CHAPTER - III

PERFORMING ARTFORMS OF ASSAM : A BRIEF SURVEY

Traditional performing artforms may represent distinctive cultural pattern and indicate amusement of the people of their culture. The traditional performances are associated with different fairs and festivals which may play a dominant role in the cultural heritage of Assam. Thus performing artforms are occupying an important place among rural-urban, literate, non-literate and tribal-non-tribal people in different parts of Assam. Performing artforms are associated with various activities of different social groups of Assam. Generally these are important media of communicating folklore items. Most of them are related with religion. Besides they play an important role in education. The different groups of people celebrate different seasonal fairs and festivals with the help of performing artforms and acquire different categories of knowledge which were reasonable and reliable for the illiterate rural folk of Assam. Assam is rich specially in the field of performing artforms. In the rural areas for the non-literate folk the performing artforms are the principal media of communicating their feeling and ideas. Such performing artforms are mainly folk song, folk dance and folk drama. These artforms may play an important role in imparting informal education amongst the rural folk either of the male folk or of the womenfolk. That is why, Assam is called store house of performing artforms. These are
mainly created by the people as their mental and physical activities. Specially songs and dances are the very oldest forms and first expression of human mind and body. Besides they have some characteristics of their own which can be seen in different fields of performing artforms of Assam. The art forms depend on their own roles in the field which are related to menfolk and women folk.

Folk-Song:

Folk song is an attractive artform which is correlated with the life of different social groups of people. Generally folksong "is a product of unsophisticated people who are close to nature. In folksong, words are most important part, not the melodic structure, which is repetative and made of a few notes".1 At the very old period people expressed their innermost joys and sorrows, hopes and despairs and various human sentiments. Therefore, it is clear that folksong has a social purpose. S. S. Gupta says:

Multicoloured picture of life lie under the bosom of folksong in which the real life is depicted.2

In the general sense, folksong is a lyrical, short, simple, less

1. S. S. Gupta, Folklore and Folklife in India, p. 115.
2. Ibid.
sophisticated, rhythmic creations of a folk society. The folk songs current in the traditional, extant among the different groups or communities of people in Assam are also lyrical, short, simple, less sophisticated and rhythmic. In the broader sense folksong includes various types of song which are current in different parts of Assam from the ancient past. These songs are related with various aspects of human life. Folksongs either in religious contexts or non-religious contexts are sung to the accompaniment of various musical instruments such as mridanga (a kind of drum), manjirā (smaller cymbals), bāhi (flute), dotora (one stringed musical instruments and so on). According to their nature and characteristics these songs can be categorised in various types. These are specially - songs of religious and devotional content, songs of ceremonies and festivals, lullabies, nursery rhymes and children game songs, songs of jest and humour and songs with philosophical over tone etc. A few such songs are presented below as specimen.

The following song is a purely religious and devotional song.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ehi hari nāma purbe āchile baikunthe /} \\
\text{tāk dekhi cintā kare nārade manata //} \\
\text{cintā kare munirāja baikunthaka gailā /} \\
\text{hari nām āni pāse prethibita thailā //} \\
\text{nāradar hante nāma hailā prasār /} \\
\text{devagane tuti kare sivar gosar //}
\end{align*}
\]
devar tuti siva santhosita vaila / 
hari nāma gopya kari puja bārhai dīlā // 
hari nām gopya kari puja dīlā bārai / 
kali r jugat punu abatār vailā // 
hari nām rase, baikuntha prakāse / 
preme amretar nadi / 
Shree Manta Sankare pār bhungi dīlā / 
bahe brahmantak bhedi // 3

i.e. Visvabrahmāṇḍa is a composition of Svarga, Antarikṣṭya and Martya. Svarga is the abode of the Devatās i.e., learned and good-natured people, Antarikṣṭya is a place of residence of Gandharva, Kinnar etc. and the Martya is a place of residence of man and other beings. It is believed that Svarga is the place of learned and only the learned one knew what God is and His name. As it is pure, to think or recite about God or God’s name as man gets Makṣhya by doing so Hence the learned people or Devatās did not give any scope for the God’s name to come down to the earth, so that the people of Martya remain ignorant about God and His names and thereby they never get salvation.

3. P. C. Barua (Publisher), Mihaliyā Loka Git, pp. 3-4.
Once Nārada said that those people of the Martya who were very shrewd knew the tricks of the Devatās, and with their intelligence and mental force could arrive at Baikuntha and bring the system of reciting the name of God and worshipping procedure of God to the Martya (earth); and since then the Harinām came to be propagated among the people of the earth (Martya).

This evoked the Devatās and then they prayed to Siva to take action in this regard so that people of the earth do not know God and do not get salvation. Then Siva introduced system of worship of different Gods in different ways which is a complicated process and slightest mistake in the worships causes harm to the worshippers instead of bringing good result. By this devotion the Devatās get satisfaction.

On the other hand a great religious reformer Sankaradeva was born and widely preached the importance of Hari-nām (i.e., God and God’s name) among the people who felt great relief to have such an easy method of worship God and salvation.

Folk people believe that Hari lives at Baikuntha. When people recite the religious songs with deep devotion then they wish to get the God at very near and in return God will also bestow them boon. During this Kali Yuga, Sankaradeva, the great religious guru preacher of Assam, propagated the Hari-nām in different places. As such, some people believe that Sankaradeva is an incarnation of God who came to this
earth to reform, society and for the well being of the people in general
and his devotees in particular.

Another example of religious song is given below which is prevalent in the Goalpara region which runs thus, e.g.

\[
pitr satya pālibāre
rāma gel banavāse
banavāse kathā suniyā
kai kai sudhu hāsere
rāma gel banavāsere //
rāma gel banavāse
sange laksman sitā
nagarvāse sagāi kande
kānde pitā mātāre
- rāma gel banavāsere //
banavāser kathā suniyā
bharat gharat āise
bhaiok phiriyā ānite
gel rāmer pāsere
rāma gel banavāsere //
bharatak dekhiyā sagāi
katoi prasna kare
hā pitā hā mātā baliyā
After breaking Hara-dhanu (i.e. the bow of Siva) Rāma married Sitā and proceeded Ayodhya along with his brother, wife and brother's wives. In accordance with the advice of the subjects king Dasaratha had decided to solemnise the coronation ceremony of Rāma. After getting this information Kaikeye the mother of Bharata being instigated by Manthara (Kaikeye's mid servant), objected to this coronation ceremony and begged Dasaratha of the two boons he promised to offer after returning from the Devāsur battle (first to send Rāma in

exile for 14 years and the second to coronate Bharata as a king of Ayodhya in place of Rama). Hearing such proposals King Dasaratha fainted and died at last. To keep the sanctity of the vows offered by his father, Rama went on exile with his beloved wife Sita and his anu (younger brother) Lakshman. At that time Kaikeyee's son Bharat was at his uncle's house. Hearing these sad news, Bharat returned home and rushed to bring back Rama from exile. But Rama explained that it would not be wise act to go back and reign the country which would falsify the vows of their father. Hence Bharat came back with Rama's sandal and unwillingly reigned the country placing the sandals of Rama on the throne. On such happenings all the subjects of Ayodhya became shocked with grief and cried remembering Rama their beloved King. Of course, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita also mourned the death of their father and wept with the thought of leaving their country and the subjects who loved them whole heartedly. During exile Rama lived in Panchavati Ashram where from Sita was abducted by Ravana, the King of Lanka. At this Rama broke down and being enraged went out in search of Sita. Ultimately with the help of monkeys whose leader was Hanumāna rescued Sita from the hands of Ravana.

Within the region of Goalpara district various items of folksongs covering manners - customs of the people are sung in different tunes which are very pleasant and joyous. It is a lore of special type with special tune and flavours. In the condition of such songs dotora, ta...
and bāhi are used. Without dotora the real sentiment of the song cannot be enjoyed. Hence dotora is essential. Such verbalart relates to comic, pathetic, heroic, tragi-comic sentiments. Some of them are related to the kings and heroes of the ancient decades. To be acquainted with such verbalarts one of them is cited above.

Although it is a religious song; it may be sung in a secular context also. Rama carried out the father’s words which were very severe and unkind for the people. But Rama easily followed and showed that although it is very severe yet father’s word should be carried out with respect and for such sincerity all people acknowledged Rama as God.

Songs of ceremonies and festivals constitute another type of folk song. Some specimens are given below which are mostly related to ceremonies and festivals. The following is one specimen of such songs:

tulacir tale tale mreega pahu care /
take mariba legi rame jatan kare //
rama gailā mreega māriba lakshman gailā pari /
lankar ravane päi sitāk nilā hari //
morigel tulasi cari gel pāt /
garkhā sali nām dhare uthe jāt jāt //
The song is related to a festival observed by the Assamese people on the context of *sankrānti* day of *Ashina* month. It is known as *Kati Bihu* or *Konwāli Bihu*. On this day in the evening the house owner, i.e., the head of the family with his wife plants a *tulasi* plant generally on the east side of the courtyard. Other members of the family, i.e., sons and daughters clean the space where the *tulasi* is planted and washed with water, so that, that particular place becomes a holy place for prayer or worship. There after the boys (cow boys) of the villagers come to that particular place where the *tulasi* is planted and give blessings to the members of the family by singing songs and the ritual is ended with the distribution of *Prasad*.

In the song, the names of Rama, Lakshmana and Sitā are mentioned as the planter, rearer and cleaner of the *tulasi* tree as such names are favourite of the people. It is a popular song among the Assamese people of Dakshin Kamrup areas.

Another folksong connected with the spring time *Bihu* festival of Assam, is generally sung by cowhered boys. The song is given below,

The spring time *Bihu* festival is considered as the national festival of Assam. At the end of the month of *Chaitra* and on the eve of the *Bahag* month, *Bahag Bihu* (Garu *Bihu* i.e., *Bihu* for cattle) is observed. *Bahag Bihu* is known as *Rongali Bihu*. The environmental effect of the springs is joy to all creatures specially to the human beings. Nature makes the people forget the self and merge with the joyous spirit of Nature. The day referred to above is a day of *Sangkranti* of *Chaitra* month and observed as *Garu Bihu* (*Garu dhuowā Bihu*). On that day in the morning cattle are brought to the river or pond for bath. For bathing the cattle, the *dighlati-mākhlati* (leaves of two particular species of trees), *lāu-bāwnā* (gourd, brinjal), *māh-hāladhi* (pulse - turmeric) are used for increasing the longevity and bearing good health. Cattle are used for cultivation. If the cattle are kept in good health the house owner will get plenty of crops during harvest by the labour of the cattle.

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6. Informant, Sri Bhupendra Kumar Choudhury (70),
VIII. - Kallapara.
of good health. Hence on this auspicious day the cattle are bathed with great care in the morning and in the evening they are given new rope around their neck. The cowsheds are cleaned and smoked with incense and purified. The people who engage themselves for bathing the cattle, sing a song for the well being of the cows.

The second day (i.e., the 1st day of Bahag) of the Bahag Bihu is known as Mānuh Bihu (i.e., Bihu for man). Bahag Bihu continues for seven days. Since this day the boys and girls in a party go from door to door and sing Bihu songs in the courtyards of the families. The owner of the families offer money or rice as a token of honour and respect to the party and in return who offer blessings for the welfare of the families.

As a specimen of this genre of songs one is given below, e.g.

\begin{verbatim}
prathame pranāmo āi saraswati,
detiyē pranāmo hari /
trityē pranāmo gāowar burhā burhi,
gāi jāo bihure git /7
\end{verbatim}

The group of Bihu dancers start the performance with singing of this stanza of this genre of Bihu song to the accompaniment of dance

\footnote{7. Informant, Sri Kalyani Choudhury (25), Vill.- Kallapara.}
and musical instruments. This song may be considered as a prayer song. Through the song they offer prayer to the Goddess of learning first, then to the God of the universe and at the third turn to the elderly males and females. At the end of the song they sing the following song:

\[
tetelir talate mai bāti kārilo
\
sālikāi singilā sutā /
\
pekuri pekuri kāndibā nālāge
\
ani dim bajāror sutā //
\]

At the end of the Bihu songs and dance performance they sing songs addressing to the beloved young weavers (because during Bahau Bihu the weavers have to weave different types of cloth such as gamochā, cādar, mekhelā and so on with different designs of flowers in it) not to cry for thread, because he would bring necessary thread from the market.

In the tribal society also the Garu Bihu is observed and they recite and sing in their own language like the Assamese speaking society. They bathe their cows and strike the animals with immature branches of dighlati (a kind of tree) and mākhlati (a kind of tree) plants.

They throw cut pieces of gourd and brinjal to the cows and recite the following song to the accompaniment of Khrum (i.e., drum).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{digilithi maucauni muli dudāli gāgaun} \\
gāi khukhili / \\
\text{digilithi lāuthi khri khri gānthi} \\
gaungni maucauwa gāgaum baladgāthi / \\
bimā gāide bādi dāgā, \\
\text{phiphā balad bādi gā} / \\
bāri kholāni ambubaung gaulā \\
\text{bibādi gā gidir gaung gaulā} ^9
\end{align*}
\]

The Boro - Kacharis observe the first day of Bahag-Bihu with gaiety and austerity. Like Assamese society, they also observe Manu-Bihu. On that day, boys and girls express their love, emotions through singing the Bihu songs. Such songs may function as songs of love and yearing. One such song is given below as a specimen:

Cengrā (boy) --

\[
\begin{align*}
hāzau khoroni holo lakhā \\
āungzaung rāizau zāgauna naunglokā / \\
\end{align*}
\]

Through this stanza the boy says you are one girl who will live with me. I am only one branch of tree of hill.

Chikhlā (girl) --

ädā háthai cālinī
thāu ding greekhauolo naung bāikhā /
āchān muthā
gaugaung laulo naung daunakha / 10

Girl says you will not think for me, only you will buy perfume muthī khāru and gilmilmālā for me.

Like Assamese, the Dimaca language is also rich in respect of folk songs associated with the spring time festival which are known as Bicu - song or Bucu - song. Such songs are sung only with dances which are known as Bāidimā dance.

hāji gāshini thāi rākhā
bār rākhā shāu rākhā
thikābo hābishāu hadimabā
hābishāu dongbunāungmu thikābo
mishāla khāikläi gibunāung / 11

10. Ibid, p. 15.
11. N.N. Baruah, Dimashasakalar Git-Mat, p. 18.
Another specimen of Boro Baisāgu git is given below:

de hai logo phor zongha godan bothomi
riua viviu dengkhojong siphungni
zanzi khaphra khaphri mōsadini gōga mōsadini
bhringdā bhring bhring dā bhring khāmni dehegzōng
haila huila mosadine lōgō mōsadini
thing thotthing thozothā damnaizōng
bāgrum bagrum mōsadini
serjani deng khōzōng
bāidem tai sidun lai mōsadini.

Come, oh friends to celebrate the new year-to the tune of the flute and dance with knots on the waist. To the beating of the drums, dance rhythmic dances. To the sound of the cymbals, dance jumping and running. Dance leaning your body both ways, to the tune of the serendā.

Similarly folk songs are also current among the Rabha societies as in Assamese society. A few songs of this genre are given below as specimens. These songs are called sāthārgit, e.g.,

O cangrā gāburkāī āto enā nāmā
aung nāungo nukbārā cāle
kānī doungkāī kāthāre kānī doungkāī kāthā /

Generally it is sung by girl who has attained puberty.

Another specimen of Bihu is given below:

gremeni too mainā nāthorānge kreangā
o gānda nāungi khurāng cāle
dehā gulai rengā re dehā gulai rengā /

Bagejāri or Bahurangi song is commonly used in the society of Pati Rabha and these songs are generally sung in the southern part of goalpara district and in some areas of Dakshin Kamrup. These songs are known as Bagejāri git in Loharghat and Kulsi area of the Dakshin Kamrup and as Bahurangi in Southern part of Goalpara district. Generally Bahurangi or Bagejāri songs are mainly related to Bahag Bihu. One specimen is given below as example:

Bage (name of a girl) recites,'

O raiā pari gale rao
bhitarē bhitarē bandho
juruwale gāo II

13. Ibid.
i.e., O Raia, when you call me aloud
I cannot control my body.

Hearing Bage's git Raia (name of boy) recites -

\[ kate\ galeo\ bage \]
\[ ata\ dure\ tai \]
\[ tai\ nahaleno\ mai \]
\[ ji\ y\ i\ th\ akim\ kenekai /n^4 \]

i.e., How far have you gone away,
O Bage, how can I live without you?

There are such songs which are generally associated with various worships, like Manasā-pujār-git, Sitalā-pujār-git and so forth. Particularly the women folk celebrate worship of Sitalā and in the context of that worship various songs are sung which may be termed as Sitalā-āir-git or Āi-nām. The worship of Sitalā start with the following song.

\[ dhup\ pātā\ gasā\ pātā\ ]
\[ naibād\ pātā\ dāni /\]
\[ dāwar\ āi\ āhile\ ]
\[ saru\ āi\ ahiba\ āpune /\]

To remain unafflicted from small pox the villagers (specially women folk) worship Goddess Sitalā (the Goddess of pox). This song describes the process of arranging the altar of the Goddess.

Generally these songs are sung by women folk. When the symptoms of pox become visible on the body of any man of that area the women folk arrive at the house of the victim afflicted by pox and arrange a temporary thāpanā (pedestal) and pray the Devi (deity) for recovery of the victim from the affliction.

The following song (Āi-nām) is also sung in such contexts.

murate phul saru lai
āike sadoro gai
āhise goshāni
jagator janani
sāyā di āgaru gai //

This stanza narrates the process of receiving the Goddess of

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15. Informant, Sri Thago Bala Choudhury (85).
Vill. Kallapara.

Vill. Kallapara
pox with great honour while the women folk pray before the altar for the recovery of the victim.

Then the following song is sung by the women folk.

\[
\text{kailāsar pare āi} \\
\text{āhe bar bege,} \\
\text{etā gāir gākhīrere} \\
\text{bhog dibā lāge /} \\
\text{kailāsar pare āi} \\
\text{goman karilā,} \\
\text{etā gāir gākhīrere} \\
\text{bhojan karilā }\text{17}\]

This song narrates how the Goddess has come fast from Kailāsa to this mortal world. She may be best satisfied with the milk of cows.

There are such songs which describe about the construction of nām-ghars or gosāinghar located in different areas of Assam. As for example one such song is given below:

\[
\text{katarār gosāinghar dekhante bhayankar,} \\
\text{cāriophāle nāharar khutā,}
\]

17. Ibid.
The katarā-gosāinghar (prayer house) is constructed with the posts of Nāhara tree and inside the temple the images of Rama Laksmmana and Sita were installed. One version of this song is prevalent at Baska area in the district of Nalbari. Another version of this song is current in the district of Darrang. It is associated with an annual festival mainly performed by the plain tribes during the time of full moon day in the month of Bhadra (Aug. -Sept.). On the day, some specific songs are also sung by the youths of the village by holding takān (bamboo stick), hulābāri (bamboo stick but both sides of the stick are pointed), ukhuni (bamboo stick, one side of which is curved) and so on.

According to a living tradition current in the Darrang district this song is related with the Khatarā-Satra established by Govinda Atai, a disciple of saint - poet Madhavadeva (16th c.) at Dipila village in the early part of the 17th century A.D. In this song the term Khatara is found as 'Katara'.

Among the religious songs, the songs sung in the context of the worship of God-Siva is also worth mentioning. This genre of song is called Siva-git. These songs are sung by both the menfolk and the womenfolk to the accompaniment of musical instruments such as cymbals, mreedangas, cattle-drum, two stringed musical instrument (i.e. dotorā) and so on. One of these songs is given below as a specimen of this genre of folksong, e.g.,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Diha} & - \text{ hara hara nandi bhringi stuti kare } \\
& \quad \text{gandharba kinnar} \\
& \quad \text{hetu sadasiva deva digambara } \\
\text{Pada} & - \text{ trilokar nāth hara siva jatādhāri} \\
& \quad \text{gāle sobha kare prabhumāra ohi lambādāri} \\
& \quad \text{kapālate sobhā kare ardhachandra kalā} \\
& \quad \text{gale sobhā kare prabhumāra nara munda mālā} \\
& \quad \text{kāndhe sobhā kare prabhumāra garalar gāl} \\
& \quad \text{kakālate sobhā kare ban bāghar chāl} \\
& \quad \text{bakhopari sobhā kare ohi bhāngar guli} \\
& \quad \text{sarba gāoe sobhā kare prabhumāra bhasma dhuri} \\
& \quad \text{kare sobhā kare prabhumāra trisul dambaru} \\
& \quad \text{brikhabhe chariṣā phure jagata guru} \\
\end{align*}
\]

19. Informant, Sri Nagen Baishya (50), Nalbari.
Through this song the obedient disciples of Siva who are Nandi and Bhringi pray to Lord Siva with devotion. This song describes Siva’s nature, beauty, dress and other qualities of his personality to satisfy their Lord Siva.

Some songs associated with Siva-Mahadeva are also sung by the cowherds during the time of Bhogali-Bihu for collection of subscriptions which are utilised for their amusements. One of such songs is given below as a specimen.

Siva Siva //

äre āriyā hätir kāndhar cariyā /
hätir kān dulmul kare,  
lāfa bāigān gāchat care /  
lāfa bāigān cital pāt,  
ämār rākhāl khāy karkārā bhat /  
karkārā bhat khāire,  
hildol talat yāyre /  
hindol tali bāgher bhay,  
bābhāy bāghinik kay /  
äre āre rākhāl bhāi //  
tomār galit kai gāi ?  
rām-laksman dui bhāi,  
sitā bāre dustā pāy /
The song refers to a boy Rakhal by name who always took stale food. During conversation with a tiger and a tigress they speak about the place where the cows are available. At last they jokingly mention the names of Rama and Laksmana as well as Sita. Here Sita is described as a wicked girl. Generally such songs are sung in the Goalpara district and it is known as Gāonmāgā festival.

Another important folk song prevalent in Kamrup is Mah-Hare Mahaho which is sung in the full moon of the month of Aghon to the accompaniment of dance and different musical instrument. It is a group dance and song which aims to drive away the mosquitoes. The Bhāluk dance i.e. bear dance is an important part of this dance. The group moves from one house to another house by singing and dancing this song giving blessings to each member of the family.

As in Assamese Mahaho song is also found in the Rabha society. As for example one such song is given below:

This typical example is specially found in the district of Goalpara.

The following folksong connected with marriage ceremony of Assam is generally sung by women folk. This song is sung during the time of bringing water to be used for bathing the bride and groom.

\[
\begin{align*}
O' \text{ mon jatar } & \text{pånitulibali } nānilā \text{ matar} \\
ægatæ \text{ kaicilæ } & \text{o' mon jatar} \\
\text{darære } & \text{pitakok o' mon jatak} \\
\text{padulæ } & \text{chācibæ } gāni \text{ mon jatar} \\
\text{pani } & \text{tulibali } nānilæ \text{ matar} // \\
\text{pånitulæ } & \text{ahote o' mon jatar} \\
\text{chinæ joke } & \text{niba } tāni \text{ mon jatar} \\
\text{pani } & \text{tulibali } mānilæ \text{ matar} // \\
\text{pani } & \text{tuli } åhe \text{ o' mon jatar} \\
\text{drupadar } & \text{giyære o' mon jatar} \\
\text{påndabar } & \text{negæ bowæri } \text{ mon jatar} \\
\end{align*}
\]

21. Informant, Anil Rabha (48), Dudhnoi
The song criticizes either the father of the bride or the groom for not giving the chance of good conveyance for carrying the bathing water from the place of its collection to the *bibhā-thali* (marriage pandle). Because, while walking on foot to fetch water they would have to face some obstacles - such as facing the leech and other harmful

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creatures. They also remind the parents of the bride or groom to clean the gate of *bibāha thali* (marriage pandle) of the groom as the bride who is a daughter or a rich family will be satisfied to see the decorations and preparations. In this song the name of the groom is mentioned as Drupadi who was the daughter of King Drupada and wife of *Pancha Pândava*. Moreover this song expresses the manner, procedure and place for keeping the water which will be carried for bathing of the bride or groom. It is a popular marriage specially among women folk in the district of Kamrup.

Another specimen of marriage song is given below:

```
sonare bâtite māh hālodhi
oi rām rupare bâtite tel he /
kākhate kalasi laiyā mātregane
oi rām dhuwāb gal he //
māh hālodhi gate ghahilā
oi rām kalahe dhālilā pāni he /
thur thar kari kāmpe hāt bhari
oi rām dhuwaise joshada rāni he //
etā batite māh hālodhi
oi rām etā bātite dai he /
harak nowābaloi menakā āhise
oi rām māthāte orani loi he //
māh je hālodhi gāwate ghahilā
oi rām gāwate raigaila mal he //
```
This song is sung by the women folk at the time of bathing the bride or groom. To have the bath of the bride or the groom some particular items like peas, turmeric, mustard oil or scented oil (dadhi) are required besides water. Generally the bride or the groom

23. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
need not take the bath himself or herself. It is generally done by the bride's or the groom's mother or such elderly women who have close relation with the bride or the groom. The song mentions the name of a female as Menaka, wife of Dakshya (mother of Parbati). It is described that Menaka came alone to bathe the bride without Hara. Because the act of bathing is performed only by women folk and not by men. There is also mention in the song about the place where the bride or groom should sit after completion of bathing and about the bridal dresses which should be very neat and soft. The bride or groom would feel pinching on their soft body if dresses of coarse cloth is used.

Like Assamese society, marriage songs are also prevalent in the Boro-Kachari society. This genre of song is known as *Habā-Methāy*

\[
\text{he āi ; he ache āi Ram}\\
\text{corni hábā maun ? he āi Ram,}\\
\text{jāhā āganeni gāhā conāni}\\
\text{hābā hāi /}\\
\text{he ache āi he āi Ram} // 24
\]

Some of such songs are sung by the women folk in the groom's party.

---

Like marriage songs some lullabies are prevalent in the Assamese society. Two examples of such songs are given below:

siyāli a
nāhibi rāti
tore kāne kāti
lagām a bāti / 25

Don't come at night, o siyali (fox)
I shall cut your ears and make lamps of them.

āmāre maināi subae,
barite bagari rubae,
barire bagari paki sari jāba,
āmāre maināi butali khābe / 26

i.e., our little one will go to sleep,
He will plant a bagari (plum) in the orchard,
The bagari plums will ripen and drop,
Our little one will pick them up and eat.

As in Assamese society some lullabies are prevalent in Rabha society. One example is given below as specimen.

25. Informant, Gini Bora (63), Guwahati.
i.e., Makurinezia flower is just about to bloom,
The hens are eating the paddies with their beaks.
The bears are polluted with muddy water,
Oh my dear girl sleep sleep.

Some lullabies are prevalent in the Boro-Kachari society like Rabha society. One specimen is given below:

\[
aui, duduphaui \ phaui \\
aui \ dudupaui / \\
aeung \ phaiy\^a \ baul\^a / \\
thalir \ thicea \ har / \\
thalir \ thicea \ har\^a / \\
thalir \ th\^ainaue \ har / \\
aui, duduphaui, phaui / \\
aui, dudupaui //^{28}
\]

---

i.e., Oh John (moon) come come,

Oh John come

if you don't come

give one banana.

Oh John come come

Oh John come.

Like Boro-Kacharies, some lullabies are used in the Dimasa community. One specimen is given below as example.

\[ thu \text{ dia } n\text{änaha } thu \text{ dai } / \]
\[ thuiyäkhä thi khäde machrong bäigäunäng / \]
\[ thukäde däudichä mäi ginänäng / \]
\[ thu \text{ dia } thu \text{ dai } thu \text{ dai } /^{29} \]

i.e., Oh my darling sleep sleep

otherwise the fox will come to eat you

If you go on sleeping silently

You will be given egg for your supper

sleep - sleep - sleep.

Like the Boro-Kacharis, Hajongs constitute another tribal

---

community of Assam. They also use some folk songs during the particular time of the year. Some typical examples are given below. They sing lullabies like -

\[
\begin{align*}
ki \text{ phul} & \text{ phutise,} \\
m\text{āirengā phul} \\
tul \text{ tul kai mui} \\
k\text{ānāt dhariyā tul} \\
bai \text{ dibā phulā gāmochā} \\
dādā \text{ dibā sāree} \\
aī \text{sāree pindhiyā} \\
berāw \text{ bāri bāri} /^{30}
\end{align*}
\]

another specimen is --

\[
\begin{align*}
udum \text{ dum dumani kērā} \\
\text{āi bāi gharat jāung} \\
dudu \text{ mākhā bhāt khāung} /^{31}
\end{align*}
\]

Besides these, some other folksongs known as play song or game song are prevalent in different societies. Some specimens of game songs are given below as example of different societies.

30. B. Das, Hajong Loka Sanskritik, p. 35.
31. Ibid.
The above song is an item of folk song aimed at amusing the children. It is composed with such words which are of the same rhyme or measure. When it is sung with the favourite tune the children get attentive and fully cooperate with the singer. There is no deep or underlying meaning in the song. It is only for amusing the children. This folk song is popular among the children in the Kamrup district of Assam. It is sung by the children when they play with their friends. Generally through this song children play and attain mental satisfaction and pleasure.

The Garo language is also replete with oral songs. Both the menfolk and the womenfolk sing various oral songs in different contexts. The children of the Garos also play various games singing various game songs current in their language, e.g.,

māi khabar choprā
bāni khabar choprā
bādiyā bishākho maungegā
theram theram loi loi //

This folk song is known as play song among the children and it is sung when the children are busy with their play.

Another type of play song or game is known as boat song. Specially the boat song is very much popular among various groups of people in the Dakshin Kamrup area. This song is sung by the boat players at the time of boat race. Two specimens are given below, e.g.:

Diha - O hari ae ram hari rām /
O ram ram ram he //

Pada - banbāse āse hari, rājā judhisthīr
rājya ari dukh pāio he /
ajutoke sisha hari, sahite durbāshā
o bhikhyā māgilonta gāi o he /
tok ann dibā hari, mor kino bhāgya
O sthān korā resigan o' he /
O drupadik bole hari, durbāshā āhilā hari

---

33. Informant, B. Majumdar (33), Boko.
srighre sāg korā anna o'he /
drupadik bolai hari, māgi anā chāwal hari
age randhi bārhi khāilo he /
jbā agnidatta, thāli goot āse
dhui-pakhaliyā thailo o'he /
thāliko mudhule, mai nubhungle
lokhyake bhujite paro o'he //³⁴

i.e.,

Durjyodhana the king of Kaurava planned to exterminate the Pandavas so that there should remain none to claim the throne in future. For this purpose Durjyodhana engaged Durvasa-muni (who was hot tempered by nature) with ten thousand disciples to beg alms to Yudhisthira (i.e., to Pandavas who were in exile at that time as Kamyakvana) with the intention that if they fail to offer Durvasa's desired alms, then the hot tempered Durvasa will curse them and thereby Pandavas will be exterminated. And accordingly Durvasa met Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas and asked for food to extinguish their hunger. Knowing the plan of Durjyodhana Krishna, who is the got incarnated and also sakha (friend) of Arjuna (the third Pandava) appeared before Draupadi and asked for food and accepted the small particle of vegetables remaining after their (Pandavas) supper and thereby the

³⁴. J. Kumar (ed), Dakshin Kol, Mizra, p. 44.
hunger of Durvasa along with his disciples vanished instantly from their stomach. Thus Krishna saved the Pandavas from the evil effect of the curse of Durvasa muni.

This song is replete with a kind of Solace that a true devotee is always Protected by the God himself. Draupadi is a true devotee of Lord Krishna as such she is saved by the Lord Krishna from the fire of angry of Durbasa. In the same way, if a person takes shelter on the feet of the lord Krishna he or she is always protected by the God from any kind of danger.

The following song is sung in the context of boat race while the oarsmen are rowing their boats speedily to overcome their fatigue. The song goes thus:

O he ohe o hari ahe /  
O joi namo nārāyan o hari ahe /  
O namo nite niranjan o hari ahe /  
O krishna Chandra karā daiyā o hari ahe /  
O karunā sāgar ohe o hari ahe /  
O shreerādhe prāndhan o hari a he /  
O mukunda murāli a ohari a he /  
  hari bol a he /  
  hari bol a he /  
  o haiyā hai o  
  o haiyā haio ---
The following boat song is a \textit{stuti} (hymn) to God Narayan to have blessing for success in the race. Hence they recite the different names of Almighty, the creator of the Universe and at last they pronounce words with musical tune which bring force to their mind during the race. Hence this genre of songs may be termed as emotional pronouncements which bring zeal and valour to the mind of the rowers. Generally when the boat-man are busy in rowing the boat, they sing the song with enthusiasm.

Besides these various types of folk songs, there is another kind of folk song known as \textit{Deh-Bicårar Git} prevalent in different parts of Assam. One of them is given below as a specimen:

\begin{verbatim}
o bhāi pandit   tor kene niyam dharam /  
o bhai murukh   tor kene pātak cilan //  
nite dubāi   nite pāni kāure  
nite dube jāi ud /  
\end{verbatim}

35. \textit{Ibid.}
Inner meaning of the song is that the people of the country are superstitious. Due to this character one group of people hate the other group and fight each other for superiority. The whole universe is the creation of one Almighty and all creatures are living in this Universe. Similarly human race is also living here. Hence there should not be any distinction between man and man. Of course different groups may

have different customs and manners and accept different types of food, but those things do not stand in the way of offering prayer to our creator with our own rules and customs. In this song, there is reference to communities (i.e., Hindu and Muslim) who hate each other’s customs and manners relating to religion.

Generally this song is sung by minstrels. His outlook is that of non-attachment with worldly affairs like greed, attachment, anger and so forth. Human body is constituted with five prime elements namely earth, air, water, fire and ether and hence human body is perishable; that means human body is mortal. Enjoyment of worldly affairs by the super being (man) is not essential but the deed or act for the salvation of the Ātmā (soul) is real and essential. Human body is the best form to do good deed and pray God. In other form, besides human form such act i.e., to pray God is impossible. As such, such person (i.e., minstrel) advises to mass people through their Deh-Bicār-Git not to be allured by worldly fascination.

Folk dance is an important genre of performing art which is mostly popular and attractive in different societies of Assam. Generally it is done by the folk but these are less ritualistic in content. Besides its important characteristics are simplicity and spontaneity. It can be said that the tradition of folk dance has sprung from the lives and activities of the non-elite folk. Folk dances are mainly their emotional
expressions and aesthetic behaviours. The artistry of folk dance seems to have been unselfconscious. This genre of folk performing art is not monotonous. The regional colouring in the dress and ornaments of the singers and instruments used at the time of singing the songs make them rich and varied.\(^{37}\)

Folk dance is also purposeful like music and drama. Through the medium of dance, elements of drama are also expressed easily. The purpose may be primarily movement, the creation of an ephemeral, kinetic design in which concept (ideas about dance), process (what leads to performance), medium (the body instrument) and product (the dance) of performance merge. But physical motion is the primary end. It is termed as 'autotelic' by Anderson and Moore.\(^{38}\)

Like non-tribal people, the tribal people are also integrated with some dances which are mainly ritual. The tribal folk dance is according to their religious norms. The accurate and proper performance of dance depends on their success in chase and victory in war, fertility in women and yield from the land, pacification of the unknown elements and elimination of pestilence, protection from evil and fruition of love.\(^{39}\)

Assam has variously been described as a paradise for

\(^{37}\) H.C. Das, "Traditional of Folk Musci and Dance in Orissa" in Folk Music and Dance ed. H.C. Das, Vol. IV, p. 82.


\(^{39}\) P. Banerjee, Folk Dance of India, p. 12.
anthropologists, a land of music, a land of dances. But other religious and folk dances of Assam have scarcely been known outside the pale of the State excepts, of course, on some very rare occasions when some of these dances are taken out for exhibition. No scientific and sustained interest has, however, been taken by connoisseurs of this art in these various forms dances of Assam. Yet, Assam seems to have a long and strong tradition of culture of music and dance.  

Folk dance may be considered as an integral part of Assamese folk culture. In a way, at least for some people, dance is a part of life itself. The different religious functions of different societies are performed by dances. Dances are related with different religious functions which are performed occasionally. Such folk dances are very ancient in Assamese society. The Tribal and non-tribal people express their inner thinking and emotion by their dancing. Folk dance is various in type in different parts of Assam. According to religious functions dances are various in nature. Some of them are given below:

Dance performed in the context of the Spring time festival Assam is known as the Bihu dance. This is a highly popular dance form not only amongst the non-tribal Assamese people, but also amongst the tribal people of Assam. Generally the Bihu-dance is current among the

41. J. Das, Folklore of Assam, p. 126.
Assamese people who have some fixed attitudes. At the time of dancing, the dancers stay their hands on their hips and make body movements opening out the arms. Thus male dancers also perform their dance in the same form. Rightly does observe P. Goswami:

The steps are simple and seem to be unstudied, but the movement of the hips, the swaying arms and the protruding breasts easily catch the eye of the onlooker. The dance is rhythmic and invigorating.\(^{42}\)

The Bihu dance is always associated with Bihu songs which are sung to the accompaniment of drum, tāl, flute, takā, gagana and so forth. Bihu songs have a wide range of folk tunes and on the basis of these tune and rhythm the dancers make their body movements. The Bihu dance may be regarded as a dance of youth and vigour. The Bihu dance may express an exuderant spirit; like a Bihu song it tends to express the erotic sentiment more than anything else.\(^ {43}\) Generally it is clear that a pliant body and a sweet voice are very necessary for a Bihu dance which make the Bihu dance very attractive for the common people.

Like Bihu song and dance Huchari is an important institution.

\(^{42}\) P. Goswami, Bohag Bihu of Assam and Bihu Songs, p. 38.
\(^{43}\) J. Das, Folklore of Assam, p. 127.
which is performed in the context of Bihu festival. Huchari dance is a dance in which groups of young men visit households receiving contributions and giving blessing. Huchari dance is a very slow dance with restrained music and stepping, the performers moving in a circle.\textsuperscript{44} The Huchari dance as seen in upper Assam is a ring dance, in which the men move in a shuffling manner, with a leader in the middle, who starts the songs while the others take up the refrain. Musical instruments, like small drums, split - bamboo clappers, small cymbals and horn - pipes are used in Huchari dance.\textsuperscript{45}

Another folk dance current in Dakshin Kamrup is jejerä performance which is connected with the Rangali Bihu. The jejerä performance is a pentatonic performance. The dance is not accompanied with any dialogue and song. Generally beating of the drum and dancing with special make up are the salient features of the jejerä performance. In this performance two types of musical instruments are played. One is the jejerä (a kind of drum) and the other is manjira (cymbal).\textsuperscript{46} The jejerä is a small drum which resemble the dhol but is smaller in size. Generally three drums are used in the jejerä party. Two of them are equal in size, but the third drum is smaller than the other two. Besides these, there is one cymbal beater. In the jejerä

\textsuperscript{44} B. Datta et-al (ed), A Handbook of Folklore Material of North-East India, p. 207
\textsuperscript{45} P. Goswami, Bohag Bihu of Assam and Bihu Songs, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{46} D. Kalita, Traditional Performances of South Kamrup, pp. 46 - 47.
party four persons are necessary two of whom are dressed with special make-up. The two dancers who are specially made-up take their drums hanging from the shoulder up to the belly and beat the drums with one stick and at the same moment they begin to dance also. The other drummer beats the drum with two little sticks but he does not dance with other two dancers. They express their feeling, emotion, fear and love, and anger through dance and acting movement without any voice.

*Dandā-nritya* is another dance form of Dakshin Kamrup. This dance form is current in this area among the Ādibāsi community. It is observed at the time of Bohāg-Bihu among the Ādibāsi. *Dandā-nritya* can be performed only by male persons. So, to perform this dance form male persons are necessary. The dancers use some bamboo sticks. One person takes two sticks in the right hand and to create *sur* touches on the other person's stick during the dancing. They also use *Mada* (a drum). They perform their dance with the movements of their bodies following the rhythm of the bamboo sticks. They perform their dance in various positions, such as - standing position, sitting position and other positions. Besides these, the main characteristic of this dance form is that, at the beginning time the dancers are circular, they perform their dance in the circular position and finish their dance without breaking the circular position.

At the beginning of *Dandā-nritya* the performers recite that
Mādal nāc is an another note worthy dance form of Dakshin Kamrup. It is current in the Bodo community of this area. Through this dance form the Bodo people worship the Mādal for their protection from the malevolent spirits. They believe that the sound of Mādal can destroy the bhut-pret (bad spirit) from the area. Generally Mādal is beated at the time of Bahāg-Bihu. This dance form is performed only by boys. In the Mādal nāc, first time the family members worship the Mādal with the red bordered gāmochā. After this function the dancers stand in a circle and begin to dance with clapping. Besides the Mādal, they use cymbal, rāmkartāl and bamboo stick. At the end of the dance the beater of the Mādal departs from the dancing place and the other dancers follow him. At the beginning of Mādal nāc the performers...
Jhumur or Jhumuir is another folk dance of tea tribes. This type of dance has been occupying a top position in the field of folk dance among the tea tribes. It is similar to the Bihu dance and songs in the Assamese society. These dance forms are performed at one's courtyard in the month of Bhādra. A branch of Karam tree is implanted on the courtyard of the dancing place. The young men and women form a circle taking in the centre. They dance around the circle of the branch of Karam tree with pleasure maintaining the step of the body movement or foot motion. Mādāl (a kind of drum) is the main musical instrument of these dance forms. It is known as Karam puja. Through these dance forms, the tree tribes express their social, moral, economic life, and there is an attractive picture of love and yearning of the people. The performers perform their dance according to the rhythm of the Mādāl. These dance forms also play a vital role in the field of education among the non-tribal rural folk. Generally, this dance form is current in specially tree garden areas.49

49. Informant, Nagen Chandra Orang (38) Nalapara.
Bhāluk-nāc is another folk dance of Assam which is performed in different parts of Assam at the time of Maho-ho festival. This dance is mainly related with Maho-ho song. When the Maho-ho party enters the courtyard of a family, the Bhāluk begins to dance (who is bhāluk with wearing dry leaves of banana). It creates a joyful situation in the courtyard of every family and carry some money or rice from the family. Such Bhāluk-nāc is current in Rabha community also like Assamese society.

Piyāk nām or bokā (mud) nām is another folk dance which is prevalent in various parts of Assam. It is a very attractive and joyful dance. Piyāk nām is performed on the occasion of Nanda-utsava in the Dakshin Kamrup area. Such utsava is observed on the next day of Janmāstami of Shri Krishna. Piyāk nām party includes 50 to 75 boys who are between 6 to 12 years of age. They dance on the muddy place which was already prepared for the dancers. In this dance the Pāṭhak and Nām-party sit near the muddy place but they do not enter into the boundary of the muddy place. When the pāṭhak begins to recite the nām with the musical instruments nāgārā and bhortal then the boys begin to dance in the muddy place. At first they go round the boundary of muddy place. In the beginning the boys dance in the

standing position with body movements. Their dancing movement depends on the nam party and the nam party controls their dancing motion. In this dance form the dancer demonstrate body movements in various ways which are performed according to the tune of the nam. At the time of finishing the nam the boys dance in the sitting position and roll down on the muddy place. Such nam are related with the narration of the birth ceremony of Shree Krishna. According to the tune of the music of nam the dancers perform their dance. Generally in this dance form the body movement specially hands movements are more than the other parts of the body. Main function of the Piyāk-nām are only song, dance and abhinaya without dialogue. Through the abhinaya and dance the dancers perform a nātak (nritya-nātak) which exhibits the birth ceremony of Shree Krishna while he was in the house of Nanda at Gakul. As the function (Piyāk-nām) was observed with great joy and pomp by Nanda with his fellowmen at Gakul. The next day of Shree Krishna’s birth is called Nanda-tsava.51

Another folk dance of Rabha community is Bahurangi or Bagejāri dance which is related to Bahag Bihu. In the Bagejāri dance there are some crude dancing movements. The Bagejāri dance is related with Bagejāri song. From the traditional beliefs it is known that Bagejāri

51. Informant, Debeshar Nath (47), Rajapukhuri.
songs are created from various causes.

According to one belief, a young couple Bage (name of a girl) and Raia (name of a boy) had their love affair. They expressed their emotions, feelings through songs which eventually became popular among the group as a whole. References their love and elopement frequently run through Bagejāri songs.52

According to another belief, in old time there were two Rabha sisters - their names were Khape and Bage. Bage was a poet singer. She could compose songs on any situation and could sing these songs with sweet melody. Later on, this song was known as Bagejāri git. Although these songs are erotic in nature, they are presented in ritualistic or ceremonial functions like marriage or death rites and ceremonies.53

Another belief is that in the long past, a group of young girls went to pick-up stalks of arum to a ditch Rayakhal by name. When they were plucking the stalks of arum, a flock of white cranes were flying across the sky over them. Seeing these birds, one of the girl cried out bagalee urice cā ai cā (see, a flock of cranes are flying). Immediately a young boy who was also nearby, replied - bag ai jāri, bag ai jāri, bag

52. D. Kalita, Traditional Performances of South Kamrup, p. 60.
53. Ibid., p. 60.
(you fool, these are cranes). Thus the song came to be known as Bagejări. In Assamese Jări means slow witted or innocent. So it may be assumed that these songs are the songs of innocent girls.54

Bagejări songs are related with Bahag Bihu. These songs are sung by the womenfolk. But at the time of Bahag Bihu both the young boys and girls join together in a group and go from house to house and perform the Bagejări songs and dances. They use some traditional musical instruments which are mainly singă (buffalo horn trumpet), dighal peti (which is long dhol in size), bansi (flute), duguri (small type năgară), serendă (a chordophone) and kartāl (cymbal) etc.

The Rabhas perform various dances on the occasion of the Bāikho festival while some of these dances are meant to propitiate the deities. The Chāthăr dance (and song), which are performed by mixed groups of young men and women, have clear erotic overtones. Another important set of ritualistic dance is performed by the Rabhas on the occasion of the death ceremony which is known as Phārkānti. In this colourful dance the performers carry swords and shields. Peculiar musical instruments made of wood and bamboo, which are called Manchelenkā and Badidikā and which have clapping devices and features. Besides these, some dances connected with agricultural rites are performed exclusively by the girls.55

54. Ibid., p. 61.
Another folk dance of the Rabhas is Hānā-ghora dance. It is observed by the Rabha community at the time of Bahag Bihu. Hānāghora means a structure of horse which is made of bamboo, strips and ropes of jute. This structure is covered with white cloth. The horns of wild goat (deochāgali) are joined on the head of the horse and a bell is hung on his neck, but the back side of the horse is free. Besides, one artificial tail is joined like a horse tail which is made of jute and it is coloured. And one coloured wooden stick is fixed on the part of the tail. It is known as chaudhalā. Some instruments are used at the time of Hānāghora dance. These are mainly two mādūl (a kind of drum), two dhāl (shield), two tarowāl (sword), two bāhi (flutes), one pair of singā (horn), one jāthi-chālān (bell) and two duguri (conical drum) etc.

Generally it is believed by the Rabha community that the Hānāghora creates a clam and peaceful environment in the village. Therefore, at first time, the villagers, perform pujā of Hānāghora at the deuris (village priest) house. At the time of pujā a chicken (age of one week), an egg, vermilion, rice powder and rice beer are very essential. At the time of pujā, Hānāghora is sat at the north side and the father of Hānāghora (who is aged and who knows the origin of Hānāghora) narrates the original history of Hānāghora. Then, the head of the

56. B. Rabha, "Hānāghora Nrtya", Souvenir of Nikhil Rabha Jatiya Parishad, pp. 23-23
chicken is put on the one horn of *Hānāghorā* and the egg is put into the other horn of *Hānāghorā*. Besides these, vermillion is put on the forehead of *Hānaghorā* and the rice beer is spread over the body of it. After the completion of the *pujā* all people begin to dance clapping their hands on all sides of the *Hānāghorā*.

Another folk dance of Assam is *Bagurumbā* dance which is current mainly among the Boro community. *Bagurumbā* dance is the famous one in which Boro maidens perform to relax themselves. This dance is very graceful and captivating. *It is full of vivacity - the maidens hop and swing, bend and unbend, and at times give the impression of fluttering butter flies.*

Like the Rabha and the Boro communities some folk dances are current in the Missing community. The most important ritualistic dance of the Missing is the one performed with the priest (Mibu/Miri) at the centre on the occasion of any religious ceremony. It is seen that more folk dances of the Missing community are associated with the *Āli-āi-iligāng* (planting of seeds) festivals. Hunting, fishing, arrow-shooting, rowing, weaving, transplanting and harvesting etc. are suggested in the mimetic *Āli-āi-iligāng* dances in which all people, men and women, young and

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57. Ibid.
old, married and unmarried, dance in rows and circles.\(^5^9\) Besides at another ceremonial occasion of the Missing in which dancing feature is prominent is the porāg which is a post-harvest festival. In this festival (which is also called the Narā-sigā Bihu) drummers and dancers of one village are invited by the people of another and there is a healthy competition in drumming and dancing. On the other hand, there are also some group dances which are performed just for the fun of it. The Missing perform the Bihu dance in their own distinctive style, singing Missing Oi-nitams (love songs) and also Assamese Bihu songs.\(^6^0\)

Some folk dances are prevalent in the society of Sonowal Kacharis. The most important dance of the Sonowal Kacharis is performed with the singing of Hāidāng songs in which men dressed in flowing robes dance with gentle movements holding peacock feathers in their hands.\(^6^1\)

A truly impressive dance of the Tiwas of the hills and the adjoining areas is performed on the context of the Sagra Misāwā festival. This is the spring festival and the bulk of the songs and dances reflect the spirit of spring, youth and love. While some dances are dedicated to the deities, some other interesting dances are also performed in the

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60. Ibid., p. 209.
61. Ibid.
Wan-Sawa festival which centres round ceremonial rice-pounding. The Tiwa young men and women also perform a delightful dance on the occasion of Lāngkhun-pujā carrying decorated bamboo poles in their hands. Besides, some important dances of the plains Tiwas are associated with the Barat-pujā ceremony. In one such dance a peculiar instrument called Sarāila (a bamboo and wood affair with bird and animal motif and a clapping device) has an important place. Another dance is performed with the dancers holding pieces of burning firewood. There are also some interesting numbers in which masks of Siva-Garuda, tiger, bear, boar, etc. are worn by the performers. Another attractive Tiwa dance is Bokā-nās which is performed by young men and women on a muddy spot.62

Some other folk dances are prevalent in the Deori society. The dances of the Deoris are connected with the temple of their presiding deities Girā-Girāsi (equated with Siva-Parvati) and also the annual agricultural festival. While the young men and women start dancing in the courtyards of the villagers, the venue is later shifted to the temple where it takes a devotional turn. It concludes with the Bihu festivals.63

Like Deoris, Karbis also perform many dances. Some of them

62. Ibid.
are performed on the occasion of Chomāngkān, the elaborate death ceremony, which is also one of the biggest festivals of the Karbis. Bānjār-Kekān is a dance in which specially decorated bamboo poles (bānjār) are displayed. It is a very hilarious dance in which only young men take part. In the Nimso-Kerung dance both young men and women take part, and the accompanying Kāpāera songs are patently absence in content. In this dance, the young men hold a shield in one hand and a stick in the other. Young girls, with their heads covered with black scarves, join in later. A girl holds the coat of the boy and the boy holds her belt. Some other dances associated with Chomāngkān are Kansopadu and Ranker-Kekān. Hachchā-Kekāh is another folk dance which is related with the harvest festival.64

Like the Karbis, the Dimasas also perform various ritualistic dances. Such dances are associated with Rajni Gobra and Harni Gobra ceremonies. The pathri (oracle) is supposed to dance with the help of heavenly power. The dances of boys and girls are very interesting at the Busu festivals. Such dances are rhythmic and choreographic in patterns. Besides these, one another folk dance is prevalent in Dimasa society, which is performed to welcome an honoured visitors to the

village. It is very slow but is exhibited for long time with cyclic movements.65

Another folk dance is Jaki dance, which is associated with the Māre-Pujā. Jaki dances are performed in front of the daily to the tune of musical instruments like nāgārā (a membrophone instrument), bhortal (big cymbal), rājadhol (big drum) and kāliya (fitter). The term Jaki is a synonym of Deodha and Ghora. The Deodhās are called Jakis because it is believed that due to influence of some kind of magical power they appear to be spiritually excited "under such conditions of trances they are believed to be capable of divining and revealing the cause of illness or maladies and of suggesting their eventual cure and remedies by virtue of their state of possession. During such periods of possession the human vehicles are looked upon as temporary seats of the divine power whose will or desires are revealed through the lips of the possessed persons who are then known as Jakis".66 The Jakis or Deodhās present their dance very vigorously and violently. Besides, the number of Jakis or Deodhās are very limited.67 At the time of dancing they sometimes jump, run and shriek and at last they becomes unconscious. Besides these, they dance on long sword and press their tongue on the sword without any harm or injury done to them. Therefore.

65. Ibid.
66. N.C. Sarma, Eassy on the Folklore of North-East India, p. 50.
every word uttered by them at that moment are believed by the common
people to be true and people offer on their hands various animals
money for self-satisfactions.  

Devadasi dance is also another important traditional folk dance of Assam which is prevalent at present also in different parts of Assam. Devadasi dance is mostly related with the Siva temples. The main characteristic of Devadasi dance is that the Devadasis are unmarried. They however, lived with their parents and relatives and attended the temples services at appointed hours. Burdened with the contempt of the age and unsupported by any royal munificence, the Devadasi had to give up their holy duties. The dance costumes, as it has been gathered, consisted of a loose shirt (lahangā), a wrapper (rihā) wound over the breasts, and long-sleeved blouse over the body. The hair was dressed in coiffure, dacked with flowers, at the top of the head, and was covered with a transparent veil coming down to the shoulders. The Devadasi put on gold ornaments and drums and small cymbals were used as musical instruments at the time of the dance.

Another folk dance of Assam is the Kāli-Chāndi dance. It is related to Goddess Kāli. In the Goalpara district the Kāli-Chāndi dance is very popular and attractive folk dance. It is a very colourful and

68. Informant, Chandi Charan Das, (58), Chhoygoan.
69. Informant, Jaganath Sarma, (50), Mirza.
powerful dance. In Kāli-Chāndī dance a man wears a fearful Kāli mask and weaving a sword in hand he dances in the role of Goddess Kāli. Another important dance of Goalpara region is Bās dance which is performed in the context of Bās-Puja, i.e. Bamboo-worship. It is a vigorous dance in which the dancers carry decorated bamboo poles.\footnote{70}

Besides these dances, Kāli-dance which is held in the context of Kāli-puja. Similarly Hudum-dance is also associated with Hudum-worship prevalent in the district of Dhubri. The Hudum-dance is exclusively confined only to the women folk. As such, this dance may rightly be termed as feminine dance.\footnote{71}

The artform Kushan-gān consists of dance and song, which is prevalent in Goalpara region. The dances associated with Kushan-gān are very attractive and impressive. Dialogue and acting are also important ingredients of this artform. Episodes of Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata are sung in the Kushān-gān. The depiction of Rama is the main subject matter of Kushān-gān. The Kushan-gān party includes fifteen or sixteen persons. The leader of the party is known as Mul or Gidāl. He uses benā which a locally made musical instrument. When the Gidāl creates a tune on the benā then the other persons start to dance. Although this dance form is performed by the young boys

\footnote{70. B. Datta et-al (ed.), A Handbook of Folklore Material of North-East India, p. 207}
\footnote{71. B. Datta et-al, A Study of the Folklore Culture of the Goalpara Region of Assam, pp. 248 - 49.}
but the boys are made up as girls at the time of dancing which is very jovial and attractive dance for the audience.\textsuperscript{72}

Another folk dance of Assam is \textit{Thiyä-näm} which is prevalent in different parts of Assam. \textit{Thiyä-näm} is presented in standing position. In this art form the \textit{pāli} as well as \textit{pāthaka} remain in standing position but the drum beaters take their sitting positions. There are 20 or 25 persons in one \textit{Thiyä-näm} party. Every person of the party takes his position in rows and perform their own duties. The movements of their hands and leag are very attractive. The \textit{pāthak} does not enter the arena of the \textit{pālis}, rather he remains amidst the instrumentalists behind the dancing party. But at the ending time of the dance the \textit{pāthak} joins the \textit{pālis} when the \textit{pālis} move in a circle keeping the \textit{pāthaka} in the middle. At the beginning of \textit{Thiyä-näm} party remains in a sitting position. The \textit{pāthak} starts the \textit{nām} with a devotional song and the \textit{pāli} repeat it with clapping of his hands very actively. After finishing the song the \textit{pālis} stand up and dance with the sound of \textit{nāgārās} and \textit{bhor-tāls}. In this art form the beater of the \textit{bhor-tāl} controls the dance movement by the sound of \textit{tāl}. Generally it is not similar with the sattriyā dances. But it is distinct that the motion of the body is unique. The dance of \textit{Thiyä-näm} is various in type.\textsuperscript{73} These are mainly \textit{rangcalā}, \textit{ek-khojiā},

\textsuperscript{72} B. Datta, et-al., \textit{A Study of the Folk-Culture of the Goalpara Region of Assam}, pp. 234 - 35.
\textsuperscript{73} Informant, Dharani Bora (50), Parli.
dui-khojiā, tini-khojiā, cāri-khojiā, au-bāgarā, bheherā-jujā chālani-
sarakā, penti-nāc, kuji-nāc, ughā-ghurā, bāti-kārā, māllā-diya, etc. Each
form of dance is controlled by two ghatas (beating pattern of nāgārā
where beating of bhor-tāl is also associated by the taluawai. After the
completion of these dance forms another refrain (dīhā) is started at
which time there will be no dancing movement. The nām is closed by
beating the nāgārā and bhor-tāls and the clapping of hands only.74
This dance form is very attractive in the Dakshin Kamrup area of
Kamrup district.

The dance forms along with songs mentioned above are mostly
associated with various worships, rites, rituals and festivals may impart
various informal education to the rural folk.

The combination of song, dance and drama is called performing
art, which may impart, social, cultural, religious and moral education
to the common people.

Specially non-literate rural folk acquire valuable knowledge from
song, dance and drama necessary for their daily life. The knowledge
thus acquired help them a lot in improving their mental make-up and
spiritual awareness.

74. D. Kalita, Traditional performances of South Kamrup, p. 18.
Folk drama is another performing folk art which is mostly popular in rural areas. As in other societies, the tradition of folk drama has been continuing in the Assamese society from the fairly distant past.

Generally folk drama is an important aspects of Indian and Asian Folklore. It is deeply connected with song and dance through which elements of drama are expressed. Folk drama is also purposeful like music and dance. The purpose may be primarily movement, the creation of an ephemeral, kinetic design in which concept (ideas about dance) process (what leads to performance), medium (the body instrument and product (the dance) of performance merge. But physical motion is the primary end. It is termed as autotelic by Anderson and Moore. Drama is basically recognizable as a play activity and hence it is closely related to game, dance and ritual.

But it is correct that drama differs from games in being concerned with providing not only a conventional conflict but a foreknown resolution to the conflict. Secondly, drama must establish psychic distance between performers and audience to achieve its proper aesthetic effect. Therefore it can be said that drama resembles ritual and dance. They

77. Ibid.
possess some symbolic movements, while the movement of drama is commonly subordinated to dialogue. From this point of view it is distinct that "... folk drama as traditional play activity that relies primarily on dialogue to establish its meaning and that tells a story through the combination of dialogue and action, the outcome of which is known to the audience ahead of time".  

Generally folk and popular drama are used in a wide variety of techniques to draw the attention of the audience on the performance. Therefore, one encounters clowning, dancing, singing, instrumental music, bombastic speeches and so on. The range of styles, in terms of subtlety, is very limited in folk drama or festival drama. It is clear that the dominating moods are melo-dramatic or farcical. In such plays, there is no respect for everyday reality. These plays deny reality by turning the world and its social hierarchies upside down, by having acrobats, stilts dancers, and such performers defy gravity, or by having performances given by characters whose roles are suffused with hyperbole or the ridiculous.

There are various forms of folk arts with elements of drama in Assam. Folk drama is an attractive artform for common people of Assam.

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79. Ibid., pp. 353-54.
Saint-poet Sankaradeva (1449-1568 A.D.) started the tradition of written drama in Assam. He wrote six dramas in Brajāvali language mixed with Sanskrit language. It can easily be assumed that Sankaradeva was heavily influenced by the contemporary tradition of folk drama current in Assam. So, it is correct that the Assamese written drama grew out of the local tradition of folk theatre.

After all the tradition of folk drama has been playing active and practical role in Assam from time immemorial. The Assamese folk drama is of various types. But in fact, every folk drama has its own character and performed separately according to its nature and attitude. Evidently folk drama is related with some social functions. A brief discussion of such drama is given below.

The Ojāpāli is the most attractive and distinctive form of folk drama. It is the most ancient traditional performing art form of Assam. Generally Ojāpāli is an important, attractive and joyful audio-visual art form. The term Ojāpāli mainly consists of two words. One is Ojā and the other is Pāli. Ojā is the chief singer and pāli is the assistant and helper of the chief singer, i.e., Ojā. At first, Ojā sings verse from the Assamese versions of epics and Purānas and the Pālis follow him with cymbals and continue musical rhythm with their feet. Besides Ojā wears a special type of dress at the time of singing, dancing and acting and the chief of his assistants is called Dāinā-Pāli who performs some
additional responsibilities. But he repeats verse also with his associates Occasionally Ojā performs his motion to explain the verses through dialogue with the help of the Dāinā-Pāli. Generally it is seen that the activity and function of the Ojā and the Dāinā-Pāli create a semi-dramatic art form in the context of the festivals and ceremonies. This semi dramatic artform create an enjoyable environment among the audience.

Broadly the Ojāpāli is of two types. One is Biyāhar-Ojāpāli and the other is Ojāpāli connected with the worship of Snake goddess Manasā. The Biyāh variety or Ojāpāli recites verse from the Mahābhārata or the Rāmāyana. Therefore, this type of Ojāpāli is known as Rāmāyana-gowa Ojāpāli. The another type of Ojāpāli is known as Suknānni Ojāpāli. Suknānni-Ojāpāli takes theme from the Padma-Purāṇa. The main function of this type of Ojāpāli is the singing of Vandana. While the priest begins his puja to the deity, they start the Devi-Vandanā. And it continues till the end of the worship.

Besides these types of Ojāpāli, another types of Ojāpāli is prevalent specially in Dakshin Kamrup areas. It is known as Mare-gowā-Ojāpāli or the Mare-gān and it is current among the Pati-Rabhas.

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80. N.C. Sarma, Axamara Parivesyakalā Ojāpāli, p. 70.
This type of Ojāpāli recites songs from the oral tradition in the context of Bramāni worship or the worship of the snake goddess Bisahari. Specially they recite the Beula-Lakhindar lore at the context of the worship.

Thus different types of Ojāpāli perform different kinds of functions during various occasions. Specially in Dakshin Kamrup area, Sabhā is a joyous festival which is observed with different rites and rituals. In this occasion, Biyāhar-Ojāpāli performance continues from evening till night. This type of Ojāpāli is also seen in the Darrang and Kamrup districts. Sometimes Suknāni-Ojāpāli also presents their performance in the Sabha festival.

The Suknāni Ojāpāli specially try to visualize the theme of the singing through dance movements. The Ojā of this type of Ojāpāli, tries to explain the contents in homely verses with the help of the Dāinā-Pāli. Here the dialogue and the dance movements of the Dāinā-Pāli provide uncouth humour to the audience. From the musical point of view the Suknāni-Ojāpāli current in the district of Darrang can be categorized into the following steps: (a) Ālāpa, (b) Vandana, (c) Dihā, (d) Pada and (e) Upasam-hāra. The tradition of singing of malitas of different rāgas is totally absent in the Suknāni-Ojāpāli art form.

81. D. Kalita, Traditional Performances of South Kamrup, p. 31.
Another type of the Ojāpāli is Māre-gān gowā-Ojāpāli. This artform recites specially Vandana in the context of Māre-pujā in standing position. The special characteristic of this type of Ojāpāli is that they never sing any song in sitting position at the time of worship. They use two cymbals at the time of singing of any song as like as the Suknāmi Ojāpāli. The Māre-gān gowā-Ojāpāli is current specially in the Kamrup and Goalpara districts. This form of Ojāpāli uses special dresses. The Ojā of the group wears a dhuti and shirt and taking a chādar on his neck and it is hung upto the knees and wraps a gāmocā on his head. On the other hand Pālis wear another type of dress. They wear jāmas around their waist and it is white in colour. Besides these, they wear gānji and also wear nepur on thier feet and tie a long green cloth on their waist which is known as tangāli.

Distinctly it is seen that Ojāpāli performance is associated with different rituals. Mainly it consists of gitā, nṛtya and abhinaya. Through those aspects this performance may impart variety of knowledge and education to the masses.

Among the folk dramas the Dhuliyā bhānonā is worth mentioning which is prevalent in different parts of Assam. This performance has been enjoying an important place in Dakhsin Kamup area.

The Dhuliyā bhānonā generally gives performances in the contexts
of marriage, *Upanayan*, various kinds of *Sabhās*, festivals and so forth.

This artform needs at least twenty or more persons. They are expert in beating of drums and clapping of cymbals and so on. The *Dhuliyā* artform is a combination of song, dance and *abhinaya*.

The performance of this artform is started with the beating of drum along with the playing of cymbals. Both the drummers and the cymbolists play on their musical instruments in dancing movements along with devotional songs. This step can rightly be termed as *Vandana*. It follows the dramatization of various mythological episodes found in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* and so forth. In that contexts they use language which is current in the day to day life of them.

Besides they use various masks according to their roles at the time of acting. It is a striking feature of *Dhuliyā* performance. But in the Goalpara region the performance of the *Dhuliyās* is known as *Jaihuliyār* git, the only difference being that it constitutes two groups of drummers one for beating and the other for dancing and singing.84

Another attractive side of *Dhuliyā* party is their unnatural dresses which are used by them at the time of acting. Besides they use some

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84. B. Datta et-al (ed.), *Traditional Performing Arts of North-East India*, p. 62.
peculiar instruments, accessories which may create a joyous environment among the audience.

The Khuliyā-bhāonā is another attractive form of folk drama. Generally it consists of many persons. The chief performer is known as Ojā. He tries to manage the whole performance. Besides him, other persons are also included in the bhāonā group. They are called Bāyan, Khuliyās (who play khol), Tālis (who beat cymbal) and some actors. The party recites an opera which is based on an episode of the Rāmāyana or the Mahābhārata. At first the Khuliyās perform a kind of introduction by using khol and dance at the same time. After the completion of the performance of the Khuliyās the Ojā sings a song which is related to the Lord Krishna. Then begins a very attractive programme with the recitation of the verses and dialogues performed by the Ojās and other actors. It is seen that in the special function the Bāyan holds conversation with actors and clearly explains the complex parts of the verses. Besides, Bahuwā is another attractive character of the Khuliyā-bhāonā party. He can keep the audience in the bhāonā field by his funny words.

Although some scholars try to say that Khuliyā-bhāonā is a degenerated form of Ankiyā-bhāonā nevertheless this statement cannot be accepted without scrutinising the artforms like the Bhāri-gān or Bhāo-gān and the Kushān-gān. We can guess that the Khuliyā-bhāonā
artform was customary in the society before the age of Sankaradeva. Hence it would not be irrelevant to say that Sankaradeva was heavily influenced by these indigenous dramas and stages. At the time of acting the *bhāuariyās* (i.e. actors) use some colours in the process of make-up which are prepared locally. Mainly these are *purai* (a seed of potherb), *hāladhi* (turmeric), *pithāguri* (rice powder), *chāi* (ashes) and *cun* (lime). It is seen that the *Khuliya-bhauariyā* performance abounds with folk elements which are needful for the uneducated village folk.

*Dadhi-Manthan* is a dramatical artform which is too much popular in Dakshin Kamrup area. Generally *Suari* is a festival of Dakshin Kamrup area. In this festival *Ankiyā-nāt Dadhi-Manthan* is performed by the local people. But in some places other party perform this *nāt*. This *nāt* exhibit the misrule of Mathura Rāj Kangsa who had to embrace death penalty as a punishment in the hands of Lord Krishna. It was also a fact that although Lord Krishna possessed all normal characteristics of a child like dancing in tune, stealing of butter from Gopis' houses of Gokul which were distributed among his Gokul which were distributed among his follow *bālakas* (boys) namely Dam, Sudham, Boloram etc., yet some other extraordinary deeds like *Kāliya-Doman* (Killing of the Kāliya) moved the Gopis' hearts with love and ultimately made them accept him not as an ordinary *bālaka* but as a super human being on some occasions their beloved Krishna became dissatisfied at the behaviour of his nursing mother Yosadā and interrupted her *Dadhi-
Manthan Kārya (Churning) with her fellow Gopinies. Yosadā being irritated with such act caught Krishna and intended to tie Krishna with both hands. But much as ropes joined it remained short and they failed to tie Krishna. This happening made mother Yosadā to think that her dear Krishna was not an ordinary bālaka but an extra ordinary man.

When such deeds of Krishna is exhibited through staging Dadhi Manthan nāt before audience. The audience is moved with pity on Krishna and bow their heads to Him with reverence and pray Yosadā offering coins to untie Krishna.

Another dramatic artform is Patalā-nāc (puppet show). This artform is very ancient in India. But it is not exactly known when the tradition Patalā-nāc was entered into Assam. It is distinctly known that the Patalā-nāc is very old form of folk drama. It takes some episodes from the Mahābhārata or the Rāmāyana. Patalā-nāc are two types. One is string Patalā-nāc and the other is shadow Patalā-nāc. The string Patalā-nāc is shown by the help of string. On the other hand shadow Patalā-nāc is shown on the shadow curtain through reflection by the help of light.

According to A.B. Keith the Indian puppetry has originated in the Pāncāla country. He says that "The popularity of puppets is indicated by the erotic game known as the imitation of puppets where the word
for puppets (Pāncāli) suggests that the home of the puppet play in India was the Pāncāli country".85

Generally the puppet show consists of five or six persons. The main person of this art form is the Sutradhāra. The Sutradhāra sits behind the curtain and handles the puppets which are made from khuiilā (cork-wood) with the help of black strings. He exhibits their dances and movements including puppet entrance and exits. Besides, he puts voice into their mouth by playing on a pipe. Generally in the puppet performance, khol, tāl, and pepā are used as the musical instruments.

The Bāyan is the chief assistant of the Sutradhara. Bāyan means a man who is expert in playing on a musical instruments. The men who help the Bāyan and follow him is called Pālis. Of course, the Bāyan and the Pālis, taken together are known as Bāyan’s party or Bāyanar dal.

Generally the stories of the puppet show or Putalā-nāc is taken from the Rāmāyana which are narrated by the Bāyan through songs and verses. And thus putalās also exhibit similarly their body movements. Then the audience are very much attracted and specially uneducated folk are highly moved and become very emotional to see the show.

85. A.B. Keith, Sanskrit Drama, p. 53.
The *Kushân-gân* is another popular form of folk drama. This artform is specially prevalent in the Goalpara district. *Kushân-gân* is an open air theatre which consists music, dance and other ingredients of folk drama. This artform is mainly based on the *Ramâyana* theme. It is said that the term *Kushân* has been derived from *Kusha* one of the two sons of Rama. This artform consists of fifteen to sixteen members. The main person of the troupe is called *Mul* or *Gitâl*. *Mul* is the chief singer and manager; because the *mul* himself maintains a relaxed and restrained posture.  

*Kushân-gân* is related with two benedictory verses. One is related to goddess Sarasvati and the other is related to audience. In the *Kushân-gân*, *benâ* is used which is stringed musical instrument and locally produced. It has a characteristic feature of the institution. Besides, the *benâ*, the *khol*, *tâl* (cymbal) and other instruments are used in the *Kushân-gân*. Therefore, *Kushân-gân* is known as *Benâ-gân* among some people.

The other important person of *Kushân-gân* troupe is *Dowâri*. The *Dowâri* follows the *Mul* and accompanies the *Mul* in singing and dancing time. Besides these functions he enters into conversation with

the leader and his assistants. And also he provides amusement by introducing humorous remarks.87

Another audio-visual performing artform of Assam is Bhāri-gān. This type of folk drama is current in the Goalpara region. It is known as Bhāri-gān in the southern part of Goalpara and in the western part it is known as Bhāo-gān. They are very popular and traditional artform in this region. These Bhāri-gān performances are still occasionally held in some villages in the southern part of Goalpara but in the eastern part it is not seen practically at present. Bhāri-gān is known as corrupt form of Bhāuariyā and this term is still current in the district of Darrang and Kamrup.88 In the Dhubri district, Bhāri-gān is known as Bhāo-gān. The term Bhāo-gān can be described as Bhāo, which is acting and gān performance. From this point of view it can be said that both together mean 'an acting performance'. So they are closely related.

The Bhāri-gān troupe consists of a main singer who is known as Mul and other assistants, who are locally known as Pālis. The Pālis accompanied by tāl and khol in all respects of the Mul. Another additional character of Bhāri-gān is known as Ketuwā. Generally it is separate acting from the main body of the epic theme. Its main function:

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87. Ibid., p. 237.
88. Ibid., pp. 240 - 241.
is the creation of comic situation among the audience. For joking he uses odd-looking mask also.

The theme of the Bhāri-gān is taken from the Rāmāyana. One of the important features of Bhāri-gān is that except the chief characters like Rāma, Laksmana and Sita. Other characters such as Ravana, Hunumana, Jambuvan etc. inevitably wear very attractive wooden masks. Through these activities common people can understand different knowledge of the Rāmāyana and can feel mental satisfaction through these performances.

Besides these, another form of folk drama is the Goālani-jātrā. It is not a regular dramatic, institution. There is neither any well-integrated story nor any standard mode of performance. This type of folk drama consists of some loose materials in the dramatic scenes in which Goālani (milk-maid) occupies a prominent place in the function. But it is associated with songs, dances and body-movements. In this artform mask is also used.

Besides Goālani-jātrā, Bhāsan-jātrā is also another form of folk drama of Assam. Generally Bhāsan-jātrā is purāṇic episode. It is related with songs, dances and body movements. In this artform mask

is used as like as the Goālani-jātra. Thus the Kāti-pujār git is another form of folk drama. It is current in the Goalpara district. This artform is mainly connected with the birth of Kartika the son of Siva-Parvati like the birth day of Sri Krishna which is prevalent in the Kamrup district.

These folk dramas or quasidramatic artforms are current in different places of Assam which are mainly associated with the life of the uneducated folk and these inspire them in their field of development.

91. Ibid.