



KOKBOROK FOLK SONG

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Abstract

Amongst all the living being on Earth, only humans have the ability to express through words. Humans can express different types of emotions through words such as yearning, love, hatred, sadness, heartbreak etc. Expressing emotions through words become literature. Literature can be divided into two kinds- Oral and written literature. Oral literature includes Jaduni folklores, Mamita, Lebang Bumani etc. Written literature includes short stories, poems, essays, novels etc.

Kokborok is a living language. It has been recognized as one of the living language. It is said to be self capable and self sufficient as it also has types like other languages. However, it has not been so long since the kings of the Tipra kingdom recognized kokborok as its official language. Among all the communities in Tripura, there are nine kokborok speaking communities. They are Debbarma, Puran Tripura, Noatia, Reang, Jamatia, Kalai, Rupini, Murasing and Uchoi. There may be a slight difference in the dialect from region to region.

Keywords:- Kokborok, Jaduni, Mamita, Tipra.

Introduction

Kokborok folk song is one form of oral literature. Folk songs are the songs that have been sung by our ancestors in the old days. There are many kinds of kokborok folk songs. For instance: Jaduni, Waying khilimung (lullaby or cradle song), tangwi chamani rwchampung (harvest song), tangbiti rwchampung (song sung while working), mai kaibiti (song of planting rice), Huk tangbiti (song of working in Jhum fields), hamjakthang phuru rwchabwi kapmung (song of heartbreak), bwsai thwiphuru rwchabwi kapmug (song of a heartbroken widow) etc.

We all know that 'Jana Shiksha Samiti' was formed by Dasarath Debbarma, Sudhanwa Debbarma. Hemanta Debbarma and Aghore Debbarma on 27th December, 1945 AD. The aim and objective of the samiti was to educate the people of Tripura. In that way, the literacy rate of Tripura started to rise as people started to get education facilities and started to read and write eventually.

We come to know about Tipra Bharat or the kings of Tipra Kingdom in kokborok folk songs. When we talk about Mahabharat, we can say that the king of Tipra, Maharaja Tripur fought for the Kauravas at Kurukshetra. This is the reason we can see the footprint of change in the society or community in different kinds of kokborok folk songs and dances. There

are many kinds of folk songs of different communities and culture in Tripura. Waying khilimung (lullaby or cradle song), tangwi chamani rwchapmung (harvest song) etc are all kokborok folk songs. Such folk songs are yet to be widely known nationally or internationally.

Literature review:

While carrying on my research on kokborok literature, the old generations or the grandmother and grandfathers in the village have immensely helped me as they narrated to me gracefully about the old days. It was because of them that I was able to bring forward this writing.

I am also thankful to writer Rabindra Kishore Debbarma. The reference for this writing was also taken from his book "Kokborok Luku Kokrbai" (2007). Another references were taken from a very old book "Tripura Smriti" (1927) written by writer Samarendra Debbarma, from a book "Jaduni Khorang" (2015) written by Radha Madhab Debbarma and from a book "Phirogwi Phaidi" (1954-55) written by Sonacharan Debbarma.

Data and Methodology:

One cannot just write literature for the sake of writing. To lay down a literature, we need to first research, collect, observe and think. There are two rules to follow while collecting information for laying down a piece of literature. First is Primary Data and the other one is Secondary Data.

Primary Data includes collecting stories or information or data from villages and personally speaking to the people over there. Secondary Data includes collecting data or information from things which already contain information, for instance, books, mobile, laptop, television, library etc.

Folk song:

Bosor thangkaikha basanta phaikha

Bolong khum toksa barkha

Bosor thangnaikha khumtoksa barkha

Khapangni toksa pungkha

Bisi kwtalni watwi wamani

Hatal ha motommani

Bolong tokla kocekma khwnai

Khapang kha swrangmani

Bisi kwtalni watwi wamani

Hatal ha motommani

O jadu

Agi mayosong tangwi thanglaitwi

Chwngbo tangnani nanganw.

New Year is being heartily welcomed through song when it comes to kokborok folk songs. There are many such songs among folk songs. The previous and the new year ends and begins with summer season. Flowers such as Khumtoksa and Dukmali bloom in the jungle during summer. It is said to be the time when young hearts bloom. When the Jonijong birds sing on trees, it reminds us that New Year has arrived. When the eastern winds dwell, it also makes the young hearts dwell. And then comes Baisakh season. It is the time when Tipra people celebrate the new years. When raindrops hit the soil for the first time, the smell of the Earth mesmerizes the soul. Although there are many new folk songs that we listen to nowadays, however, the lyrics do not touch our soul like the old folk songs used to.



Earlier, the boys and girls of the village would wake up early in the morning and go look out for suitable land together in the forests to grow crops through Jhum cultivation. Once they have found a land area with good soil to grow their crops, then they would prepare the land for cultivation by burning down the bushes and plants. If the soil is very fertile, they also grow rice on the land. Huk or Jhum cultivation requires Damra, Daborok, Dasa and bamboo woven basket that indigenous women carry on their back in which they carry their food or lunch for the entire day. The song written above is the song about working in the Jhum fields. The song is sung to relax the body and mind through singing while working together in the Jhum fields.

Chamari kabiti folk song (when groom starts his new life at bride's home):

We can learn about our traditions and social culture of marriages through old kokborok folk songs. In the old days, there used to be a tradition of Chamari kamani. This tradition was practiced when a boy seeks a girl's hand for marriage. The boy has to leave his home and work in his future wife's home for a year or more to get approval of the girl's father proving that he is strong enough to take care of his daughter.

There is also a tradition of Chamari Wakwai when the groom is allowed to return to his home a week before his marriage. It is practiced also after marriage where the groom can return to his home for two weeks and then has to return back to the bride's home. Before sending off the groom, the village chief and all the villagers would drink together with the groom. This ceremony includes singing and dancing accompanied with the musical notes of indigenous musical instruments such as Sarinda and Chongpreng.

Every community has its own tradition following different kinds of rituals and ceremonies. Traditional attires are also worn according to particular ceremony. The ceremony of putting clothes on the groom has been described in the following song.

Song –



Kami dagini chwano thumui
kami chokdiri twiwi
Twksa langisa tini nwnlaiwi
Sarinda Chongpreng twiwi
Dada kotor bai bachwi kotorbai
Mare babjansong bai
Tini Chaswmai lainai
Duti muikhonchok kanwi
Khorok pakori sorwi
Chango Changri khawi
Sak kwthar khawi ri kwthar kanwi
Tini thango lama lamkolok himwi chamari.
Okni buma-buphano khibwi thangjao.

The ceremony of putting clothes on the groom has been well described in the above song. However, these traditions are not followed or practiced anymore. The attires have also changed with changing time. Chamari Ompa tradition is also lost.

Tangbiti rwchapmung (song sung while working):

The old tradition of Jhum cultivation differs from the present way of doing Jhum cultivation. Earlier, our indigenous people used to store vegetable seeds. They used to grow sesame, gunthu, twimasa, maize etc kinds of crops. Now it is not practiced anymore. People do not also find suitable land for Jhum cultivation. As the old traditions are not practiced anymore, the traditions have died out. Nowadays people do not practice Jhum cultivation and the Jhum vegetables are less and less available. The old tradition and the present time differ just like day and night. The old traditions have been described in the following song.

Song – (Boy)

Tangwi chamani sag dukherokba

Tangwi chanani sakba

Khwna phung aikhe huk rwgwinani

Twma muimungno twinai

Following the Chamari Ompa tradition, the newly-wed groom asks his bride about working in the Jhum fields to help his mother-in-law and father-in-law. The above song is about groom's curiosity to know about what should he take to the Jhum field tomorrow.

Song – (Girl)

Khuphang bokla khutulailololai

Kubui kokyade swlai

O bosong maya jarokba

Angle mayani bisini twikha

Khwna phung aikhe huk ruguinani

Angle khatiwi tonkha

Yagra gunthu sarnai yaksi masinga

Wandal koboro bantano pinkhe

Harung hakoro mogodam borok.

Through kokborok folk songs, we learn that in the earlier days people would perform 'huk rukmani', the other person would sow twimosa seeds in the Jhum field. This is the first thing to be sowed in on the land. Likewise, different kinds of vegetables seeds used to be sown in the old days which have been described in the above song. This is how we learn about the culture of Jhum cultivation through folk songs.

Mamita (consuming newly harvested rice):

Just like other communities, we or the Tiprasa people also celebrate newly harvested rice eating ceremony. This festival is called Mamita. The new rice is harvested from the Jhum fields during Bhadra-Ashin month of the year and then stored in a particular room. The new rice is consumed only after offering it to the deities choosing a good day to do the offering. The festival is celebrated with joyful family gathering. The celebration includes eating and drinking together followed with singing and dancing. Rondok (a pair of two pots worshipped as the deities) are worshipped and birds are sacrificed. Some sacrifice ducks and offer to the deities. Some worship different deities. Boy and girls dance and sing together during this festival. Therefore the song is called Mamita rwchapmung and the dance is called Mamita mwsamung.

Song –

Da kwtal twiwi Ri-kwtal kanwi

Sarikpang ochai hwnwi

Nokhwla pharwi nokhwla sibwi

Bisi bisini khali khalini

Kangal Mamita rio.

Rajabo kaio osani mwtai

Chwngkhai Mamita horo

Rajabo tano Misip Mothona

Kangal tuk tabuk tharo.

Mandar Bubarbo Chakrom

Chini sakbaksa Bayap charirok

Phaibaikha mwnwi rorom.

If we study the lines of the song above, we learn about the social culture and traditions of the Tiprasa people. If we look close enough, our traditions and way of living are hidden in the folk songs. It has been described here in the song that when Mamita is set up, the entire place of worship has to be kept clean for five consecutive days. It has to be kept clean even while the Ochai (traditional priest) performs the rituals. The kings of Tipra Kingdom earlier used to celebrate Durga Puja festival. The kings don't involve in agriculture, therefore they do not have to celebrate Mamita. However, it is seen that the Kings have been celebrating Durga Puja since old days. That is why Durga Puja has a term "Osa" in kokborok language. It is said in the song that, the Jhum farmers and the Kings are not to be compared. Normal people cannot celebrate Durga puja among or by themselves because it needs money to celebrate Durga Puja in a grand manner. The festival is celebrated for five days. That is why the Jhum farmers cannot celebrate Durga Puja festival but can celebrate Mamita. During the Mamita ceremony, Srijamdu and Srijadu are worshipped. It is important to follow old traditions of celebrating festivals together which helps in preserving our culture. Such age old traditions become alive through the folk songs. We get to know about different kinds of traditions through kokborok folk songs.

Waying Khilimani (Lullaby or cradle song):

Waying Khilimani (Lullaby or cradle song) is also a kind of Kokborok folk song in terms of Kokborok literature. Waying khilimani is a song sung to put a child to sleep. When the mothers have to go away for work, the grandmothers would sing the cradle song to the infant.

Song-

O.....le...le...le.....

Rangchakni bupha twiwi

Nwphabo thungkha Rajani seboki

Nwmabo thungkha Rajani daijwk

O.....le...le...le.....

O.....le...le...le.....

O rangchakni Buphawi

Rangchakni waying Ruphaini buduk

Waying duk romui thudi.

Sal jora jora tokma kotego

Chemuk twinairok phaio

O.....le...le...le.....

From Waying khilimani song we can learn about how it used to be in the old days and we can also learn about the social culture of that time. We also get to learn from this song that earlier the kings used to employ people as his servants or maids. The song says that kings soldiers took the infant's parents to work for him as his servants. Waying khilimani song can differs from region to region. Apart from that, in the old days, Jhum cultivation was very prevalent in Tripura. Parents would leave the child with grandparents and would work the whole day in the fields. They would go to the fields early morning packing their food for the entire day and then return home in the evening. This is when the waying khilimani is sung to the children to fall asleep while their parents are away working. Waying khilimani is a sweet and comforting song that even the naughtiest children or a crying infant would fall asleep to it with comfort.

Goriya:

Goriya is one of the most important traditional deity of the Tiprasas. Baba Goriya has been worshipped since our ancestor's time. That is why, I have penned down about the auspicious day of celebrating Goriya Ter and worshipping Baba Goriya.

Song-

Babawi Babawi Goriya Babawi

Gumtini twibai nono yakung suwanw

Don tubudi, jon tubudi o Babawi

Maibar tubudi, khulbar tubudi o Babawi.

From the above song, we learn that Baba Goriya is a deity of good harvest and prosperity. Not only that, Baba Goriya is also the deity who blesses good fortune and wellness to the family. That is why Goriya Ter is considered as the most important Deity for the Tiprasas. That is why we can see that in the above song, Baba Goriya is being asked to bless the family with prosperity, Maibar (abundant rice) and Khulbar (abundant cotton). Baba Garia protects the family or house from illness and ill fortune. The deity is worshipped to bless the family with bountiful year of good harvest. Goriya rwchampung or song also falls under folk song. It is seen that people of Tripura worship two different forms of the deity. One is Biya kwrwi and the other is Biya Gwnang. Biya Gwnang form of the deity is taken all around the village by the villagers. The deity is taken to every household in the village and every family would offer him food and seek blessings. On the other hand, Biya kwrwi form of the deity sits in one place and is offered sacrifices and offering there. Goriya Ter continues for seven days starting from Buisu to Sena. It is believed that whoever worships Baba Goriya with pure heart, their wishes come true.

Lebang:

Lebang is another form of folk song. Our ancestors have been singing Lebang rwchampung or song since their time. People of Tripura in those days depended on Jhum cultivation and Lebang rwchampung used to be song in the Jhum fields. Lebang are certain kind of grasshoppers that feeds on the crops that are grown in the Jhum field. Lebang rwchampung is sung while the farmers try to catch Lebang insects by making a certain noise by beating two bamboo sticks together. The beating of bamboo sticks mimics the sound of Lebang which attracts the Lebang towards the sound and then these insects are caught. The song depicts the act of catching lebang together in the Jhum fields.

Song-

O bai koto, o bai chikon

Lebang romwi mwsalainai

Phaidi jadosong

Budi Da chikon, Romdi Bai chikon

Lebang romwi mwsalainai phaidi jadosong

In the above song, we learn that during those days people used to catch Lebang together. The people in the Jhum field are calling their brothers and sisters to catch Lebang. The act of catching Lebang became Lebang rwchampung or song and Lebang mwsamung or Lebang Bumani dance. This is how Lebang rwchampung or song became one of our kokborok folk song.

Jaduni or Jadu Kolija:

Jaduni or Jadu Kolija is a folk song that expresses deep emotions such as heartbreak, love or loss of someone close. Jadu kolija song has not been derived from written literature. It is sung depending on the situation of the person. Jaduni or Jadu Kolija is also known as Tipra Bharat. It is said that Jadu Kolija earlier used to be about Jhum cultivation. It is said that it birthed from there. However, it is also sung expressing the grief of losing someone dear or heartbreak or about love. Jadu Kolija are of many types- Uttar Ragini, Dokhin Ragini, Mayani, Duna, Daspa, Khakulu lokhopoti etc.

Song-

Boy: Nini gairingle chengereng gereng

Thampuima pereng pereng

Ani gairingle chuksoro soro

Nobar nangsoro soro.

Girl: Nini gairingo phaiwile mano

Tokha mogodam chanw

Boy: Thaisa chathani thainwi riwanw

Tobo ani gairingo phaidi

Mosok Sulmani:

Mosok sulmani is also another folk song which is about deer hunting. This folk song is also based on agriculture we can say because while the farmers take some rest after working the whole day in the Jhum field, they would catch fish together or hunt deer. When the deer comes to feed on the wild fruits of the forest, then the farmers would catch deer. The catch is then shared and eaten together with everyone in the village.

Song -

Hasing hakwrani boyar sipphaikhai

Hugo thangnani phaidi jadu

Yaksi tangdi, yagra tandi

Tandi lama burasa

Lama tandi lama saidi

O burasa.

Yangbo hoi ayangbo hoi

Athuk romna phaidi bwrwichwk.

O bura iko nahardi mosok

Sere serekhe yapiri sedi

Mosok kharwno naidi burasa

Tantwi tantwi tanyatwi

Tankhwlai mosok thwi

Sultwi sultwi sulyatwi

Sul khwlai mosok thwi.

Resiyar Khagra:

Resiyar khagra is a song of expressing grief and pain sung by the women who lost their husbands who went to the war and got killed. These songs are mainly heard in the hilly areas or rural areas in Tripura.

Song-

Haduk duk kolok maisui pinjagwi

Pagri nurukliya, jadu pagri nurukliya

Haduk duk kolok gunthu pinjagwi

Yakwrai nurukliya, jadu yakwrai nurukliya

Maising siyari bangmani bagwi

Naharwi nurukliya, jadu naharwi nurukliya.

Conclusion:

Lastly, we can conclude that Kokborok folk songs is part of our culture and heritage. We can learn a lot about our culture and heritage through folk songs and dance forms. We get to learn about how our ancestors used to live those days. Our ancestors used to be very active and that is why these folk songs and dance forms were formed. I hope that this writing would the reader to learn about our culture. This writing includes introduction, literature review and collection of information or data on how these folk songs and dances were formed.

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