



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Mystic Reverberations: Goria Folksongs of the Jamatia Tribe.

Ananda Dayal Jamatia

Research Scholar.

En No: P18PEN0002

Department of English, Tripura (A Central University)

Abstract. The article explores the thrilling world of Goria folk songs, highlighting their importance to culture and lyrical depth. It examines the lyrical themes, historical settings, and ethnomusicological aspects of these songs using a multidisciplinary approach. The article highlights the significance of Goria folk songs in maintaining Jamatia culture and identity.

Introduction: The historical record of when and how the Jamatia tribe started worshipping Goria dates back to 1490-1515 A.D. during the reign of Dhana Manikya after an invasion and conquest of the Kukis Thanangchi by Raikwchak the then General of Dhanya Manikya.ⁱ The Jamatias being the forefront army of the king got hold of the eight metal trident of the Goria. Since then, Goria has become the supreme Deity of the Jamatia tribe. Stories, tradition and music are interwoven into the rich tapestry of the human culture. The Jamatia tribe has a remarkable tradition of Goria folksongs in the state of Tripura. These mystical and melodic songs act as powerful windows into the spirit of this native group. These folk songs not only act as a bridge between the old and the new world but also act as a vessel of cultural preservation, the tradition that is getting lost due to the emergency of the modern world. The folksong of Tripura can be classified into ten categories.ⁱⁱ However, this article will only highlight the main three categories of the Jamatia tribe namely:

1. Taunt or Bogla'sⁱⁱⁱ songs.
2. Functional or Devotional songs.
3. Love songs.

1. Taunt or Bogla's song: The taunt or the fool's songs sung during this festival by young boys, girls and the Boglas, make every individual cry with laughter. Everyone present within the reach of these songs are bound to listen. Some of these songs are so obscene that the elders sometimes had to put their hands on their ears. This is perhaps the reason why Late. Chandra Sadhan Jamatia^{iv} one of the resource persons was hesitant to explain the true meaning of the song and often made an excuse whenever I approached him for the translation. However, these songs are usually meant for ritualistic performance and hence are difficult to translate as the signs and symbols made during the performance cannot be fully described in the transcription and hence the true meaning of the song gets thwarted. The primary goal of the song is to make the audience laugh, so any pretense of having a logical, rational or didactic meaning is wholly unwelcome.

Kokborok^v	English Translation
Wanji barini moso	The chillies of the Bengali veg garden
Wanjii barini moso	The chillies of the Bengali veg garden
Chini parani siklarogni	The medians of our village
Sikomo rochok rochok	Pubic hair are rochok rochok

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: The song is sung to taunt the young medians of the village in a spirited and harmonious way during the festival. The pubic hair of the medians is being compared to the growth of the healthy nursery chilli planted in a garden, the healthy chilli plants about 8 inches in height growing densely together are known as “rochok rochok”. So, the song opines that the pubic hair of the village maidens is also healthy and dense meaning “rochok rochok”.

Kokborok**English**

Chana hinbo phaiya

Food is not what they came for

Nungna hinbo phaiya

Drinks is not what they came for

Chini dadale khakwlai hinba

Their heart is weakened

Chwngno si nana phai o

That they came to see us

O Bogwla, eyang nohole

Look at us oh Bogwla

O kherphang, eyang nahole

Look at us oh Kherphang^{vi}

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: The girls through this song taunt back at the boys saying, that the boys did not come to the festival for the food and drinks but rather came to chit-chat with them. The young girls then ask the Boglas and the Kherphang to look at those boys to make them feel uneasy

Kokborok**English**

Dukseber dukseber

The wild Ivy gourd

Tain de rojo o ber

Are not picked and placed in the basket

O parani sikla rokle

The faces of the medians

Mwkhangsi sober sober

Of this village are dull

Balore balore balo

(This is an alliteration - sound)

Mwikhumo haplok Lupe

The peep of the termite's mushroom

Miya hakwtwi Lupe

The shoot of the young bamboo shoot

O para ni bwrwi sikla rokle

The village medians'

khaju thai lupe lupe

Hair buns are just a handful

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: The boys taunt back saying that the median's faces are dull like those of wild ivy gourd and hence it's of no use to talk to them just as the wild ivy gourd is not fit to be picked and placed in the basket. The boys further taunt the girl by saying that their hair buns are almost similar to the first little peep of the termite mushroom and the coming out of the young bamboo shoot out of the ground describing as "ruchu

ruchu" meaning "not handful". This a metaphorical way of saying, the actual meaning of the sentence is that the breasts of the medians have not fully matured and are still not handful.

Kokborok

English

Nogbra bari o khiwi tong mani

While shitting at the back of the house

Sipak Tilangkha Wokma

Swine took away my vagina

Angsai Phaikhele

When my husband returns

Hojak Phainai

He will scold me

Phirok Rophaidi Wokma

Bring it back you swine

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: The most tabooed topic and source of anxiety is sex, one of the strongest primary driving forces behind all human activity. The taboo surrounding this subject is removed by singing songs to the young, old, and respectable members of the community, revealing its importance in the realm of human consciousness. The constant need for a companion to interpret, explain, or give meaning to the phenomena, both natural and man-made, around him is another factor contributing to human anxiety. They appear to sing meaningless jokes and songs without any pretense of meaning, which enables them to enjoy the utter arbitrariness of the world around them. They embrace the absurdity of the universe by writing these obscene songs.

2. Functional Song: Functional Songs are often sung with a specific purpose; these songs are not only about aesthetic enjoyment. These songs are rather crafted carefully to fulfil a particular function, this function can be of any type, ceremonial, melancholy or rite of passage. In the Jamatia tribe, countless functional songs exist, the lullabies or known as Lelema in Jamatia dialect are sung for relaxation, a soothing tune creating a peaceful environment. The functional song also possesses cultural and spiritual significance an eco within the tribe bringing peace, harmony and unity. The prime example is the Gorja song, this song serves as an instructional tool for every individual wanting to study the tradition of the Jamatia tribe. Gorja is the Supreme Deity of the Jamatia tribe. During the seven-day festival of Gorja puja in Chaitra and Baisak, every individual of the Jamatia tribe becomes a part of the festival. The individuals and the devotees go from village to village

carrying a symbolic deity of Gorja, the face crafted of gold and the seven feet height idol made of Muli bamboo.

One of the many songs collected and translated goes like this:

Kokborok	English
Ang hingya do Baba Gorja	It is impossible for me to come walking
Nwng jejaga o tongphanw oro phaidi	Wherever you are please come
Uttor o tong bw, Dokhin o tong bw	Be in the East or West,
Pochim o tongbw Dokhin o tongbw	Be in the North or South
Saath sumurdur o tong phanw	Even if across the Seven Seas
Nwng oro phaiwi, achok phaidi	Come and take your seat
Chini bangwi nwng don tobodi	Bring us riches
Baba Gori Raja yoi	King of Kings
Gomoti ni twi bai nono yakung suja o	Your feet are washed by the water of Gomti
O baba yoi Baba Gorja Raja yoi	Master and King of all Kings

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: This verse is a sincere prayer addressed to Baba Gorja, The, devotees bring forth his intense devotion and longing for Baba Gorja, emphasizing their willingness to go to great lengths. The use of directional terms, such as East, West, North, South, and even “across the Seven Seas” shows how universal their desire is. They address Baba Gorja as the “King of Kings” and ask for blessings, wealth, and recognition while washing the feet of Gorja with the sacred water of Gomti.

3. Folk Love Song: The folk love songs of the Jamatia tribe are usually known for their heartfelt lyric and melodic tunes. The lyric of these song reflects the sincerity of the true love of the lover or the beloved. These Folk love songs sung during the Gorja puja almost make one stand in awe as the lyric used are so enriched metaphorically, the lyric also draws inspiration from the beauty of nature. There exists a popular lore among the Jamatia tribe that, if the husband is upset or annoyed recite a verse from the folk love song ‘Busu ni Khum^{vii}’ then he’ll burst into laughter”. Given below is one of the many love-at-first-sight folk love songs of the Jamatia tribe.

Kokborok**English**

Mokol pengya hai

The expectations in my eye

Aswk tangwngwi angba

Why I didn't?

Kok Thaisa sarwjakliya.

Could have at least spoken a word to him

Bobw ano hwnwi sini khana bilee

He too must have recognised me

Ta wngwi ophlei nailangya

Why didn't he turn back to look at me?

Buiso ni phung o khumtoya kholphro

While picking the flower during Buiso

Jaduno kisa nukrwkmani

Had a little glimpse at my Jadu

kha kisa rwktharmani

My heart now runs after him.

Goriyani kha khorang o

The coming of Gorla festival

Bwkha kubulwi thang o

Matches my heart with his

Khuksaphanw phano jadu no

At least a word to my Jadu

Ring bo jakliya

Could have called him

Kok sabojakliya

Couldn't speak a word to him

(Trans: Mine)

Commentary: This love song is the perfect example of love at first sight. The song speaks about the incident where due to being shy the girl was hesitant and was unable to communicate. She felt that the boy must have thought that he did not meet her expectations. The girl speaks out loud saying despite the love she has for him he did not even bother to turn and look back at her. It was one fine early morning during the eve of Buiso^{viii} while she was picking flowers, she saw him and instantly fell in love. Since then, she felt that her heart belonged to him and only him alone. The girl saying "He too must have recognised me" indicates that the boy must have known that the girl likes him. The song ends with the girl saying she could have at least called him, could have at least spoken a word to him as he was standing right next to her.

As we come to the end, these songs are more than just musical notes they are the heritage of the common people, echoing through time and reminding us of the tribe's enduring spirit. The Jamatia tribe's folk songs are mystic. Songs that can make people cry with joy as well as songs that can connect a person to the divine world. The songs were full of chants, beauty, and smiles. Despite their beauty, these beautiful folksongs are on the verge of fading due to the advent of modernity therefore, preserving them through documentation,

transcription, and widespread publication will help preserve the risk of losing its rituals which celebrated the regeneration of nature.

ⁱ Dr. Bhattacharjee, Pradip Nath. Jamatia Folklore a Sociological Study, 1995, p-138.

ⁱⁱ De, Ranjit. Loksangeet and Janjiban, 2004, p-15.

ⁱⁱⁱ Messenger of Gorja.

^{iv} Late, Chandra Sadhan Jamatia. Personal Interview, 14 Nov 2022.

^v Language of the Tripuri.

^{vi} The high priest, keeper of Gorja's idol.

^{vii} Bush flower.

^{viii} Seven-day festival of Gorja.

References:

1. Bhattacharjee, Dr. Pradip Nat. Jamatia Folklore A Sociological Study, 1995, p-138.
2. De, Ranjit. Loksangeet and Janjiban, 2004, p-15.
3. <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2205031.pdf>.
4. Dr. Banik Somdev. The Oral Tradition of Bengali Folk Songs in Tripura.
5. Jamatia, K.B. Modernity in Tradition: A Historical Study of the Jamatia Tribe of Tripura. 2007.
6. Late, Jamatia, Chandra Sadhan. Personal Interview, 14 Nov-2022.
7. Jamatia, Bipra Kr. Hoda Okra 1. Personal interview. June 26, 2023.
8. Jamatia, Manindra Mohan. Hoda Okra 2. Personal interview. June 26, 2023.