
A GIRL'S CRY AND HER MOTHER'S LESSON: EXPLORING SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK OF BOROK/TRIPURI TRIBE THROUGH JADUNI RWCHAPMUNG

***Dr. Shantaraj Debbarma**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Adwaita Malla Barman Smriti Mahavidyalay, Amarpur, Tripura.

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***Corresponding Author: Dr. Shantaraj Debbarma**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Adwaita Malla Barman Smriti Mahavidyalay, Amarpur, Tripura.

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ABSTRACT

Jaduni or *jadukolija* is a *Kokborok* traditional song of *Borok/Tripuri* people of Tripura state of India. There are many *jaduni* songs. These songs are sung in the context of momentous events or during festivals. These songs are timeless; it is hard to say who composed it. The songs have been passed down orally from generation to generation. These songs are one of the significant sources of knowledge about the language and culture of the *borok/tripuri* people. Through these songs one can gain knowledge about the socio-economic and religious customs and way of thinking of the *borok* people. This paper is specially focused on one *jaduni* song called '*hamjwk tunphuru kapmung*' (the cry of the girl/bride when marriage is fixed). This song expresses the mental state of a girl after her marriage to an unfamiliar person is fixed. Her thoughts about life and family are revealed through her crying. And in response to her crying, her mother's reply reveals the thought of the *borok* people about marriage. And the teachings of how a bride should live in her husband's house after marriage are also reflected in this *jaduni* song.

KEYWORDS: *Kokborok*, *Borok*, *Tripuri*, Folktales, Oral Tradition, *Jaduni/Jadu kolija* (Traditional Song)

INTRODUCTION

Kokborok is a language of *Borok* or *Tripuri* tribe of Tripura. They also designate themselves as "*Tipra/ Tiprasa*" and speak in their own mother tongue i.e., *Kokborok*. *Borok* people are the largest indigenous community of Tripura state located in the North-Eastern region of

India, who speak *kokborok* language. The 'kok' means word/language and 'borok' means man/people. So *kokborok* means the language of *borok* people. It has several dialects namely, Debbarma, Reang, Jamatia etc. They like to introduce themselves as *tiprasa*. The *Boroks* – indigenous people of Tripura passed down their oral traditions and expressions in the verbal form from one generation to the other generation. They have a rich oral tradition including folktales, religious rites and rituals which transmit history, moral values and social norms across generations. The culture refers to the knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and habits which are acquired by a man as a member of a community or society. The language and its oral tradition are central to the identity and liveliness of the *borok* tribe and it also links to their cultural heritage. However due to the influence of modernization and education policies and the dominance of Bengali and English language, the usage and practice of *Kokborok* language is declining. *Jaduni rwchapmung/jadu kolija* (traditional *Kokborok* song) is one of the oral sources of *borok/tripuri* tribe's cultural heritage. *Goria rwchapmung*, *Chethuang rwchapmung*, *Tangbiti* etc. are the some major *jadu kolija* by which explain tripuri culture. The objectives of this paper are to explore the socio-philosophical outlook of *Borok* tribe which expressed in *Hamjwk Tunphuru Kapmung* (The Cry of the Bride) *Jaduni rwchapmung*, its oral traditions, and to search the cultural identity of the *borok* tribe.

Culture and cultural values: The culture refers to the knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and habits which are acquired by a man as a member of a community or society. Cultural values refer to the set of beliefs, ideals, principles etc. that are accepted as good, right, important, guiding behavior and social norms which are the means of living a good life. It serves as standards for behavior, morality, and decision-making within a group. They are passed down through generations, shaping daily routines, communication, and perceptions of beauty or justice. They are often multidimensional, encompassing social, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions. Cultural values shape family norms, communication style, and behavioral expectations and guide daily activities. The family norms of the *Borok/Tripuri* tribe in Tripura are rooted in a mixture of patriarchal and matrilineal structure with deep-seated traditional values, though they are increasingly adapting to modern social influences.

Marriage and its types: The *Borok* society is characterized by strong kinship ties, clan-based identities, and a shift towards nuclear families, although joint families still exist. Marriage is forbidden within the same *bosong/sandai* (lineage) and generally restricted among close relatives on both paternal and maternal lines. The primary form of marriage is monogamy. There are four type of marriage viz., *Hamjwk Tubui Kaimani* (negotiated marriage), *Chamari tisai kaimani* (Marriage by Service), *Kharlai Kaijakmani* (elopement) and *Phuisai Tubuma*

(marriage by purchase/bride-price). Divorce (*kaklaimani*) is permitted on grounds like adultery, maladjustment, or impotence. Widow/widower remarriage is allowed and practiced.

Hamjwk Tunphuru Kapmung (The Cry of the Bride)

As soon as the marriage is fixed, the girl gets angry at her father and mother and cries... the girl says you do not want to be relieved from work by me. "*Sajwk twi khokma twi rumu bangna, Sajwk bol nama dogra bangna,*" the girl (bride) cried that the water I brought was muddy water. I do not know how to bring clean drinking water. The wood I collect is bad wood, that wood does not make a good fire. The cooking I do is not tasty. I could not serve food well because I served food with the tips of my fingers. Now I am leaving, cook in a big pot as much as you want and eat in peace. Girls participate in household chores. For example, girls collect water from wells, ponds or streams. The girls of the house collect wood for cooking. They collect wood from the forest near the village for cooking. Not only that they also serve the food after cooking to the family members so that every member of the family can eat in moderation, the girls of the house keep an eye on this so that they do not eat more or less as they wish. Perhaps it is because of doing so many household chores that girls of the family get the courage to rule over other members, and that rule is for the betterment and good of the family.

"Sajwk olokhi nokni nongkhorkha, nokhla kwchar pukhiri khurwi, agwbam tokri tongthung. Nok khama bahri thaiglik song kaiwi, mayung chirikrwi tondi." The bride continued to cry that I am evil; I am leaving, and now do whatever you want. Dig a big pond in the yard and cultivate fish, keep fish jumping. Plant a banana garden next to the house and make the elephant scream. You have had to tolerate my behavior for so long. You have had to give me food and clothes. Now live happily by giving the daughter in marriage. Digging a pond near a house is very dangerous. So it is generally forbidden to dig a pond near a house, because there is a possibility of children drowning there. Almost every day, the elders of the house are outside the house for work or to collect food. Only the children are at home. As a result, the children can fall into the pond while playing and there is a possibility of any kind of serious accident. Therefore, it is said that ponds should not be dug near the house. Again, Elephant's favorite food is bananas and banana trees. Now if a banana garden is located near a house, wild elephants will be tempted to eat, resulting in damage to both the houses and people. That is why it is said that not to plant banana gardens near houses.

The mother hearing her daughter's cries also cries and replies, I want to keep you at home, but your father wants to give you marry. I have to obey your father because he is the head of

the house. Still I told your father to return all the gifts i.e., *mathiya* (bracelet), *rangtang* (coin necklace) etc. that the bridegroom gave and break the marriage proposal. Mother of the bride said “*Oh sajkwa rondok songwtwi, songwi tongnabo kumar takmani twkyaba, khuturuk songtwi songwi tongnabo wahrukni manwi yaba.*” how we can keep you in a house like a *rondok* because you are not a clay pot made by the potter. We cannot even keep you as a *khuturuk* because you are not a thing made of bamboo. In *borok/* tripuri culture, the *rodok* refers to two earthen pots or containers used for storing newly harvested rice and as an integral part of traditional worship. These pots are treated as sacred embodiments of deities namely, *mailuma* – the goddess of prosperity and harvest and the *khuluma* – the goddess of cotton and agriculture. These two pots are symbols of the two goddesses of the borok tribe. We cannot even keep you as a *khuturuk* because you are not a thing made of bamboo. *Khuturuk* is a traditional specialized bamboo container used by *borok/tripuri* tribes to store valuable possessions. It is basically used to keep clothes and jewelry.

The mother of the bride continued to reply to her daughter, “*Yakni homochang thwiya sanino, panthor par wnglainase. Nwma bai nwpha kwthang tongwino, sajkwno nukhung yak romrinnase, twibuk agwnang sarwi chahnase, hapung maigwnang tangwi chahnase nono kwina dan horo, kwthwi khorode hohrba.*” So that you can cross the plain field before the torch goes out, so that you can become a family before we die, that is why we are sending you to your husband’s house. So that you two husband and wife can catch and eat fish from the stream together, so that you can grow crops in the fields and be happy, that is why this farewell and this marriage. We are not sending you to die; we are sending you to live your own life. You have seen that all the girls of your age in the neighborhood get married and go to their in-law’s house. The *Boroks* tribe believes that a person cannot live alone. One day, parents will die. That is why parents feel it is necessary to get their children married so that they can have a companion or partner before they die. The purpose of marriage is to live together, work together and enjoy life. That is why we want to get you married. This marriage is for living, not for dying, said the mother of the bride. After explaining why a girl should be married, she warns her daughter that you are going to your in-law’s house, be mindful of everything and eat. Even if you want to eat unfamiliar food, show reluctance to eat. If your husband asks you to eat, then eat. After saying this mother broke down emotionally and continued to say, “*Sajksa lokhi nokni nongkhorwi thahngklai thapa hohr tonglakkha. Sajksa lokhi nongkhorwi thahngkhai twihuk twi tongglakkha.*” My daughter is leaving me at the age of understanding my sorrow. The fires in the oven will no longer burn; the pitchers will remain empty, if my lucky girl leaves. She has not learned to carry the

pitcher on her waist; she has not yet been able to lift the block of woods. You have to go to another house at this age because of your father. You have to call someone else's mother as mother; you have to call someone else's father as father. However, even if you call someone else as mother and father, will they be like your own mother and father? Still you have to address your husband's mother and father as mother and father. You are going to your in-law's house; you should follow the rules and regulations of that house. If you are given new clothes, you should not wear it without any valid reason. Always be humble. Even if your husband does not understand you for some reason, you will decorate your face with a calm smile.

The friends are also crying and say if you leave, we will be alone. We played together; we wandered through the wilderness, the hills and plains. We work together in *huk* (shifting cultivation field), now, whenever we work we will remember you.

CONCLUSION

Jaduni/jadukolija is a traditional *kokborok* song. The songs have been passed down orally from generation to generation. It is very difficult to know who the first composer of these songs is. However, these songs have been modified, refined and corrected from time to time. It can also be said that the composer of these songs is not a single person. It has been created culturally by living together in the same geographical environment. The sources of these songs are the daily life, advantages and disadvantages, the joys and sorrows and the faith and belief towards nature. Rights arise only when a person fulfills his/her duty. The girls of the *Tripuri* community participate in every work of the house. They collect water from stream, wood from the jungle for preparing food; they perform all the daily tasks of the house. As a result, they are not a burden of the house; they are active members of the house who help the family for the betterment of the house members. They maintain their dignity by performing their duty. However, a girl has to get married because a partner is definitely needed to fulfill her mental and physical needs. A partner/husband is needed with whom she can share happiness and sorrow, work together and spend her life happily. Marriage is a social tradition. Every person has to get married to understand the true nature of life. Every house has its own rules and regulations. The bride's mother convinces her daughter to follow the rules of her husband's house. She should consider her husband's parents as her own parents and treat them accordingly. She should always treat her husband with a smile. When she receives new things, clothes etc. she should take great care of them. The point is that this song teaches the lesson of living a life by respecting one's husband and the members of the

husband's family and fulfilling one's duty for the betterment of the family and maintaining goodwill with everyone. A complete guide to family life can be seen here. Furthermore, teamwork, we- feeling and helping others fellow beings by working in their *huk/* shifting cultivation field were the culture of *tripuri* people which are described beautifully in this *jaduni* song. Finally we can say that through this song, we can learn about the socio-philosophical thinking of the *borok/tripuri* people, their lifestyle, and their behavior towards their family, fellow beings and nature.

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