



ANALYSING GALO FOLKTALES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH IN SHAPING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE

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Abstract: Folktales exist in every society and folktales reflect the culture and tradition not the community. A community can be known and understood well if one acquaints with the culture and folklores as it embodies cultural traits. Folktales contain various themes which seems relevant in our day to day life. Now when science and technology is at its peak, folktales are considered to be out of time zone and lacks importance and relevance these days . And also the huge impact of the contemporary literature is also massive for such a notion. But, folktales being unique and different it still has its influence on the minds of both young and old. The indigenous knowledge and wisdom in the folktales shapes culture and keeps one connected to their tradition. And folktales can still entertain, educate and preserve culture of society. Folktales are made up of important aspects of human beings in the field of history, economics, geography and society. Like wise, Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh have a rich tradition of culture in the form of proverbs, myths, legends, ballads, folksongs and folktales passed on orally from generations. Therefore, an attempt will be made to understand how the Galo folktales exercises in shaping cultural identity and heritage in the contemporary world carrying along its tradition along with time.

Keywords: Folktales, Galo, Culture, Indigenous, Tradition

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Folktales occupy a very important role in the daily life of the tribals. Folktales are stories which refer to a time long ago beyond history can trace. The term 'folktale' is often used loosely to describe all forms of traditional narrative. Folktales of the ethnic communities are the stories for children passed by oral articulation from generation to generation in Arunachal Pradesh.

Folktales displays how hurdles and success do occur in any culture throughout the different periods of one's history as it gives one wisdom to understand situations and things from different points of view. Folktales not only entertain, amuse and provide mental pleasure but also instills moral values and imparts didactic purpose which has relevance with our daily life. Since time immemorial, folktales have been providing young and old with amusement and entertainment.

Folktales helps us to understand our relation to the story of one's own civilization. The same folktale can offer different meaning and values at different ages and levels throughout our lifetime and resonate differently each time. Folktales have always been around in every society. Now at a time when science and technology, medicine and education, one might feel at times, why do one need to value folktales? So, if one thinks that folktales are irrelevant, a thing of the past then one should realize that important connection to our past will be sure to be discontinued with which one have been connected and come from.

Folktales reflect the culture and tradition of a community. folktales carries cultural traits, beliefs, food habits, arts, crafts, rituals, sacrifices, costumes, festivals, values, customs codes of conduct and laws of the people born community to whom one belongs to. All folktales are highly structured set forms of folklores and it performs important communicative functions among the indigenous communities. The folktales are diversified replica of indigenous social life.

The identity of a community is preserved in folklore and folk-literature.. Folktales maintain traditional values and norms of the society. It teaches people to live an acceptable social life. One can find numerous folktales which are rich in metaphoric and symbolic meanings among the tribal folks of north-east India which are passed on orally by elders to the younger generations. The folktales of north-east India are diverse in its themes

Similarly, the Galo's of Arunchal Pradesh are one of the major tribes of The Tani clan and has immense rich heritage of oral literature in many forms like proverbs, ballads, folksongs, folktales etc. which is being passed on since generations by oral means which amuses, educates the young generation which has always been in and around our culture and tradition. Observed behaviour and natural phenomena which imbibes sense and order is explained in folktales for those who have the desire to listen and reason.

Methodology: The primary data has been collected from educated orator, folklorist, by an interview and relevant secondary materials in the form of

books, journals, articles, magazines and some unpublished materials related to folktales of Galo's were also collected and reviewed. And finally cross examination was done carried forward by using descriptive and analytical method.

Aim: The research paper is an attempt to explore the importance of relevance of Galo folktales and also to document the Galo folktales selected for the purpose of the research paper.

Reviewing Two Galo folktales

1. DIICHI BOONE

Long long ago in a far away land there lived a very beautiful young girl whose name was DIICHI BOONE. Many young boys wanted to gain her hands but amongst many two young and handsome boys contested among themselves to have her consent. Both of them belonged to two different imaginary regions called TAKII and TALEE. The region of TAKII was inhabited by a group of people who were known for their expertise in shooting poisonous arrows which made those shot suffer quickly and die. They never missed an arrow and hit their targets for sure.

On the other side, the region of the TALEE there dwelled people who were expert swordsman. They could fight with their swords tirelessly in individual fights or on war. Their each strike dropped their opponent fall dead to the ground.

The two young boys were so handsome that DIICHI BOONE (the girl) could not make up her mind regarding whom to choose as her life partner. So, she ended up meeting both the boys at different occasions from time to time. In due course of time, DIICHI BOONE found something unusual about the young boy from TAKII region. Whenever they met he used to cover his eyes from the front with his local hat hence resulting the back portion of the hat pointing upwards than normal. One fine day accidentally, when both were together and while talking the hat of the TAKII boy fell down to the ground. DIICHI BONE, saw the abnormally fixed eye of the TAKII boy and understood why he used to cover it all the time. Then and there she decided to leave him and preferred to go with the TALEE boy and she did..

On getting information about DACHII BONE's departure to the TALEE boy 's place, the TAKII people got furious and prepared for war against the TALEE people. There was another group of people called PEKAA who were great warriors who inhabited ten stations right from the nearby place of the

TAKII's to the TALEE's. They favoured the cause of the TALEE's and decided to stop the marching of the TAKII's at all the ten stations. But since the TAKII's were experts in shooting arrows they made their way through by facing the PEKAA's and accordingly the PEKAA's asides themselves from this situation.

This way the people of TAKII reached the TALEE region unharmed and shot down everyone around. They also very well know the house DIICHI BONE was hiding. The TAKII's gathered and told DIICHI BONE that they have abandoned her in favour of the TALEE young boy. All they wanted was to see her little toe of her left leg in place of her beauty for a last time. So, accordingly DIICHI BONE, hid the rest of her body and showed her little toe of her left leg through a hole. And at its very first glance one member of the TAKII's shot an arrow at it and she died at the same time. The TAKII's, after completing their war on the TALEE's they returned to their native place.

The folktale gives us a message that physical beauty is temporary, it is bound to finish and decay. The girl in the tale gave preference to the look of the TAKII boy than his true love for her. It was her choice to be with him but finding a defect in his eyes she shifts her love and attention to the other boy without even letting the former know that he was ditched by her. As a result due to her indecisive and fluctuating nature a war arose which resulted to the death of many people in the TALEE region. She should have understood that beauty is not everything in life. When one likes and loves an individual inner beauty outshines and every defect seems invisible.

2. TOOPO GOONO

Once upon a time in a village, there lived a girl named TOOPO GOONO. She had two elder brothers namely, iMEEDII SIIRII and MEEMA GOOYOR. People praised god for giving such beauty and character to Toopo Goono, right from her birth. But she lost her father and mother before her marriage. When she reached her marriageable age many approached both her brothers with marriage proposals but she refused many on many occasions.

MEEDII SIIRII, the eldest brother left the decision at the pleasure of his sister whereas on the other hand the second elder brother MEEMA GOOYOR, accepted one of the marriage proposal without his younger sisters consent and recieved everything offered in the form of bride price that custom admitted. After fulfilling all the formalities of the marriage ceremony, the time finally came for Toopo Goono to leave her parents house and move to her husbands house. Instead of paying attention to his sister's cry, her unwillingness to go to her husbands house MEEMA GOOYOR arranged everything forcefully for her

final departure. The marriage team from the brides behalf and Toopo Goono set out for her husbands place but after covering a certain distance she was made to sit on a fine big stone without spreading any mat to sit on. She is served with rice which is to be eaten as the last meal from her parents. As soon as Toopo Goono set her foot on the stone the stone started moving upward engulfing her body. As the stone reached her neck she cried telling her second elder brother MEEMA GOOYOR that it was he who has let her face such a situation in her life and that she has to die in such a uncommon and peculiar manner. She cried out to her second elder brother MEEMA GOOYOR telling that, this was what he chose for his sister's future which caused her end. And by that time the stone reached and covered her head too before everyone present there.

This folktale tells us how forceful marriage should not be practiced against the will of a girl. The eldest brother MEEDII SIIRII was kind and understanding towards his sister and respected her decision but on the other hand the second elder brother MEEMA GOOYOR was cruel and didnot understand and respect his sister and went against her will not to marry ignoring the psychological aspects of Toopo Goono. And everything went wrong when she had to loose her life where She was forcefully made to do according to the wish of her second elder brother MEEMA GOOYOR and everything went wrong and she innocently met with an untimely death.

Listening and reading such folktales entertains, amuse and teach us that one can't have a fruitful and successful relationship who keeps on pondering upon physical beauty not giving much value to the depth of what true love is and one can also understand and see through the folktale how forceful marriage can bring bad yields and not an ideal act to be practiced for a new beginning.

In this way we find how Galo folktales are still so relevant to people of the past and present as well for both men and women and young boys and girls .These Galo folktales are a category of folklore which has a short story and gives a moral at the end. It resonates what used to be considered a general truth at that time when the folktales came into being. The knowledge, the moral values imbibed in such Galo folktales not only entertains and educate but inspire young boys and girls, men and women regarding our decision making process too. Such tales with some kind of moral values teaches how one has to keep ones conduct and there are many more tales with some other morals in it which further enhances in preserving one's culture and heritage. When an individual abides by the moral values taught by the folktales it becomes a practice .Folktales tell people to remember where they have come from and

make one learn from the past. Folktales imparts a moral message from the past to the present and it preserves one's cultural heritage.

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