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This e-journal Folklore and Folkloristics publishes write ups in different sections specified as follows:

Article Section: Research based articles are published.

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Highlight Section: Short write up is published.

Book Review Section: Book Review is published. Books must be sent to the Editor-in-Chief by Registered Post or Speed Post. Address: Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam, 101/C, Brindaban Mallick Lane, Post: Kadamtaba. Howrah-711101. West Bengal India

Advertisement Section: Advertisement of books and journals relating to folklore and allied subjects are published. Advertisement of any institute working on culture and society are also published.

News and Information Section: News and Information relating to any activities of culture in general and folk-tribal culture in particular is published in this section. Contributors are requested -

(i) to mention the name of exact event, incident, occasion
(ii) the exact date, time and place of commencement
(iii) name of institution, person, performer, artist, funding agency concern
(iv) name of tribe, community, caste whatever is relevant
(v) attach all possible photo documentation
(vi) mention the name, phone, e-mail of contributor (mandatory)

Photo Gallery: Any photograph (digital photo) reflecting exclusive feature of culture is published in this section. Please send a detailed information or statement of the photograph (of which the photo is about).

Video Section: Any significant video document on folk and tribal culture is uploaded in this section

Reader’s Response Section: This section will start from June 2012 issue. Letters of the readers or the response of the readers are published in this section. Mention the name, phone, e-mail.

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Who can write in this Journal?

Persons belonging to any discipline of pure science and social science may write in this journal. Students, teachers, research scholars, interested persons in any discipline like – language and literature, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, folklore and folkloristics, economics, social work, physics, chemistry, medical science – so on and so forth may write in this journal. The only thing is that the write up should address culture, tradition, folklore or tribal-lore. Interdisciplinary approach is highly solicited.

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   *General Format of article*
   - Title of paper
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3. Line Spacing – double.
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3. Send write up by 31st March for June issue and by 30th September for December issue.
4. Please save the PDF copy of the journal for your personal record. Data uploaded on the website may get lost due to technical error.
Editorial

Finally we are able to upload the December 2015 issue (Vol. 8, No. 2) of ‘Folklore and Folkloristics’. Mita Sarkar (Das) contributed an article on ‘Development of Anthropology in Eastern India’ which is an important work on Anthropology. I want to make special mention about the Sapna Dogra’s ‘Introduction to the Folktales of Himachal Pradesh’ because it highlights on the folktales of Northern part of India. Sapna Dogra is also included as a National Level Representative in our journal Folklore and Folkloristics. Rembemo Odyuo’s paper on ‘The Lotha-Naga Traditional Cultural Beliefs and Practices: Reflection in Folk Narratives’ is another contribution throwing light on North East India.

I want to extend gesture of my cordial thanks to all the contributors, all the members of Editorial Board for giving me their support. I am also thankful to all the International, National and District level representatives for extending this journal their help to this journal.

Sk. Makbul Islam
Editor-in-Chief
Folklore and Folkloristics

DECEMBER 2015
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Editor: Sk. Makbul Islam
Article-1

DEVELOPMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN EASTERN INDIA

- MITA SARKAR (DAS)

Abstract
Started in University of Calcutta, Anthropological research has flourished in many ways in India. This paper tries to make an attempt to deal with the contribution of different institutions like University of Calcutta, Vidyasagar University, Viswa Bharati University and other important organizations too. Besides, Research Methodology, Tribal Studies, Urban Issues, Gender Issues etc have also been discussed.

Key Words
Institutional Research, Methodology of Research, Studies on the Aged, Anthropology of Rural Women, Need of an Alternative

Full Version of Paper
There is a long tradition of anthropological study and research in India and the development of anthropology, University of Calcutta, is the oldest university department of India and one of the oldest among such departments in the world. Apart from the first university anthropology department, which has contributed in the development of anthropology in the region, the presence of a few other research organizations like The Asiatic society and Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta immensely helped in the growth in the subject. Besides, the Anthropological Survey of India, one of the largest anthropological organizations in the world, has its head office in Calcutta with a number of regional centers. Being a Government of India Organization, it played a significant role in the development of anthropology, both in the theory and practice, considering all the sub-disciplines of anthropology. It also provided the general background of Indian population to formulate the various strategies or policies initiated by the government. Besides, particularly after independence, in research organizations (such as the centre for social sciences), anthropological studies formed an integral part. Again organizations (like Cultural research Institute) were also established to initiate studies and research on disadvantaged people (like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes). These studies have also significantly contributed to the development of anthropological knowledge. In this paper, however, I shall cover certain specific issues of social anthropology.

II
Before discussing the trends of social anthropological studies and research in this region, it may not be out of place to discuss briefly about the different universities/ institutes and
research organizations where anthropology is formally taught or research studies are conducted, particularly in the social anthropology.

**University of Calcutta:** Department of anthropology - One of the oldest anthropology department - post graduate and Ph.D. teaching and research; anthropology department at the under graduate level in eleven colleges.

**Vidyasagar University:** Department of Anthropology - Teaching and research at the post graduate and Ph.D. level; anthropology department at the under graduate level at four colleges.

**Viswa Bharati University:** Department of anthropology - teaching and research- post graduate and Ph.D. level – started as a part of rural studies (Palli Charcha Kendra).

Apart from these universities departments and colleges where anthropology is taught as a distinct discipline at the under graduate and post-graduate levels and Ph.D., issues related to social anthropology are also taught in the department of sociology at Burdwan, Kalyani and Jadavpur University.

**Institute and Research organization**

As mentioned before, the Anthropological Survey of India is one of the largest anthropological organization in the world. Its head office along with its Eastern Regional Centre are all located in Calcutta which have immensely promoted the study and research of anthropology in this region.

The Indian Statistical Institute, one of the most prestigious research organization in India, is located in Calcutta and there are different units through which anthropological studies are conducted. A number of distinguished anthropologists were and are attached to many of these units.

The Centre for social Sciences, Calcutta, is another relatively smaller but prestigious research centre dealing with different branches of social science, including anthropology. It was established in early 1970s supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and Government of West Bengal and a number of distinguished social anthropologists like late professor Surajit Chandra Sinha were attached to this center. Besides these institutes, social anthropologists are also working in a number of organizations in and around Calcutta working on different issues using anthropological approaches. A number of social anthropologists were and are attached to the Behavioral Science Unit of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

Social anthropologists were and are associated with the Agricultural Extension Wing of Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya (Agricultural University) to study the social-cultural dimensions of agricultural development following anthropological approaches. Social anthropologists are also working in the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health and in the census department, Research Institute, Government of West Bengal, to
study and formulate policies of development of the disadvantaged people (particularly of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes).

Besides, anthropologists are also working in many non-governmental organisations like CINI, Vivekanada - Society, Centre for Alternative research in Development, Rural Development Association, etc. to formulate policies for development and empowerment of the vulnerable sections of the population, like women, children, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, drug addicts, displaced persons etc.

III

If we examine the history and development of anthropology and the social context, its close link with colonial rule is quite evident. All over the world, the colonial rulers, for more effective administration and in order to protect the colonial interest, felt the need to have adequate knowledge and information about the subjugated peoples. India was no exception and there were a number of studies and publications during the colonial period and Calcutta being the capital of colonial rulers, a number of important publications were there from this place. ‘The tribes and castes of Bengal published in 1891 by H.H.Risley and The People of India by the same author in 1915 may be mentioned here. It may not be out of context to mention about an interesting government documents of that period. At the time of collection of data for the people of India project, a special attention was given to select a particular caste having certain physical features. The intension was quite clear: to project that people of India are not only socially differentiated, physically they are also distinct. It may not be out of the context to mention here that during the colonial period, the ICS officials had to undergo training in London to know about the people whom they are going to rule. Interestingly, after the Second World War, with the decline of British imperialism and the rise of U.S. neo-imperialism, the importance of information about people based on field work is still very much there. Thus, the need of anthropological knowledge and understanding based on unique anthropological field work is still there even in the change socio-political and historical context. Long back, in the first International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in London in 1934, the importance and use of anthropological knowledge in colonial administration and the need of training of anthropology were emphasized. However, it would be wrong to think that anthropology only serves the colonial interest. As the colonial rulers tried to use it in their own colonial interest, the nationalist scholars through their field research tried to focus on the uniqueness of Pluralistic Indian Society And Culture and emphasized its unity in diversity.

Anthropology, Sociology and Research Methodology

It has already been mentioned that the oldest university anthropology department in India is located in Calcutta University, One of the oldest University in India. Even though there were a number of brilliant sociologists in this region and there was a well–known sociology unit in Indian Statistical Institute, Sociology is a separate distinct discipline at the university level started much latter. As a result, though Sociology flourished much earlier in the University of Bombay or in the University of Delhi, it was only in late seventies when a separate sociology department was established in Calcutta University.
It may be added here that even though there was a long anthropological tradition in this region, unlike in the north (Delhi university), it was not much influenced by anthropology in terms of theory, research methodology and area of research. Most of the sociology departments of this region were most influenced by political science as is evident from the nature and type of research. Interestingly, the sociology department of Calcutta University is not the first university sociology department in this region and developed much latter.

It is known that social anthropologists are more preoccupied with studies made on small communities or rural areas and mostly depend on case studies and observation for data collection and follow qualitative method of data analysis. The Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta, has a long and rich tradition of field research. Late, L. K. A. Iyer, who joined the department when it was established in 1920, was a famous ethnographer during this time and had a number of important publications on tribes and castes. The name of T. C. Das may also be mentioned here who became famous for his study on Purum Kuki (1945) and Bengal famine of 1943 (1949). After the publication of the monograph on Purum Kuki, one issue of the American anthropologist was fully devoted to further interpreting and re-interpreting this finding of this study. This was perhaps the only occasion when the whole issue of American anthropologist was devoted after the publication of any volume. It attracted so much attention as it represented a new trend of reach. Surajit Sinha, one of Das’ students commented after his death; “India lost one of her most devoted specialists on tribal ethnography and a great teacher who was ever experimenting with methods of training the students in field work during his long tenure as a teacher in Calcutta University (1921-63)”.

The name of K. P. Chattapadhaya, another teacher in this department, may also be mentioned. He initiated study and research on some unconventional areas like jute workers. He also played a crucial role in this study of and research in social anthropology. The name of Nirmal Kumar Bose, another distinguish anthropologist, may also be mentioned here even though he was attached to the geography department of Calcutta University. He was also the Director of the Anthropological Survey of India and influenced research of social anthropology not only in this region but also in India as a whole. His books, Hindu Samajer Garan (1949) Peasant Life in India (1961) and Calcutta. A social Survey (1964) may be mentioned here. His study in Calcutta city marks a departure from conventional social anthropological study. He also initiated studies of some unconventional areas as part of studying Indian Civilization. These scholars really influenced a large number of students of this university and shaped the future research of social anthropology in this region as new university departments or research centre were established. Thus social anthropological study became more diversified and complex society or urban areas were also studied following typical anthropological approaches. Thus, though the appropriateness and adequacy of anthropological tools in this context of studying complex societies are sometimes made, in the last three decades such studies have been made quite competently.
Tribal Studies

Anthropological studies are diverse in nature. Calcutta was and has become a centre for anthropological studies. As the anthropologists, at the initial stage, were more pre-occupied with studies on simple-folk people, ethnographic studies on the tribals predominated. However, a few of them may be mentioned. Notable anthropologists (like N. K. Bose) contributed to the understanding of tribal societies in relation to the Hindu Civilization. His important work in this regard was the “The Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption”. Tribal and Non-Tribal’s are coming into contract through socio-cultural interaction since time immemorial. This socio-cultural process is unique in two senses. First, it sometimes brings together two cultural groups and sometimes there are some revivalist outlooks among the tribals who respond unfavourably to the intersections of non-tribal counterpart. The study of Purum Kuki of Manipur by T. C. Das can also be mentioned in this context. He has described vividly the kinship and social organization of the Purum Kuki of Manipur. He also made explicit the prescribed marriage system among the Purums.

The Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, is a repository of tribal studies. It attempts to preserve the diverse nature of our culture by orienting its programme to national tasks and by covering major gaps in developing programmes of nationwide continuance of anthropological studies of human groups. It conducts researches on biological and cultural aspects of Indian populations with emphasis on tribes and weaker sections of the population. Activities of the survey also centre around the preservation and documentation of the diverse nature of our culture and in that context studies on tribals and development with reference to industrialization were also made. Studies on the impact of industrialization on the life of tribals were also made by the Cultural Research Institute, Government of West Bengal. It may be added here that even though most of these studies are academic many of them have development implications. The study by Roy Burman on the Toto may be mentioned here. P. K. Bhowmik, who worked on the Lodha (1963), provided a development model for them and initiated some programmes for their upliftment. This is an interesting case of how anthropological knowledge can help and contribute to the development process.

Tribal studies are of diverse nature. The interest of anthropologists ranges from basic cultural studies to narratives of civilization of different origin. Tribal studies include studies on ethnography of tribal economy as well as tribal politics and movement. Overall tribal studies can broadly be classified into:

a) Ethnographic studies
b) Tribal Economy
c) Forest, environment and tribals.
d) Tribal Development policy and planning
e) Tribal religion and festival
f) Tribal politics, movements, identity and socio-political system.
g) Tribal education.
h) Tribal women.
i) Tribal demography, nutrition, growth and health; and
j) Tribal society, culture and change.
Urban Studies

The process of urbanization is quite fast in most of the developing countries, including India. It has obvious social, economic, political and environmental implications. There is a growing importance of mega cities and decreasing importance of small towns. There is an urgent need to examine it with reference to cross-cultural situation. What are the socio-economic and political implications of this trend? Again, is it possible to conceive urban development in isolation? How plausible is the achievement of success regarding urban development without considering the regional context? Interestingly, even though Calcutta is one of the mega cities in India, the growth rate has gone down indicating significant rural development in the region. Migration is major factor contributing to rapid urbanization. What happens when people of different cultures migrate to cities? Do they still maintain their distinct identities? Many of the Asian countries are pluralistic in nature and have their own characteristics based on ethnicity. Tension and conflict result in different parts of the world when the expectations and aspirations of the people are not fulfilled. These are important issues requiring urgent attention and social anthropologists has responded on them and indicated studies on many of these issues.

It is true that hardly there was any study on urban anthropology worth mentioning as this was a new area of research to social anthropologists. But after the very interesting study by Nirmal Kumar Bose on the city of Calcutta and publication of the book in India and the article in *Scientific American*, gradually studies on various urban issues were initiated with anthropological prospective and approaches. Thus studies are made on different communities in Calcutta, to study their nature of change after migration, identity issues and cultural change. The melting pot theory of the west provided a model for approach in the context of the migrant population. Besides the earlier study of Nirmal Kumar Bose, a recent study by S. Chaudhuri (92007) has also indicated how people often try to maintain their distinct social identity even after migration to the city. This is often done through cultural activities, clubs, libraries, traditional festivals, newspapers and educational institutions. It does not mean that people are all living in isolated enclaves. They do have opportunities to interact with others at different levels, at the place of work, for political activities, in clubs, games and sports and many other activities. In reality, people have multiple identities and respond and interact accordingly. Thus they are different places of religious activity for people belonging to different religious groups; caste organizations are functioning in the context of some communities and provide help and support to the people belonging to that group. Languages, regions often become an important consideration. However, there are many occasions when people join hands cutting across religion, region, language or caste. Class is often an important cementing force.

There were also studies on the poverty stricken people, the slum dwellers, pavement dwellers and the beggars. Three process are noted after migration or in the context of such poverty stricken people, continuation of certain traditional norms, modification of traditional norms and emergence of distinct adaptive norms in such limiting situations. An interesting seminar on the city of Calcutta was also organized where besides anthropologists, people from other disciplines contributed interesting papers to discuss the different facets of the city life. Subsequently a volume on socio-cultural profile of
Calcutta was also published. Anthropologists have also studied the religious places or community festivals in urban areas. In fact, the number of visitors has also increased considerably in recent past. What does it indicate? A rise in bhakti or devotion or better travel facilities or certain secular demands? It has been noted that to meet secular demands, there is a modification in religious activities. It has also been noted how it is articulating with the growing or changing demands of the society. In fact, study with anthropological perspectives has provided interesting insight about these changing situations. Anthropological studies have also been made on important religious places of Calcutta like the Kalighat temple. It has been noted that the number of visitors has increased considerably. This does not always mean that there is a rise in devotion. It may be related to better travel facilities. The increasing economic implications of such important temples have also been noted.

**Studies on the Aged**

Through the problems of the aged have already assumed importance in developed countries of the West, in India the problems of aged persons has assumed much greater importance since independence. Due to overall scientific and technological developments, life expectancy of the people has also increased and naturally their number has increased considerably.

Of late, social anthropologists have shown keen interest in this problem and studied the aged in different areas including urban areas and in slums, focusing on various problems of the aged life: (a) socio-cultural; and (b) the behavioural. Under the socio-cultural variables, loss of income, authority, status, social contact, health, role, status and intensification of familial control are important. The behavioural problems of the aged include changes in personality, needs, expectations and interaction.

A syllabus for old age care has been designated by The Ministry of Labour, Government of India, in collaboration with the Central Staff Training and Research Institute, salt lake, Kolkata. They have prepared a syllabus for old age care trade which includes on training on this craft.

Other studies have pointed out the problems of the aged in the context of three important parameters, family, health and behavioural aspects. Need for care of the elderly at home has also been emphasized. Family pivotal role in the absence of adequate health care system in caring for the elders. The institutional medical support is neither adequate nor available to the elderly in India. So, their dependence on family becomes inevitable.

**Gender Issues**

The role of women in the society is not negligible. But since it is male dominated, the position of women in the society has come down. The gender issue has been a great concern in contemporary world. The heroic role of women was found in many countries including India. During the vedic period, we find notable women (like Gargi) who had participated in learning and debate. But the issue of gender has not been given such importance as it is given today. The UNO declares Women Day every year. Sociologists
and anthropologists have pointed out the importance of gender equality in advancing society. Gender studies are held in different locations. Apart from university departments, there are centers for research where gender studies are conducted. In Kolkata also, a number of scholars of various disciplines are conducting gender studies. There are two centers of women in Kolkata. One is located at 1, Reformatory street, Kolkata (Alipur Campus) in Kolkata university. Another center for women studies is located in Jadavpur University. The Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, has also conducted a gender study. Another publication from “STREE”, Calcutta, “Guilt Without Trial” is a book written by Carolyn Sliegholme on women in sex trade in Calcutta.

**Anthropology and Rural Women**

Changes in rural societies have been especially prominent since the industrial revolution. In the history of human civilization, depending on the local ecology and natural resources and also due to subsequent technological development, different types of rural societies with varied cultures, levels of development and economic life gradually emerged in different parts of the globe. In fact, though agriculture is the main economy in rural areas, all are not always involved in agriculture and could survive by following varied other occupations or supporting the primary economy. It may be added here that in spite of the fact that the rural people are more homogeneous in nature, there do exist considerable variations in levels, of development, economy and socio-cultural tradition, not only among different countries of the world but also in the context of a particular country. Apparently though rural society is homogeneous, it is also very varied and naturally the policy of rural development must articulate with such varied context.

A new development paradigm is also needed that put people at the centre of the development, consider economic growth as a means and not an end, protects the life, opportunities of future generations as well as present one and respects the natural systems on which all life depends. Growth does not mean development. Unless and until there is growth with justice, where peoples have equal share and access to resources, there cannot be true development. It is well known that Green Revolution has increased crop production, but it is also responsible for the concentration of holding and increased inequality. Proper development strategy may evolve with experience and experiment where traditional wisdom can contribute much. Technology is required but not the domination of technology over its creator.

The anthropologists have classified villages in a number of ways: thus there can be (a) migratory agricultural villages where people stay in a particular village for a few months depending on the period of cultivation; and (b) semi permanent agricultural villages where people stay for a long period and then migrate again on the basis of settlement and location of cultivable land, the village can be (a) nucleated type, where the residential houses are located in clusters surrounded by agricultural land; and (b) dispersed villages where cultivators live separately along with their farm lands. It is obvious that social life differs greatly between the first type of nucleated villages where people live in close
proximity and in the second type of dispersed villages where people have less social contracts or interactions.

On the basis of social differentiation, stratification and land ownership, villages can be classified into (a) villages composed of peasant joint owners; (b) peasant joint tenants; (c) peasants including some tenants and labourers; (d) tenants; (e) employees of a big private landowner; and (f) labourers and employees of the state, church, public land owner. Immediately after the colonial rule in many countries, there was an acute shortage of food and the government of the concerned countries desperately tried to increase food production at any cost. May be an increase or growth in production was the goal at that moment and may be the objective was achieved in a given context, but is it possible to equate it with development? Any increase in production is growth but development is the broader and wider term and has other connotations too. It not only includes growth, but an equitable distribution of facilities and reduction, if not elimination, of exploitative practices.

However, during the twentieth century, social science became increasingly concerned with economics, economics with wealth rather than people, with economy rather than society, with maximization of income rather than improving the quality of life. The dominant contemporary tradition of focusing exclusively on such variables as per capita gross national product or national wealth is really a continuation of the above approach. However, gradually there is a shift from this approach. It has been observed that wealth is important, but to concentrate on its exclusively is wrong. Valuable social and cultural traditions can be and are maintained at all levels of income. The richness of culture can be largely independent of the people’s wealth. Again, unless societies recognize that their real wealth is their people, an excessive obsession with the creation of material wealth can obscure the ultimate objective of enriching human lives. It is not the level of income alone that matters- it is also the use that is made of this income. Much depends on how the fruits of economic growth are shared, particularly on what the poor get, and how much the additional resources are used to support public services, particularly health and education. What is decisive is not the process of wealth maximization but the choices that individuals and societies make. Sustainable development is concerned with models of material production and consumption that are replicable and desirable. These models do not regard natural resources as a free good, to be plundered at free will of any nation, generation or individual. The close link between poverty and sustainability must be analyzed carefully if the concept of sustainable development is to have any real meaning. The poor; struggling for their survival, often lack of resources to avoid degrading their environment. In the societies of the poor, what is risk is not the quality of life, but life itself.

In the approach of rural development, different models are available: (a) Community approach where certain communities, which are generally considered as backwards groups in the concerned country, like the tribes in many countries, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in India, get social support, (b) Region based-where certain areas, generally backward in the concerned country get special support for development. In some cases, special development inputs are provided to a region already developed region
which can provide an example to be replicated by other areas; (c) Community and region based- It is really a combination of the first two, where certain communities of a particular region get special support, and special facilities are also enjoyed by other people living in that particular area. The best example is Intensive Tribal development Blocks in India; and (b) in many cases, while extending facilities, the economic condition is also concerned beforehand. This is done considering the constraints of the resources, and generally the facilities and development inputs are provided to poorer families. Ideologically, three groups or models are available in the context of rural development:

(a) Those who turn their backs on modernization altogether, looking towards a revival of a pre-colonial village centered order.

(b) Marxists, who see social redistribution as logically prior to sustainability. Thus they suggest more equitable distribution and sharing of resources through land reform.

(c) Groups proposing appropriate technology, which seek to develop and apply technical and institutional alternatives to the centralizing, iniquitous and often environmentally destructive process of development.

During the 1960s Green revolution was introduced in many countries by means of Government propaganda, subsidy and inputs in order to increase crop production. Cultivating these new seed, no doubt, required considerable departure from prevailing practices of traditional subsistence or near subsistence agriculture. In fact, the traditional system of farming is not only inappropriate for cultivating HYVs, but the practice of the Green Revolution also demanded the deliberate and systematic breakdown of the traditional system.

Within a space of two decades, the varied agricultural systems of the third world and the social system were replaced by a new model in many countries. The poor peasants, cultivating the new varieties of HYVs were exposed to new uncertainties and new opportunities for being exploited and dominated. Simultaneously with pauperization Green Revolution also bought a process of perpetuating dependencies. The rich not only increased the size of their landholdings, but also increased their share of benefits from the distribution of inputs and infrastructural facilities. Many of these consequences were not entirely unintentional since the largest group in Green Revolution was typically the middle class or well-to-do farmers. The Green Revolution was not only responsible for pauperization but also resulted in the malnutrition of peasants. Besides, genetic erosion is a result of Green Revolution and as old varieties disappear, and as genetic uniformity spreads in the third World, an increasing incidents of devastating crop disasters are bound to occur. The extensive use of chemical herbicides and pesticides hastens the process of pest mutation. The Green Revolution technology is biased. Although high yielding non-sterile varieties could be developed, the seed companies have a disincentive for doing so since it would mean large-scale loss of markets and, consequently income and profit. Again, transitional cities were quick to find partners among the cities in the third world countries. Green Revolution enabled the introduction of technical inputs into an unequal system of landholding, thereby not only reinforcing the gap between rich and poor, but even increasing it. In spite of limited variations from the perspective of the third world countries, appropriate technologies in seeds will give special emphasis to hardiness, disease resistance and the capability of reproduction of the seeds. The basic problem of
Green Revolution is that the impact of technology is powerfully influenced by contemporary social, political and economic relationships.

**Some Emerging Areas of Anthropological Studies**

It may not be out of context of discuss here some emerging areas attracting the social anthropologists in this region:

1. Environment, development and forest
2. Indigenous wisdom and knowledge.
3. Anthropology and human rights.

The world today is deeply concerned with ecological issues. Man for his ever-growing needs uses resources in nature. In this way, he promotes development. The use of natural resources and the initiation of development produces change in ecology. The nature of change in ecology manifests the character of development. The character of development again, determines the use of resources. The pattern of use of resources reflects to a certain extent of the path of development that a governing group decides to follow. Although the issues have to be analyzed from different points of view, the role of human being as an agent of change has to be taken as a focal point. In the relationship between development and environment, adjustment is the need, but conflict is generally the outcome. The development programmes of many countries like India and Malaysia are guided mainly by the governmental issues. This is now regarded as too costly to be avoided. The process of planning and concomitant administrative decisions should attach top priority to a resolution of the contradiction between development and environment.

With end of the colonial rule in South and South East Asia, a member of nation states were created, a process, which often resulted in a large-scale migration of people. These migrations, quite often, were a response to political pressures and policies in postcolonial states. Development programmes initiated in tribal dominated areas often adversely affected the tribal way of life, economy and habitat resulting in displacement. This is frequently followed by the encroachment on traditional tribal areas by non-tribal and the exploiting of natural resources became more intense, generally affecting the ecosystem of a tribal area. These are the inevitable difficulties of development policy in a situation where the component programmes are funded by international agencies and one often supervised them. Quite often greater emphasis and attention are given to the interests of the backward tribals are often treated as secondary. Actually with the formation of new nation states and increase in population, the exploitation of natural resources has become more intense. There are tremendous competitions to have access and command over natural resources and this has often created conflicts and tensions at different levels. The developed countries (or rather the multinational organizations) try to control the resources of the less developed countries, while the dominant sections of the developing countries try to manipulate in such a way that they enjoy the major share of the national nature resources, often depriving the local population, mostly the tribals.

Different natural resources (namely forest, land and water) have their own specificities and ecological characteristics. A discourse on the relationship between human being and these natural resources in different geographical region will contribute to an understanding of man-nature balance, marked by both adjustments and conflicts. Perhaps
of all natural resources, the most critical situations prevail in the context of forests. Degradations, deforestation and desertification are conspicuous in developing countries, particularly in South and South East Asia. In India, for example, forest has become an issue of common concern in recent past mainly for three reasons: Firstly, due to ecological consideration; secondly, for its commercial value; and lastly in view of the growing unrest centering forest and exploitation of forest resources. There were a number of classes and conflicts between forest dwellers (including the tribals) and the government officials at the forest policies or programmes were reported to go against the interest of tribals. This again was not always directed related to forest policies or programmes but sometimes a big development projects (like construction of river valley project, dam) adversely affect forest ecology, indirectly the tribals. Many of the river valley projects were opposed by the local people. This perhaps is not related to India only. Indigenous people of Sarawak, Malaysia, have set up barricades across logging roads to project against damage of their land and forest caused by timber companies. This big Nam Chom Dam project in Thailand was ultimately dropped in March 1988 in the face of strong opposition. Quite often these types of big development projects were planned in the name of national interest. The opposition from the local population in the context of such big development projects naturally raises a vital question. In a welfare state, can there be a basic contradiction between the local interest? One very important component of knowledge to be generated in the sphere of man-nature relationship is the perspective of local inhabitants. It may so happen that what planners and decision makers consider significant is subordinate to other factors in view of local people. But one should understand and know the experiences and problem solving ideas of local people. Some voluntary organizations (or social activists), addition to governmental agencies, engage in intimate interaction with people on crucial ecological issues in different areas. They may be in a position to appreciate as well as to communicate the people’s aspirations and experiences. These experiences are extraordinarily valuable in understanding the man-nature relationship from below. If one gives more emphasis on only one issue, without considering the socio-economic factors, a somewhat unbalanced view of the whole ecological issue may emerge. Adequate emphasis should be given to linking the ecological factors with economic, political, social and historical forces as well.

The health situation in most of the countries in SAARC region is really critical. Despite all our technological breakthroughs we still live in a world where a fifth of the developing world’s population goes hungry every night, a quarter lacks access to a basic necessity, like safe drinking water and a third lives in a state of abject poverty. In developing countries, the major causes of death are parasitic-diseases, which will seventeen million people annually, including 605 million from acute respiratory infection, 4.5 million from diarrheal diseases, and 3.5 million from tuberculosis. Most of these death are linked to poor nutrition and unsafe environment, particularly polluted water, which contributes to nearly one billion cases of diarrhoea a year. In both developing and industrial countries, the threats of health security are usually greater of the poorest. The disparities between the rich and the poor are similar for access to health services: in developed countries, it is 1: 7000. Spending on health programmes is also a very different and it is quite low in the developing countries; for example, it is only 7 per individual per year in Bangladesh. This situation is not much better in many other developing countries. Considering this
alarming situation, out of the seven important targets put forward for human development in the Agenda for Social Summit, four were related to health. They are as follows:

1. Primary health care for all with special stress on the immunization of children
2. Serve malnutrition to be eliminated and moderate malnutrition rates to be halved.
3. Family planning services for all willing couples.
4. Safe drinking and sanitation for all.

Need for an Alternative

The prevailing health and medical system, the western system, has unfortunately failed to meet the needs of the world’s majority. The failure of the Alma Ata Delaration in fulfilling its objectives of achieving health for all by the year 2000 gives more urgency to looking for an alternative. In most countries, a very frightening policy change is being maneuvered by agencies like the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund to give less and less emphasis to the social and welfare sectors and higher emphasis to the economic and infrastructure sectors. As such the final allocation for health is going down in most Asian Countries. The implication of such a trend in countries where health insurance is unaffordable. Based on current trends in health care financing and failure of the Alma Ata Declaration to take a grip of the situation, the condition of the poor has become more critical and difficult.

Generally, when we talk to think about science, we refer to the western or industrial society. In the context of scientific development, we prefer to discuss more about the so-called modern scientific innovations assuming that science is only there in those societies. The role of science is to help mankind to meet various demands exploiting the natural resources in the best possible way without adversely affecting the environment. Thus in the socio-economic and historical context, the knowledge making fire revolutionized human society. People have developed their own science and technologies based on the demands of the concerned societies, but quite often these are ignored. What I want to impress here is that we need to look at indigenous science and technology, particularly when an existing body of knowledge is available. Perhaps it is better to develop it instead of replacing it in the name of scientific development and modernization. A number social anthropologists in this region are deeply involved in studying the traditional wisdom and knowledge of the people, particularly the tribals. A post-graduate course on Human Rights has been introduced in Calcutta University attached to the department of Anthropology, Calcutta University. Human rights are now a topic of pressing concern in a world of conflict, competition and seemingly relentless globalization. But how do we deal with the tension between a concern for “local cultures” and the existence of “Universal Rights”? Over the last decade anthropology- with its rich understanding of local countries- has been centrally involved in these wider discussions and debates. This new M.Sc. in anthropology and human rights provides a robust exploration of Anthropology’s contribution of Human Rights Work. Is the wide spread of child foresterage in West Africa a normal aspect of West African kinship or is it the thin edge of the wedge of child trafficking? Where do we draw the line between “indigenous peoples or ‘natives’, and ‘outsiders’”? In addressing these and other issues anthropology, the course will enable students to develop theoretical and practical skills for analyzing human
rights issues in context. It will equip participants with a reflective understanding of their own cultural and professional practices, whether they work in organizations that increasingly concern themselves with human rights issues, or are seeking a socially aware approach to a pressing topic of our time.

The course provides a lively and stimulating look at key human rights issues and the way anthropology’s unique cross-cultural perspective has contributed to its understanding and debate. Particular attention is given to case studies from India and around the world in order to explore how rights operate in social life and are shaped by wider cultural forces. We explore important topics relevant to the critical study of human rights such as limits of relativism, the nature of individuals and humanity, the legacy of colonialism and the nature of legal pluralism. Students will gain grounding in the anthropology of law, power and consider how globalization is linked with the rise of human rights and other rights-based concerns, including indigenous rights; environmental and land rights; child, health and medical rights; war violence and social justice; and cultural and intellectual property rights. The programme offers a broad-based approach, with options of public health, children, international human rights law, as well as intensive training in ethnographic research methods.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FOLKTALES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

-SimpleName DOGRA

ABSTRACT

The paper looks at Himachal Pradesh and its rich reserve of folk literature. The performative aspect of the folktales is emphasised. Also how any folk text is as much informative about the context, society, ideology of a society as is for that matter any fictive work. They are vivid expressions of economic condition of common man, political affairs, religious beliefs and practices, and historical and geographical condition of people. The paper also looks at Pahari language and its dialects and the scholars who have worked in this field in the past few decades.

Key Words

Folktale, Performative text, Pahari culture

Full version of Paper

Folktales are the most developed form of folk literature. They are the very basis of our belief system. On one hand folktales give us pure entertainment and on the other, provide us life’s basic mantras like wisdom, perseverance, morality, righteousness, charity, sharing, eventual triumph of truth and justice, happiness after trials, to name a few.

Folktales come under the genre of folklore. Folklore is a vital element in a living culture. Folklore consists of folk songs, folktales, ballads, proverbs, riddles, folk theatre, folk customs, traditions, beliefs, etc. M.R. Thakur defines folklore as:

Folklore is a legendary tradition contained in popular beliefs, institution, practices, oral literature and arts and pastime of the mental and the spiritual life of the folk. The folklore is in fact believed to contain the seeds of all sciences — astronomy is claimed to have evolved out of astrology and chemistry from alchemy; folk customs turned into law and codes, nursery tales into romantic stories and folk ballads into epics. (Preface, 5)

Thakur further divides folklore into two disciplines, i.e., folk beliefs and folk arts. He says that folk beliefs constitute tradition, rituals, myths, etc.

and that they cannot be disobeyed because they contain social sanction behind them. But the folk arts are: . . . voluntary, spontaneous and discretionary. They have no sanction except the choice. We choose to play a drama. We like to
sing a song; we desire to tell and hear a story, to recite a ballad and enjoy its music without any compulsion. (5)

Himachal Pradesh has a rich reserve of folk literature viz. folktales, ballads, riddles and proverbs. Much of what is known of Pahari culture is embodied in its folk culture. The inaccessibility of the snow covered terrain and the fact that Pahari language had no official script of its own explains the absence of any written literature until recently.

The folk literature, with special reference to the folktales that have evolved over ages has become the carrier of the essence of the community at large. Dan Ben-Amos says about folktales in general thus:

..... these folktales are not characterized as fiction in the context in which they appear. On the contrary, their inclusion in documentation of other subjects depends on their cultural acceptance as historical reality rather than fiction. They offer sanction to social values, institution, or dynasties. (256)

Every community has a desire to express its heritage, arts, language, customs and its sense of identity. The artistic expressions of ordinary people cannot be ignored. The essence and identity of the Himachali community is engrained and crystallised in its folktales. Folktales may assert, subvert or negate an ideology. They manifest happiness, miseries, beliefs, norms, joys, sorrows, trials and tribulations of common man. They substantiate ideas and expression of a community. They perpetrate the discourse that shapes a society. The repeated telling and retelling of a folktale can easily metamorphose into propaganda and dogma, which eventually shapes a culture.

Folktales are compositions that are transmitted orally from generation to generation undergoing various alterations owing to additions, deletions, loss of memory, etc. They are the repository of traditional and cultural wisdom passed on to posterity. The entertainment provided by them may at times be considered crude but they are important because they manifest and express the aspirations of the folk. The tale telling tradition of Himachal is very old. The people of Himachal love folktales. There is a popular saying in the region:

*Kankna bahiyan tan katha ahiyan*  
*Kankna nisriyan tan katha bisriyan*  
(With the planting of the wheat seed the tales emerge  
And with the sprouting of the seeds the tales disperse)

Almost ninety percent of the people of Himachal Pradesh live in villages and small towns. Most of the Himachalis depend on agriculture for livelihood. After the sowing season, since not much work is left to be done, the long cold nights are spent narrating folktales. In the long winter nights when work in the fields takes a back seat, it becomes an appropriate time to sit indoors by the fireside and entertain the family with the tales. Usually the eldest in the family narrates tales to the immediate listening community which comprises family members and sometimes even the neighbours. The narrative style
is usually conversational. My mother tells me how she as a child would huddle close to my maternal grandfather and insist on hearing a *katha* (story). He would delightfully narrate some. He knew a large number of tales, some of which were long enough to serve as lullabies. Secondly, the difficult mountainous region invites long journeys that are mostly covered by walking. In such a situation telling of tales becomes the best medium for diluting the monotony and fatigue of the arduous journey.

Folktale is a performative text. Its narration and delivery requires gestures, a good memory, emphasis, pauses and various other performative aspects that sustain the charm of the story. The written form misses on this important aspect but nevertheless the written word gives space for pausing and reflecting on the intellectual activity gone behind the creation of the text. In the written form the ‘word’ takes the centre stage. The word with its various meanings and signifiers helps in sustaining multiple discourses by allowing the reader to pause at intervals and develop a thought process.

Folktales weave a world that transcends the parameters of reality, where Gods and mortals live and breathe together, where there is a swift movement in time and space, where flights of fantasies are given a free reign, where wit wins over intellect and underdog always triumphs. The folk imagination makes no distinction between the tangible and the intangible. L.N. Birla says:

> The story-teller imagines impossibilities and the listeners expect the impossible to happen. Both sides have a tacit understanding that the action of the stories takes place in a world where you might make things happen as you want them to. Those who tell as well as those who listen, are eager to have just the story, no report, no reason. (Preface)

Folktales are part of oral literary traditions and are devoid of written language. They have no record of rendering as such and survive on ephemeral existence of memories of men that are transmitted from one generation to another through word of mouth. Almost all the basic facts, themes and ideas that are under the sun can form a theme for folktales; for example: the origin of man, gods, goddesses, chivalry, love, sacrifice, animals, death, past, future, dance, food, rituals, festivals. Man, nature, gods and the entire universe exists through human relations in the folk imagination. The folktales show the way in which a community tries to understand and reason out the activities surrounding it by throwing over them a colour of imagination, magic, beauty and mystery. They have the power to involve the audience as participants. This is one way in which the folk society provides for itself entertainment and satisfies its aesthetic sense, which is sometimes considered to belong to a lower intellectual level than the institutionalised forms of the dominant culture of the majority.

There is a basic pattern or core in all the folktales of the world. The core remains constant while the outer layer changes with culture and language. Simple and basic curiosities of the primitive men are satisfied in the folktales. They contain in themselves an interesting answer to all queries related to science, geography, seasons, colours, human nature, elements of nature, God, etc. According to a folktale earthquake is caused because earth
is carried by an ox on one of its horns and when the ox is tired it shifts the earth to its other horn and this causes movements on the surface of the earth; rather an interesting answer when compared to the sliding of Tectonic plates, as any science text book would say. Folktales are a reliable index of traditional ways of knowing and understanding that have been displaced by the prevalence of science and reason.

Folktales and folk songs are the only forms of folklore that have survived in the modern world. Folk theatre and ballads are associated with professionals and with the changing times these professional folk artists are dwindling and taking to other means. The primary reason behind the survival of folktales in the world of technology is its association with non professionals. The creator, narrator, transmitter of folktales is the whole community at large.

Folk texts enjoy the existence of being prior to any classical text. The literary aspects that are so interesting in a folk text find a simultaneous existence even in canonised literature. Also folk text is as much informative about the context, society, ideology of a society as is for that matter any fictive work. They are vivid expressions of economic condition of common man, political affairs, religious beliefs and practices, and historical and geographical condition of people. A.K. Ramanujan says:

Past and present, what’s pan-Indian and what’s local, the written and the oral, the verbal and the nonverbal — all these are engaged in reworking and redefining relevant others. What are distinguished as ‘the classical’, ‘the folk’, and ‘the popular’, as different modes in Indian culture, will be seen as part of an interesting continuum. Texts, then are also contexts and pretexts for other texts. In our studies now, we are beginning to recognize and place folk texts in this ever present network of intertextuality. For folk texts are pervasive, behind, under and around all the texts of the society and in all its strata, not merely among the rural and the nonliterate. (xviii)

Just like any other literary text the oral narratives are overtly and insidiously linked with ideology. They may serve as a norm for a particular social setup, or go tangential to the expectations merely to entertain by surprise. The moralistic folktales can serve as a role model for people to follow but a tale depicting a greedy housewife is mere entertainment for a society where women show resilience and where they might themselves go hungry but would make sure that her children and husband are properly fed. As Gloria Goodwin Raheja says:

Oral narratives, whether song, poetry, story, proverb, or autobiographical narratives, are always situated communicative practices that may serve to reproduce a social order, to critique and undermine it, or something in between. (5)

She further adds that,
…to understand that these performances do not simply reflect a previously existing and congealed social reality, but instead constantly create or recreate, authorize or undermine the social practices and cultural forms of the everyday world of singers and speakers. (6).

The community plays a major role in the building of the ethical character of the folktales. The listening community is simultaneously the creators as well as the audience of any folktale. The community comprises family members or a large gathering to indulge in the recital of the folktales. Such gatherings and recitals are important for the mental and moral growth of the individual and of community at large. They create a relationship between the teller and the audience. Such folk narratives channel social norms, dictate the virtues and vices of life, instruct and delight. Since the primary role of any basic folktale is to moralise it becomes doubly important in developing community bonding and sharing. Community’s familiar and common worldview, experiences and morals is indispensable for the survival and functioning of any folk narrative. Dan Ben-Amos says:

The tales evoke a responsive chord among the listeners only if they correspond to their worldview, their aesthetic standards, and the ethical values that were partially shaped by these tales to begin with. Hence folktales are a valuable testimony about a society’s view of itself. The validity of the interpretation of folktales depends on its agreement with observations of social conduct, analysis of language and religious symbols, and information about socio-political structure and history. (264)

A community speaks out its heart in the folktales. Folk’s aesthetic sense is satisfied by the folktales because they are narrated in language, style, tone, format and manner which is familiar and dear only to a specific community. The tale telling process strengthens the social and communal identity of a group. Ramanujan says, “A folktale is a poetic text which carries some of its cultural context within it; it is also a travelling metaphor that finds a new meaning with each new telling.” (Preface). There is something in the tales that the desire to tell it over and over continues to fascinates the listeners and readers alike. Folktales are texts in search of a context.

It is generally thought that primary function of the folktales is to moralise. But a large number of them merely entertain and some deal with so dark and tragic themes that they can become discomforting to the listeners. Both bright and dark aspects of a society find a reflection in the oral narratives. All sort of themes like murder, incest, suicide are depicted in the folk narratives but the mode of narration dilutes the enormity of the themes. Himachali folktales deal primarily with deities, demons, animals, gods and goddesses.

P.C. Roy Chaudhury says that, “Folk literature is often crude and even grotesque.” (8). It is this very crudeness and grotesqueness that has captured the imagination of the illiterate folk since time immemorial and it is this very crudeness that is most challenging for the present translator to retain.
Pahari is a general term for various dialects spoken in the central Himalyan range. The word Pahari is derived from the word ‘pahar’ meaning ‘mountain’. The term Pahari means language of the mountain people. The term ‘Western Pahari’ given by Dr. Grierson is used collectively for the dialects spoken in Himachal.

K.S. Singh says:

Though a small state, there are as many as 32 languages spoken in Himachal Pradesh. Out of these there are 6 belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family, 3 unclassified, 2 are foreign and the remaining 21 to the Indo-Aryan and or its Pahari sub-family. (Foreword, xiii)

Nearly ninety percent of the people of Himachal Pradesh speak Western Pahari. The main dialects of Pahari language are: Sirmauri, Mahasui, Kinnauri, Kangri, Kehluri, Sasodhi, Gaddi, Bharmauri, Lahauli, Bhoti, Kului, Mandiali, Chambial, Baghati, Keonthali, Jaunsari, Bhaderwahi. There is a unique similarity in the grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary of all the dialects, except for Lahauli and Kinnauri. Pahari in the past was written in Tankari script. But nowadays it is written in Devnagari script. (For a detailed study of Pahari language see Y.S. Parmar; K.S. Singh; Mian Goverdhan Singh)

Himachal Pradesh has a rich reserve of folklore. Though commercialization of folklore is an upcoming trend, nevertheless there is an attempt to conserve and preserve the scattered folklore. Scholars have realized that this rich reserve needs to be preserved lest it get dissolved in the urban context. Post-independence era saw various scholars and government departments paving the way for publication of items of folklore viz. folktales, folksongs, ballads, riddles, proverbs, etc. in journals like Himprast, Himbharti and Somasi that became a major platform for scholars to publish their creative as well as folk research. There were and are special sections and parts reserved for the publication of folklore. In fact such journals encourage the scholars to collect and publish their finds. Now, just a flip through the old journals shows the vast amount of literature that is preserved for posterity. Himprast and Somasi are journals published in Hindi language, whereas Himbharti is published in Pahari language. The establishment of ‘Himachal Academy of Arts and Languages’ in 1972 was a milestone in formally and officially starting an institution that encouraged scholars to take up various language projects, translation works, folklore projects and other creative works. It also provides fellowship, financial assistance and other help in publications. It has published in the last years, since its inception many anthologies of Himachali folktales in Hindi and Pahari. Katha Sarvari –I and II (1977), Himachal Pradesh Ki Lok-Kathayen (1990), Chandrabhaga: Himachal Ki Janjatiya Lok-Kathayen (1993), Kath Ki Ghodi: Himachal Ki Lok-Kathayen (1991), are some of the most reliable primary sources to be worked on. Journals like Somasi, Chandrabhaga, Himbharti and Bagar are also published by the Himachal Academy. Some editions of these journals are especially dedicated to the folktales of Himachal. Apart from these some famous scholars like Gautam Sharma Vyathit, O.C. Handa, Bansi Ram Sharma, P.C. Kashyap have made personal efforts in collecting, categorizing and publishing of the folktales. Bansi Ram Sharma was the first to do an indexing of the ‘motifs’ of Kinnauri folktales. He did a scientific study of some 500 folktales by taking Stith Thomon and Antti Arne as a model. Apart from some translations by Manohar Singh Gill, Gurmuukh Singh Bedi, Som. P. Ranchan, H.R. Justa, etc. there are other dissertations and thesis by Swarnakanta Sharma, Prem Bhardwaj, etc. that are
commendable. There are scholars that have variously categorized the Himachali folktales and written extensively on them. Most of the works are available in Hindi. Bhardwaj’s and Justa’s psychological study of the tales is commendable and encouraging. While there are many studies being carried out on cultural and psychological grounds, it is intriguing that there is still a lot of room for analysis and detailed study in this area.

Further in-depth study of the narrative techniques, humour and loose social order in the folktales; function of folktales as an alternate text for social control; examination of the medium of folktales in the light of changing sociological contexts; folktales’ influence and transformation over the ages, could be some interesting topics for future study. It is desirable that further studies in the areas focus on making holistic studies that do not just extract motifs or particular features of folktales but rather look at their roles in the social environment to which they belong.

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THE LOTHANAGA TRADITIONAL CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES: REFLECTIONS IN FOLK NARRATIVES

- REMBEMO ODYUO

Abstract:
The Lothas have been primarily a vocal people. They did not know written form till the advent of the Christian missionaries who framed the Lotha alphabet in the 19th century. This did not mean, however, that the Lothas did not satisfy their literary inclinations. Their literature, though oral, found expression in the art of telling stories which are now preserved as the folklore of the Lotha people. This paper is an attempt to look at some of the traditional cultural beliefs and practices embodied in their tradition and as reflected in their folk narratives. In this essay, folk narratives refer to any traditional literature that has been passed on by word of mouth and they may include all traditional literature; myths, legends, songs, folktales etc.

“No one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of the past human experience and explain the how and why of the present day conditions. Whether memory changes or not, culture is reproduce by remembrance put in words and deeds. Through memory the mind carries culture from generation to generation” - Jan Vansina

Traditional cultural practices reflect values and beliefs held by members of a community for periods often spanning generations. They had evolved from the people’s way of life since time immemorial. They may relate to the less important aspects of social life including food habits to more defined and stringent as the specific duties and obligations of men and women. The following are some of the traditional cultural beliefs and practices of the Lotha-Nagas:

Key Words: Naga, Oral tradition, Naga society, Naga marriage system & inheritance of property

Full Version of Paper

Birth of a Child & Ceremonies
The birth of a child is sacred, and therefore the parent of the unborn child has to fulfill certain norms in order to give birth of a child. It was an aged old custom among the Lothas that a Lotha woman during pregnancy may not allow to touch or eat meat of some wild animals. It is believed that by doing so curse may fall upon the couple or the unborn child. She was also not allowed to kill of any wild animals. It is most important that neither the husband nor the wife should kill a snake during this time. By doing so it is
expected that the child would have a tremulous tongue when it is born. It is also forbidden to an expectant mother to cut her hair. Any hairs which fall out are carefully collected and twisted into the hair-band.

At the time of delivery she is attended by women folk and an old midwife called Oshangessi. The husband is allowed to remain on her side at the time of delivery. In the past when a women experiences a very painful birth the husband is said to make fire and fumigates his wife or exchange a hot ‘rice beer’ with her. Also the husband occasionally spits on his fingers and puts a little of his saliva on the woman’s stomach. By doing so it was believed that a woman can give birth to a child without much difficulty.

After a child is born, a name is given to the newly born other than that which is to be his/her name. This is done in order that the evil spirits may be deceived and go away, thinking they are in possession of the real name. If the newly born is a boy, a cock is killed, and a hen in the case of a girl. The fowl meat is then cooked which is called ‘ethihan’ (birth-meat) and is served only to the mother who gave the birth and the midwife Oshangessi. No members of the household including the husband can eat the birth-meat. If it were to be eaten by any member of the family or the husband, they may not have a good relationship with the newly born.

On the sixth day, the male child is christened. On the contrary, if a female child is born, the christening takes place on the fifth day. On the sixth day and fifth day, in the case of a boy and female respectively, the child’s grandmother and an old woman, would be invited to do the honour. On this day, either piglet or big is killed and the meat prepared for the ceremony is called ‘mvuchok han’ (ceremonial meat).

On the sixth day morning, a boy, and on the fifth day, a girl will be called to the house of the newly born. The boy/girl will be asked to half-bend facing towards the rising sun. The old woman then performs a ritual by lifting up the child and will place the child six times on the back of the boy/girl and sing the ritual song:

To a male child, the woman says:

“Ralo nini nzo wotav, Sophano nini nzo wotav,”
“You will go with him to the jungle together, You will go with him for hunting together,”

And to a female child, the woman says,

“Otssungo nini nzo wotav’ Ojulo nini nzo wotav,”
“You will go with her for collecting fire wood together, You will go with her for fetching water together,”
After this ritual is performed the child’s ears is pierced and hair is cut. Now the child is ready to be carried for the first time.

Marriage System
Marriage is the union of a boy and a girl to form a family with social and religious consent, in which the mates, their parents and the village elders have to give their consent. Marriage in Lotha dialect is called Yanbi Yanthan. The norms are very clearly defined. The form of marriage most common and widely accepted in the Lotha-Naga society is monogamy. Monogamy is a form of relationship in which an individual has only one partner during his or her lifetime. Polygamous system of marriage was also practised among the Lotha-Nagas. Child marriage is unknown among the Lotha-Nagas. Widower or widow remarriage is allowed in the society without any loss of respect or social stigma.

In the past, Longapvui (a go-between or intermediary), preferably an elder woman, is engaged to convey the proposal. Normally she visits the girl’s house more than once as the matter has to be acquainted through slow degree. When the Longapvui goes and offers soko (rice beer) to the girl’s family, and if the offers of soko is accepted by the girl’s family, it means the proposal for marriage by the boy’s family is accepted. After this is done both the parties sits and discuss the marriage plan and the bridegroom gives the girl a rain-shield (phuchyo), a small carrying-basket (yingkhangdro) and a dao handle. In some cases, the groom used to give okhyak/phari (basket) and onhyan (rope to carry the basket). The bride in return gives to the groom Lechapsu (dao holder) and Ruve (apron).

The following articles were the gifts given by the girl’s family or relative’s as a token of love and appreciation to the bride on the wedding day:

1. *Chumo Teri* (bobbins thread) for weaving cloths
2. *Lepok* (dao)
3. *Vekhuro* (sickle)
4. *Moro* (winnowing fan)
5. *Chohchu* (spade)
6. Domesticated animals, including pigs, chickens, dogs, etc
7. Food items, including paddy, rice, chilies, etc
8. Dress and ornaments, etc

In the past, it is the custom of the Lothas that no marriage is allowed to take place before Pikhuchak (feast of prosperity). For it is a belief that if marriage takes place in the village before the feast of prosperity, the prosperity of the village is hindered. After Pikhuchak (feast of prosperity) a day is fixed for giving Hanlam (price of equilibrium). Before giving any other marriage price, price of equilibrium called hanlam is given three days prior to the wedding day.

Divorce
Divorce amongst the Lothas is less common and unlike marriage there is no ceremony connected with it. Divorce may be on any ground like infidelity, barrenness, pregnancy by another man, adultery, ill-treatment and desertion. Whatever may be the cause of
divorce, it is intimately connected with refund of the bride price depending on the merit of the case. 

The following are some of the cases which results in the termination of marriage:

1. If the wife leaves her husband and goes away out of her own decision, in this case, she or her parents do not get back any part of the bride price.

2. If the wife goes away for no fault of the husband, not only she will not get anything, but also she will have to repay the cost of the marriage to her erstwhile husband. And if the wife goes back to her parents, the burden of repaying the bride price may fall under her parents. But if she goes away with her paramour, he will bear the formalities.

3. Termination of marriage because of husband’s infidelity, or incompatibility, and not for wife faults, the wife may be allowed to take her personal belongings only including clothes, ornaments, weaving apparatus, agricultural implements etc.

4. Again termination of marriage resulting from wife’s infidelity, the husband gives Rs 10 to her as divorce cost. And if the wife goes away with her paramour the husband will get back a part of his marriage expenses which is generally paid by her paramour.

5. If the husband deserts his wife for no fault of her, the husband will have to pay a heavy fine which is settled by discussion between the two parties.

Generally and since marriage is a difficult and costly affair for a man, a husband does not desert his wife. And since remarriage of a wife is not very easy, the wife generally does not take initiative for separation. Whatever may be the cause of divorce; it is talked and settled, whenever necessary with fine, between the two families.

**Inheritance of property**

Inheritance is understood to be transmission of property from person to person at death or before death. It is practiced separately according to the type of the society i.e patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral. In the context of Lotha-Naga society, the family organization is patrilineal and therefore inheritance is inherited exclusively by the male heir. It is an age old customs amongst the Lothas for a father to divide his property among his sons during his life time. In many cases, the youngest son usually gets a lion share of the family property, but he has obligation relating to the care of his aged parents. When sons marries and sets up a separate house hold, each son received his portion of the father’s property. In the case where a father died leaving with no male heir, or grandsons, brother, brother’s son, the property is inherit by the male members of first relatives and they are responsible to look after the daughter until they get all matured. Daughters have no role in the inheritance even in the absence of a male child of the family. If there is no male heir, a daughter may have become fit to be the care-taker being entitled to its portion, but the property reverts back to the male line subsequently.

The property mainly comprises of cattle, household articles and so on but the land can be held either by the village, a clan, or an individual. Heirlooms such as the ancient *daos* and spears which the Lotha so prizes are held in trust by the senior member of the clan in the village, provided he has done all the social gennas. To alienate them would bring disaster on the whole clan.
Conclusion
For centuries, the given context of the tradition remained static and idyllic. However, with the introduction of education, the acceptance of Christianity and the process of globalization that has permeated in the Lotha-Naga society have deeply impacted them in every aspect of their life. Nevertheless, it is observed that despite the various changes that were introduced and the manner in which the Lotha-Naga adopted and incorporated them into their lives, the intrinsic values and principles survived and remained firmly with the people.

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REFLECTION-1

SK. MAKBUL ISLAM RECEIVED ‘NAVAKALEVARA AWARD-2015’

- SUJAY KUMAR MANDAL

In true sense this can be called a rare achievement. The revered Samkaracharyya of Puri, Jagadguru Nischalananda Saraswati handed over the “Navakalevara Award-2015” to Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam in presence of Gajapati Divyasimha Deva (the king of Puri) and eminent Professor Surendranath Dash on 11.07.2015 for his unique research on Sri Jagannath.

Dr. Sk. Makbul Islam has been working on ‘Sri Jagannath Consciousness’ since 2002. His major work “Lord Jagannath in Bengal: Impact on Folklore and Culture” was published in ‘Folklore Research Journal’ (Vol-9, Orissa Special Issue, p. 00-000). In this article Dr. Islam had made a detailed study on how Sri Jagannath influenced the folk-cultural fabric of Bengal. Later on Dr. Islam has done extensive research on “Sri Jagannath Consciousness in West Bengal, Nepal and Bangladesh”. He executed fieldwork in West Bengal, Bangladesh and Nepal, visited all the major Jagannath temples and made documentation of the same. This was a Major Research Project supported by University
Grants Commission, India (2009-2011). Dr. Islam was the Principal Investigator of the Project. By this time Dr. Islam rendered 6 books on Sri Jagannath, such as:


The second book “*Sri Jagannath: Dipti O Byapti*” (ISBN: 918-81-89276-48-5) is an edited book that contains Odiya and English articles on Sri Jagannath. This is a felicitation volume of Professor Surendranath Dash.

The third one is a booklet titled “*Sri Jagannath Anubhab*” (Bangla, ISBN: 978-81-89827-43-4) renders a narrative poem on Jagannath.
The fourth book titled “Banglar Jagannath Sahitya” (Bangla, ISBN: 978-81-89827-66-3) is a unique research on Jagannath Literature of Bengal. No other scholar than Dr. Islam has brought our attention to this field.


Dr. Islam is working on “Sri Jagannath in North-East India” covering four states like Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura. This is also a Major Research Project approved and supported by the University Grants Commission, India (2015-2018).

“Nabakalevara Award” is mentored by Sree Jagannath Research Institute, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The award is given to a Non-Odiya scholar only in Jagannath’s Navakalevara year. The first recipient of the award was German Indologist Harman Colkey (1996). After 19 years, the second recipient is Dr. Islam (2015).

Dr. Islam was born in a Sufi-Muslim family. His mother was pious and father was a saintly person. His scholarship speaks of a balanced blending of logic and devotion. As a researcher, his interest flourished in many areas of which folkloristic study on Sri Jgannath holds a bright position in academic.
‘BAHA BONGA’ - THE FESTIVAL OF FLOWER OF THE SANTALS

- SK. MAKBUL ISLAM

The ‘Baha Banga’ festival of the Santal community held in ‘Disam Jaher Than’ in Boner Pukur Danga village in Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal (India) on 4th March 2015. This festival is really colourful including offering of puja to Disam Jaher, dance and song in the beginning of spring season (basanta).

Jaher is the Goddess of the Santals. The Jaher Than is located under a Sal tree. In Santali language ‘Baha’ means flower and ‘Bonga’ means God. Santal Festival starts with Baha Bonga. Sal Flower is offered to Jaher with some rites and rituals usually performed by the community priest known as Naik (or naike). The ‘Baha Bonga’ festival helps to enhance the social cohesion amid the community. The Baha Bonga involves a taboo, that is plucking new bud from tree is prohibited. This traditional folk tradition helps to bloom the bud into flower, fruits and seeds in due course of time. This is undoubtedly a friendly festival for nature and vegetation to grow without any interruption. In wider sense it helps protect the green as well as helps conservation of nature too.
শ্রীচৈতন্যের দশ অবতার

- শেখ মকবুল ইসলাম

শ্রীচৈতন্য দাসের চৈতন্যভাবন্ত গ্রন্থে শ্রীচৈতন্যের অবতারতত্ত্ব প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। এই গ্রন্থের মূল প্রতিপাদ বিষয় হলো শ্রীচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুর সশস্ত্র অবতার হয়েছেন নববীর। তিনি অবতার। চৈতন্যভাবন্ত লেখা আছেঃ

তবে রূপে শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য মহারাজ।

নববীরে অবতার নাম বিখ্যাত।”

(চৈতন্যভাবন্ত আদিভুবন, আধ্যাত্ম-১ম, পৃ:১)

কলিযুগে হরিসিদ্ধীর্তনই ধর্ম। হরিসিদ্ধীর্তন-দ্বম পলায়ন করার জন্য শ্রীচৈতন্যের ধরাধামে অবতীর্ণ হয়েছেন। তাই বুদ্ধিবদন্ত লিখেছেন—

“কলিযুগে ধর্ম হয় হরিসিদ্ধীর্তন।
এতদ্ভাবে অবতীর্ণ শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য।
এই কঙ্ক তাপনত সর্ব অভূত।
শ্রীরাম শিষ্যদিত গৌরচন্দ্র অবতার।
কলিযুগে সর্ক হরিসিদ্ধীর্তন।
সব প্রকাশিত চৈতন্যদাস।
কলিযুগে সংকীর্ণসমরণ পালিবার।
অবতীর্ণ ঐন্দ্র ধ্রু সর্ব পরিক্রমে।”

(চৈতন্যভাবন্ত আদিভুবন, আধ্যাত্ম-৪ম, পৃ:৫)

শ্রীচৈতন্যের অবতার বুদ্ধি, তা আর এর নাম প্রশংসার লিখে বলবার দরকার নেই। আমার এই সকল প্রবন্ধের আলোচনা বিষয় হলো—শ্রীচৈতন্যের ‘শশ ওঁ রাহা‘ বিষয়ে আলোচনাপত্ত করা। এটা চৈতন্যের অবতার তত্ত্বের একটি বিশেষ দিক। চৈতন্যভাবন্ত গ্রন্থে একাধিক স্থানে বৃহত্তরসমূহ ‘চৈতন্যের দশ অবতার’ তত্ত্বের উল্লেখ করেছেন।

শ্রীচৈতন্যের অবতার ভাবে সমাধিত। শ্রীচৈতন্যের দেহের আমি বিভূতি বোধ করি না। তাই শ্রীচৈতন্যের ‘দশ অবতার রূপ’ ধরা পড়েছে শ্রীকৃষ্ণকৃপায় বুদ্ধিবদন্ত সদা অনুভব করি। তাই বুদ্ধিবদন্ত লিখেছেন—

“কলিযুগে বিস্মিত ধর শ্রীকৃষ্ণ।
বুদ্ধিবদন্ত সংকীর্ণ সংজ্ঞায়ন।
কেন্দ্র যুগে শ্রীচৈতন্য বহিঃবিরাম।
মধুর-রূপে তুমি জন প্রভাতে বিহার।
কৃষ্ণরূপে তুমি সব শ্রীরামের আঘার।
হয়শ্রীরামে কর বেঁধে উদ্বার।
আমি তোমার দুই ধূম বৈষ্ণব সংরাম।
শ্রীব্যাজনাপ্রে কর পৃথিবী উদ্বার।
নারিসংঘর্ষণে কর হরিপুরীন।
বলি ছাড় অপরূপ ব্যামরুপ হই।
ধ্রুপদামরূপে কর নিষ্কমিত্রায় মহী।
রামকঠোরণে কর রাম-সংহার।
হহ হর্ষরূপে কর অনন্তকিছু।
বৌদ্ধরূপে দামা-রূপে কর প্রকাশ।
কৃষ্ণ রূপে কর হেমাকাংগের বিনাশ।”

(চৈতন্যভাবন্ত আদিভুবন, আধ্যাত্ম-৪ম, পৃ:৪)

এখানে দেখা যাচ্ছে, বিষয় দশ-অবতারের কমধূমক চৈতন্যদের আলোচিত হয়েছে। চৈতন্যভাবন্তের মধ্যে শ্রীচৈতন্যের অবতার এক ধরনের বৌদ্ধ বিষয়ে কথা আছে, মূলার্থে প্রথম ধরে বর্ণ-ভাবের তোলপাড় শ্রীচৈতন্যের বর্ণ-রূপ ধারণ করেন—

Editor: Sk. Makbul Islam
এ ছাড়াও চৈতন্যের দশ অবহার তর্কে সমর্থন আছে মধুরে। শাহসুন্দরীর দশ অবহারের ফলে তারা পুনরায় হারান।

(চৈতন্যভাগত, মধুর, অধ্যায়-১৩, পৃঃ১৩৭)

ভাগবতের দশ-অবহার খাঁসী গঙ্গা-কৃষ্ণ এবং বিদ্যুৎ ভাষা ও ভক্ত-মনে নানা ভাবে প্রভাবিত করেছে। ভক্তগণের বীর্যবিনিময়ের দাবীতে এ প্রস্তাব স্থানীয়। ইতিহাসে যা মণিপুরী ধারাবাহী মূল্য অতিক্রম শিক্ষার একটি শিশুমূলক দিক। এ ছাড়াও, তেরাকোটা মনিনিতের দশবারীর প্রথমে, বিশিষ্ট অবহারের তাতে ইত্যাদি এ প্রস্তাব স্বধৰ্মী।

চৈতন্যভাগতের কবিও দাবীতে ভাষার সঙ্গে চৈতন্যের সেবার করেন। চৈতন্যের অবহার ছিল এ কথা নতুন নয়। তবে তার দাবীতে রূপ আদায়ের কাছে নতুন লাগে। ভূলোক নাস চৈতন্যের দাবীতে ভাবনাকে শাপের দাবীমূলক ওপর প্রস্তাব নিয়েছেন।

গ্রন্থ
চৈতন্যভাগত, রূপোক সন বিশিষ্ট, নৃপনাথা সুধার সেন। সাহিত্য আকাশের, চতুর্থ মুল্য। ২০১১।

লেখক
শেখ মকুনিল ইসলাম। মুল্যমূল্যকল্পের প্রাক্তন একাডেমিক প্রকৃতি এবং মিলিটার আইনসিটির কর্মসূচী। বাংলা বিভাগে সেন্ট পলসুর ক্যাথলিক মিশন কলেজে কলকাতা। ইমেল:

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