CHAPTER - VIII

SIMILARITIES AND DIS SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE ASSAMESE BARAMĀHI AND THE BHOJPURI BĀRAMĀSA SONGS
(A) Assamese Bāramāhī:

Bāramāhī or Bilāp-Gīt is one of the treasures of Assamese folk literature. The poet narrates beautifully regarding the twelve months, establishing the relation with nature. This sort of song is found to hear generally in Kamrup and Goalpara. But the structure of composition of this kind of ballad varies in different regions. In ancient time there were no train, aeroplane, motor-car etc. and people travelled by boat, cart and some of them travelled riding on the back of horse or ass for business purpose. Therefore we find some beautiful description of Sāud (merchant) mostly found in Bāramāhī-Gīt. This type of songs may exhibit the feeling of lover and his damsel. Bāramāhī song is the living picture of the emotion and love of a women's heart. Rightly does observe P. Goswami: "This is not quite a ballad, but a song descriptive of twelve months with a thin narrative thread."  

1 P. Goswami: The Ballads and Tales of Assam, p.50
this type of song is found not only in Assam, but also in
other parts of India describing the twelve months of the
year; some times popular, some times literary, in origin.2

The change of seasons can influence the heart of
the human beings. This type of songs are a kind of reflec-
tion of the spontaneous feeling of women with the change
of seasons of the year.

The reaction of feeling of wife of changing season
for husband, who stayed in abroad is expressed through Kanyā-
Bāramāhi and Madhumati Bāramāhi-Gīts. The real picture
of natural superstitions, beliefs, manners, customs etc.
reveals in this type of songs.

Feeling of sorrow with reference to the agriculture
also expressed in this genre of ballad. The ballad entitled
Madhumati exhibits the feeling of grave in the context of
new-paddy in the month of Āghon.

āghanar māhate kanyā sansāre nabān dhan
katek khalte madhu katek parān
jār saṅge priyā āse rāndhi bhāt khāi
āmar saṅge priyā nāi, thākim parar mukh chāi

2 Ibid., p.50
In the month of Āghon new paddy is available and some kind of paddy are tasteful and some are not. The man who lives with his beloved feels happy taking the cooked rice. But the man who does not live with his beloved feels sorrow and has to suffer a lot of mental conflicts.

Generally the month of Puha is regarded the month of virtue. Every woman pays respect to her husband. There is vivid example of this fact:

Puhar māhate kanyā puspe adhikāri
swāmite bhākati kare Bhagyawati nārī.

i.e., A fortunate woman can show respect to her husband who is regarded by her as God in this earth.

The month of Māgha is the period of enjoyment of various food. Harvest is stored at home and it is believed that Lakhimi (the Goddess of wealth) entered every family. The heart of the villagers leaps up with extreme joy at the advent of the Bhogāli Bihu. The friends and relatives are invited to enjoy the Bihu with various kind of cakes and sweets. In this delightful period if the husband is absent, the woman's heart generally breaks with the pangs of separation and sorrow.
In the month of ḍhāgun the whole earth becomes colourful due to the presence of spring-season. The youthful girl imagines some dreams and her mind becomes colourful. Madhumati also feels excitement with desires due to the impact of youthful stage. She desires to satisfy her cardinal love with her beloved person. Therefore a living picture of sorrowful heart of a youthful woman who is affectionately attached to beloved person.

The following lines of the song may reflect the idea mentioned above.

Sakal säude fāgu māre rāndhi bhāt khāi
may nāri abhāginī thāko parar mukh chāi
banār banuā pākhi siyo thāke jore
may nārī abhāginī thāko akalsare.

The birds of the wood also enjoy the feeling of union each other, but I am unfortunate for, I am sad when I notice other happiness. Only I spend time without the company of my beloved.

Madhumati feels that the earthly life is an immense void due to the separation of her beloved. Her mind and face becomes just like a desert. Her body is burnt with the fire of lust and desires.
In the ballad *Kanyā-Bāramāhi* the merchant says to Kanyā in the month of *Chaitra*:

*Chaitar māhate kanyā chaturdikhe man*
*bilawore-bilāwore kanyā nabān yowbān*
*khāwore kanyā karpur-tāmbul bārhok pīrtī*
*guchāo maner kaitār magichho surabhi*

Here we find the lustful attitude of woman. In the month of *Chaitra*, a young woman becomes very restless on account of her youthful stage. The desire of union with beloved is arisen in her mind. But inspite of having the weakness of mind, she controls herself to abide by the social customs and moral laws. In the following verses reflect this sort of social obligation:

*par purusak dekho bāp-bhāī samān*
*dharamāk chinti tumī jowā rāj pathe.*

In the month of *Bohāg* the woman wants the company of her husband who stays in abroad. In this month there is no scarcity of goods and nutritious food is available and therefore the guests can be entertained easily. We find a picture of plentifulness of food in the rural life.
At the advent of the month Jetha, mind becomes restless again for some fortunate days and a woman asks question to a merchant who takes shelter.

Kon dese thākā saud, kon dese ghar,
Ki nām tomar mār āru ki nām bāpar.

O saud! which country do you live in and what are the names of your parents?

The description of the month of Asāra depicts the emotional songs regarding the separation of beloved person.

The month of Sṛyān belongs to rainy season when it rains cats and dogs, darkness cover the whole earth with clouds and in this period the women want the company of their beloved. But unfortunate Madhumati passes her days and nights without the association of her beloved.
Again, in the Kanya Bara Baramahi we find:

Sawanar mahate kanya sawani rati
aji rati kanya may bhunjibo suruti.

The nights of the month of Sravan become pleasurable for a company. The Saud reminds the Kanya that he will surely take pleasure on her during the night on that day.

But the Kanya who is separated from the beloved person never surrenders before Saud (merchant) to satisfy his illicit love and replies with strong determination of her mind:

Aji rati chor may jate log paw,
hate gale bandhi tak raj ghare pathaw
chariofale rakhitham matta gaja hati
sithane paithane lagam ghritar pancha bati,
tikhna khandahate dhari jagio chowpar rati.

If she catches the thief red handed, on that day night, she will put him into jail, no doubt. For her protection she will keep elephant round the house. The house will be lighted with five lights of ghee and she will spend a sleepless night taking a sharpen knife in her hand.
On the other hand, the month of Bhāda was the last month of his business and this reminds him to take the return journey after a long interval. In the moment of goodbye the Sāud says to the Kanyā:

bhādar māsate kanyā māsar paril ses/
haṅsi kheli bidāi diya jāw nij des //

But the virtuous, chaste lady gives reply tactfully, O Sāud you should return home saving your respect, status even your life. It is my beyond imagination to bade goodbye you.

However Kanyā's mind occupies an unknown idea. She approaches to her father about the matter. Then the father of Kanyā asks the Sāud to give his acquaintance and then the Sāud discloses his real identity.

Bāramāhi-Gītas are reflection of the separation of love, joy and grief and tears and smile of young man and young girl. This type of songs are an art by which the desires, ambition, imagination of the women's heart are exhibited. It is universal truth that human life is full of sufferings and every man has to struggle boldly against dangers and
difficulties of life. This sort of mental conflicts are expressed through folk literature.

(B) Bhojpuri Bāramāsā:

From the method of description and the aspect of subject matter Bāramāsā is derived from the Sanskrit literature. According to Krishna Lal 'Saṭṛitu' division of Sanskrit is originated from the Aryans who lived in Saptasindhu. But as they stretched to the east and the south, the existence of the seasons one could notice the inconsistency among them. The month of Māgh and Phāgun were included to the winter season. In fact from the fifth day of the full-moon in the month of Māgh the spring season is well-comed. Thus the month of Phāgun is regarded as the symbol of the spring season. Due to this inconsistency of the season and month, the description of Saṭṛitu's eliminated from the people's mind and the Baramāsā occupies the place.

The Baramasa is sung specially in the rainy season. But there is no any restriction to sing it in the other

3 H. Tiwari: Gaṅgā Ghat ke Git, p.60
seasons also. It can be sung according to sweet will of any person. Bāramāśa prevails greatly in Bhojpur region. The inhabitants of the rural areas like to enjoy this type of song. Because this sort of song exhibits the picture of weal and woe of the Bāramāśa. Bāramāśa often begins in the month of Asār and ends with the description of Jeth.

The main content of the Bāramāśa-Gīt is to narrate the grief of the separation of love. Jāisi, the imminent poet of Hindi literature describes the separation of Nāgmati's love and he closes it with the description of the natural beauty of the every month of the year is nicely depicted. The description of the two first months of the Bāramāśa entitled Nāgmati-Kī-Birah is narrated as the following way:

charhā āsārh gagana ghan gājā,
sajā biraha dunda dal bājā
dhum sam, ghore ghana dhāye
set dhajā, baka pānti dekhāye

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4 Ibid., p.62
5 Ibid., p.196
i.e., At the advent of the month of Asar, cloud begins to thundering. The heart of the women feels trouble for the separation of her beloved person. The smoky-coloured clouds sail in the sky as it the white coloured. Flamingoes are flying in the sky line by line.

In the month of Shravan, it rains heavily and it covers water all sides. But the separated woman becomes wild for her beloved person. Her heart is broken for the separation of love. Tears come out from her eyes.

Besides Jaishl many saints and poets of Bhojpur compose Baramasa-Git later. The sorrowful picture of women’s heart due to the separation of love from her beloved person. In such situation she cannot even accomodate her

6 K.D. Upadhyaya : Bhojpuri Loka Sāhitya Kā Adhyayan, p.196
sorrowful life with the beauty of nature. In the month of Bhādra her life becomes very monotonous and in the month of Māgh her mind becomes wild and feels very trouble, some even to alive without the presence of her husband.

The following lines may prove this fact:

bhādo bhawan sohawān nā lagoi
āsin mohi na sohāī
kārtik kānta bidesh galle ho
samujhi samujhi pachtāī
āghān āwan kahi galle Udhow
push bitala bhari mās
māgh mās yowban ke matal
kaise dharaba jisa ās./

i.e. The separated woman feels very sad in the month of Bhādra and Āsin due to the absence of her beloved person.

Her husband went away from home in the month of Kārtik and she hoped that her beloved person should arrive at home in the month of Āghon. But now the month of Pusa also about to pass away. So her mind fills with extreme grief. Because Māgh is the month of full-youthfulness. So it is impossible to spend time without the company of her husband.

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7 H. Tiwari : Op-cit., p.60
The pangs of separation is so much so untolarable that sometimes in order to mitigate her sorrow has expressed it before the sakhi (friend). In this context we can cite the following verses:

*bhad mās bhayābah e sakhi*  
*ghan bahut ghaharai,*  
*kekarā saranawā ham jāi ke balthi*  
*jib more bahut darāi kātik me sakhi, kātiki lāge*  
*sabe sakhi Ganga nahāī*  
*hamāro lalanā parades' e sakhi*  
*kekarā sange Ganga nahāī.*  

i.e., O' friend! when cloud thunders dreadfully in the month of Bhādra, I am afraid of it. Who will give shelter?

In the month of Kārtika, it falls the full-moon of Kārtika. Friends take bath in the holy water of the Ganga with their husbands, but she is unfortunate as her husband is yet to arrive back.

(C) **Bhojpuri Chownāsā**:  

Chownāsā is the brief account of śāramāsā, describing the sexual frustration felt in the four months still prevails.

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8 K.D. Upadhyaya: *Op.-cit.*, p. 197
In some regions of Bhojpur, chowmāsā also narrates the pangs of separation of Radhā, Sītā, Parvati with their husbands respectively. Chowmāsā is counted from Āsār to Āsin or from Srāvan to Kārtika. A detailed picture of separated woman from her husband is narrated with the impact of nature during these four months. In ancient time, during this period the trade was stopped. The merchant returned home from abroad and they again set out for business after the festival of Dasaharā. During that period they finished their domestic affairs. But if husband would not return home during this period, the sorrow of such a woman was beggar description. Then she expresses her feelings of sad before her friends, as Chowmāsā, e.g.:

mās Āsāra ghana garajalē, sab sakhi chhānhi
chhawāni/
ham bawari ninu dolano, sune mandil binu sāi/
śāwān megh barase mori sajani koī kuhuk sunāi/
ham bawrāli piyā binu ākul, talafat rayen bitāi/
bhādobā garaja gambhir sakhi ho kariyā ghatā nabha chhāi/
chamakelā bijuli ghor ghan garaje, suni seja piyā nahī
kuwār mās sab hili mīlī sakhiyā, jhule māgan āyi/
hamare balamu parādesh bilami rahale, unbinā kush
na sahāī / 9

In the month of Āsār the clouds begins to thunder and my friends repair their roofs of the house. But I am remaining just like a lunetic. O friend! in the month of Sravan the clouds are thundering terribly and in such an environment one can enjoy the sweet voice of the cuckoo. But I am suffering a lot due to the separation of beloved person.

(D) Similarities:

The Bāramāhī and the Bāramāsā bear similarity from the view point of contents, structures, contexts and meaning. Both of them depict the state of mind from mouth to mouth or season to season, usually the newly married young wife while her husband is away from house and lives abroad. As for example we take an Assamese Bāramāhī song entitled: Radhā-Bāramāhī, which may show similarity with Bhojpuri Bāramāsā entitled Radhā-Bāramāsā, e.g.:

9 H. Tiwari: Op-cit., p. 66
At the month of Bahāg the rainy season is started.

And the advent of rainy season, fishes begin to go against
the current of water. But Rādhā is alone. So she cannot move like fishes. At the month of Jeth it becomes impossible to remain outside home due to excessive heat. The wild deer and other beasts also take shelter at the shadow. But alas! Rādhā has no one to take shelter. Rādhā passes the night without sleep even at the golden bed. What's gain my Lord (Kṛṣṇa) has received by going on business leaving his Rādhā? In the Bhāda month the birds begin to cry due to want of water. In the month of Āhina the worship of the goddess Dūrga takes place. She comes and goes being pleased grows-up, unfortunate but Radha passes days and nights without the association of Kṛṣṇa. In the month of Aghona Rādhā will be a girl of sixteen years. When the month of Pusa will come she will have to pass the severe cold nights without her husband. The month of Māgha is wellknown for religious performances, as her husband will not return. In the month of Phāgun the religious minded people will offer worship in the temple. But she will have to pass the month with sigh. In the month of Cait the bel fruit, i.e. aegal marlas will fall down and her husband will go for trade by taking the ripe vilva fruit. But she will have to remain without Kṛṣṇa.
The Bhojpuri Rādhā Bārāmāsā also tells the same
episode of unfortunate heroine Rādhā:

Kahnaiyā nahi āile, Kahnaiyā ke le āi,
Sital Chandan anga lagawati kamini karata srinār.
ja din se man-mohan bichhare sankal mas Aar
Kahnīya nahi aile ----

ek la goria angawā ke patawi, dusre piyā paradesh
tisre meh jhamājham barase, sāwan adhik snedes.

Kahnaiyā nahi āile---
Bhādi rayeni bhayābaha udhow,garaje abru qhahar ai,
labaka-labake thanka-thanke, chhāttā darada uthī jāī
Kahnaiyā nahi āile---
kuwāre āqini ās lāgabati, johali piyā ke bat
abki berī jo hari mor āihe, hiyara ke khulihaī kapāt

Kahnaiyā nāhl āile----
kātik pūnarmāsi udhow, sab sakhi gangā nahāwe,
ham ab abala paraṇa sunariā, kahiye gahanawā jāī

Kahnaiyā nahi āile---
agahana thari anganawā udhow, chāhu disi upajala dhān,
piyā binu karakelā mora karejawā, tanawā se nīkasalā prān
Kahnaiyā nahi āile---

Pusahi phuhiyā pari gaile, udhow, bhījī gaile tan ke chīr,
chakal-chakawā batli bololani, ohi jamunā ko tir

Kahnaiyā nahi āile---
Māgh karakā, jārā udhow, sab sakhi ruawā bharabat
hamaro balamuwa paradesawa chhabale, piyā binu jār na jāwai.

Kahnaiyā nahi āile---
Radha, in the long absence of Kṛṣṇa being bereaved in separation in order to cool and control her charged desires and emotions has used sītal-chandana. Since the departure of Kṛṣṇa it has been raining throughout the Āśār and Udhav was told by Radha that Kṛṣṇa was about to come back during that month, but he had not reached yet. So she imposed Udhav to go and bring Kṛṣṇa with him.

She told Udhav, that she was very lean and thin, her husband was far away from home, and in the month of Srāvan it had been raining torrentially. If Kṛṣṇa did not reach home, she would lose life. So she requested Udhav to bring Kṛṣṇa with him.

Radha spoke to Udhav that the nights in the month of Bhādra were very ferocious and frightening with lightning and continuous thunder strokes. Her heart broke with the pangs of separation and sorrow she prayed to Udhav to bring her husband home.

11 D.P. Shingh: Bhojpuri Lok-gito me Karun Ras, p. 435.
In the month of Aswin she was earnestly and anxiously waiting for Kṛṣṇa to come back home, but her waiting went in vain. So she prayed Udhava to bring Kṛṣṇa with him.

In the fullmoon night of Kārttiṅa, Radhā felt intensely that all her Sakhīs (friends) would go for taking a dip in the holy water of the Ganges with their husbands, but she was unfortunate as Kṛṣṇa was yet to arrive back. So she prayed to Udhava to go and fetch Kṛṣṇa with him.

On the month of Āghon, Radhā had been waiting eagerly for Kṛṣṇa's return. All around her she saw beauty, happiness and grandeur in nature specially the fields brightening and teeming with ripened paddy, but her attention had been diverted from this grand beauty in the absence of Kṛṣṇa. In the month of Pusa, Radha's clothes on body had been drenched with dew drops. On the bank of Yamuna the bird chakawa was chattering with piu, piu, cadences. Kṛṣṇa still then did not return and so she prayed Udhava to bring home her husband.
In the month of Maqh it was bitter cold. Her Sakhis (friends) had been putting cotton into the blankets, but her husband was away from home and without Krisna she could not escape and protect herself from the biting and cutting cold.

In the month of Jeth it was unbearable and excessive hot. Due to this hot wind blew heavily and she felt restless. So she prayed to Udhava to bring her husband with him and thus relieve her of the pain of separation.

In both the Baramahi and Baramasa the depictions of the Agrieved soul of Radha in Krishna's absence in compatibility with the changes in nature are all the same.

(E) Dissimilarities:

Having so many similarities the Assamese Baramahi is different from the Bhojpuri Baramasa on the aspect that whereas in the forms there is the vivid and intense description of the same in the latter.
The narration in Bhojpuri Bāramāsā begin from the month of Ahar, in Assamese it begins from the month of Aghon. In Bāramāsā the pangs of separation is so unbearable that sometimes the Birahini (heroine) in order to mitigate her sorrows has expressed it before the Sakhi (friend) or 'near and dear ones'. In this context we can cite the example of Rādha Bāramāsā. On the other hand in Assamese, there are some conversational type of Bāramāshies which describe the conversation between wife and her unknown husband. On reaching back home after long absence, the husband in order to test the wife's purity, heartness and chastity, pretends to be somebody else and lures the wife with huge wealth and request her to accept him as her lover. But when the wife remains truthful and chasteful, he discloses his real identity.

Besides Bāramasa, Chowmāsā, a description of four months of the rainy season of the year is seen in the Bhojpuri language, which is not found at all in the Assamese language.