



## Oh re nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?: A Cultural Reflection on the Kurukh song of Conscience

DR. SIRISTA J. MEENZ

Assistant Professor, University Department of Anthropology, Ranchi University, Ranchi.

E-mail: [siristajulitameenz@ranchiuniversity.ac.in](mailto:siristajulitameenz@ranchiuniversity.ac.in)

**Abstract:** Kurukh language belongs to the Dravidian speech family, specifically the north Dravidian branch. It is the mother tongue of Oraon community. The Oraons are Adivasi community residing in the area of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The life of the tribals is interwoven with nature. Songs are sung since time immemorial. There are various genre of songs such as seasonal songs, marriage songs and love songs but there are also such songs which instils strength amongst the community and tells the story of valour and resistance. Thus, this paper is an attempt to showcase the conscience of the Kurukh people through the song *Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?* : A Cultural Reflection on the Kurukh song of Conscience.

**Keywords:** Kurukh song, Struggle, Conscience

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### Introduction

*Eknaa dim toknaa araa katthaa dim dandi* meaning to walk is to dance and to speak is to sing is a popular Kurukh saying. The Kurukh language belongs to the Dravidian linguistic family, specifically the north Dravidian branch. The script of the language is *Tolong Siki*, derived from two root words *Tolong* referring to the garment worn by men around the waist and *Siki* meaning *sika*, mark made on the wrist with hot twig. It the mother tongue of the Oraon community. The Oraons are the Adivasi community residing in the different parts of the country such as Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Andaman Islands, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. In Assam the Oraons are not enumerated under Scheduled Tribe as in other mentioned states but classified under Other Backward Communities. They are also known by various names such as *Urangs*, *Dhangar* (labourer), *Kora*

(digger), *Dhangar Kora* (servant digger) and *Kisan* (cultivator) but is to ascertain that they prefer to address themselves as *Kurkhar* after the name of their language, meaning Kurukh speaking community.

According to the 2011 Census the total population of Oraon in India is 37,76,688, while in Bangladesh and Nepal the population is 50,000 and 41,800 respectively. In Jharkhand they are the second largest tribal community after Santhal with the population of 17,16,618.

The very essence of tribal way of life is exhibited in their culture which is reflected through their expression in vivid folklores. Folklore is a blend of two words 'folk' and 'lore', former meaning people and latter meaning knowledge or wisdom. It can simply be understood as knowledge or wisdom of people and the knowledge is transmitted orally from one generation to another, through word of mouth and learnt by imitation.

It is a living tradition which is deeply rooted in the past and gets exhibited when it is performed in the present. The verbal form of expression is described as verbal art, folklore is the oral literature perpetuated by oral traditions. It comprises of various genre of oral literature such as myths, legends, tales, riddles, proverbs, chants and songs.

Songs are an integral part of folklore, it serves as an effective way through which they express themselves creatively, sharing their experiences of life, emotions, history and joy of living, grief, struggle and valour, thus through this panorama the song is being presented to have a deeper insight of the Oraon worldview.

### **Research Methodology**

The present work is the outcome of the empirical research done employing ethnographic method for the collection of folklores of the Oraon tribe residing in the *Chechari* area of Mahuadanr block of Latehar district of Jharkhand. Primary data was collected using unstructured interview method and the secondary data gathered from books, journals and YouTube videos.

The song is presented within the purview of transcription, transliteration and translation where in the transcription is presented in the Kelly tolong font of the tolong siki script for better understanding and veracity.

### **Analysis of the Song *Oh re Nagpuriyar, eka tera kaadar?***

The song starts with a beautiful flute and mandar music.

(Transcription)

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(Tansliteration)

Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?

Ender ge raajin sunaa nandar, ho ender ge desen sunaa nandar? (2)

Kirraa baraa kirraa baraa re bhairo...

Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?

Ender ge raajin sunaa nandar? ho ender ge desen sunaa nandar?

(Translation)

O my people of Nagpur, where are you going?

Why are you deserting your kingdom? O why are you deserting your country

(2)

Come back, come back o brothers

O my people of Nagpur, where are you going?

Why are you deserting your kingdom? O why are you deserting your country?

(Meaning)

The first stanza of the song questions the fellow Oraon people as to why are they abandoning their own *raaji* and *des*? meaning motherland and where are they going? *raaji* and *des* not also symbolises motherland but also encompasses mother tongue, language, cultural heritage thus the question is raised to evoke the conscience.

(Transcription)

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(Transliteration)

Ender ghati manjaa nimhai jiyaa nu? ender tuti manjaa nimhai addiyaa nu?

Kirraa baara kirraa baara re bhairo...

*Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?*

*Ender ge raajin sunaa nandar? ho ender ge desen sunaa nandar?*

(Translation)

What was inadequate in your life? What was the fault in your nativity

Come back, come back o brothers

O my people of Nagpur, where are you going?

Why are you deserting your kingdom? O why are you deserting your country?

(Meaning)

In the second stanza the line *Ender ghati manjaa nimhai jiyaa nu* meaning What was inadequate in your life? and *ender tuti manjaa nimhai adiyaa nu?* Meaning What was the fault in your nativity raises a very vital aspect and evokes the conscience by questioning the *Adivasiyat* meaning nativity. The Oraons have rich cultural heritage but that might not seem enough in the eyes of the people, that is why cultural elements as important as language is being abandoned. Thus an urge is made to come back and replenish the roots of the Oraon community.

(Transcription)

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(Transliteration)

*Kohan kohan paretaa, tongori, jhariyaa, niman mekhaa lagi bhaiya mann, maasa, karegaa.*

*Kirraa baraaa kirra baraa re bhairo...*

*Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?*

*Ender ge raajin sunaa nandar, ho ender ge desen sunaa nandar?*

(Translation)

Lofty lofty mountains, hills and streams, as well as trees, plants and slopes are calling you

Come back, come back o brothers

O my people of Nagpur, where are you going?

Why are you deserting your kingdom. O why are you deserting your country?

(Meaning)

In the last stanza of the song reference to '*Kohan kohan pareta, tongori, jhariyaa, niman mekhaa lagi bhaiyaa man, maasa, karegaa*' is made meaning Lofty lofty mountains, hills and streams, as well as trees, plants and slopes are calling you Symbolises the innate bond of the community with mother nature. It also reflects the cultural heritage comprising of rites, rituals, language and customary law symbolised in as mountains, streams and forests. Thus, nature not only serves as a medium of livelihood but is the foundation of their identity. *jal, jungle* and *jameen* meaning their water, forest and land is the centrality of the Oraon tribal life. The song ends by questioning *Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar? Ender ge raajin sunaa nandar, ho ender ge desen sunaa nandar?* Meaning O my people of Nagpur, where are you going? Why are you deserting your kingdom? O why are you deserting your country? Reflecting the pain of abandonment and hope of returning back.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that this song was sung to display their nonviolent protest against the Netarhat field firing range, Tiger Project and all other such projects which led to the displacement of the indigenous people. This song served as a medium to instil strength amongst the people to fight for their rights.

This song also provides an insight to the present times where it reflects an urge for the Oraon people to come back to their roots, the people are leaving their native place thus pointing towards migration, denouncing their own religion thus highlighting the conversion of the Oraon's and the impact of modernisation leading to lack of knowledge about themselves thus questioning their identity.

The Kurukh song *Oh re Nagapuriyar, ekaa taraa kaadar?* exhibits valour of the Adivasi community to resist against oppression and urges to Oraon people to reinstate their *jal, jungle* and *jameen*. meaning their water, forest and land, it evokes the feeling of strength, resistance, love for their mother land and their identity. Thus, this song beautifully expresses the conscience of the Oraon community.

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