

Ornaments of Saraniya Kachari - A brief insight

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Abstract: Saraniya Kacharis are one of the notable tribes of Assam. If we study about them in more detail, it is seen that they were been converted to Hinduism by different religious leaders from different tribes of Assam in different eras. Therefore their traditional rituals, attire etc. bear unique characteristics. They have their own social system, ethos, folklore and folk art. People of this type generally resides in Baksa, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darang etc. district of Assam. Use of ornaments is prevalent since pre historic ages. Likewise other tribes of Assam Saraniya Kacharis have also their own jewelries. In this paper effort is made to discuss in different ornaments of Saraniya Kachari. .

Index Terms- Ornaments, Saraniya Kachari, Tribe.

I. INTRODUCTION

Beautiful things are eye catching. Like people finds beautiful things more attractive, same way they prefer to look beautiful. Jewelries are one of those attractive things people use to look beautiful. Jewelries were used by our past generation when no other things were available. It is the oldest thing used after human evaluation or might before that. Our past generation used colorful flowers, feather of birds were used as ornaments. During ancient ages, people used different metals to protect them from wild animals; those things were the horns, teeth, bones of dead remains of various animals. They used to wear those to scare the wild animals. As development advanced, people started to mould metals into different ornaments.

It is said that, in ancient time, only male used to wear ornaments. But, eventually female also started to wear ornaments. Now a day, it can be seen that females wear more ornaments than male. Generally ornaments wear in different parts of the body. Many customs and traditions are associated with these ornaments. It is a general belief that ornaments forbid evil forces from attacking humans. Many tribes of North East India as well as Assam used to wear many ornaments in ancient time for hunting purpose and these ornaments protect them from evil forces.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

This research topic will study about the different ornaments of the Saraniya Kachari. Many ornaments of this tribe are vanished and are not mostly used by people now a days. But still this research topic is carried out to discuss about those vanished ornaments. This topic is chosen to discuss about their traditional ornaments.

2.1 Method

For studying the topic Ornaments of Saraniya Kachari we adopted analytical and descriptive method.

2.2 Source

We have taken study materials such as magazines, books about Saraniya Kachari's ornaments as reference for preparing the article.

III. MAIN THEME DISCUSSION

Saraniya Kachari belongs to Mongolian tribe. By looking at the history of Assam we can conclude that the Saraniya Kachari's converted to Hinduism due to social, religious and political reason. The people of lower Assam mainly get influenced by the Sankardeva 'Nava Vaishnav Dharma' and got converted to Hinduism. After that they started following Hindu customs in their various functions. And they become a part of elite society. In the process of emancipation they have accepted Assamese language as a medium of expression, though some fundamental features remain unchanged. The Kachari people followed rites called 'Saran'. As they took Saran they were known as Saraniya. Presently the Saraniya Kachari resides in Baksha, Nalbari, Udalguri, Kamrup, Darang, Barpeta etc districts of Assam.

A divers number of ornaments found in Assam. Assam is a place of both Aryan and Non-Aryan race people. In that case, apart from gold and silver, people wear ornaments made of feathers, pearls and with various parts of animal remains. In the book 'Axomiya Manuhar Itihas' by Nagen Saikia its states "Ornaments of Assamese people traditionally depicts socio-economic condition and their aesthetics sense".

According to Nalini Deka "The Saraniyas came into existence after the cultural assimilation of Aryan and Non-Aryan". Thus, their caste-custom, rites and rituals were similar to the Aryans and the ornaments worn by the Saraniya's were similar to those of Aryan.

In the present days, male Saraniyas have not seen wearing any ornaments, but in the ancient years they too worn ornaments. The songs of Marriages indicate that male used to wear ornaments in ancient time. Especially, Bride-Grooms used to wear ornaments. This depicts through following popular traditional marriage Song:

“Ehaatot Baloramar Kathar Gamorkharu

Gaaot Baloramar Bala

Galot Baloramar Pratapar Maduli

Shradhat bohibar Bela”.

In this Song, Boloram appears as Bride-Groom. Through this song, it tries to describe the use of many ornaments by him. Apart from these, ornaments like Gamkharo, Bala and Maduli are also mentioned in this song.

IV. ORNAMENTS ACCORDING TO BODY PARTS

Depending upon the ways of making as well as wearing ornaments by Saraniya Kacharis can be divided into different categories. In this paper, their ornaments are explained according to body parts and effort is made to properly represent their ornaments from head to toe.

4.1 Wearable on neck

Golden and silver necklaces are worn on neck. In case of necklace, use of silver is must higher than gold. In old days women used to wear ‘Thakmani’ (a kind of necklace). Other than these, women from economically sound background used to wear Galpata, Chandrahar, Bishar, Dhukdhuki, Jonbiri etc.

4.2 Wearable on Ear

Saraniya Kachari and most of the people from lower Assam use the term ‘Sona’ in case of earring. Sunorfuti, Kanpatta, Dool are popular among the ladies belonging to older generations. In day to day life, they prefer to wear ‘Pasa’ on ears. Earrings are prepared using different type of design of leaves and flowers.

4.3 Wearable on Nose

There is a special place for nose ring or nose pin in the society and culture of Saraniya Kachari. They used the word ‘Nakful’ to mean Nose ring or nose pin. They wear nose ring on left nostril. Earlier noserings are worn on tip of the nose. Kalfulia, Nakfulia, Tarafulia, Nakfuli, Singri Tenga patiya Nakfuli and Sunor nakbali etc. are the wearable ornaments on nose.

4.4 Wearable on wrist

Most of the women of Saraniya Kacharis are fond of Silver ‘Bala’. Bala Is worn as day to day life ornaments. In special gatherings like marriage ceremonies, parties etc., Muthikharu, Gamkharu, Sakha, Baju are preferred. Different bangles made of gold and silver are also worn by women of Saraniya Kachari.

4.5 Wearable on finger

Use of both gold and silver are prevalent in male and female of Saraniya Kachari. Rings with different colorful stones are also commonly used. Generally rings are worn in ring finger and index finger.

Though in ancient time, proofs are found that males of Saraniya Kachari had also worn ornaments but now a day, they only seem to wear rings. In the society of Saraniya Kacharis, married women must wear ornaments and it comes under their customs. They belief that woman who do not wear ornaments resembles widow.

V. PRESENCE OF ORNAMENTS IN FOLK LITERATURE OF SARANIYA KACHARI

Every tribe of Assam has rich heritage of folk literature. The Saraniya Kachari also have their own folk literature and has many examples. The elderly women called as ‘Aayati’ used to sing different folk songs in marriage ceremonies or in some other religious functions. There are many similarities between Assamese folk literature and the folk literature of Saraniya Kacharis, especially in the song of marriage. Similarities between Assamese and the Kacharis marriage songs are same, because Saraniya women sing like Assamese elderly women (Aayati).

“Marar Alankar Thuwahe aai tumi

Oi ram deutrar alankar thuwahe

Rame di Pothaise bisitra alankar

Oi Ram haate jur Kori luwahe”.

There are many marriage songs prevalent in different occasion of marriages like songs describing about ornaments or jewelries of the bride. Here are some examples of songs of marriage:

“Brahmane Bulere Koina Ulao Ulao

Aakakhe futa nai tara u Ram ram

Aakakhe futa nai tara

Aaire hatote hunor kilimara

Keneke ulaba para”.

In this song there is a mention of golden Bengal called as ‘Sunar Kilimara’. Married women sing many songs worshipping mother Bhagawati and they also mention about various ornaments in their songs.

“Bhorit Pindhila aai vorir nupur naam dhoreu

Bhori dekhong aai paror Bulon naam dhoreu”.

Moreover local proverbs and idioms describe about their various ornaments. For example:-

“Dangor Kokai, Soru Kokai

Khuwai thoi jang Bonni Bhatar makha

Okalote holung hatot nuhuwa sakha”.

In this above lines the plight of a girl is described who is soon going to be married. She is trying to adjust herself in her married life. The situations where the girl is preparing herself mentally and emotionally for her marriage are beautifully explained in this song.

The folk songs of Saraniya Kacharis give us a basic idea of their ornaments. It also provides us brief glimpses of how these ornaments play a vital role in their social life.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it can be seen that the Saraniyas have a distinct set of ornaments. These ornaments are losing their essence and popularity in passes of time, because people are more attracted towards modern ornaments. In many cases, the traditional ornaments and jewelries are getting deform in the name of modernization. Therefore, it is a matter of threat of getting vanished of the traditional ornaments. It is necessary to make measures for protection of ornaments but in some cases, the demand of traditional ornaments in commercialization has contributed in popularizing those ornaments. It is a positive step towards preservation and galvanization of those jewelries. In this respect, there is ample scope for research and study of these ornaments and which can be proved instrumental in protecting the ornaments in particular and culture in general.

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