

NANGELI GEET OF DARRANG, ASSAM: A CRITICAL STUDY OF ITS ORIGINE, PRESENT TRAFORMATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS AS INTENGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: Nangeli Geet is a distinctive folk tradition of Darrang district, Assam. Traditionally this song sung by cowherd's boys in open fields. It is a form of musical dialogue where two groups engage in competitive singing in the local Darrangi dialect. This paper tries to explore the origin of Nangeli Geet as a fully oral tradition, its historical context as a pastoral leisure art and its present transformation through moderation and stage presentation by cultural groups. The study highlights the challenges of preservation, including loss of oral sources and the need for documentation. It further discusses future prospects for its revival as a recognized intangible cultural heritage of Assam.

Keywords: Nangeli Geet, Cowherds' boy, Oral Tradition, Darrang, Intangible Cultural Heritage.

1.0 Introduction:

Assam is the land of diverse folk traditions. Each and every district has preserved its own oral literature through ritual, song and dance. Among these, Darrang has a unique folk song tradition which is known as Nangeli Geet. This song is remaining confined to local memory. It is defined as a rich folk culture of Darrang District. Once upon a time the cowherds were singing such kind of song freely at wide open paddy field with natural beauty in the time of keeping cows among the two groups of cowboy. It is one kind of traditional song which comes fully orally from generation to generation

1.1 Objectives: The objectives of this research paper are-

1. To trace the origin and performance context of Nangeli Geet
2. To understand the lyrical and musical structure
3. To analyze its present status
4. To suggest measure for its future preservation

1.2 Methodology:

This research is based on qualitative method i.e.

1. Observation Method- The researcher observed of folk artist as an outsider.
2. Interview Method- The researcher interviews with the Folk Artist and Cowherds boy.

2.0 Past: Origin and Traditional Context:

Cattle rearing were a major occupation, in the agrarian society of the Darrang. Young boys who took cows to the fields locally called them cowherds boy. So to pass time, they developed a singing competition. Laterally it is known as "Nangeli Geet".

2.1 Features of the Past:

- ❖ **Open- air performance:** There were no stage, no instrument, only voice in the fields of the cowherds' boy.
- ❖ **Dialogue form:** Two groups of cowherds' boys face each other and sing question-answer competition.
- ❖ **Language:** They sung pure Darrangi dialect with local humor and satire.
- ❖ **Function:** It was entertainment, social commentary and teasing between villages.
- ❖ **Oral transmission:** There was no written lyric. Few obscene words used in original song and it were free expression among boys because in open field there was no one to listen to their song.

3.0 Present: Transformation and Moderation

Due to time pages the pastoral life has changed. Today there is no cowherd boy in the paddy field of Darrang. Thus, the original context of Nageli Geet is fading.

However, a revival has started:

- ❖ **Cultural Groups:** Tarun Azad Deka, a Folk Artist of the Darrang formed a cultural group which is known as "Bishnu Jyoti Cultural Group". This group collecting the song in different parts of district and replacing few moderated words which is suitable for the family-friends for the performance.
- ❖ **Adding Musical Instruments:** This Group is adding musical instruments like Dhulki, harmonium, flute, Dotara with this song.
- ❖ **Stage Adaptation:** It is transformed from the paddy field to stage performance.
- ❖ **Digital Presence:** The folk artists of Darrang create a YouTube archive channel and research repository.
- ❖ **Recognition:** Now it is present as Endangers song of Darrang.

3.1 Present challenges:

- ❖ **Lack of written documentation:** The lyrics remembered only by old cowherds' boy.
- ❖ **No inclusion in textbooks:** Still there in written evidence about it.
- ❖ **Migration of youth cities:** The new generation migrates to cities for education and job purposed.

3. Future: Preservation Strategies

- ❖ **Documentation:** Create a textbook, audio-video reoccurring with the help of old cowherds' boy.
- ❖ **Academic Inclusion:** Include in curriculum activities of Darrang School and College.
- ❖ **Youth Training:** The Bishnu Jyoti Cultural Group takes initiative to train the new generation through workshop.
- ❖ **Moderated Innovation:** Keep the original raw version for archive and promote the moderate version for audience.
- ❖ **Competition:** Organize Nageli geet Competition at Darrang district level.
- ❖ **Digital Archiving:** Create a dedicated YouTube archive and audio museum of old singers of Nageli Geet.

4. Example of Nangeli Geet:

First group:

Ahutolir sopora	ta hati hatiau
Baper hol domora	ta hati hatiau
Mare hol kajeli	ta hati hatia gai
Sekhuri sekhuri	ta hati hatiau
Marek khedi loi	ta hati hatiau jai

Meaning of the song: The cowherds compare the father of the opposite group to a bull and the mother to a black-eyed cow.

Second Group: *Bahot pori kande* *bahmoira sorei a*
Khulungat kande gui
Tohotor boinere *sithi di kheideisi*
Logote thakimgei hui

Meaning of the: The secrets of a girl's character are exposed here.

5. Conclusion:

Nageli Geet is the voice of the paddy field of Darrang, it is not just a song. Its past was oral and raw form, its present is moderated and staged and its future depends on documentation and the participation of youth. Folk Artists, researcher and the government must work together to save it for future before the last cowherds' generation dying out.

Work Cited:

Informants:

Name	Sex	Age	Education qualification	Address
Tarun Azad Deka	Male	62	B.A	Oja gaon, Mangaldoi
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