PREFACE

The idea to study the repertoires of Assamese folktale tellers was first broached to me by my teacher, Dr. Kishore Kumar Bhattacharjee, Head of the Department, Folklore Research, Gauhati University. Till to-day no attention has been paid to study the repertoire of individual storytellers and their creativity in Assamese folktales. Moreover, the meaning of the tales from the tellers point of view and the reflection of storytellers’ personality have not yet been investigated in Assamese folktale study. So I felt delighted to get that idea and started to study the repertoires of a few storytellers in the field of Assamese folktale.

A repertoire is a selected and memorized knowledge of a bearer of tradition which she can recall at anytime. As a tradition bearer, a storyteller selects and absorbs the traditions from her culture and society. So the social knowledge which is continued from generation to generation is known from individual repertoire analysis.

During the thirties and the forties of the last century, some scholars in Germany and Hungary established methods for the study of the role of personality and society in folktale performance.
The storytellers' tale repertoire, creativity and the meaning of the tales are studied now by different scholars of the world. In India, Kirin Narayan gives emphasis on the art of storytelling in her book *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon* (1997).

In Assam, the study of folktale has so far broadly remained confined either to collection of texts or classification of the collected material, notwithstanding certain analytical attempts. Therefore, here an attempt has been made to study the repertoires of storytellers by selecting three women from different parts of Assam and to study their creativity and meaning of the tales.

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