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ORAL LITERATURE OF THE TRIPURI COMMUNITY AND ITS TYPES

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Abstract

Oral literature is the form of literature that has been passed down for generations orally. In those days, there were no scope for writing or in fact obtaining education, which is why the folktales used to be told and passed on from generation to generation orally. There are different types of oral literature. They are folklores, folk songs, repartee (Phumukmung), idioms etc.

Folklores are the stories of the past which are shared and passed on by grandparents to their grandchildren or by older generation to younger generation. Folk songs are the songs sung by a particular community since the old days. The main folk song of the Tiprasas is Jaduni. The lyrics of the song are usually about yearning someone, expressing passion or pain. It is a form of expressing one's pain of separation, heartbreak or when someone has madly fallen in love. Idioms are phrases which have double meaning and are spoken in indirect manner. It is a way of expressing one's thoughts. Although, the younger generation or children might not be able to understand this kind of phrases. Repartee (Phumukmung) is a way of giving witty replies to each other between two parties of people in a conversation with sarcasm, humor or in a fun and light manner. These are usually humorous and fun to listen to, especially during the evening hours.

Keywords: Folktales, Tiprasa, Folklore, Folk song, Literature.

Introduction

Kokborok is none of the official languages of Tripura which is a northeastern state of India. There are nine kokborok speaking communities in Tripura. Although, there are not many kokborok literary books available, the number is observed to be gradually increasing in the recent years as new writers have started to take the initiative. They write poems, short stories, novels, folklores etc. of different genres. Apart from written form, kokborok literature also has oral literature which has been told and passed on from generation to generation.

Data and Methodology:

In order to put up this piece of writing, two types of methodologies have been used to collect information or data. Those are Primary Source and Secondary Source. Through Primary Source, data have been collected by communicating with people living in village areas. The data was collected from senior citizens Mrs. Sukhu Laxmi Debbarma, Mrs. Tara Laxmi Debbarma and Mr. Mangal Debbarma of begram bari in mandai, Agartala, west tripura.

Through Secondary Source, data have been collected by taking reference from literary books written by writers Rabindra Kishore Debbarma and Naresh Chandra Debbarma and from the folklore-based books written by Tarini Debbarma.

Literature

Every community in the world have their own literature. Literature is a very important aspect for every community as through it, we are able to learn about a particular community's food culture, way of living, cultures and traditions.

Types of literature

Literature is of two types. They are written literature and oral literature.

Oral literature

Oral literature is those which have been told and passed on since the old days. In short, we can say that, the words or phrases spoken by people to each other and later became Folktale or Oral literature. However, it is still unknown as to who first started to tell folktales and since when it started. The words or phrases shared to each other or passed on from one person to another became Oral literature.

Types of Oral literature of the Tiprasa community

There are various types of Oral literature of the Tiprasa community. They are folklores, folk songs, priest chanting, cursing or swearing phrases, idioms, repartee, religious chants etc.

Folklores:

Folklore is a type of oral literature through which we can know about the past of the Tiprasa community. Among all types of oral literature, folklore is the one which is told or described elaborately. There are questions to be asked and lessons to be taught and learned. These are stories about falling in love, disagreement between two communities over marriage, being cursed by Deities etc.

For instance, from the story of Chethuwang, we know that the elder sibling wanted to marry his own younger sister, however, she refused to marry him and climbed up a tall tree, who later flew up the sky. Through this story, we know that marriage between siblings is not allowed in the community.

Idioms:

Idioms are phrases which is said or used with humor to mean or say something. It is also a type of oral literature. These types of phrases can be said in a humorous way according to the given situation. It is a way to say something in indirect manner to show sarcasm or to politely nudge someone about certain matter or situation. It is hard to say who first started using idioms. Following are the examples of idioms in Kokborok -

- a. Ok bukcha tongdi lakai ta nadi.
- b. Ochaini nogo bema kakya.
- c. swi khitung da wasungo dawi peng.

Folk song:

The main folk song of Tiprasa community is Jadu Kolija or Jaduni. It is usually sung during merriment, when someone falls deeply in love or while resting after working whole day in Jhum fields in a form of teasing each other between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. Apart from that, Jaduni is also sung in mourning on the death of a beloved in anguish and pain. Other folk songs are Waying Khilimung, Resiyar Khagra etc. These are also oral literature as these were passed on from generation to generation by mouth through songs.

For example:

"Nini gairingle chemereng mereng thampuima pereng pereng

Ani gairingle chuk soro soro nokbar bon ang soro soro"

Repartee:

It is a form of replying in a witty way which has double meaning to it. It is also a type of oral literature. It can all be of two types such as delivering plain repartee or delivering it through songs. Such as-

- a. Nokhao nok, nokhao huk= Chumui
- b. Khwrwi khe wngya, mokol bai nukya = Nobar
- c. Takhuknwirok lama seklaio = Yakung
- d. oro nuko oro nukya thorailwng mwsa= ainani pohor
- e. nokni bere nok bwsa= gunda

Conclusion: -

Like every other community, the Tiprasa community has various types of oral literature. These have been described elaborately in this writing. Repartee, folk song, idioms, folklores are all different types of oral literature. These have been told and passed on by mouth since the old days. However, these are now about to be forgotten and lost as these are not much seen to be spoken or sung. Without sharing among each other, soon these will be lost and forgotten by time. Therefore, we have to document every type of oral literature and pass on to the future generations in order to preserve them.

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