



Project on Folk Literature of Nitaipukhuri-Panidehing Area

Sponsored by
Department of English, HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri
Dist- Sivasagar, Assam, PIN- 785671

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Assam is rich in folk literature with the distinctiveness of diverse folk culture of ethnic societies. A great variety of folk songs, poems, folk tales, proverbs contribute to the rich cultural heritage of this North-Eastern state. Different folk songs like Aai Naam, Dhai Naam or Nichukani Geet (Lullaby), Biya Naam (Marriage Song), Tokari Geet, Deh Bicharar Geet (Spiritual song), Bihu Geet, Bon Ghosha, Phul Konwarar Geet, Moni Konwarar Geet, Naharar Geet, Moni Dewanar Geet, Nao Khelar Geet, Goshai Naam, Jikir and Jari, Swarajar Geet, and many more are still prevalent in Assam. These songs are orally handed over to the next generation, and as such they are continued generation after generation. The tales of Burhi Aair Sadhu, compiled by eminent writer, Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezboraoah, are nothing but a few folk tales listened from the grandma.

Nitai-Panidehing is situated in Sivasagar District, with 16 villages, of which some are located in riverine area. The villages are Dowarichiga Gaon, Baputigarh, Bogpara Gaon, Bagali Pathar Gaon, Garukhuti Gaon, Gohain Gaon, Ahom Pathar Gaon, Bhatgaj Gaon, Bam Rajabari Gaon, Borgaon, Bahuwabari, Ushapur, Pahukhowa, Nowjan, Udaipur No. 1, Udaipur No. 2, Borguri, Araltoli, Narayanpur etc. These villages are inhabited by a number of ethnic peoples. Ahom, Koch Rajbanshi, Deori, Sonowal Kachari, Mishing, Nepali, Bodo are to name a few, with distinctive cultural values and resources.

This project, which would be carried out by the students of Department of English, intends to explore the rich cultural heritage of the region through the field based study on Folk Literature.

Sub-themes:

For the benefit and convenience of the students the theme of the project is divided into a number of sub-themes:

1. Folk Tales of Nitai-Panidehing Area
2. Love Songs of Nitai-panidehing Area
3. Nichukani Geet (Lullaies) of Nitai-Panidehing Area
4. Tokari and Deh-bicharar Geet of Nitai-Panidehing Area
5. Folk Songs of Different Tribes of Nitai-Panidehing Area
6. Any Other relevant Theme

Spiral Bound Project Report must be submitted in printed form within 4 months. The report must be within 5000 words.

Dr. Gitali Saikia
Head & Associate Prof., Dept. of English

Manashi Gogoi
Vice-principal, HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri

Registration: Last date: 12 June 2024

Contact details:

Meghali Boruah (Mobile no. 9678564882)

Jaspreet Kaur Sagoo (8876258195), Dr. Polin Hazarika (Mobile no. 9435839574)

**Project
on
Folk Literature of Assam**
**Topic - Assamese Proverbs (*Fokara Yojana*) : A Study of Nitai-
Panidehing Area**

Submitted by
Sujata Borah &
Dristipriya Dutta
FYUGP Sem - III
Department of English

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Gaiha
29/08/24
HoD, Associate Prof.
Dept. of English
HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri

Submitted to the Department of English
HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri, Sivasagar.

PIN- 785671

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Sujata Borah

Dristipriya Dutta

1.0 Introduction:

Literature is the reflection of a nation's identity, culture and values. From time immemorial, people used to share their thoughts and experiences through songs and stories in their own languages. This eventually came to be known as Folk Literature. Folk Literature is the flow of culture having no written language. It has been transmitted orally. Both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles etc. form the very bulk of Folk Literature.

Assam, a unique state of North- East India, is very rich in the context of civilization and culture. In ancient Assam oral literature has been playing a crucial role in traditional Assamese society. The Folk literature reflects the day to day joy and sorrow of the common people, especially the life of the farmers and their families. Assamese oral literature is very resourceful in the context of quantity and quality. It is all about how the farmers celebrate harvesting how the common people worship their Gods and how they celebrate their significant festivals.

2.0 Significance of the subject:-

The study of proverbs promotes an understanding of their functioning across different language and cultures, highlighting the similarities in their figurative structure and stylistic use in discourse, proverbs also have external structure such as sound harmony which contribute to their effectiveness and impact.

3.0 Objectives:-

Proverbs are usually given as a piece of advice to people. Although every language has its sayings and expressing their way of the world many cultures share the same proverbs.

Teaching proverbs not only expand knowledge of vocabulary but also familiarize them with the folk culture. This project is carried out with a view to

3.1 Gather knowledge about proverbs scattered in Nitai-Panidehing area.

3.2 To study how the proverbs of this area reflect the Assamese society

4.0 Methodology:-

Descriptive and analytical method has been used in this paper. Moreover the descriptive method has also been used wherever feels necessary. The data used in this paper are taken from both primary and secondary sources. Though field study primary or first-hand data are collected other important methods in collecting data in qualitative field of research like women studies are observation, interview, schedule, questionnaire, case study etc. In this study of Folk Literature, specially, interview and observation techniques are used.

5.0 Review of Related literature:-

A number of books and articles have been consulted to acquire knowledge about Assamese proverbs. These books help to study Assamese proverbs from different angles. Various aspects of proverbs are discussed in these books.

Axomiya Bhakha Alangkar:- Fokora Yojona, is a book on the common Assamese Sayings, written by Jibon Chandra Koch, published by Banalata, Dibrugarh, gives a detail account of a large number of proverbs and their meaning.

In *Some Assamese proverbs* written by Captain P.R Thornhagh Gurdon (1896), printed in Shillong by Assam Secretariat Printing Office, now available in Internet Archive, it is said in the introduction that "... proverbs, which have in many cases been picked up from the mouths of the people, will speak for themselves." This book is a collection of Assamese proverbs, Which are short pithy sayings that express a general truth or piece of advice as well as the beliefs of the society in general.

6.0 Discussion:-

Proverbs are short sayings that teach us valuable lessons and offer advice. They are passed down through generations and are found in many cultures. Proverbs help us understand life better and guide us in making good decisions. They often use creative language, like comparisons and metaphors, to make their message more memorable.

Proverbs cover a wide range of topics. Such as friendship, love work, success, and failure. They can be used in everyday conversations, writing and story telling to add depth and meaning. They are like wise words from our ancestors, offering insights and guidance to help us navigate life challenges. Proverbs are also a window into a culture's values, beliefs and traditions. By studying proverbs, we can gain a deeper understanding of a communities history, Customs and way of life. Overall they are a treasure of wisdom, Offering practical advice and inspiration for living a good life.

Proverbs is an important sub genre of oral literature. They are the representation of the society at large. They are made from the experiences which we get from the society and are a kind of moral or educational.

6.1 Lessons for the folk society:

Almost in all societies elders and parents use proverbs to spread the knowledge and to guide the new generations. Proverbs are the store house of wisdom of different race and it plays an important role in importing informal education among people. Although proverbs are created by unknown composers they throw glimpses an different places like environmental problems, agricultural management social conduct, patriotism, superstitions, status of women, medical remedies, hospitality, customs, beliefs and family relations etc.

Assamese proverbs contain ideas or information suitable for importing instruction. The Folk people composed the proverbs of inculcating in the succeeding generations those virtue in the principles that have traditionally been deemed as desirable common people use these

proverbs in their day to day life and there by acquire and transmit the knowledge informally proverbs in one of the most important bearers of the moralities those are prevalent in a society proverbs have high structural and contextual value proverbs can be divided in some sub genres given below:-

- i) Proverbs relating to agricultural activities : “Ahin Katit rakhiba pani jen rajai rakhe rani”. (One should keep water in the paddy field in the month of Ahin and Kati, just like a king carefully keeps her queen.)
 “Mahantar chin mahanit, burha garur chin ghahanit” (A priest is judged by his prayers and a cow by its pasture)
- ii) Proverbs relating to women : “maak saihe jiyek jati” (Like mother like daughter)
- iii) Proverbs relating to preparation of food : “Chahar sesa, masher kesa” (Cold tea, and uncooked fish, cannot be eat)
- iv) proverbs relating to medicinal herbs, remedies and dietary habits.
- v) proverbs relating to house building : “Pube bhoral, pachime goral” (The granary is in the east, the barn should be in the west)
- vi) Proverbs relating to journey : “Pathe nari bibarjita” (One should give up the company of women while going somewhere.)
- vii) Proverbs relating to learning : “Porhai Porhe, ruwe paan
 Ei tiniye nichinte aan”
 (Those who teach, learn and plant ‘paan’, they never think about other things.)
 “Alpa Vidya bhayankari” (Little learning is a dangerous thing.)

Proverbs, often seen as a vital component of folklore, serve as a repository of collection wisdom and cultural heritage. In Assam, a region rich in diverse ethnic and linguistic traditions, proverbs play a crucial role in reflecting the social values, beliefs and everyday life of its people. This discussion delves into the significance of proverbs as a form of folk

literature in Assam, Analyzing their thematic elements, cultural relevance, and the ways in which they encapsulate the live experiences of various communities.

Conclusion:- In conclusion the proverbs 'Actions speak louder than words' reminds us that it's not what we say but what we do that truly matters. Through our actions, we demonstrate our character, trust, commitment and intentions, building trust, credibility and respect. Empty words may impress initially, but it's the tangible efforts and results that ultimately speak to our true nature.

As we navigate personal and professional relationships let us remember that actions are the lowest language, conveying our values and priorities.

6.2 Sayings of Daak:

Daakar Bachan or *Daak Charit*, are maxims attributed to one Daak, supposed to be the son of Varah-Mihira, sixth century astronomer, are popular in the rural world of Assam. *Daakar Bachans* are also found in Nitai-Panidehing area. The sayings deal with necessary knowledge or experience on such subjects as cultivation, choice of cattle, desirable qualities in a woman (Goswami:2005). These 'desirable qualities in a woman' is definitely the creation of patriarchal society. The patriarchal structure of the Assamese society defines them through popular sayings such as:

1. *Gair barjita oloma bahi*

Strir barjita ghane tole hahi.

(A cow with loose udder is not in demand. A woman who frequently laughs is always kept aside.)

2. *Uthanga kapal, kharamjuria bhari*

Xei nari kulakshani.

(A woman whose forehead is high, legs are broad, she is not like Lakshmi. That means , these are ominous).

3. *Nasta hal krishi majhe hal bat*

Nasta hal stri nite behai hat.

(If somebody makes a path through paddy field it will be spoiled, a woman who always goes for shopping would spoil.) *Sasurita pusi kare aai byaya*

Si narik sada Lakshmi nasaray.

(One who always spends as her mother-in law says,

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth never leaves her.)

4. *Swami sewa gadhuli rati*

Sehise nari Lakshmi jati.

(One who serves her husband day and night is just like a Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.)

5. *Uday kalat nilipe ghar*

Dake bole taik kar antar.

(One who does not polish her house in the morning, should be exiled.)

In these and many more sayings how woman should act that is spoken by that 'wise man, but he did not say anything about the duty of the household for a girl, or a woman. Woman is made by this 'person' who represents the patriarchal society. From her very childhood a girl used to listen to such advices, maxims or sayings. Everywhere there are some kinds of instructions and teachings for her. Because of this process of socialization, a girl internalizes the desired ideals of womanhood. The Hindu woman internalizes the ideals

of wifehood. For Sita, Savitri, Damayanti personify the ideal wifehood.(Singh 216). Jasbir Jain in *Gender and Narration: An Introduction* says, "Gender, like narrative, was a word of wider significance than feminist. Hence the category of gender instead of feminism. Men and women had different kinds of experiences. The manner of contextualizing, analyzing and communicating is also different. Social locations, roles, inherited strengths (and constraints) were different. Even the manner in which history constructed them or cultures negotiated through them was different."(Jain, 2002:xi) Daakor Bachans are looking at the women from male point of view, constructing women for the benefit of males, by patriarchal society, from patriarchal perspective. Jain again says, "In traditional; societies women have been constrained by social constructs and have been vertically divided into family units, relating to the outside world through their men, being governed by their positions. How they coped with these subordinated positions, or lack of communication, or the failure of their dreams? (Jain: 2002, xii)

7.0 Conclusion:

The proverbs available in are an integral part of Assamese oral literature. These proverbs found in Nitai-Panidehing area manifest the use of vocabulary by the village people, and how they express their age-old experiences and beliefs through language. The proverbs thus collected here help us to know the nature and culture of the whole area.

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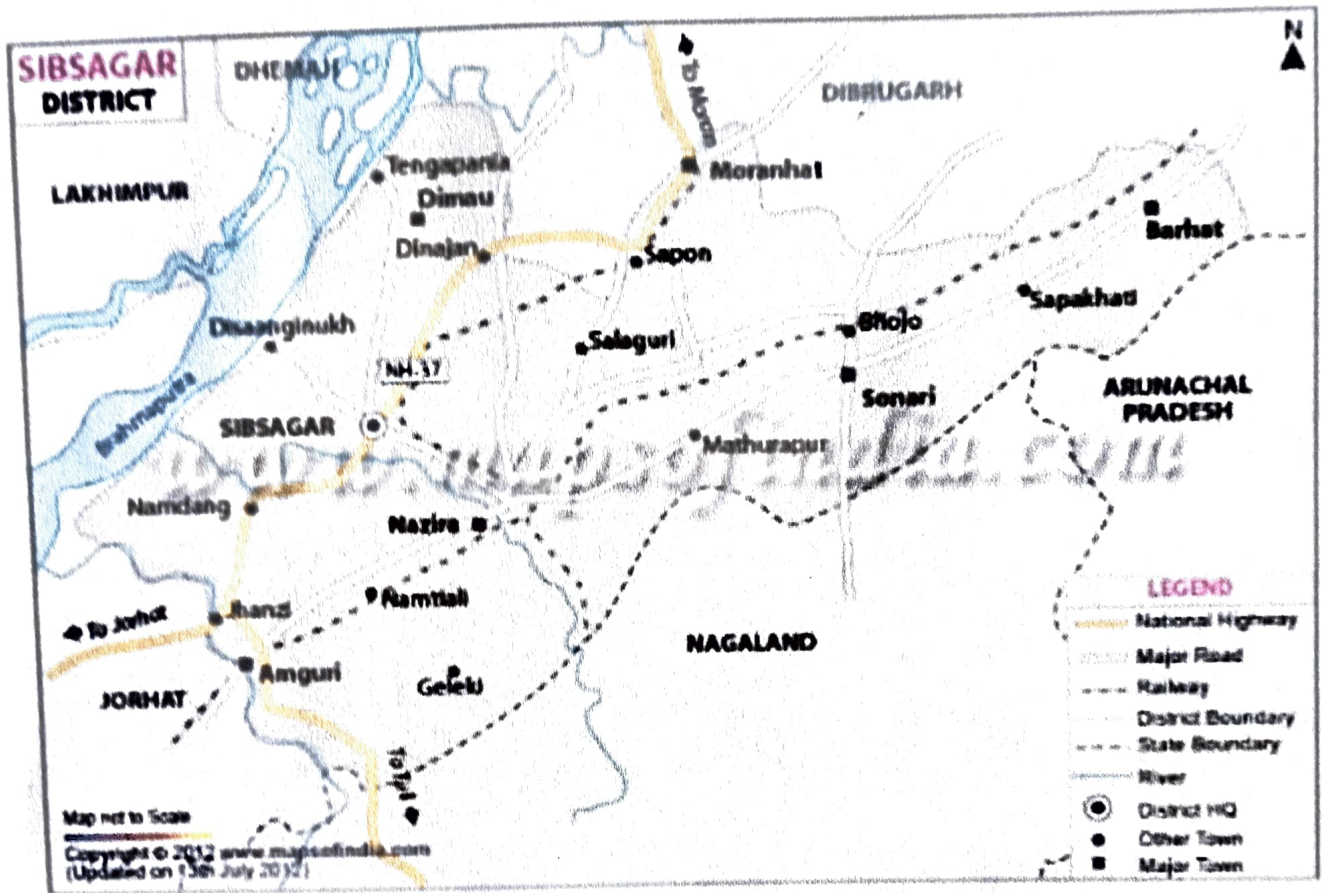
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Interview with Luhit Handique. 19 June 2024

Interview with Manju Konwar. Bogolipathar village. 20 June 2024.

The Area: (Map of Sivasagar District)





Field Visit and Project on **FOLK LITERATURE OF NITAIPUKHURI & PANIDEHING AREA**

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