



## FOLK CULTURE AS REFLECTED IN THE SHORT STORY “ORNI BEGOR” OF LATE NILKAMAL BRAHMA

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**Abstract:** The word folklore or the folk cultures were the same oldness to the folk caste. Different castes have their own folk culture in the world, because any caste or society cannot survive without folk culture of their own. When the people started to live in the earth they were following the living customs and doing all this for living in a society, then only the folk culture started among the peoples of a society. The custom and tradition found in the system of living in a society like daily work activity, eating food habit, singing and dancing, religion, worship etc. are called the folk culture of the society. In the present paper an attempt has been made to discuss on the folk culture prevalent in Bodo society with special reference to short story “Orni Begor” of Nilkamal Brahma.

**Index Terms:** Folk culture, food habit, Religion, Society, Culture, Customs.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The folk culture or the word folklore is same oldness to the folk society of the respective caste since they were living. Peoples when started to live as a community with their rules and regulations, customs, working habits, eating habit, etc. then the folk culture of that community got started. According to E. B. Taylor Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.<sup>1</sup> As different castes have their own folk culture similarly the Bodos have also many folk culture of their own. The eating habit, dancing-singing, social customs etc. that are custom and tradition of a community is called the folk culture of that society. Y. M. Sokolov says Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in this paper, is going to discuss about the folk culture of the Bodos as reflected in the short story “ORNI BEGOR” (seed of fire) written by Nilkamal Brahma, a renowned fiction writer in Bodo.

### II. WRITER’S INTRODUCTION

Nilkamal Brahma, son of Late Mahendra Ch. Brahma and Late Maneswari Brahma was born at Soto Adabari, a village near Kokrajhar town on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1944. Later on, his family resided at Bagansali in Kokrajhar town from 1955. Brahma, having his M.A degree in Political Science in the year 1971 from Gauhati University, Guwahati rendered his valuable service as an Assistant Teacher at Kokrajhar Higher Secondary School in the year 1973, and later on was elevated to the post of Vice Principal in the year 1992 and Principal of the same institution in the year December 1993 . A running train nearby Kokrajhar Railway station crushed him down on 28<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1998.

Nilkamal Brahma is one of the prominent writers in Bodo literature. Apart from being a novelist, poet, dramatist, critic, essayist, translator, humorist and journalist of Bodo literary world, he has left behind a wide collection of notable short stories. These are -1.Hagra Guduni Mwi (1972), 2. Silingkhar (1984), 3. Sirinai Mandar (1885), 4. Sakhondra (1987), and 5. Mem Daudwi (1995). Nilkamal Brahma got the title “short story samrat” for his valuable contribution towards Bodo short story and encouraging the Bodo writers to write short stories. Bodo Thunlai Afad (Bodo Sahitya Sabha) also honoured him in its 37<sup>th</sup> annual conference held at Baganpara in February 1998 with “Rangsar Award”. The short story book Hagra Guduni Mwi contains total 10 numbers of short stories and the story *Orni Begor* is the fourth short story of the book. In addition to this he wrote four short story books Silingkhar, Sirinai Mandar, Sakhondra and Mem Daudwi contains 20, 10, 11, and 11 numbers of short stories respectively.

<sup>1</sup>Logan, Peter Melville : On Culture: Edward B. Tylor’s Primitive Culture, 1871, BRANCH: Britain, July 2012, p-1

<sup>2</sup> Dorson, Richard M: Folklore and Folklife An Introduction, Edited by Richard M. Dorson, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1972, p-17

### III. THE STORY

The short story "Orni Begor" was written by Nilkamal Brahma which is a social short story. The repeated character or scene in the Boro society is seen in this short story. Nowadays the age is the age for education and all are in competition for earning high education. But some of our parents are not interested in and they stop their daughters study without thinking their future and without asking them they arrange marriage for their daughter in small ages were seen in Boro society. This type event is occurring in the story through the character of Onjima. Horesh is a rich man of an interior village which is far away from the town or urban place. Onjima is his daughter. Onjima is appearing HSLC examination this year and hard studying for HSLC test examination. But her father has no interest in the higher study of his daughter's interest for study. Onjima was seat in a marriage with a professor of a town as her father forcefully asked her for the marriage against her interest. Onjima was trying to get rid from the marriage but could not because of her father's strong decision. But one day at the absent of her husband left from the home and with help of a village brother Sailesh, went to the Delhi and stay at Mahatma Gandhi Ashram and complete her desire to have higher study. In the story the author give an example of Onjima in Boro society that a strong and right determinant mind without thinking left and right how can reach the desired destination.

### IV. FOLKLORE ELEMENTS IN THE SHORT STORY

The short story writer was a person attached to the soil. Therefore, in this short story he tried to include so many customs and traditions prevalent in the traditional Bodo society of that period. Here, folklore elements as reflected in the short story "Orni Begor" are going to be discuss below.

#### 4.1 Material culture:

##### (i) Astham Swnai (Ring marriage)

The ring marriage (Astham Swnai) ceremony is done after the agreement between the bride and bridegroom before the marriage if the marriage date is delayed for any reason. The ring marriage ceremony is seen in the story between Onjima and professor which reflect the folklore of use of ring in the ring marriage of the Boros.

##### (ii) Use of bamboo and wood

Onjima left for Sailesh the elder brother of the village as her father arranged marriage for her and she was not interested in the marriage. Her father took back her from the home Sailesh as she was hiding at his home. Professor came to her home by taking rent Jeep to marriage her. Horesh father of Onjima called her when professor reachd their home but she did not response. He push the door of her room but could not open it so by force he open the door and pull her catching at her hair as she was refused to get out from the room and holding the post of the bed very tightly. So thorough the story it reflects the use of wood and bamboo as the material culture of the Bodo people as it mentioned the door which was made of bamboo and the bed made of bamboo or wood through the story.

##### (iii) Use of betel leaf

Onjima did not want to marry at her young age time. Her father arranges for ring marriage of her with a professor but she did not want to seat in the marriage so she left for the village by saying that she is going for betel leaf. So the use of the betel leaf reflects the use of material culture by the Bodo people through the story.

#### 4.2 Customary folklore

The different customary folklores reflected in the story are given below:

##### (1) Social Folk Custom: Marriage:

- (a) "Haba gwlaio eba nainanwi labwnai haba":– the taking of date for the marriage before the marriage is seen in the Boro society as the other cast made during the marriage. This is a part of "Haba gwlaio eba nainanwi labwnai haba" custom of long process marriage. In this story Professor goes to the Horesh Mahajwn and make the date and day fixed for the marriage with the daughter of Horesh which reflect the folklore of long process marriage or marry by seeing the bride before marriage in the Boro society.
- (b) "Brahma Haba" Brahma marriage:– There are two types of marriage system in Boros and these are (i) Bathou Haba (Bathou marriage) And (ii) Brahma Haba (Brahma marriage). In this short story the marriage of Onjima and professor is done by firing Hom (Awathi Saonai) reflect the folklore of the custom of Brahma marriage of Boros.
- (c) Astham Swnai (Ring marriage):– The ring marriage (Astham Swnai) ceremony is done after the agreement between the bride and bridegroom before the marriage if the marriage date is delayed for any reason. The ring marriage ceremony is seen in the story between Onjima And professor which reflect the folklore of ring marriage culture of the Boros.
- (d) "Bwnanwi Labwnai Haba" (Allure marriage):– Horesh Mahajwn marries Gambari, mother of Onjima, by riding on horse and then brings her forcefully with power to his home. The "Bwnanwi Labwnai Haba" is a type of marriage among the six marriage system of the Boros which reflect clearly in the story as folklore of the Boros.
- (e) Habani khalari thi khalamnai (Date fixed for marriage):- Professor fall in love on the beautiful body structure of Onjima and she want to fixed the date of marriage with her as he did not get such a beautiful girl earlier, he said himself. So he said that he will marry her and want to fix the date of marriage and saying this he fixed the date himself. So the making of date of marriage reflects the system of making date fixed from both the family before they were going to marriage is seen in the Bodo society and this reflects the customary folklore of the Bodo people through the story.

#### 4.3 Verbal folklore

The different verbal folklores reflected in the story are given below:

##### (i) Oral folklore:

- (a) Proverb (Bathra bhao):- "Nathai mansiya sanw raja janw , Gosaiya hwyia binanwi janw" means people want to be king but God made people as beggar. This line reflects the use of proverb by the Boros.

### V. CONCLUSION

The short story "Orni Begor" is based on the true and high desire of Onjima to get high education, but her father was not interested in high education. So he arranged marriage of her daughter with a professor when she was preparing for HSLC Test Examination. She left the home after marriage and with the help of an elder brother of the village she went to Delhi and took her

higher education. Keeping the story of the short story aside the main focus of this paper was to draw some light on folklore elements available in this short story which have been discussed above under three (03) different heads. This gives to the readers an idea that Brahma's short stories are full of folklore elements and he was a down to the earth person who had deep love and respect towards culture and tradition of the Bodos. This is the reason that this short story has been selected here for discussion.

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