top different division. 'Ballad's may be primarily divided in to three branches although it is in several divisions as per different scholars. In the first division, the ballads may base on historical and real incidents are included. The fabulous songs, the proverbs and maxims of different topics are played to second division. The artificial ballads of modern age composed by sensitive poets are placed third division.

Compared to the Assamese folk-literature, up till now, the number of preserved and published ballads is not numerous. Excepting some collected ballads the most of others are incomprehensive and incomplete.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

- To know about proper evaluation of environmental knowledge, responsibility, consciousness of ancient Assamese society.
- It will be a new inclusion of this subject to Assamese folk-literature and it will give a new slandered to Assamese folk- literature.

- In the era of globalization, the influence of environment is infinite. Therefore, the perfect study of this subject will bring definite contribution to present society and literature as well as to the world of science.
- The knowledge can be emphasized on the scientific analysis of traditional environmental perspectives of Assamese folk-society and folk-literature.

1.2 Methodology

This paper is based on data collected from field study. Also from different sources like research papers, research articles etc. published in journals, periodicals, books and internet.

2.0 CONSERVATION OF WATER RESOURCES

In respect of environmental awareness reflected in ballads is the 'awareness for water resource conservation'. No organisms in this vast universe can survive without water. Earth is the only planet where water is available throughout the universe. 71% of the earth's surface is covered by water. 99% of water above earth's surface is not fit for livelihood of man and other animals. Only 0.3% of surface water is fit for mans use. The water required for man is practically conserved in lacks, rivers, streams, ponds etc. According to the Geological Survey of America, the above 0.3% water is mostly inaccessible. Out of this 68% of water is available as ice and iceberg. Only 30% of that 0.3% is available for man and other animals over earth's surface. About 1.2 billion man of earth, developed by higher science and technology are yet suffering from the shortage of water. In India, about 600 million people are subjected to necessity of water. In Assam, it is 54.14%. People around the world are deadly concerned with necessity of water and supply of same.

The ancient society had been quite different in this respect. During those days, there had not been any filters, tube wells and wells etc. They were used to ponds and rivers. Although, people during those days were dependent on the water of ponds and rivers, they well could save themselves from epidemics born from water. The main reason was that during those days the society paid required price and honor to water. They even did not throw any carcass of any animal to the stagnant of water. Even water used for lavatory was drained to some ponds exclusively meant for that purpose. They did not use any fertilizers or insecticides to any cultivable lands. The fact that during those days, people did cremate or burry the carcass of man and other animals is directly or indirectly indicates the man's consciousness of water. A public pond is available in every village perhaps accordingly. It is noticed that every household of Assamese people is available with a pond and it seems the household is totally incomplete if it is not saw. The ponds that exist near village, temple and satra etc. are the unique example of existing knowledge and devotion to water of ancient Assamese people.

Water is considered as the symbol of purity amongst the society of assumes as well as Indian. Water is used in the affairs of atonement and purification of soul by the people of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianize and other religion. Although it is used in religious purpose, it is not a symbol of purity. Mind would never be free unless water is sprinkled over self body, while entering a temple, candlering a sacred lamp in the temple after returning from going outside. Water is mostly considered the superior in different social as well as religious, cultural function etc. There is a tradition in Assamese society in a marriage the 'Pani

Tula' activity where water is collected from nearby river or pond. The bride and the bride groom are well purified by the water as collected under this conservation so that their future conjugal life should be happy and prosperous. It, on the other hand, has a great significance of environment value of collecting water not from domestic wells or ponds but from public tanks and rivers.

Several stories are available about the awareness of water in respect of cultural and folk-literature in these ballads. It is well noteworthy that 'Kamala Kunwari Geet' and 'Dighir Pukhurir Geet' in this context. Amidst of this ballad, a story is remains inherent. To illustrate the above contention, a story is narrated to describe it parallel.

Kamala Kunwari Geet

“Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Beli je Bohut Hol .

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Bahi Mukh Dhubore Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Beli je Dupor Hol.

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Tel Tenga Ghohibor Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Beli Bhati Dibore Hol.

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Suli Melabore Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Dulat Goi Uthibor Hol.

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Amaru Jabore Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Pani ba Kimane Hol.

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Pani a Apota Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Pani ba Kimane Hol?

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Pani a Agathi Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari

Pani ba Kimane Hol?

Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar

Pani a awanthu Hol.

Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari
 Pani ba Kimane Hol?
 Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar
 Pani a akokal Hol.
 Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari
 Pani ba Kimane Hol?
 Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar
 Pani a Abuku Hol.
 Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari
 Pani ba Kimane Hol?
 Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar
 Pani a Adingi Hol.
 Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari
 Pani ba Kimane Hol?
 Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar
 Pani Athutori Hol.
 Kamala Kunwari Mure Praneswari
 Pani ba Kimane Hol?
 Hunoksun Hunoksun Swargadeu Iswar
 Pani a Amukhe Hol.”

QUEEN KAMALA KUNWARI

“Once there was a king in a certain area in Assam. He loved his people and did all that was possible to protect them. His subjects were also very loyal. The king led a happy life with his devoted queen Kamala Kunwari.

But happiness does not last forever. It is like a dew drop in a leaf. There happened to be severe drought in the country. The fields were perched. There was not a lot of verdure anywhere. People and cattle were dying of thirst and hunger. The king was very anxious to save his people. He engaged some people to dig a big and deep tank. The tank was deep but where was the water? It was dry. The digging was done deeper and deeper but there came not a drop of water from it. The king lost in thought. The people lost all hopes.

At this time, the king had a dream. Yes, he would be able to save his people, there would come water from the big tank but he would have to sacrifice his beloved queen.

The king woke up. He struggled in his mind. On one side there was the queen, his loyal and devoted wife and on the other side there were his subjects; to protect them was his sacred duty. What could he do? He told about his dream to Queen Kamala Kunwari. She heard it, kept silent for a while and then with tears in her eyes, said, ‘King, I must sacrifice myself for these people, who are like my children. I know you will never be happy without me, but let me go.’

The king stood on the bank of the tank. The people were waiting with grief and suspense. The queen bade good-bye to the king and stepped in to the hollow of the tank. There was water- cool, cleansing out. The water rose up still higher. The queen did not stop and went forward. At last, the faint voice of the queen came and the beautiful queen Kamala Kunwari was lost in deep water forever. The king and the subjects wailed her loss.”

DIGHIR PUKHURIR GEET

(1)

“Horichoy Raja Horichoy A

Digiri Khandoi Raja A

Horicoy Raja Horichoy A

Digirir Pare Pare

Paroua Boli Dila Raja,

Raja Horichoy A

Digirir Pare Pare

Hanh Boli Dila Raja

Raja Horichoy A

Teo Rajai Panike Napai Hori A

Horichoy Raja Horichoy A

Digirir khandoi Raja A

Digirir Pare Pare

Moiho Boli Dila raja A

Raja Horichoy A

Digirir khandoi Raja A

Digirir Pare Pare

Hanthi Boli Dila Raja

Raja Horichoy A

Teo Rajai Panike Napai Hori A

Raja Horichoy A.

(2)

Nonglar Aage Rajai Pukhuri Khundila

Bhal Bulohe O rajj.

Pukhuri Khandi Rajai Panike Napala

Bhal Bulohe O rajj.

Pukhuri Pare Pare Rajai Onek Phul Rula

Teotu Rajai Dighit Panike Napala.

Bhal Bulohe O Rajj

Dighirir Pare Pare Rajai Belbokul Rula

Teotu Dighit Rajai Panike Napala.
 Dighirir Rajai Pothaboli Dila
 Teotu Rajai Dighit Panike Napala.
 Hanthik Dilamurot Ghunhi Lakhi Bilasur Tel,
 Muihok Dila Ghunhi Hingot Ghunhi Narayoni Tel
 Teotu Dighit Rajai Panike Napala.
 Pukhuri Khandi Rajai Kuwerik Horala.
 Akhar Randhan Akhate Thakila
 Kular Soli Aphilai Palala
 Halur Kapur Aanjuli Singila
 Olal Kuweri Dighiri Pujiba.
 Akupak Marei Kunwari Aku Vori Hol
 Akupak Marei Kuweri Akukukal Hol.
 Akupak Mari Kuweri Bukur Human Hol
 Aru Pak Mari Kuweri panir Tol Hol.
 Parute Bohirajai Kandiba Dhorila.”

A vivid story is incumbent in ‘Dighir Pukhurir Geet’ like the story in ‘Kamala Kunwari Geet’. In this song, the description of digging a pond name ‘Dighir’ for water by a king namely ‘Horichoy’ is described. According to the story, the king ‘Horichoy’ happened to dig the pond ones again, yet water is not accessible. Considering that some curse is prevailing upon, the king ‘Horichoy’ ultimately slaughtered a pigeon first. Afterwards failing to drop any water the king ‘Horichoy’ happened to sacrifice elephants, duck, buffalo, goat etc. will all types of worships. Notwithstanding that the king began to plant different types of plants and flowers. The king having found no means, like the song in ‘Kamala Kunwari Geet’, he sacrificed his princes while water became abundant in the pond at last. In the above two songs, these two king sacrificed everything for the betterment of their kingdoms are narrated vividly. Really both this king was well aware of usefulness of water and for conservation of water. They even did not hesitate to sacrifice their wives. The stories like this, to include in ballads, it is obvious that the awareness for the utility and preservation water directly illustrate the awareness of Assamese people for water.

3.0 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND CREATION OF SHELTER

In order to preserve water resources and for security of bio-diversity, the ancient Assamese society through ballads wants to create natural resources or basics of water resource conservation and reflects another environmental; aspect ‘character of bio-diversity’ in those resources. The stories included in these songs are not supposed to express these aims and objectives but for the sake of convenience in relation to the story, the ancient Assamese society included this environmental consciousness in songs. For the perspective water conservation, another significant step is to save environmental balance of pond, ditch, and marsh of ancient Assamese society. The first step to save bio-diversity is to create shelter or preservation of

these. That is why, through songs, the picture of pond, ditch, and marsh are being created, which reflect a noble picture of bio-diversity.

“Ki Mas Maribor Mali
Dokoi Pukhuri Khonale Nahore
Bondhale Henduri Ali.”

“Bilore Kanore Kolmou phulote
Pokhilai Jaki Di Ure,
Dinore Dintu Kheli Khelai Kunware
Tamulir Logot Phure.”

“Bordubi Majote Gorilai Gujori
Panite Kheli Khelai,
Hihur Huhoroni Mogoror Dopotit
Horubor Mase Polai.”

“Pukhurir Parote Sore Koli Goru
Panit Soribo Hah,
Hei Nu Koi Pukhurir pani Tuli Ane
Kunwarok Dhuaishi Ga.”

In the analysis of these ballads, the creator or the unknown poet, through stories, draws a very splendid portrait of Assamese society and nature. Among different significant things, manmade creation like paddy field, pond, marsh etc. are crucial. These are the consciousness environmental pillar of ancient Assamese society. For the agricultural livelihood, the significance of paddy field is eminent. Even though, these seems to be created only for the purpose of fulfilling wishes of men, but other animals get more profit from these. From shelter to food-chain, these manmade natural creations are being created depending on ‘paddy field’. It is important to notice that the complete picture of manmade environment is created in the songs. In other words, those splendid pictures become environmental ideal as those who are unable to define paddy field, it becomes another way to utilize or understand the nobleness of environment through songs related to paddy field, pond etc.

“Da Koi Potharot Sore Koli Goru
Damuria Koribor Be,
Sikatuk Mari Kinu Lav Hobo
Khaloloi Gotiai De.”

“Habit Soribor Habir Horini
Potharot Soribo Honha

Hesuki Di Jau Sokoli Dhorakhon
Tate Lahe Kori Boha.”

“Da Koi Potharot Doloni Duponi
Tate Mari Jame Hol
Makor Saran Sui Hewati Jonale
Kunwar Migoialoi Gol.”

In the present society, the significance of these songs as well as the significance of paddy field, ponds, marshes, gradually get decreased. No more existence of paddy fields, ponds, ditches, marshes etc. in the development and thereby there came extinction of ecological system. The ancient Assamese society had either created or preserved these resources. It is not necessary to take help of paddy field, pond, ditch etc. to know about the nobleness of environment, but it can be understood through folk-literature. In this way, in simple words, the people created the significant things at that time for future generation.

4.0 RELIGIOUS COLOURS IN RELATION TO ENVIROMENTAL AWARENESS

Where the ancient society throws the color of religion, there emerged noble culture. For example, lightening earthen lamp under ‘Tulokhi Gos’ and in paddy field, wrapping of red clothes in big trees, worshipping of trees etc. Another way is to believe in the existence of God in water. The reason behind this is their consciousness towards environment. The people at that time realized that ‘water is the life of all animal’. No one can live without water. They had created the belief that there remained or existed God in water that future generation will understand the value of water, to preserve it, even though they will not be able to understand this value, at least they will give respect for which they will not waste any more. Another common view regarding on this perspective is to have big pond in almost all temple, satra etc. The reason behind is same as mentioned above and they believed that that was the creation of ‘God’ which became ideal for them and in the starvation, they will use the water of those ponds they had in their temple, satra etc.

“Hei Kotha Huni Jolor Jolkunwaror
Gat Totoke Nai,
Koboloi Dhorile Jolor Jolkunware
Jolkunwarie Mukholoi Sai.”
“Ajabur Marile Thanua Kunware
Bapek Rajar Nagaroloi Sai
Ako Ajabur Maribo Khujute
Nile Jolkunware Pai.”
“Noite Maribor Rou Koi Borali
Pukhurit Maribor Hole.
Joleswaer Kunware Putekor Agote
Porbor Kothake Kole.”

5.0 INTIMACY

The intimacy of birds and other elements of environment in this song are very important. The intimate relationship between human being and birds is evident from prehistoric era. The Assamese society is related to these aspects. They were fully aware about the environmental nobleness of birds. The aware ancient Assamese society gave a prestigious place to their loving birds as they were useful for agricultural perspectives. The unknown poet, through ballads kept this with birds and protested illegal action done by human being.

“Habite Kandile Hoikoli Soraia
Sitikar Mukholoi Sai
Jerenga Potharot Kande Joymoti
Saudangor Mikholoi Sai.”

“Borgharar Mudhote Kopou Kuruliai
Hailakh Modomor Mat
Ajati Nohou Moi Nedekha Nekheda
Horonkher Marise Gaat.”

“Akakhot Urile Ho’ Khai Hogune
Tolote Urile Bog,
Olai Bohisil Swargodeu Isware
Tate Pai Gole Log.”

These songs not only protested but they reflected the necessities of birds in environment like eating of corpse by vulture so that knowingly or unknowingly no one can harm birds.

This intimacy is not only found with birds. The people of ancient Assamese society were very kind towards other animals. This kindness was exchangeable found from both sides, from people as well as from birds also. The song of ‘Ful Kunwarar Geet’ attracts attention of people through the story of ‘Aruna Jogorar Kahini’. These are not romantic poems by romantic poets even though these poems were richer with imagination, fancy but these poems had base upon environment. Because time immemorial, people made close relationship to the animals, trees etc. and people gave the value of their relationship to the relationship to the animals very beautifully. Even animals also began to think human being as another part of environment and thereby they began to accept human figure.

“Habire Majote Baghor Gujoroni
Kinu Ogotir Goti
Aruna Jogora Duti Vai-Kokai
Upojil Tene Kori.
Posatuli-Sote Mohia Rode Dhou Dhou
Piahot Phati Jai Hia
Mur Hu Boikhot Morilu Kunwar Oi

Pani Di Jibo Dan dea.’

Phulkunwar- Sad-Hurujoloi Saba Posetuli

Sade-Hurujoloi Saba

Panire Logote Arilu Tumake

Ahile Eate Paba.

Sote Mohia Ajar Phul Phulile

Potharor Phaloi Sai

Panire Logote Kunwar Vromi Phure

Pani Je Osorot Nai.

Panire Logote Batkuri Baute

Dinore Derpor Bela,

Kunwarok Loi Gol Hukula Hatia

Pate Ak Dekhot Raja.

Kunwarok Nedekhi Dhone Posetuli

Sade Hurujoloi Sale

Aruna Jogora Duti VAI-Kokai

Morile Tumate Lage.

Kunwarok Loi Gol Hukula Hatia

Pate Ak Dekhot Raja

Kunworik Loi Gol Haud Oi Mudoia

Patinaot Dia vora.

Aruna Jogora Duti Vai-kokai

Habite Khopile Rati.

Baghe Bhaluke Rokhia Poria

Megha Dhorisile Sati.

Aruna Jogora Duti Vai-kokai

Bohot Bokhotir Gut

Baghe Bhaluke Rokhia Poria

Khuai Mani Mohe Dudh..”

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