

“Bathudi” Folk Literature : A Bird's Eye View

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Folk literature is one of the important traditions of the tribes of Odisha transferred from generation to generation orally or literally. Bathudi tribe has also its own distinct folk literature. They have songs for children, Changu Geeta (Dhap song), Doli Geeta (song of swing), riddles and short stories.

The Bathudi are an ethnic group found mainly in the north western part of Odisha, such as Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and in the Nilgiri subdivision of Balasore district. Some of them however migrated to neighbouring states of Jharkhand and West Bengal. The 2011 census showed their population to be around 2,17,395. They are classified as Scheduled Tribe by the Government of India. They are Hinduised tribes of Odisha and are settled agriculturist and wage labourers in their main occupation. Their chief God is “Badaam Thakur” worshipped in ‘Athara Deula’ situated amid the reserve forest of Similipal. They use to speak local Odia as their language as they have no mother tongue of their own. They were the original inhabitants of Mayurbhanj and some families of their community were placed in the position of Zamindars of Adipur, Karanja, Jashipur and Similipal by the then rulers of Mayurbhanj. Their socio-cultural life is so interesting that it attracts a number of the scholars to research on them. This article deals

with the folk literature of Bathudi community of Odisha.

Folk literature of Bathudi

One of the famous literary creations of Bathudi tribe is Trilochan Bipra’s “Aadya Sunya Gupta Puran”. It is an unpublished script, in the form of Palm leaf bundle, found in Gokul Chandra Dalei’s house at Haladibata village of Saharapada Block. It is worshipped as a sacred literature by this family and Gokula Chandra’s son spreads the message of the poet by singing and performing “Palla.” It is written in the form of ‘Nabakshari Chhanda’ (each line contains nine alphabets) like Odia ‘Bhagabat’. It contains a myth on evolution theory of the earth, origin and growth of Bathudi tribe.

Evolution theory of the earth and origin of Bathudi tribe

As per the “Aadya Sunya Gupta Puran” before the creation of this earth, there is a rule of void and darkness. The earth was drowned amidst the water. The formless God (Nirakaar) floated himself on a banyan leave. Then he created the Adimaataa (mother Goddess). Once God scrape inside of his ear by putting finger to get relief from itching and brought out some ear wax. He threw it towards his leg. Aadimaataa made it two parts

and threw it in to the water. With the touch of Aadimaataa these two parts of ear wax got life and came out from the water as demons. They were named as Madhu and Kaitabh. They demanded food to mitigate their hunger and drank half of the whole water. They became avaricious to get marry Aadimaataa. To escape from them Aadimaataa made a condition that if they kill almighty Niraakaara then she will marry with both the demons. Demons attempted to kill Niraakaara but failed. Niraakaara beheaded two demons with help of Sudarshan Chakra and threw the flesh and bones of the demons in to the water. One man and a woman were born out of two piece of flesh of the demons and were named as Basuki and Basumaataa. Seven islands were created from other seven pieces of the demons. These are the seven continents of the present world. Bathudi tribe worships Basuki and Basumaataa as their first ancestors (Aadipitaa and Aadimaataa).

Formless God (Niraakaar) directed both Basuki and Basumaataa for creation of the universe having all living and non-living things (biotic and abiotic components). Both of them (Basuki and Baasumaataa) engaged themselves into deep meditation to know the truth behind it for a longer period. So Aadimaataa adorned herself into Mohini (the most beautiful and attractive woman) to fascinate Niraakaar. Niraakaar became irresistible and his sperm leaked spontaneously. He tried to hold by the hand but it flew in three drops through finger gaps and out of these three important Gods got their birth. They are Brahma, Bishnu and Maheswar. This is written in the “Aadyasunya Geeta” as:-

“hoile maayaa je mihini
Niraakaaranka thakuraani
Hoina Mohini murati

Kaame mohile anaadinki
Se murti chahina anaadi
Hajilaa taanaka gyana buddhi
Lingaru birjya je skhalita
Huante prabhu padmanetra
Hastare dharante se reta
Tatkshane padilaa galita
Hasta muthiru gali galaa
Tiniranddhre se bahilaa
Tribindu tridev janam
Hoile suna nruparaan
Brahma Bishnu je Maheswar
Naama bahile aadiswar”

Niraakaar advised Brahma to create the universe having biotic and abiotic components. Brahma created this beautiful earth. Baasuki and Basumaataa became angry and gave birth to twelve sons (Baasukiputras), ordered them to destroy the earth. When Basukiputras were going to do this job by using their Bow and arrow, Treedev (Brahmaa, Bishnu and Maheswar) praised Basukiputras and requested them not to create any harm to this earth as:-

“Aadya srustire tumeeka
Biramaananka madhye srestha
Tenu naayak boli naama
Bahilu atu tini dian
Baasuli bolina ama bahi
Thila je tame baara bhai
Aajun ‘Baathuli’ bolaaiba
Jagate kirati rakhiba”

The word ‘Baathuli’ was later on misspelt as ‘Baathudi’. This is a myth, which speaks the origin of the ‘Baathudi’ tribe. Basukiputras became calm and withdrew their effort but their arrows did not calm. They beg advice from their mother. Their mother advised to collect some pieces of earth from Sapta Dwipas (seven Islands)

and construct a pot. Fill the pot with the water of Sapta Sindhu (seven seas), then drown these arrows in to this water. The situation would be normal. From that day Bathudi community used to observe a tradition that day after the marriage the groom pointed seven arrows (drowned in the water of a pot on the head of the bride) to the front.

“tenu mun kahuchhi tamaku
Bibaaha sesara belaku
A Karma karibe samaste
Chandra surjya thibaa jaake”

“Badaam Puraan” and the myth:

“Badaam Puraan” is a sacred book of Bathudi community. It is regarded as the ‘Jeevan Veda’ of this community. We find another myth from this book on the origin of this community. A son was born to Baasuki from his arm (bahu) and named ‘Bahubali’, he married a girl born to Pravati from her chin (thodi) named ‘Uthuli’. ‘Baahubali’ and ‘Uthuli’ were blessed with a son and named ‘Baathudi’.

Pitaa naama Baahubali maana Uthuli
Tenu taanka putra naama rahuje Baathuli
Sehi dinathaaru naama Bathuli rahilaa
Baathuli name sansre prakhat hoilaa”

(Badaam Puraan-p- 39)

‘Badaam Puraan’ was written by Chakradhar Mishra in 1340 A.D. It is written on the basis of ‘Kuraal Puraan’.

According to the renowned archaeologist Nagendranath Basu “in beginning there is nothing but cunya (sunya) and from the arms of the sunya, Mahaprabhu sprang into existence the founder of their tribe and it was for this (the origin from the arm or baahu of the creator) that the tribe came to be known as Bahuri or Bathuri”. (Archaeological survey of Mayurbhanj)

According to Badaam Puraan as Baathudi became young he got married to Duhlei, the daughter of Kasyapa Risi. He came to know that he cursed to death at the age of eighteen. So he went away to Similpaal forest to meditate. Duhlei was also gone with him. In the forest Badaam Thaakur in the guise of an old man came to them and advised to chant the name of Badaam Thaakur, then goddess Sahan Dei advised to chant both the names i.e Badaam Thakur and Sahan Dei. They chanted the names by biting their chest and thigh as a drum and danced in the jungle. Again Bathudi was advised to invent a drum but he made a one side drum, which is famous as ‘Changu’ among their community. Bathudi played this one side drum and dance with the name of God. By hearing this song all the Gods and goddesses came down to this earth and danced with Bathudi and Duhlei. In the meantime Jama Raja, the God of death came to take away Bathudi from this earth. God Niraakaar of Sunya created an illusion and added a zero on the right side of 18 and it became 180. Jama Raja extended the life span of Bathudi from 18 to 180 years. Bathudi was blessed with all sorts of prosperity by Gods and Goddesses. Then they established a number of stones as the symbols of different Gods in the forest. It is famous as Athara Deula in the Similipala forest. Later on they left Similipal forest region due to increase of their number and attack of wild animals.

ORAL FOLKLORE

It is like the ballads. Oral literature of this community was very heart-touching and interesting. It has its origin with Lories. It transfers orally from generation to generation. Children’s play songs, ridiculous songs, changugeeta, festive songs, marriage songs, death songs, Doli Geeta

(swing songs) etc. are the different types of oral songs.

Children's play songs:-

“Inti Katia kulei
Neijaa megha bulei”

When it is about to rain at the time of play, children request the cloud to pass away without raining.

Sometimes it is seen that sun shine and rain plays hide and seek game. They come one after another. By seeing this situation bathudi child sings:

“Kharaa dauchi barsaa dauchi
Budaam budhaa baahaa hauchi”

Another song related to the same situation is at the time of child play is:

“Megha dauchi jhapur jhaapar
Chataa tale kiare
Mui naai chheinbar kuliaa
Kaniaa dekhei diare”

Children always like to visit their maternal uncle's house. It also reflects in their play songs:

“Iliri milirij hiliri kantaa
To mamu gharke pakhataa”

Another song related to the food of Uncle's house:

“Aasu dhaanar pithaa khaaine naagai mithaa
Mamu ghar bhujaa khaaine naagai majaa”

Changu Geeta:

Bathudi folklore has a song on the origin of Changu or one side drum i.e

“Chapudaa maarian garubaadya kalaa jaata
Tenu kari baadyaama chaangu helaa khyataa”

It has been described earlier that Bathudi chanted the name of Baadamthakur and Salai Debi by biting his hand on the chest to create a

rhythm. Then he invented a drum and it is named after his act of rhythm. That is chapudaa (biting of hand on chest) + angaru or angu (from the body) = Changu.

They use to sing another song of Daaliparba or Daali festival, which begins on Kumar Purnimaa or the full moon day of Odia month Aaswin (September- October). They presented branches of different trees to Badaam Thakur on these days.

“Siriraam Raamje Govinda Raama Raama
Sital baula mule dande birisaam
Odishaar Jagannath Jhadakhande Badaam”

They described the incarnations of Badaam Thakur as

‘Satyajuge Hari Hari je
Tretayaare Ram
Dwapare Srikrishna
Kalijugare Badaam’

Picture of their socio economic life has been reflected in the following changugeeta:

“patra khande tuluthini khadi khande bhangithini
Sujuna saagare naani hala dimisaani
Tote naagai bada saradhaa
Chandra badani Raadha”

Epic literature:- (songs related to the Puranic stories):

“ebe paahilaa rajani syaam chhaad lugaa kani
Dibasare priti karaa purusanka hani
Indra je duhita tule ahalyara sange bhule
Gautama saapa dele sahasreka joni
Syama chhaada lugaakaani”

Description of the beauty of the rural women is also seen in Changu Geeta:-

“aakhire kajalgaara disuacchi ki sundar
Purnami chanda pari mukha taahaar

Mathaare baandhichi beni
Phulakantaa ante puni
Taahaaku dekhile duhkha hare mohar”

Romantic song:

“Mathaaku ta mathaamani
Aanibi jatane kini
Godaku debi jhuntiaa
Baajuthiba kinikini”

Doli Geeta (song for swing):

Bathudis composed a lot of songs for this purpose. They use to sing all these songs since time immemorial. It is sung by both boys and girls, sometimes competition is going on among the boys and girls through songs. Following are some Doli songs of this community.

(I)

“chirili baaunsa bataa
Upare banduchi Surya debataa
Tale bande Basumaataa”

(II)

“Naibaali dhasa-dhasa
Aasa naanimane dolire basa
Dolire basa nakari mana birasa”

(III)

"Hanu gelaa dale dale
Barasake raja aasichhi thare
Aasichhi thare
Doli jhulibaa saangare”

Badi Geeta competition:

Boys and girls sing humorous and ridiculous songs with questions against each other like:

Boys:

“Phutilaa naali palaasa
Baasa naahin khaali rupa sarasa

Rupasarasa
Khande dhuru thaai hasa”

Girls:

“naipaani hala-chala
Kaathaare tamar nahin ta mula
Nahina ta mula
Tameta simili phula”

Song with questions:

“Nua taatiare paana
Jahinre janama tahinre marana
Kahibaki taara naama”

Boys answering the question:

“Paaniru janam luna
Paanire huai taara maran
A ate satya bachana”

Romantic songs to own the heart of a girl:

“Jamukoli kalaa kalaa
Tui abhalaaku muina bhalaa
Chaal jibaa ghini palaa”

Girls:

“Resuna khaailaa puka
Dine hansidele jibaki dukha
Jete hene paranuka”

Boys:

“Aambagachha aabu aabu
Mari haji gene paunsa habu
E bhaba kanhu paaibu”

Girls:

“Baadiri baalia gaba
Tahmara aamara dekhaa hoiba
Jibanare jebe thiba”

Song on the origin of Swing or Doli:

“kansaa taatiaare paana
Siaali nataaru duli janam

Dulijanam
Kheluthile bhagabaana”

Baathudis use a number of idioms, phrases and riddles in their day to day life such as:

Riddles:

“Inti katiya maakala
Bhiniki maarai chaapala”

Answer- (answer- kodaal or spade)

“Khaauthili khaauthili
Bhuka naagibaaru pakeideli”

Answer- (Danta Kaathi or tooth cleaning stick)

“nai sepatu aasilaa jhane
Taa pithier khesu pane”

Answer- (panasa or jackfruit)

“baara haata kaakudi tera haata munji
Aailaa mahaajana heigalaa bandi”

Answer- (dangaa o kata or boat and stick)

“paribaare paribaa
Je gachhara patara naahin
Se tarakaari karibaa”

Answer-(chhatu or mushroom)

Idioms and phrases:-

“Sabu bhangaa juaali badaam saalare thuaa”

Meaning- all broken so to say tired person takes the shelter of BaadamThaakur.

“Jaati aagare haati jaai pare naahin”

Meaning- community is greater than a person.

Kaandana Geeta :-

Marriage is a part of social reforms. When a girl leaves her home, family and friends after marriage, she cannot control her emotion and weeps or cries through songs by remembering the love and affection of the family and friends.

There are a number of songs related to this situation. These are:-

(I)

“baadire nagaani begunaa taati mo maa
Kia karidaba tora paaiti mo maa
Karine kariba mothaaru saan mo maa
Sia ki hoiba mo samaan mo maa
Sakaal khiaa ta sanja hoiba mo maa
Khaai naahin boli kia kahiba mo maa”

Meaning: - Addressing to her mother she sings ‘oh mother! Who will help you in your works? Younger sister was not so perfect to do all this. Your lunch will be late and who will take care of you’

(II)

“sahe belapatra Mahaadebanku a maain
Koti namaskaar maamaananku a maain
Maamaane mote kara kalyaan a maain
Tama paada tale jaaujeeban a main”

Addressing to the maternal aunty she begs blessing through this song.

(III)

“Jhadi barasaare pitaa kakei mo saanga
Kede hasa khushi heu thilei mo saanga
Tuma hasa khela puri rahichi mo saanga
Mora hasakhela sari jaaichi mo saanga”

Addressing to the friends she expresses her worries for her new responsibility of life.

(IV)

“Baali baaigana pukaa a bhaai
Dari paaliaata baaigana bikaa a bhaai
Bhala baaigana biki dianti a bhaai
Pukaa baaigana raandhi khaaanti a bhaai”

Addressing to her brother she speaks that farmers sell their good quality vegetables and eats bad vegetables, like wise you handed over me to other.

Folk story:-

Like all other people Bathudi people also use to tell stories to coexist. They have a number of folk stories but let us discuss some interesting stories.

Story of two rivers

Khairi and Bhandani were two sisters. They visited to their maternal uncle's house on the full moon day of Odia month Shraban (July-August) popular as Gamha Purnima, a festive day. At their arrival they saw that their uncle was absent. They felt disappointed as their aunty was not affectionate. Aunty sent them to the field to work. They worked there till lunch time and felt hungry. Their aunty did not send them food in time. They found two eggs inside a hole and ate these eggs as they were hungry. To their surprise they transformed into two snakes as these eggs were of a snake. At the late hour their uncle came with their food and did not find these two sisters. After some time he found two snakes were roaming there. He asked about these two sisters. Snakes replied that they were the unfortunate two sisters and told all things that happened to them. All are wept there feeling sad and undone. These two sisters flow there as two rivers as there was no way to return into human body. There are two rivers flowing near Jashipura in the name of these two sisters Khairi and Bhandani. People gather to see high waves of these two sisters (rivers) on every Gamha Purnima. This story is also found in the swing songs.

Story of two sisters

Suni and Puni were two sisters. Suni was step daughter to the mother of Puni. She lost her

father and mother at an early age and lives with her step mother. She was physically and mentally tortured a lot by her step mother regularly. One day she decided to leave home and went into the thick forest. Sitting on a rock she cried loudly and requested the wild animal to eat her. One tiger heard it and took her to its cave. On the way the body of the Suni was scratched and she felt pain. Tiger asked, niece! How do you feel? Out of fear she replied its ok, I am feeling fine. Tiger placed her in front of its cave and asked about the smell of its mouth. Suni replied it has a pleasant smell. Tiger was very happy and he went to the nearby market and brought sweets, different beautiful dresses and valuable ornaments for Suni. Suni lived happily there. After some day tiger said, niece! I think your family would be worried on your absent. So let's go to your home. Suni went to her house with all these valuable ornaments and beautiful dresses. Her mother and sister surprised seeing all these and desired to know the story. Suni narrated all happened to her in the forest. After some days her sister Puni desired to pretend like her sister with the tiger to get all these valuable things. She left home and cried loudly inside the forest like Suni. The tiger came and took her. On the way she was asked same questions by the tiger but Puni's reply was very harsh and unpleasant so tiger killed her in front of the cave.

Baathudi folk literature is very amazing and heart-touching. All sorts of tastes of life are reflecting in their songs, poems and short stories. Social customs, traditions, natural beauty, religious beliefs and faiths are also getting a special place in their literature.

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