

Songs of the vernacular Muslims in Lower Assam

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Abstract

Songs of the vernacular Muslims in lower Assam bear oral tradition since its beginning because of no such authentic documentation. Version rolls from mouth to mouth in the form of reversion. The origin of the creation of some songs loses its rightness to follow onward. Some songs lose for ever having no preservation. In spite of the fact, different forms of songs among the vernacular community exist as devotional song, lullabies, nursery songs, play-song, and labour song. With a view to record this literature, songs of all forms are to collect in bookish form.

Keyword: Songs, Lower Assam, Urus Mobarak, Magon. Introduction

Song is a refresher for human being. Every caste and community has attraction to this art. Its feature and nature is distinct according to caste and community. Language is the mainstream to display the main theme of song. This is either vernacular or standard mode of version. Regarding songs of the vernacular spoken Muslims in lower Assam, it is remarkable to say that the language form used in the thematic version of song is Bengali. It is dialectic in form. Different forms of song are found among the vernacular spoken Muslims all over lower Assam. This present paper discusses the distinctive qualities of the song that range from devotion to emotion.

Devotional Songs

This form of song is related to Sufism and Shariatism. The Sufi concerned songs are led by the Peer while the Shariat1 dealt songs by the Alims2.

Sufi-Songs: The Sufi-Songs are four in forms. Each form has especial name, viz-Dakkan, Parergan, Bhajan and Bisched. All these forms are sung step by step in the Urus3. With these four forms of songs, there is another additional form that is distinctly sung at the time of rhythmic utterance on the day of Urus Mobarak under tent at the time of jikir. The gathering individuals utter Allahu closing mouth doing physical motion standing static when someone sing speedy song keeping rhythm between the two. The song sung at this time is called Kashida that gears up the motion of rhythm of Jikir.6

Dakkan: Under a tent arranged for Urus Mobarak, the devotees sit according to their priority. There are several groups to sing around the ashar4 under the tent. At least there sit four parties to sing. At first, there is sung the song entitled as dakkan5. In this form of song, guru is called to accept his disciples. The laities come to surrender themselves before the feet of their guru with soft appeal. They sing at this time as

Doyal Chanra asho tomar kangala daktacha (Kind hearted, come, you are called by your unfortunate devotee)

Ami janina bhajan, janina shadan jakoro nijoguna (I donot know what is devotion, what is motion) Asho tomar kangala daktacha. (Please come, your devotee calls)

Ja tomara sadaigo daka, tara falao nanan paka, (He who always calls you, coil him in many ways) Ja tomari sadaygo daka, tara rakho gachtola (He who always calls you, keep him under tree)

Asho tomar kangal daktacha. (Come your devotee calls you) Doyal Chanra asho tomar kangala daktacha

Jae tomar anugogoto tarae kandao monergo moto (He who is your obedient is wept according to your wish)

Doyal keoka rakho dalan kothai (you keep someone in great building) Keoka rakho gachtola (You keep someone under a tree)

Asho tomar kangal daktacha.

Jaina pather pathikgo tumi (To which way you are the traveller) Sheina pather kangal amigo (I am as like as you)

Bhavae tumijae amar, amijae tomar(In this world, you are mine, I am yours) Tar sinnah ki jagotae(What the symbol is in world)

Asho tomar kangal daktacha.

Doyal Chanra asho tomar kangala daktacha. 7 Parergan

This is the second step to sing to bridge between this world and the world that will come next, i.e. after death. This is the song of crossing the sea of life that is between these two worlds. One example of such song is quoted below:

Ami kidia salabo tori guru, upai bolona, How way I drive my boat priest, show the way)

Ami jarbolae salabo torigo, Sheto amar kothai shonena upai bolona.(That which inspirationI drive my self, that hears no words from me)

Agae somudrurer deo uithacha, Kach baya homaiya uthago (In front there grows waves that upward the boat)

Amar kopal mondo nahoilego,Amari serae jetona upai bolona.(If my forehead was not so bad then no farewell say way)

Somodrutae nouka diae , majimalla sob palaichago(To leave boat in sea, oarsmen all elope)

Amar guru aishae hail nadorilaego, Kinarai nao chapena upai bolona(If my preacher was not the boat driver then no arrival at bank say way)

Ami kidia salabo tori guru, upai bolona. 7 Bhajangan

In this type of devotional song the devotees bewail not to serve their guru so spiritually. The devotees express their sorrows not to deepen their spiritual service to him so profoundly. Again they express their utmost wish to adore their guru. An example of such song is given below:

Badi mon keno gurur kotha shonena(Why my mind does not hear the order of the preacher) Monkae boli guru bhajan(I direct my mind to adore preacher)

Oi pathae mon cholena.(Mind does not go that way)

Badi mon keno gurur kotha shonena.(Why my mind does not hear the order of the preacher) Mon hoiyachae tetoner ghora(Mind turns to running horse)

Diba nishi guira berai ami shohar jora(I roam day and night through city)

Shohar jora guira berai ami gurur kacha keno bashina,(I don't sit by the preacher for roaming through city)

Badi mon keno gurur kotha shonena.(Why my mind does not hear the order of the preacher) Dinerodhin kangal kedae koy(The unfortunate says weeping)

Orae tumi guru nidoy hoilae Ami kar kachae darai,(O you the preacher be unkind, to whom I stand) Tomar prem sikoler rashi dia(love rope)

Hosta keno bandona.(Why donot bind hands)

Badi mon keno gurur kotha shonena.7 Bischedgan

This is very elegiac in form having emotional feeling towards life that is helpless after this mundane world. This type of song shows that earthly attractions can serve nothing to the world that is immortal. To love Allah and to follow His orders intact as His messenger Hazarat Mohammad (Sallallahu Alaihe Wua Sallam) leads his life on this earth are real point to help in the world after this world. This type of song is full of pathos and therefore the singers weep at the time of singing. An example is illustrated here as :

Doyal amar goti ki hobae, amar jedin morono hobae.(Kind what will be condition to me when I shall die)

Amar moroner agae, tomar namo jano jagae ai minoti chorona. (Repaet)(Befoe my death, your name should likely be recollect, such appeal is to your feet)

Amar jedin hoberae moron, bhai bandhu tara shobae koriba rodon(When I die, nears dears will weep) Tara keo janbena kothono amar jibon.(None of them will know what length my life)

Jedin azrail ashia hat pao bandia, amara loiya jabae.(When the soul taker comes and binds my hand and legs, carry me)

Matir khas matitae robae, deher pran pakhi uriarae jabae,(Earthen frame remains in earth, soul bird will go away)

Cholo adeshae dorodi nai, desher manush deshae jai(Forward to the world that is origin, therefore here is no helper)

Je deshae shobai gechae.(Where all have gone) Sharia Songs

These songs are alternatively called Gajal, Nath-e-Rasul, Hmad. Gajal or Nath-e-Rasul relates to the life style of Mohammad (SAWS), and Hamd concerns with praise of Allah Who is Omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. The Alims who are learned in formal Islamic education like Madrassa prefer these forms of songs. These songs revolve round Allah and His messenger. No peer (Goshai) is preferred. They strictly follow what is prescribed for Islamic format of life. Hence they are Sharia (orthodox followers of religion). These songs are sung among the Madrassa students during congregation or religious function. After the devotional songs of above mentioned distinctions, there are other types of songs that are mostly related to mundane attraction of society. These songs are concerned with the features where we have. Such songs are known as folk songs.

Folk Song

This form of song is very popular among the community. The folk songs are concerned with some classifications, viz- Goalparia Loko-Geet, Duwa-Gaan, Kisha, Lullabies, Nursery Rhymes, Children Game Songs, Magoon and Marriage Songs.

Goalparia Loko-Geet: This is mostly preferred and favoured among the vernacular spoken Muslims of lower Assam. There are some special characters in such songs, say, cart driver, cattle keeper and their heroic touch of the maids' heart. A gap between the two for some cause is an inspiration to make such song. Such song is the emotion of all section of people in society all over Lower Assam among the vernacular spoken Muslims. One example of such hero based song is illustrated here as:

Baro mashae taro ful futae (Thirteen flowers bloom in twelve moths) Bosorae futa golap shoi(Rose blooms in year)

Najao jamunar jolae.(Donot go to Yamuna bank) Kala (najao)2 najao shoigo(Hero don't go friend) Oina jamunar jolae.(That Yamuna bank) (Nander beta chikunarae kala)2

Kala bajai mohan bashi shoi (Hero horns exciting flute)

Najao jamunar jolae. .(Donot go to Yamuna bank) Kala (najao)2 najao shoigo

Oina jamunar jolae.

(Kadom gachae Helonira bia)(There is marriage of Heloni in a Kadom tree) Kala dilo bishom jala shoi (The hero gives enough aches))

Najao jamunar jolae

Kala (najao)2 najao shoigo Oina jamunaro jolae.

Kala (najao)2 najao shoirae Oina jomunaro jolae.9 Duwa-Gaan

Alternatively such song is called labour song. The field workers sing this form of song at their working hours on the field during paddy or jute plants care. The labourers sing during Bahag and Jeth months---the first two months of the Assamese calendar. Such songs are sung to lessen their tired condition at work in hot sun. The Duwa-gaan has a number of forms as Bandana, Adom Path, Imam Path, Boyati Path, Mar Gaan, Ghorer Gaan, Torir Gaan, and Parer Gaan.

Like such above mentioned form of songs, another form of song is named as jarigaan. This form of song is two in types viz- Bhujari and Ashoiria jari. The prior form is sung in the paddy field work during Bohag and Jeth months of the Assamese year. The later form of song is sung arranging stage gathering. In every field of the song, there are two divisions of singers. The group is basically led by one person who tunes the rhymes of song and then the same is followed by the second group that is constituted by more persons. This form of song has no formal documentation but rolls from mouth to mouth in tradition.

Kisha

The Kisha is a long form of event having poetic version in music. At the time of retirement from days' labour, people gather at public place where a Gidal⁷ is invited to sing Kisha to amuse the common mass. The Gidal plays his hands named Sharinda or dotora at his kisha song. There is a narration of matters related to imaginative king and his events and incidents. All matters are displayed in terms of music and speech.

Lullabies: This type of song is sung to pacify a baby with some assurance as : Ai san noria bat dimo baria (O moon come running offer you rice)

Bashamasha nao dimo kharali masha ghora dimo (We will give you boat during flood and horse at drought)

Ango mainak tukku dia ja. (Come and go to give a touch of kind love)

..... Olalalaly kalbadurar chao (Ha ha baby of mother)

Kalar mao baitta nai Kar dudo khao. (Mother is not at home, therefore whose milk you will drink)

.....
Maina dola-dolay Dalim gacher tola (Baby dwindles under pomegranate tree) Hap kulkul kora (Snake clicks clicks)

Haper peta anda (There is egg in the womb of snake) Ango maina thanda. (Our baby is quiet)

Nursery Rhymes: Such songs are sung at the time of baby-sleeping. The nurse sings to the baby at her lap to go to sleep with melody as:

Gomala betara gom dia ja (Sleep trade persons, come to give sleep)

Baksu bojai taka thoisi goina nia ja. (The box is full of rupee, take the same to count)

Children Game-Song: The Childs sing some songs according to their nature of plays. There are various play names and accordingly different songs fit to each play. One example of such play-song is exemplify here that is sung at Gunsimala play as:

Abor debor Gunsi Mala nai gunsi choumala Choumalar hatae marlam ghor

Kamar galo khelapuri Kamaraja disa taka Taka det mon nai Elsa macher jol Toppot koira tol.

Magon

This is very popular among the community. This is a seasonal song that is sung during the time of Pushmash.⁸ A group of young who are mainly the cattle keepers go house to house at night and sing for fund collection. They sing in circle form wherein there is a prime one in the circle, who initiates and who is followed by others in the group. The initiator is called Boyati. The followers are called Dohari. Their singing style is of two in forms: static and dynamic. The static form is Kharatal and the dynamic is Ghuranital. In Kharatal, the Magon players utter rhymes standing figures one place having no circle in form. Such utterance is of slow in vocal motion. There is also quotation for arrival information at the yard of the host. After information of their arrival, they sing Kharatal striking soil surface with stick at hand as:

Ailamra bhai aeibari

Pash duwarae kolagach gari Kolagacha dola ful

Narir mathai kalasul.

Or,

Moish ailora moish ailo Pashduwara bangilo Kolagacha musmusi Buira burir kachkasi

.....
With such utterance, they attract the host and take offer from him. One the other hand, the Ghurani Magon is played in circle in form. They show physical movement at playing the song. There are some steps to sing the concern. First, the party introduce themselves why they arrive at the yard of the host. One example is given here to clarify the idea as:

Disha: Ettar Settar Manikpurar Manikpirar chela ailo ailo barir bettar.

Padgawa: Ora hai hai ai Sokina jap diyona jola (repeat) Opar ja demsigach boroi demsi dora

Ekta demsi siliharara paran kemun kora ra hai hai (repeat) Oi Paran kora olut pulut golai utha kash

Kashti klashti gelam amira Chitalmarir hata ra hai hai Ai Chitalmarir hatae jaya kinlam ami pan Pakka pakka pan niyara gelam dadarbari ra hai hai Ai dada dada dakpari dada nai mor ghora Shobul Shobul dakparira Shobul acha ghora ra hai hai Ai az Shobular holdi bata kail Shobular bia

Shobul jaira shashur barira dol danga nia ra hai hai Dol danger duimurar dui chtalmach baja

Ekta nilot kuttakuttirai arakta nilo tiara hai hai Ai tiar maika bia dimo nalsharikhan dia

Nalsharikhan uira gelora Chitta rajar bariara hai hai Chitta raja Chitta raja baisaha koren ki?

Apnar pola mar khaira dorbarae bashia ra hai hai Ai ar marbrnna, ar marbenna batae fatr bari

Kailbehana uitha dekhben ra kota ranger ghari ra hai hai Ai am parilo jam parilo jarae moilam bhai

Magonkhani dila parara dowa koirai jai Am parilo jam parilo jara moilam bhai Magonkhani dila parara arakbari jai. Baeler upor baelra bhai tarir upora bael

Aibarira divo takara shenduk khulbar gelora hai. Marriage Song

Women sing songs at wedding in relation to bride and groom. Such type of song is called marriage song. The women show action at the time of singing. With marriage song, women express pleasure through dance and song in the form of nritya and deliver entertainment among the listeners. Several women constitute group to sing this form of song. Marriage song is sung according to situation. That means this song goes to change in feature and nature at the time singing. Here a marriage song is exemplified as:

Ghorer pachae kalarae kochu (There is a pjant behind the house) Maijar shobha betigo (The maid is a beauty of floor)

Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Ato dini palilamgo moina (So many days you are nurtured) Thoter bhato diago (To offer rice from lip)

Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Aijo keno jaogo moina? (Why do you go today baby?) Ghoro khali koirago (To make house empty)

Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Moinar bapae dakongo dakae Baby's father calls and so calls)

Hater shodai ainago (To fetch kits from market) Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Ato dakon daklamgo moina (So much is called the baby) Moina naimor ghorae (Baby is not home)

Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Ghoro bojai naori thakotae (Kith and kin are full of home) Moinak nilo chorago (Baby is taken by thief)

Sundar moinago. (O beautiful baby)

Moinar mayae kandago moina (Baby's mother weeps baby) Dudo bhato niago (To keep milk and rice)

Sundar moinago.¹³ (O beautiful baby)

There is song before marriage at bridal home. There is song at the groom home. Then there is song in front of either bride or groom after marriage. Sometimes, some relatives such as father or mother of the either are joked with ridicule.

Notes:

Peer: Spiritual leader of his followers. He is called Guru or Peersaheb. Alims: The religious preachers learned in Madrassa education.

Urus: Bhakti gathering place at night.

Ashar: Centre place where four banana trees remain posting in square figure under the tent. In square figure, there places candle light on wooden frame.

Dakgan: The thematic concept regards invocation to their spiritual leaders or gurus. Its alternative name is termed as bandana.

Jikir: Recall of allah.

Suorce: Abdul salam, 2 No. Uttar rangapani.

Source: Abdul salam Sarkar, 2 No. Dakshin Rangapani.

Source: Sheikh Barkat Ullah, Asstt. Professor, Chhamaria Anchalik college. Gidal: singer.

Source: Abdul Salam, 2 No. Uttar Rangapani.

Pushmash: In Assamese Puhmah and in Bengali Pushmash—the 9th month of both Assamese and Bengali calendar.

Source: Shormala Nessa and others. References

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