CHAPTER - IV

SONGS ASSOCIATED WITH FESTIVALS
Festivals and ceremonies as well as public celebration current in different cultures of the world, are always associated with various songs, dances and recitations. Both the regions, i.e., Assam and Bhojpur celebrate different festivals and ceremonies round the year. Most of such celebrations are associated with songs. In accordance with religious perceptions and traditional norms, songs are sung in the time of aforesaid festivals and hence the songs are termed festival songs or ceremonial songs.

Both in Assam and Bhojpur certain festivals are observed which are connected with rituals. Among such festivals prevalent in Assam special mention may be made of the Mare-puja. The Mare-puja is another name of the Manasa-puja. It is specially observed on the Kṛṣṇa-Pañcami day in the month of Śrāvana, and also any day round the year. The purpose of the observation of the Mare-puja is to propitiate the snake goddess Manasa. In the Assamese society it is believed that one's ambitions, hopes and aspirations are fulfilled if one performs Manasa-puja.
According to poet Manakara —

barisek antare bārīṣā kālat/
chāriddin pujibek srāvana māhat/
pūjo biśahari ek chita kāri/
mātir bhāri, sijur dāli.\(^1\)

i.e., once in a year during the rainy season four days in the
month of srāvana the goddess Manasā is worshipped with Siju
plants, earthen ghat and altar.

The preliminary preparation on the day before the
pujā is called adhivāsa or gondh. On the adhivāsa-day the
Ojāpāli (the choral singers, who sing the glories of Manasā
during the Manasā-pujā) by chanting mantras bathes the
goddess and places her on the altar. On the very day of the
pujā-homa (holy fire) is performed. Even there is the occa-
sion of giving sacrifice of birds, and animals like duck,
pegion, goat, buffalo etc. There after the Ojāpāli completes
the pujā by reciting Sukanāñni. Here Sukanāñni means singing
of the glory of the goddess Manasā.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Atul Ch. Baruah : Manasā Pūjā Arū Ojāpāli, p.31
\(^2\) Ibid., p.21
In Mare-puja the role of OjaPali is most essential and significant. The OjaPali helps in the overall performance completion of the pūjā through their songs, dances and dramatic performances. The episod of Behula-Lakhindar an important part of the Manasā-pūjā, is sung by the OjaPāli-troupe to the accompaniment of talas (cymbals) along with dance and Obhinaya.

According to the Assamese version Lakhindar was the youngest son of Chando, a very affluent and adament merchant of Champak Nagar (Chhaygaon in Kamrup District), who was a true 'Śaiva' and antagonistic to Manasā-pūjā. So the snake-goddess Manasā felt offended and gave him punishment in several times in various manners. Chando lost his six sons and all the merchandise. Lakhindar married Behula the only daughter of Saheraja of Ujainī i.e., upper land. Chando built 'Mṛghar' a very beautiful and protected house for the sake of Lakhindar. But according to the previous plan Manasā tried her best to take revenge on Chando. On the first night of the marriage life of Lakhindar and Beulā, she did accordingly. Beulā sailed to Devaloka along with the corpse of Lakhindar by a raft made of banana plantains. By dint of her chastety and sanctity she
could manage to bring him to life along with six brothers.

It is nothing that Manasa-puja is started in the same way as Vīṣṇu-pūja. The puja begins with the worship of lord Gaṇesa. Then the sun, lord Vīṣṇu, lord Śiva and Goddess Śivā (Durgā) are worshipped one by one. This apart, goddesses like Śītalā, Subāgini and Astanaṅga are also worshipped in accordance with the current tradition. According to dhyān-Mantra, Dharma is an incarnation of Nārāyana. Whatever it may be, in Manasa-pūja Dharma is conceived as Vīṣṇu. Hence a separate worship is performed in reverence to god Dharma known as Vīṣṇu in the shape of a'ghat." All things sacrificed in the name of Dharma should be of white colour. Even white pigeons are flown to the heaven in honour of Dharma. All the above rituals and rites are narrated through the songs of Ojāpāli. The Ojāpāli sings the following songs in conformity with the various stages of the Manasa-worship performed by the priest with the help of Mantras in the name of Dharma:

O' dharama pūjā lauṛe nāmīyā devaṇ,  
sighre nāmī pūjā lauṛe manchar bhitar,  
       dharama pūjā lauṛe ----  
dhavalā āsana, dhavalā basana  
sunya rathe nami aṭāla anādi dharam.  

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3 ibid., p.23  
4 ibid., p.3
i.e., O' gods and goddesses please be merciful to come down to the altar of pūjā and receive the pūjā. The god-Dharma comes down to the altar with white attire on a chariot through the heaven to receive the pūjā.

/ Ganesa Vandana:

O' are tomar charane nati
bando devo ganapati

i.e., O' god Ganesa! We offer our earnest prayer at your holy feet.

Nārāyana Vandana:

O' bando deva nārayana parama kārana,
dasa rūpe dasa avatāra
minarūpe māyā kari pralaya jalat hari
cāri veda karilā uddhāra.

i.e., O' god Nārāyana! We offer our heart-felt reverences at your feet. O God of many avatāras you in the incarnation of Mastya (fish), retrieved Vedas from the vast tidal and devastating ocean.
Dūrgā-Vandanā:

bandim māi bhavānī, jagatara janāni
kṛpā karā nandinir mātā
parvati, śrīmāt pralaya jalat hari
 cará veda karilā uddhāra.

i.e., O' goddess Bhavānī!
you are the mother of the universe. O' mother of Nandini!
please, be kind enough to shower your blessings upon us.
O' mother Parvati! We shall always worship you as you merciful both in sorrow and in happiness.

Similarly, the worship of the goddess Kālī and the Astanāg are also performed. The following song narrates the powers of the snake goddess Manasā.

Dīhā: jaya jaya padmāvatī pātale utpati
ō nirmanīye karilā nirman.
bīrya hante mānsa bhailā, mānsa
hante asthi bhailā sarīr bhailā thān thān.

Vandana:

ō ! māi manasā vando devi
charane māi manasā ---
e - dui hasthe yora kari
bando mātā Bīsahari
i.e. Glory to the goddess Padmavati. You are incarnated in the Pātalpura. The creators has created you in a mysterious manner. O' goddess Manasā! We offer our prayer at your feet.

O goddess Bisahari! we sing your glory with folded hands.

O goddess Padmavati, you think for the welfare of the Triloka. Your birth is on the leaf of a lotus and so your name is Padmā. O goddess Padmā! You are the mother of all snakes. You fulfil the desires and ambitions of wealth, knowledge, longevity, and having sons. The Manasa-pūja has been classified into three special categories on the basis of its system, method of worship. Such as (a) Maju-pūja, (b) Ghat-pūja and (c) Murti-pūja.
Maju is a type of image. This image is made with Kuhila (a light-weight plant growing in the shallow water) or with the parts and limbs of banana tree. In Maju-pujā, buffalo sacrifice is a must along with other animals. As goddess Manasa is a goddess of sacrifice, her altar is always decorated with colours of red, white, black, yellow etc. But the altar of Dharma-Devotā should be always white; so it is done with whitish powders of rice. This pujā is particularly celebrated in much pomp and grandeur in the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara and Dhubri in Assam.

The Rābhās in the undivided district of Kamrup and Goalpara in Assam celebrated Māre-pujā as Barmāni-pujā. Barmāni means snake deity Bisahari. Even the Rābhās celebrate it as an important ritual in the marriage ceremony, though it is not compulsory. The man who conducted the pujā is called Deuri. He is also supported by five other assistants. The Deuri and his helpers help in the overall performance and completion of the pujā through their songs, dances and dramatic performances. It is similar to the performance of the Ojāpallī. First of all they pray the goddess Saraswati to be

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5 A. Baruah: Op-cit., p. 30
blessed by Her. They also cite the rituals regarding the creation of tālas and others. Before starting the ritual they offer regarded to the tālas and drums. Then they sing songs from the Padmavati-lore current amongst them through the lips generation after generation.

Although the Manasā cycle includes different myths and legends nevertheless special stress has given to the Beula-Lakhindar legend. The legend narrates the glories of Manasā as well as the tragic story how Beula, by dint of her unstincted pity and devotion (the qualities attributed to a Sati) was able to bring back a new lease of life of her once dead husband and his six elder brothers, becomes more enjoyable when present lucidly by the Ojāpāli troupes.

In Bhojpur also Manasā-pūjā is observed like Assam, the Bhojpuri singers also recite the songs in the context of the worship of the snake goddess Manasā. These songs are known as Bisahari-gita, which are more or less akin to the Assamese songs of the Manasā lore. But unlike the Assamese Manasā-kāvya the Bisahari-gīta of Bhojpur does not have different episodes. The Bhojpuri Bisahari-gīta contains only the episodes dealing with the birth of the snake goddess Manasā, Her beauty and traits. Songs associated with the Manasā-
lore of Assam takes the form of unified Kāvyā, whereas Bishahari-gīt of Bhojpur appears to be shorter in comparison to the Assamese Manasā-songs. Like the Assamese, the Bhojpurī also regards Manasā as the ruling deity among other gods and goddesses. One such song goes thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{phala madhye guwa} \\
\text{nābed madhye pāu} \\
\text{devī madhye bīshahāri} \\
\text{jagat loke jān.}
\end{align*}
\]

i.e., Among the fruits the aroca-nut is well known, among leaves the betel is worthmentioning and among the goddesses Bishahari is the most notable. According to the Bīshaharī-ki-gīta of Bhojpur, Bīshaharī is the only saviour. Songs of this genre of both the regions show that the snake goddess Manasā of Assam has only one sister while according to Bīshaharī-gīta of Bhojpur she has five sisters. In both the Assamese and the Bhojpuri songs of Bishahari, Padmā (Manasā) is described as growing up in Kailāsa in the care of her parents, Mahādeva and Pārvatī, where she is recreated by the natural forces and she takes bath in the Manasarobara. In the Bhojpuri tradition

6 Bibhuti Anand and Jyotshna Anand: Geet-nād, p.37
there is a reference to the effect. The Manasa-puja is performed on the auspicious day of Nag-pancami falling in the month of Sravana. On that day goddess Manasa is worshipped in almost all the house-holds of Bhojpur. On the morning the girls just after leaving bed clean the whole house with cow-dung and draw lines with the same. At the front of the main door of the house, they draw the pictures of two snakes with cow-dung.

In town and cities where cow-dung is not available they draw snakes on paper and set it in conformity with tradition, worship is performed. By putting milk and fried-rice in a pot, they keep it in a lonely spot with in the premises of the house for the snake goddess Manasa. It is believed in the Bhojpuri society that Manasa would come and accept their offer. The purpose of the worship is to get oneself rid of the fear of snake biting and if at all the snake bites, the poison will not affect them. Like all other parts of India, Nag-pancami is celebrated traditionally with devotion and sincerity, in the Bhojpur area and in the context of

7 K.D. Upadhyaya: Bhojpuri Lok-geeto kā adhyayan, p.202
of Manasā-pūjā songs are sung. A song is given below as a specimen of this genre of song, e.g.:

\[\text{javan gollā ham kabahun dekhlo,}
\text{O' gollā dekhabalalā ho mere nāg dularūā.}
\text{je mora nāg ke gāhu bhikhi dihe}
\text{dale dale betava biwaihe ho more nāg dularūā,}
\text{je mora nāg ke kodo bhikhi dihe}
\text{karia karia musri biwaihe ho more nāg dularūā}
\text{je mora nāg ke bhikhi umeth dihe,}
\text{duno bēkāti sukhī rahihe ho more nāg dularuwa.}
\text{javan gollā ham tabahu na dekhali}
\text{O' gollā dekhabalalā ho more nāg dularuā.}\]

\[9\]

i.e., During Nāg-pūjā the womenfolk go to the neighbours for begging alms. For getting good amount of alms, they nicely and lovely express their objectives and wishes. Those who offer handsome amounts willingly and heartily, it is believed that, their desires and wishes get fulfilled in a large way. Those who offer kado (a bad quality-rice), their wishes and desires are hardly fulfilled.

Similarly, the Manasā-pūjā observed in the Nāg-pancamī day in lower Assam privately or publicly by the tribals and

\[9\] K.D. Upadhyaya: *Bhojpuri Lok-gita* (Bhag-2); p.86
the non-tribals and the songs associated with Manasa-lore are sung by the Ojapali-troups.

b) \( \text{Al-nam or Sitala m^a^t^a\_ki\_gita} \):

\( \text{Al-nam or Sitala, the presiding deity of small pox is also worshipped in both regions. The goddess is worshipped with Mantras and songs. These songs are known as Al-nam or Sitala-pujar gito in the context of Assam.} \)

Mother small pox is very much feared by the Assamese women and therefore flattered with all sorts of sweet names. She is called Sitala the cool one and \( \text{Al- or Bhagavati. Al} \) has seven or nine or twelve or twenty one or one hundred sisters. Al along with her sisters are believed to be the presiding deities of these diseases. Whenever a child catches measles or any other variety of the rashes closed under small pox it is said to have flowers on it, and Al or Bhagavati is also said to have appeared on it. The Assamese generally do not use medicine to treat the attack of small pox, for simple people know that Al appears and departs at her own sweet will. It is common, when Sitala is satisfied and pleased she cures the patient of the disease. Purity in body and mind, cleanliness everywhere—these are the watchword during the stay of
the disease and women take care of everything. So the
mother of the child invites the womenfolk for a congrega-
tional prayer to please Āi or Śitalā. It is the principal
worship in which they arrange and in which they sing Āi-nām.
Every household of the village where Āi-visits has to arrange
one such prayer. Following song is given as a specimen:

Seven sister come to home of the poor
and we have nothing to offer;
we shall rub your feet, with hair of our head,
make our body a bridge for her. /10

Similarly the goddess is described as Śitalā (the
cold one), Dharmā (the righteous) and Māramī (the kind
hearted one). She is identified with Bhagāvati, Bhavāni,
Parvati, Mahāmayā and Durgatināsini, all names of Sakti
ideas. But Āi has nothing to do with these goddess, because
of nature of the disease She is considered the manifestation
of power. Song given below is a beautiful illustration of
the figure of speech known as personification:

10 J. Das: Folklore of Assam, p. 108
they are coming, Al's seven sisters, across the

seven mountains

All bow their heads— the grass, the creepers,

the trees, for Al is coming.

The golden butterfly round it circles on its two

silver wings.

The Al's have come to visit the places,

we beg our life to them.

Unconsciously did we trespass into Al's garden

unawares did we pick the buds.

Forgive our crime this ones, O shavani,

we prostrate at your feet.

The Al's come to poor houses, nothing do we have

to offer,

we shall rub their feet with our hair lise down

to make fords of our bodies;

Al has come, and her bondsmaid is weeping

at her feet.

Don't you weep O bondsmaid, for Al is smiling—

we shall sing Al's glory. \(^{11}\)

The Assamese mother believes that if child survives

after on attack of measles or small-pox it will have extra

luck.

10 P. Goswami: Folk-literature of Assam, pp.61-62
Simplicity of expression and sincerity of feeling are important character of this genre of folk songs.

The tradition of the propitiation of small pox deity Sitalā is found prevalence in Bhojpur. According to tradition current in Assam small pox deity Sitalā is the daughter of snake goddess Manasa. On the other hand the Bhojpur belief is that the small pox deity Sitalā is nothing but a form of Durgā or Mahāmāyā. Like the Assamese song Alīm (Sitalā) the Bhojpuri Sitalā-mātā also exhibits some myths and beliefs in the case of mother Sitalā, the small pox. Pox is a dreaded disease. Perhaps no disease is worshipped as god or goddess except Sitalā. When a child suffers from small pox and shrieks with terror and pain the mother in order to relieve the son from pain, prayers to Sitalā-mātā for curing the disease. For this the mother of the child thinks herself to be guilty and sinful. Then she offers her prayers to mother-Sitalā to free her son of pain and torture as follows:

nimiyā ki dāli maiyā lawali hilorowā ki jhulī,
maiya gawali git, ki jhulī jhulī
ejhulata jhulata maiya ka logeli ptyasiya ki chali bhali
mālahoriyā abasa ke jageli e' mālin;

12 K.D. Upadhyaya: Op-cit., p. 200
e.g.; Goddess Śitalā is singing swinging on the wings hanging on the branch of the neem tree. While singing she sang song also. In course of singing she felt thirsty and went to the house of the mālin (gardener). After going there she asked the wife of the gardener if she was lying a sleep or awake. She should awake up and give her water to quench her thirst when she was satisfied after taking water, she blessed her "your daughter should satisfied and please her father-in-law and the daughter-in-law should satisfy."

patukā pachāri bhikhi māgeli bālakāwa ke māi,
hamārā ke balakāwa bhikhi di,
more dulārī meyā,
hamārā ke bālakāwa bhikhi di
more manewā rākhani meyā
hamārā ke bālakāwa bhikhi di. 14

e.g.; The mother of the child begged that she should be given a child in alms. She is her dear mother. So she should

13 Ibid., p.201
14 Ibid., p.202
sparer her child in alms. She has been always fulfilling her wishes, no doubt, she should offer her a child this time.

In the Bhojpuri society specially the मालिन (wreath maker) are the great devotees of this goddess and they are invited to the patient's house in order to chant the goddess's names, so that the goddess can be satisfied with a view to curing of the patient. सिताला-माता is very kind hearted to her devotees. It is believed that a barren woman will be blessed with a child, if she worships the सिताला-माता. Following specimen gives an insight into the mythical significance of the सिताला-माता:

पानीया भारता ए माया, चाणिया मोर क्षितयिल हो एरे देवघर लिपटा ए माया हाथावा क्षितयिल हो एरे ताबहु ना चूटेला ए माया बांजिंगा केरी नयिला हो. / 15

e.g.; The lady earnestly states to the goddess सिताला that her head has lost its hair by carrying water for her worship and her palms have got withered by constant visit and darsanas to the temple. Even then she is not blessed with a child and

15 Ibid., p.201
that blot of being a barren woman has not been washed away.

When a child suffers such a disease, like the Assamese families Bhojpuri families also have to follow some special customs and they have to avoid some kinds of food and things until the patient is cured completely. They are prohibited to cut hair, to take bread, to use turmeric and oil in dāl, to eat dry vegetables and to mended shoes etc. The Muslims of both the regions are influenced by the Hindus with regard to Śītalā. They also believe in the presence of such a divine power.  

Another important festival associated with worship is the Dūrgā-pūja. In Dūrgā-puja also songs are recited to propitiate the goddess. In Assam and Bengal this festival is observed for five days— at a stretch. In other parts of India the last day of the Dūrgā-pūja is observed which is known as the Dasaharā. In Assam different songs are sung during the observation of the Dūrgā-pūja, beginning from Saṣṭhi to Daśami. The songs narrate the origin of goddess

16 Ibid., p.200
Dūrgha her beauty and invocations made by gods and goddesses to Dūrgha and soforth. From the thematic and structural points of view these songs may be termed as creation myths.

In Bhojpur goddess Dūrgha is known as Bhagavatī and and the songs sung in her praise are known as Bhagavatī-ki-gītā. Bhagavatī is also another revelation of mother Parvati. Like Assam in Bhojpur too the goddess Bhagavatī is known in various names like 'Jagadambā, Bhavāṇī, Dūrgha, Kālī, Jagat-tārīṇī, Mangalā, Durgatī-nāsīṇī etc.

d) Kālī is an another manifestation of goddess Dūrgha. She is worshipped independently in both the regions Assam and Bhojpur. In Assam Syāmā-pūja is one another name of Kālī-pūja. This goddess is invoked by the devotee in various names such as Mahā-kālī, Ugra-kālī, Mangalā kālī, Dīgambarī, Kāśi-khāti, Bhairavi Asuranāsini etc. Song of this genre is given below as a specimen. This song is sung in the context of Kālī-pūja.

Dīha : O' kāli karāl badāni
Lah lah kare jibhā, rakte pare pānī

Pada : O' Kālī rūpe bhailā avatāra
kharge sabhā karata tohāra
O' goddess Kālī possessor of dreadful face, your tongue is shining and hands are besmeared with blood. You are holding a big sword and wearing a garland made of human heads. Being sky clothed the goddess is dancing on Śiva. She kills the demons, and thus mother goddess Kālī protects the world. Both the gods and the demons worship her.

There are a number of household deities in the form of a female. Among them Lakṣmī is well known and worshipped in almost every home by the women. Lakṣmī-pūjā is observed as a vṛata festival in honour of Goddess Lakṣmī, the presiding deity of crops and wealth in both the regions of Assam and Bhojpur. The Vrata festivals are domestic festivals observed by the women to realise a definite desire, e.g.; desire of son

17 Kripal Das(Sukananni Oja), Informant (M.65) ´ Bārtari (Chhaygaon), Kamrup, data collected on 5.4.96
desire of crop and so on.

e) Laksmi is the corn mother. She is the goddess of fortune to the people of agricultural economy and is also identified with paddy. The pūjā is observed in the fullmoon day after the Dūrgā-pūjā. But some people also worshipped Her in other days besides the Laksmi-pūjā day. Even she is worshipped by singing her names at morning and evening by the women.

In Assam the songs sung in this context are known as Laksmi devir-gita which bear the similarity with that of Bhojpuri Laksmi-Devi-Ki-gitas.

In addition to this, in Assamese society various songs associated with different pūjās and vratas have been handed down traditionally, which are known as songs associated worships. These songs are sung in praise and glorification of gods and goddesses. In Assamese society it is believed that through the performance of pūjā or vrata the evil is eliminated and negated, and ambitions and aspirations are fulfilled. It is also held that if the god or goddess is not duly satisfied with the pūjā or vrata danger and sorrow multiply and even death may occur. Among them the Ṛpesarā-nām or Opesarā-sabhāhar git and Subhasanir git are noteworthy. In Lawer
Assam Opesara is identified with Dūrgā. Opesara-nāms sung in praise of female spirits and performed by the women folk when children particularly the young girls are affected by ailments. If a child is often ill, a girl is not attaining puberty at proper age or somebody getting emaciated for no apparent disease, it is evident that Apeswarās are angry; so they must be pro-
plittted. The specimen given below is an illustration of f) Apesara-gīta.

e, devaro devata, nādana devata,
lāgil konjanar ghāti e,
gopini sakale tutikai mātichho
bhāgok mahāmāyār ghāti.
e, rūgar jakhalā, sonār hetā kāri
āahe apesarā nāmi he
rūparo ejuri dhūp, sonāro ejuri dhūp
āl opesarā kākuti karichho
ei nāme habā santos. /18

ēg. ; O' God of gods ! you are the unknowable. If somebody in the family has committed any sin we gopini fervently pray to you to forgive us all. We offer you our prayers with a fair of silver and golden incense sticks, be satisfied and merciful to us.

18 P. Goswami : Bāra māhar tera gīta. p.48
Similarly unmarried girls for getting handsome and capable husband, and married women for the progress and prosperity of her husband observe the Sababarat. They observe fasting through out the day and perform the puja in conformity with all formalities. At the end of the puja they sing song in praise of the goddess Kātyayini and at the end of the song, they beg the blessings of the goddess in the following way:

Kātyayini mā he, ghurl ahllā āpuni
tomār charanat bar māgo āmi.

e.g.; O' goddess Kātyayini! you have returned for us. We offer you our prayers at your feet and beg your blessings.

Of all the songs connected with the festivals and vratas, the Bhojpuri Šathimātā Ki gitas, Bahurā-gitas and Piriya-Ki-gitas, are remarkable. These songs have similarity with the Assamese Apesarir-gitas, Subasenir-gitas and Sababarātar-gitas.

9) Šathimātā-ki-gitas:

Šathimātā vrata is observed on the Sukla-śāsthi day in the month Kārtika in every year. The vrata is also known as Surya-śāsthi, because all the prayers and offerings are performed in the name of God Sun. That day the womenfolk offer
prayers and \textit{pūjās} on the waters of the tanks or river's by floating the \textit{pūjā} articles on a basket made of bamboo. Only the male person can carry this holly basket. Countless numbers of women in the hope of getting sons wait early in the morning on the bank of the river or tank.

As in the Assamese society, a childless woman is neglected in the Bhojpur society. Even the members of the family also do not behave with friendly and co-operatively. The sister-in-law and the mother-in-law \textit{illtread} and scold her and the husband \textit{tortures} her. The following songs express the pain and anguish of childless women and the cruelty of the society towards them.

\begin{verbatim}
sāsu māre hudukā e dinnāth
nanadiyā māre gāri
e santho lāgale purukhawā e dinnāth
hamrā ke danda se māri. /19
\end{verbatim}

Here a barren woman fills her miserable condition as she has failed to give birth to a son. The mother-in-law always rebukes her, the sister-in-law keeps her abusing, even her husband who married her bits her with a stick.

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19 K.D. Upadhyaya: \textit{Op-cit.}, p. 201
Similarly the Godhan festival is observed on Sukla-pratipada day in the month of Kartika in Bhojpur. A man's image is built with cow-dung on that day and the heart of the image is hammered with broken pieces of bricks by the women. This system is called go-dhan-kutana. The real meaning of Go-dhan is Gobardhana. In reality the ancient gobardhana-pujā is widely prevalent in Bhojpur now-a-days in a distorted form. The image made of cow-dung is really that of Indra. Lord Kṛṣṇa broke the pride of Indra in this process and so Gobardhana-pujā is a symbol of the out-going of Indra's pride by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Before this ritual stories are told to this episode. The women folk even by the help of a vatkā (a small parckly shrub which is used in medicine) and rengani rebuke the members of the family and even prick their own tongue by the help of that Vatkā. There after according to tradition, the songs of Vrata are sung and after this sweets are offered at the feet of Godhan-bāba and concludes the pujā. The objective of the Vrata is to develop good-will, love and affection among the brothers and sisters. But the mystery behind the abusing by the womenfolk is still unknown. The following songs may
Give testimony to the heartly love and affection existing between the brother and the sister.

kavan bhaiyā chalale oheriyā
kavan bahin deli āshis ho nā
mora bhowāji ke pāragu bindur hu nā. /20

e.g.: The sister begs blessing of the Gobardhan-bābā for the longevity of life of the brother.

1) Piriyā ki-gītā:

Piriyā gītas are sung in the context of Piriyā-vrata observed by girls not attaining puberty for the welfare of the brother. This vrata is celebrated from Kartika pratipada to aghana Sukla pratipada for one month. At the beginning of the Pūjā the image of goddess Piriyā is made with cow-dung and from the image the girls take away cow-dung bits for drawing pictures of human beings on the walls of their houses and this system is called piriyā-lagowā. /21

Every day in the morning they listen to the glories of the goddess Piriyā. Then they take meal. If by mistake

20 Ibid., p. 204
21 Ibid., p. 204
they take meal on some day, the very next day they have to perform rituals for freeing themselves from the sings. The **Piriyā-gita** glorifies the goddess **Piriyā**. At the end of the **Vrata** (**Kartika-ditiyas**) they immerse goddess **Piriyā** on the water of the tanks or rivers. This ritual is popularly known as **Piriyā Dahāvan** in the Bhojpuri society.\(^{22}\) In this songs the love and affection between brother and sister is greatly revealed. A specimen of the **Piriyā** song is given below:

\[
\text{lādūrā chīwrawā se ham pujībī piriya ho.} \\
\text{tohārī badhāiyā piriya baratiyā.}
\]

\text{e.g.:} \quad \text{O' goddess Piriya! I worship you with sweets for the well-being of my brother. I observe this Vrata hence. Please be merciful and bless me kindly.}

\(j\) Similarly there is another kind of song in Bhojpur, known as **Bahurā-kī-gita** which is sung in the context of **Bahurā-vrata**. The term **Bahurā** is called **Bahulā**. Because the main heroine of the **Vrata** is a cow named **Bahulā**.\(^{23}\) Once while she was going to the forest for grazing, she felt into

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p.206

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p.203
the trap of a lion. When the lion wanted to eat up her, she prayed to the lion not to do so as she had two calves. She promised to come back and offer herself to the lion after consoling her calves. Bohula kept up her promise. The lion being pleased with the cow's honesty and sincerity, freed her.

Bahula's song is most popular as the song of Harini (deer) in Assamese society. There is only difference in respect of the Hero and heroine. But the themes of these songs are all the same. For example a portion of Harini-gita is given below:

nidarun byādh tay ki karna karili
kino loye pari pāti amāk badhili
ānichili nāir ghāte tānātur hai
batale badhili moka sammukhate pāl
bāhe ache chāvā mora ati maramar
dugdha khabā nāpe marbo kari dharfar
mānīsa loye pari pāti amāk badhili
āmār sahite chāvāk anāth karili./

Bahurā-vrata is celebrated on the Kṛṣṇa-saturdasi day in the month of Bhādra in Bhojpur. Even hundred girls in the
hope of getting a devoted and handsome husband observe this Vrata in the Bhojpur areas. From the point of view of objectives there is no difference between the Sare-barāta songs found in the Assamese language and that of Bhojpuri Bahurā-gītā.

The young women observed fasting on the Vrata-day and after taking bath in the evening on the bank of the river, offer prayers and worship by drawing images of Bahulā (cow), and her calves and the lion on the sands. Through these songs the heartly love and bond existing between mother and son and picture of true promise are revealed.

25. K.D. Upadhyaya: Op-Cit; p. 203