

‘Hudum Puja’ Of Koch-Rajbongshi Tribe: An Analytical Study

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Abstract:

‘Hudum Puja’ is one of the most significant parts of folk-culture of Koch- Rajbongshi people. This festival is generally limited within women. It is celebrated among various tribes of the world in different ways or names. To eliminate prolonged drought and to bring rainfall, the women celebrate this festival. Hudum is their folk-god and Hudum is believed as the God of drought. Worships, rituals and ceremonies has significant place in the folk-culture as well as it is an inseparable part of Assamese culture. The Hudum Puja of Koch-Rajbongshi has given a unique dimension to the field of Assamese folk-festivals. Through this study, a complete discussion about the significance and essentiality of this kind of study in contemporary times is tried to given.

Key-words: Hudum; culture; folk-culture; folk-festival; Koch- Rajbongshi.

Objectives of the Study:

There lie some specific objectives behind every creative works. To give a unique identity of folk-cultures of Koch- Rajbongshi will be tried to display in our research. Therefore, the discussion of the objectives of our study is given below—

- (a) To give a complete idea about culture and folk-culture.
- (b) An analysis on the field of Assamese culture and folk-culture will also be given.
- (c) Through the analysis of rituals, festivals and ceremonies a complete idea about that certain ritual and festival and their influence in society are also to be given importance.

Significance of the Study:

The field of traditionally celebrated folk-festivals among Koch- Rajbongshi is very wide and large. We have just gathered data through our little knowledge. We consider it as important work to study about the language-literature-culture of Koch- Rajbongshi as an ancient tribe of Assam as well as India. We believe that this study about the rituals and folk-festivals of this tribe will help to bring light to every folk-festival of this tribe.

The study of folk-festivals will not only bring light to the cultural sides of Koch-Rajbongshi people but also help to prosper Assamese culture. In this regard, we think our study has much significance. Moreover, we believe that our study will develop interest among the new generation to study about such kind of study through introducing a new direction. It can be hoped that, although a little, this study will help in the development of national culture.

Methodology:

Analytical method is mainly used to study our subject-matter “The Hudum Puja of Koch-Rajbongshi Tribe: an Analytical Study.” Moreover, helps from different reference book is taken as well as some data are collected through field study also.

1. Introduction:

Folk-festivals are mainly the festivals of people. It is the code of conducts and rituals performed by the people of a specific area in folk and traditional way. Mainly, folk-festivals are seen celebrated among the people for the abundance of agriculture and to increase fertility. Most of the folk-festivals celebrated in Assam are agriculture-centric.

‘Hudum Puja’ is celebrated with much grandeur by the Koch- Rajbongshi people of Western Dhuburi area of Assam. It is believed by the Koch- Rajbongshi people from ages that people can get rid of drought with the celebration of Hudum festival.

The Koch- Rajbongshi people completely depend on agriculture and their economic lives are very simple like other rustic people of different Indian states. Most of their preparations, rituals and ceremonies and the songs and lyrics etc. are created on the basis of agriculture.

In the field of religious beliefs and traditions, although the Koch- Rajbongshi people of Western Assam follow the rituals-rules-traditions of Aryan culture, yet in most of the ceremonies the tribal characteristics are apparent. Singing and dancing is prevalent in most of the rituals and ceremonies. They believe in god and goddess of nature i.e. river god, forest god, ghost and spirit etc. In the field of religious beliefs, there are amalgamation of Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnavite and Buddhist tantras among them. They worship magic, Shiv puja, the serpent goddess Bishahari, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Narayan, Bishnu, Hari etc.

Therefore, as a result such beliefs and traditions, Hudum deo or Hudum puja is celebrated publicly in Koch- Rajbongshi society. In this festival also, the tribal characteristics are apparent. Although in some places, the influence of Aryan culture is prevalent yet most of the places, this festival is celebrated according to their own tradition without a priest. In most of them regional characteristics are apparent.

2. Discussion of the Main Part:

Since time immemorial, much before the birth and propagation of science, the Hudum puja was originated and still it celebrated with great splendor for the removal of drought in the area

inhabited by the Koch- Rajbongshi. Though it is not include in science but it can be called as folklore and Hudum can be called as Nature-God.

From ages, to get rid of drought, people of many places worship various nature-centered God and Goddess. It can be known from various works of scholars that the people from Australia, Java Island, Bisinia, Southern Greece, Western Russia, Armenia, Shyamland, New South Wales, New Britain, Japan, Central Africa, France, Rome, New Guinea etc. also celebrate folk-cultural ceremonies.

It is known that people of India also performed various rituals to satisfy the nature. Even in the epic period, from the descriptions of worship of God like Indra, Barun etc. to eliminate drought, the plough of King Janaka to get rid of drought, rainfalls by Indra in the episode of Khandav dahan in Mahabharata etc., we can get hints about the worship of Water-God. Moreover, according to the belief of some people, it rains immediately after worshipping Dharma Thakur (a religious deity) during the time of drought. Apart from these, it is heard that people of Bangladesh perform 'Megharanir kula nomowa brat'(a fasting for rainfall) or 'Megaranir Brat; the people of West Bengal of India also perform 'Khetrabrat'(field fasting), 'Basudhara brat'(fasting for earth) etc. Similarly, Koch- Rajbongshi tribes of Assam also worship 'Hudum deo' or 'Hudum puja' from very ancient times.

The word 'Hudum' is guessed to be derived from the 'Hudu Poki' (a rare bird) of Koch-Rajbongshi society. According to folklore of Koch- Rajbongshi, two Hudu bird (a male and a female) sit on tree branch facing each other and talk about rains and at that mean time rainfall occurs. Because of this folklore, Koch- Rajbongshi people catch wild Hudu bird and perform Hudum puja.

Human being depends on agriculture for food. Without water the production of agriculture is not possible. Therefore, another name of water is life. In general, it rains in our country from Bohag(April-May) to the last of Bhado(August-September). But occurring of drought in this period causes huge damage of the country. When there is heavy rainfall, the crops are destroyed due to flood. On the other hand, drought is more terrible than excessive rainfall. Due to drought, fields don't produce crop, people cry out for a drop of water, evil, famine and plague also arise. Therefore, to get rid of this drought, Koch- Rajbongshi people celebrate "Hudum Puja".

The components needed for Hudum puja are----nest of ghesul/fekul bird, head of house crow, soil of prostitute's door, ivory soil, washing water of dheki (wooden rice pounder), water bagged from seven houses, pubic hair of prostitute, baokumtar kuta, burhi suta, spider web, banana plant, a coconut without husk, sixteen bunch of bananas, vermilion, a necked pot, banana leafs, fruits, curd-milk, jiggery-sugar, white rice, baby banana leaf, a pair of earthen lamp, incense and frankincense, twelve types of crops etc.

Male are abstained in Hudum puja; it is completely a folklore and women-centric ceremony. There is no need for a priest in this ceremony. Yet, the 'Hudum Khuti' (a post of banana trunk) is established with honesty and various rituals. Not every people can cut the banana plant used for 'Hudum Khuti'. Only 'ek kuchia chawa' i.e. a mother who has given

birth to only one child or not given birth to second child can cut the banana plant. She has to cut the plant being nude in the darkness of night in a single breath. Before seven day of establish the 'Hudum khuti', seven unmarried girl by taking 'kula'(a winnowing fan) and soil collect and keep water from seven different houses. On the day of ceremony, these unmarried girls wash nangolor juwoli (a tool used in plough), put spot of vermilion on it and plough by acting as being bullock and plowman, and sprinkle the previously collected water from seven houses. The banana plant is buried after plowing of the soil and worship for rainfall to Hudum deo. The previously collected components of the ceremony have to put into the hole. As soon as the women who have a living husband do uludhoni (a shrilling sound produced by repeated movement of tongue), the head priestess becoming nude, plants the 'hudum khuti' in the hole. After that, she takes bath upon a new kula and washes the hudum khuti with the water remained in the kula. The drummer beats a large drum (dhak) by covering the eyes while the women keep producing 'uludhoni'. After that, the necked pot filled with water is established near the hudum khuti by putting beetle-nut, twelve types of crops etc. and complete the task of planting the hudum khuti by burning incense sticks and offering naivaidya. According to folklore, rainfall starts as soon as the completion of planting the hudum khuti. If it does not rain within three days, the women start the worshipping of hudum puja.

Hudum puja starts in the night of Saturday or Tuesday. If it does not rain, this puja goes on for several days. The women worship hudum deo for rainfall by dancing and singing after completing their household core at night.

By completing hudum puja with much honesty and grandeur in their traditional way, they dance and sing in a circular way around the hudum khuti. Although the songs of hudum puja are sexual in natural but sexual abuse is not exists there. In this ritual, the priestess being nude, worship hudum deo desperately for rainfall. The priestess has no hesitation or shame of being nude in this worship. Because, the bearer-upholder and life of everybody, the enormous world-nature is also uncovered. Women are also nature. Earth is woman and nature, Hudum Indra and Barun or her husband. When the sperm-like rain falls on wife-like earth fertilizes and flourishes with crops, fruits and flowers. Therefore, to make association with uncovered nature, woman-nature has to be uncovered. On the other hand, for participation of women who has to live within the strict boundaries of domestic social life, go far away from society and elders beyond social rule and regulations by associating with their co-female in the darkness of night which spontaneously brings out their suppressed pleasures. Moreover, they go far and reach to the primitive human state by crossing the boundaries of decency and vulgarity.

Conclusion:

There not seen any special discussion about Koch- Rajbongshi who lives in the North-East corner of India. But reliable evidence and primary discussions by scholars and ethnographic sources on primitive tribes of North-Eastern India is found.

Along with India, Assam is also an agriculture dependent state. Rain is needed for harvesting and for this rain in the time of drought, hudum puja is celebrated. Hudum puja is generally prevalent among the people of agricultural class in Koch- Rajbongshi society. The

daughters and daughters-in-law in the house of cultivator of lower class seem to take first part in this worshipping. Moreover, this worshipping is performed because the Koch-Rajbongshi people are mainly depends on agriculture. Therefore, this festival is celebrated in Koch-Rajbongshi society from ages.

Drought is a natural disaster. People used to perform various nature-centered rituals, worships and adorations to satisfy the nature. From the equivalent festivals like this celebrated at all ends of the world, it is precisely said that 'Hudum Puja' is a significant and shining example of cosmopolitan mentality.

Therefore, it is seen that Hudum puja is a fundamental component of folk-culture of Koch- Rajbongshi. It seems that without Hudum puja, the culture of Koch- Rajbongshi will be incomplete.

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