

Proverbs or Folk sayings: A Comparative Analysis of Assam, Bengal, Odessa and Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Folk sayings or Proverbs are the fertile consequences of diverse experience of folk life and in many state of India; these folk sayings or proverbs are being created. Circulated and observed these folk sayings or proverbs are known with different norms in different state of India like “Dakor Bosson”, “khonar Bosson”, “Ghagh” etc. Nature of folk life and folk tradition and its different characteristics are almost similar across different places on earth. Since diverse tribal –ethnic and social groups since time immemorial had been migrating from one place to another exchanging their culture and tradition with other groups and also assimilating with them. A close similarity between and among different folk saying or proverbs regarding their subject-matter, structure and mythologies or legend surrounding them may be observed. So with some subject-matter and structure these proverbs are spread in different place of the earth. On scientific basis, these proverbs are spread primarily in ‘Bengal’, ‘Odessa’, ‘Uttar-Pradesh’ and ‘Assam’ of India. So the aim of this paper is to make a comparative analysis of these folk saying or proverbs and is doing so Comparative methodology and Historical Geographical Theory within it would be adopted. Legends surrounding them and similarities and dis-similarities among them would be analyzed.

Key word: folk-culture, Proverbs, Folk saying, folk society, legend, Subject-matter, Structure etc..

Introduction:

One of the greatest parts of folk-culture is the proverbs or folk sayings .Which is the fruit of divers and varied experience and knowledge of folk-life or of rural These proverbs of folk saying contain knowledge and experience of traditional rural people which help them to sustain in day to day life form a definite way of viewing and understanding the world which are stored for ages

In many different states of India ,proverbs or folk sayings are being observed by different names. In some states these proverbs are known as “dakor Boson”,in other as “khonar Boson or of “Ghagh”.In the North-eastan state of Assam these proverbs are known as “Dakor Boson”,in West Bengal ;as “khona and “dak’s proverbs,in Odessa ;as “Dak’s proverbs and in Uttar Pradesh;as”Ghagh’s proverbs.

Similarities between folk-societies across the world are found. In India too; similarity between proverbs of different states are found. Despite the regional distinctiveness and specificities, Similarities between proverbs are found .A part of folklore; folk-saying or proverbs across the world share structural and subject matter similarities .Since the nature and characteristics of foundational elements of folk-life is same so the way of expressing those knowledge; that is the proverbs are also same across different states. so comparative analysis of four state of India ;West Bengal, Odessa ,Assam and Uttar- Pradesh has been taken up in this article. there are similarities between proverbs. So in this article it has been attempt to see what theories of folklore are best suited to analyze these similarities. Moreover , it will also see what are the variation and difference between these proverbs in spite of their similarities.

objectives of the study:

- A. Are there any folk saying like that of Dak's saying in Assam is prevalent in In Bengal, Odessa and Uttar-Pradesh? the study will try to analyze this.
- B. Another attempt of the study would be to throw light on various

Similarities and differences between and among these folk sayings of Assam, Bengal ,Odessa and Uttar-Pradesh.

Methodology of the study:

The primary method of the study is comparative though as and when required

Descriptive and analytical methods would also be applied.

is also

source of datas:

The primary sources of data for the study have been secondary.

Books and journals that are related to folk sayings of ‘Dak’ in Assamese literature have been

Resorted to and in similar way in order to collect various data on folk sayings or proverbs of Bengal, Odessa And Uttar –Pradesh help from specific books.

Introduction to ‘Dak’s sayings in Assamese folk literature :

‘Sayings of Dak ‘ are a great treasure of Assamese folk literature. These sayings are the ripe fruit of folk life and mind that that has been stored for several ages. Sayings of ‘Dak’s

The oral encyclopaedia in Assamese folk literature regarding day to day know how of Assamese People .¹ It is not exactly known if Dak was a specific person or the creations were impersonal.

According to the sayings of Dak

‘Lehi Dongora Dakor gaon
Xatkho xatuta pukhurir nao. ‘

(It means Lehi Dongora was the name of
Dak'svillage where there were seven hundred and ponds
Full of boats)

Many believe that Dak was born in the Lehi Dongora village of Barpeta district of Assam.

There is also a legend regarding the birth of Dak which states Dak was a contemporary of

One of the Nava-ratnas of the royal court of king Vikramaditya Borah Mihir. As per this legend Dak was the son of Borah Mihir. Being a pilgrim, one day Borah Mihir reached the Lehi Dongora village

And stayed in a house of seven brothers. The day on which the Borah Mihir reached the house as a guest. There were only mother in law and the little daughter in law. The muni was very much pleased at Hospitality of the little daughter in law and so blessed her to be a mother of a son. It came into Reality and the child soon after his birth called on his mother. This was the reason why his name was Dak.

‘opojie makok dila dak

Xexixe karone tar nam bhoila Dak ‘.

(It means, since he cried out to his mother right after his birth
His name was Dak)

Dak died by sinking into water. According to another legend one of his friends murdered him By drowning in water while swimming in the Luit river since he was jealous of Dak.

Thus, there are numerous legends related with the birth of ‘Dak’ and hence it is better to assume ‘Dak’s sayings are congeries of the entire folk community and their thousand years of experience. Rather than that of being creation of a particular person. So in social and day to day life of Assamese people Dak's sayings bear a significant importance.

From the elements, contents and subject-matters of Dak's sayings we come to know that they Express knowledge and experience of folk community. The currently available texts that contain ‘Dak's sayings includes 16 basic subjects: agriculture, trade and commerce, maternity, astrology, materials that we use for day to day activities, cooking procedures, character of men and women, politics. Assam is primarily an agricultural state. Thus collective knowledge in ‘Dak’s sayings say:

“puhot Ahu joitho txali(khali)

Tehe Saba grihostali“.

(it means in the month of December Ahu

Rice should be sowed and in April-may, Sali

. Rice should be sowed. Only then prosperity
Will prevail in household.)

Agriculture solely depends upon the bullocks, so regarding the quality of them Dak says

“Visa nejia kalia suta
Bisari kiniba bolodh guta “.
(it means only those bullocks with long
Hairy tail should be bought .)

Regarding trade and commerce Dak says

“tinikho sathi jupa ruba kol
Maheke pokheke sikunaba tol

Pate posolai khaba
Lonkar bonij ghorote paba"
(it means three hundred and sixty banana
Trees should be planted, surroundings of
Them should be cleaned and cleared after
Every month, only then prosperity like in
Lanka will prevail)

Regarding the food habit of Assamese people Dak says :

“Poka teteli aru burha borali
Buster koria diba jali”. (It means, with ripe tamarind, old Borali fish
Should be cooked in high flames.)

Birth, death and marriage are inseparable elements of human life. So regarding the care that a new born and mother should get Dak says:

Ahito xikhuk jen nedekhi
Avyontore thoibo huhrido rakhi"

“purbo xire xikhu xuwai

Puwati rakhiba agni jolai “.
(its means babies should be made to sleep in the eastern direction and the mothers should lit a fire in room, it will keep them safe)

Regarding character of men and women Dak says:

“souk lal hiya Khal
He purukhor lokhyon bhal".

(its means Man whose eyes are reddish and with broad chest; possesses good character)

“Swamir hewa godhuli rati

Dake bule xehi lokhimi jati“

(its means Women who serves her husband day and night is the most fortunate and desirable according to ‘dak’)

Dak's saying are based on folk knowledge, and they also have scientific basis which can't be ignored.

Folk sayings/proverb of Bengal:

In Bengal where Folksaying or proverb are known as Dak's or Khona'ssayings. Usually sayings on agriculture are associated with ‘Dak’ and sayings on astrology with ‘khona’.

According to Bengal tradition ‘Dak’ was a son of a milkman and as per another legend khona was his wife. There are varied opinions regarding the name of ‘khona's father. To some she was a daughter of a demon and to

others of a human being. Demons of Lanka valley murdered the father and brothers of 'khona' and kidnapped her to the Lanka. As Lanka was a prominent land of astrology she herself became an expert in that area.

It is said that 'khona' was the first poetess of Bengali literature. Her proverbs composed of short sentences which bear valuable advices regarding agriculture and health. These are the precious resources of Bengali folk literature²

On the other hand, one of the wisest and learned of royal court of king Vikramaditya, married a woman and blessed with a son. But while determining the horoscope of the new born, he made a mistake and hence just before it he sailed down his son through sea by putting in a big copper pot. The pot Coincidentally reached Lanka and demon named 'Jonoik' noticed it. He brought the child his home and nurtured the child the way he had earlier nurtured 'khona'. Demon 'Jonoik' named the child as 'Mihir' and he too became as expert in astrology as was 'khona'. At last they met each other and got married. Overcoming thousands of hazards they reached 'ujjaini' from the land of demons.

Borah became very happy to get his son back along with daughter in law .He himself realised that he was fault while practising astrology. The problem which her husband and father in law could not solve was easily solved by her. for such extraordinary talent king Vikramaditya appointed 'khona' into his royal court. But at this both her husband and the father in law became so jealous that they cut off her tongue so that she could not spell and her eloquence got spoil. They were furious at her because she crossed the line of her boundaries, broke away chastity of a woman by going out of home to royal court.

In Bengal too there are many folk sayings among which it is believed that agricultural sayings are associated with 'Dak' and astrological with 'khona'. At first all sayings were associated with Dak only though later with the popularization of legends surrounding 'khona', these sayings were attributed equally to her.³

According to an another source, probably from within 8th to 12th century A.D.; Khona's proverbs were written and can be classified into four categories.⁴

- A. Proverbs on agriculture and evil and superstitious practices.
- B. Effects of cultivation and astrology.
- C. General knowledge.
- D. Proverbs on cropping.

Example of Bengal folk sayings regarding agriculture are

Dak:

Ek aghone dhan tini khaone pan
(Dak means in the Month of Aghon or November, rice Should be cultivated and
During April-May beetle leaves Should be planted).

Khona:

Jodi borshe aghone, raja Jan magone
Jodi borshe poushe ,kori hoi ture.
(If it rains in the month of November then the situation gets wore to the extent of making the monarchs beg. Actually November is the month of reaping the harvest, so rain should occur during that month. Again if it rains in the month of December, the weather gets cooler)

Regarding trade:

Khona:

Dak sere bole ravan
Kola lagabo Ashar shraban
(Khona says that months of June,July or Ahar- shrabanare best for banana
Plantation.)

Dak :

Tiniso sathi jupa kola rue
Thak grihosto ghore shue

Kroyekola nakat pat

Tatei hab kaporbh

(Dak says that three hundred and sixty banana trees should be planted, only it
Can ensure well being of the land lord. Commercially this plantation
Beneficial)

Regarding character of woman:

Dak:

probhat kale nidra jai,

Basi khojya xurjye napai.

(Women should get up early in the morning)

Regarding astrology:

Khona: ki kor swasur lekha juka

Ashare navami xukal pakha

Jodi borshe muloshl dhare

Maj haxomudra boga sore.

(khona says that if it rains on the 9th day of the month of Ahar or July then
Downpours become order of the day and water level rises up to the level of
A sea.)

Regarding food habit :

Dak : purula hak rehit maas

Dake bule byonjon xas.

(Here Dak says That with the green leaves of Puroi, a local green dish ;
Ret fish should be cocked.)

Thus in this way folk knowledge of Bengal is Expressed both in the name of Dak and Khona.

Folk Saying/Proverbs of Odessa

Interestingly, in Odessa too folk sayings or proverbs are known as 'Dak-boson'. Proverbs of Odisha can be categorized into two:

A. Dak boson : it includes climatic factors for agriculture, rain, astrology, folk medicine etc..

B. Sota : it includes second wife, daughter in law, conjugal life, husband, son etc. Like in Bengal, in Odessa too from place to place legends related to

Khona. In specific places of Odessa 'khona' is also known as 'Dharik'. But reference of Khona and Dak is found only in proverbs, folk sayings, quotes etc.⁵

Some of the odessa's 'Dak' Sayings are :

Regarding weather:

Chandra mandala madhyer tara

Megh borokhe mushol dhara

(It means stars shine within the lunar zone then there is strong possibility of
Downpours)

Regarding character of women:

Stree hoi jodi no thibo goon

Juice kipibo sundar pag. Etc.

(It means patience and stability are the main qualities that make a woman Beautiful.)

folk sayings/Proverbs of Uttar-Pradesh:

Like in Assam, Bengal and Odessa, in Uttar-Pradesh too folk sayings are prevalent. But these aren't related with 'Dak', rather with 'Ghag'. The meaning of both the word 'Dak' and 'Ghag', is wise.

The Legend related to 'Ghag' is like this: in ancient time, one day Borah Mihir was marching towards the capital of king Vikramaditya when the dusk fell. So he halted his march took shelter in a milkman's house. There he made love with the daughter the milkman and later she gave birth to child named 'Ghag'. Although 'Ghag' belonged to milkman's family but was an excellent learned and talented person.

Numerous stories are related to the death of 'Ghag'. According to a legend 'Ghag', through his astrological knowledge came to know that he would die of sinking into water when he would go to have bath. thus he never stepped into ponds to have bath. But one day his friends dragged him into water and suddenly he was by someone mysterious force dragged more into the water and hence died.

So, some of the proverbs of 'Ghag' in Uttar-Pradesh are :

Regarding weather:

Purab donuhi paschim bhan

Ghag kai borkha niora

(it means if The rainbow rises in the East then it rains heavily.)

Regarding agriculture:

Potoli pand ulimuti ban

Push howobhui je tarian. Etc.

(its means Bullocks with long tail should be bought, they don't get tired

Easily while ploughing

A comparative study of Dak's sayings Or Proverbs in Assam, Bengal, Odessa and Uttar-Pradesh.

If we compare the proverbs and legends surrounding 'Dak', 'Khona' or 'Gagh'; we will see many similarities between them from subject matter and structural point of view. All the myths, sayings, their contexts, understandings of life in all states are almost same. Specially, the people who are associated with the myths or legends are same across the states.

Similarity of legends:

According to a legend in Assam, Dak was the son of Borah Mihir and died of drowning in water, in the same way name of Borah Mihir's father of Dak and father in law of Khona is also associated in Bengal. So, in both Assam and Bengal Dak was the son of Borah Mihir.

Again both in Assam and Bengal there is no historical evidence of Dak living as a person. That Dak was the son of Borah, Khona was of Moidanava is not supported by any historical legacy. In Assam also there is no historical evidence of such incidents surrounding Dak. That Borah, on his way to the court of king Vikramaditya; stayed in the house of an unknown person and consequently Dak was born bears no historical evidence. That Borah Mihir was an astrologer of Ujjaini too; bears no historical evidence.

In the same way the name Dak and the manner in which he is related to the proverbs of Uttar-Pradesh is significant. Here also Ghag was the son of Borah Mihir and died in the very same ways he had died in Assam according to legend. So Ghag and Dak had lot of similarities. Both in Assam and Odisha. Dak and Ghag died by drowning in water while taking bath along with their friends. So, it can be said that both the tradition of Dak and Ghag share a same source of origin⁶

Thus, it is visible that Dak of Assam, Khona of Bengal and Ghag of Uttar Pradesh have similarities but also they have some particularities keeping consistency to their regional specificity.

Similarity of subject-matter and Structure :

If we compare Dak's sayings in Assam and Khona of Bengal regarding agriculture and characteristics of man and woman we find similarities. For instance

Dak of Assam says:

“solla sahe mula, tar adha tula

Tar adha dhan, bina sahe pan".

(it means, by ploughing for sixteen times;

Seeds of radish plants be sowed, half of the

Plot should be planted with rice and the rest

Which has not been ploughed planted with

Beetle leaves).

Khona says :

“Sollasahemula, tar ardhektula

Tar ardhek dhan, bina sashe pan

(the same meaning as stated above implies

Here).

Assamese Dak saying :

“jitu probhate nidra jai

Bahi xojyat xurjye npai “

(Women should get up early in the morning)

Bengali Dak saying:

“probhat kale nidra jai

Basi xojya xurjye napai “.

(the same meaning as stated above implies here too)

Assamese Dak's sayings:

“pube xah pochime bah

Uttare khuwa dokhine thuwa “

(it means in the East there should be the poultry farm, in the west; the bamboo

Groove; and in the North direction people should sleep).

Khona's sayings:

Pube xah, pachime bah

Uttare kola dokhine mela “etc.

(the same meaning as stated above implies here too.)

Like in Bengal and Assam folk sayings or proverbs of Odessa also share similarities. Like in Bengal and Assam here too these sayings are not creations of any single person rather creations of collective persons. But the background is same.some of the similarities between folk sayings of Assam and Odessa are,

Dak of Assam :

Jodi borokhe maghor khekh

Dhonya raja punya dekh

(If it rain by the last quarter of the month of January the prosperity comes to a country)

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora, page-135)

Dak of odisha:

Jodi borokhe maghor khekh

Dhonya raja dhonya dekh

(the same meaning as stated above implies here too.)

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora, page-135)

Dak of Assam:

Xu tri gendheli

(it means women of good character never adore
Herself with make up)

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora page -135).

Dak of odisha:

Sthiri hui jodi no theo gun

Juiki hui pibohundarpon

(patience and stability are the main qualities that make a

Woman beautiful).

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora ,page -136)

So it can be said the regarding Text, texture and context there are many similarities between Dak sayings of Assam and Odessa⁷

In the same way Dak tradition of Assam and Ghag tradition of Uttar pradesh share similarities regarding legend and subject matter of the proverbs. For example how the bullocks should be which is the backbone of agriculture we notice similarities

Dak said:

Goru kiniba dighol neja

Moit dile nohoi kuja.

(Bullocks with long tail should be bought, they don't get tired

Easily while ploughing

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora ,page -140)

Ghag said:

Patla penju likhoti ban

Punch hui bhui je torian

(the same meaning as stated above implies here too.)

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora ,page- 140)

Regarding other subjects too Dak and Ghag share similarities, for example

Dak:

“Grihini hui bule kutur “ (harsh voice isn't a good quality for women).

Ghag:

“nari korkoma kattar jur

(The same meaning implies here too) “.

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora, page- 148)

Dak said:

‘dake bule bap huna upai

Banijyor fol krikhitepai ‘

(Dak says that in cultivation itself; profit of commerce is earned. So

Cultivation is the primary means of income, trade and commerce is only secondary).

Ghag : “uttam kheti madhyam ban ‘(The same meaning implies here too)

(Dak probosonaru Dak prompora, page- 148)

conclusion:

Thus from the study of ‘Dak’s proverbs or folksaying in Assam, Bengal, odisha and uttar Pradesh- ‘ ,we have derived some conclusion like these:

1. There are some unique similarities between the sayings of Dak of Assam and the folk sayings of Bengal, Odessa Uttar-Pradesh. In Bengal they are known as both Khona and Dak. In Odessa and in Uttar-Pradesh as both Dak and Ghag.
2. The similarities between the myths of all the states are of special significance. In all the states, the name of Borah Mihir is attached, be it the myth of Dak, Ghag or khona.
3. The background of all these legends, in all the societies are the folk lives. The act attaching the name of Borah Mihir to the legends of Dak or Ghag was done by the folk societies for there was no historical evidence of it.
4. If the sayings of Dak of Assam, of Bengal, Odessa and Uttar-Pradesh we see similarities regarding their subject matter, Structural explanations behind the saying etc. The sayings or proverbs related to agriculture, astrology, character of people, trade and commerce are same in both Dak’s or Ghag's proverbs or that of Khona.
5. Along with the Similarities, regional specificity has also been maintained in Assam, Odessa, Bengal and Uttar-Pradesh.

End note:

1 Lila Gogoi, An Outline History of Assamese Folklore, p.p-16

2Purabi Basu,Kingbodontit khona o Khonar Boson,Introdocation page

3 sushil Kumar Dey (ed.) Bangla probad, p.p-733

4 [http://eiscmy.indiatimes.com/horoscope/khonas-word/astroshow\(20927236.com](http://eiscmy.indiatimes.com/horoscope/khonas-word/astroshow(20927236.com)

5 Kunjabehari Das, A study of Orissan Folklore,p.p-28

6 Nabin Ch.Sarhama,Dak Proboson aru pomppra,p.p- 146

7 Nabin Ch.Sarhama,Dak Proboson aru pomppra ,p.p-148

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