The lexicographical meanings of Sanskriti (Sam-√Kri + ti), a tatsama word is of gaining culture in respect of elevating the standard of education-art-taste. But at present the significance of the word transcending the lexicographical limit has entered into the world of human civilization. There lies a hint in the bosom of the word '••••' regarding man’s endeavour for '••••' or creation. A researcher wrote:

Sanskriti never attains a universal form. The varying characteristics and multifariousness relating to a nation, religion, country and community are found to be latent in the soul of sanskriti. Two types of streams always flow through culture namely – the folk-culture of rural Bengal as well as urban culture. A researcher wrote about the origin of the folk-culture:

That is folk-culture has got a hyphen with agriculture right from the beginning, but there appeared clash of views in determining the definition of folk-culture. It is worthy to be mentioned here that a score of western scholars laid down their respective views in term of determining the definition of folk-culture available in the book The Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology.
and Legend edited by Maria Leache. Though each of them differs in respect of their views, yet a common definition of folk-culture is liable to be found out. A researcher determined those chain of arguments, and which are as given below:

1. Traditional creations of peoples,
2. The knowledge, experience, wisdom, skill, the habits and practices of the past are handed down by example or spoken word,
3. A variety of forms of artistic expression whose medium is the spoken word.
4. In a purely oral culture everything is folklore,
5. Folklore derives its integrity and survival value from a direct response to and participation in group experience, and the fusion of the individual and common sense,
6. Folklore is the accumulated store of what mankind has experienced, learned and practiced across the ages as popular and traditional knowledge.
7. The term ‘folklore’ is most meaningful when applied to the unwritten literary manifestations of all peoples.

These set of definitions on folk-culture given by the western scholars has no doubt made its conception clear to us, nevertheless, if we want to know the folk-culture of rural Bengal perfectly and completely, it is necessary for us to know the social position of rural peoples, their customs, rituals, festivals, birth and death and the oral literature itself. It is already mentioned earlier that the agrarian civilization has a long standing connection with the culture of the peoples of rural Bengal. And as a result of which an uninterrupted consistency stands to be the chief sign of folk-culture. The rural society stays
to survive in a clustered way. The culture that is born out of the enlightenment of community consciousness brings forth their total identity of their way and life-style. We may take into account the set of views given by the celebrated folklorists of Bengal in this regard:

Hence, it is understood that folk-culture happens to be the complete identity of the life of a cluster of peoples living in a specific geographical and social environment. Following the thread of arguments cited above, we may analyze the world of folk-culture delineated in the agrarian novels already discussed earlier. It is indeed a fact which cannot be denied that if we want to know the complete bio-data of the life of the peasants of Bengal, their culture should have to be in our knowledge. So, we shall try to focus and highlight and to know the elements of the folk-culture of the agrarian life in this chapter in question, but prior to that, the life of the peasants of the regions concerned basing on which the novels developed themselves deserve to be mentioned. The socio-economic condition of the peasants living in the vast rural areas of the undivided Bengal is same. They are lagging behind in education, and health factors as well as having no economic solvency, but they have age old legacy of exploitations. Although the standard of life of these innocent and
easy-going peasants of Bengal is identical, but their secular culture appears to be full of diversities and looks different from region to region. The subject-matter of this chapter in question deals with of what type of sanskriti rules the agrarian life spreading over from Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, North Bengal down to Jessore, Maimansingha etc.of the undivided Bengal. We are ready to present a rough sketch of this unique culture related to agrarian life with a help of a table furnished below :

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Folk Culture of the Agrarian Society</th>
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<td>Folk Literature</td>
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<td>- Proverbs</td>
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<td>- Pot Painting</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Nakshikantha</td>
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<tr>
<td>(A rag with artistic design)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Alpana</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Painting on the floors or walls of a house or temple with liquified pigment of rice powder, zinc oxide etc.)</td>
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<td>Folk Art</td>
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We have divided our course of discussions pertaining folk-culture into five parts, and every part is yoked with additional parts. We have made an effort of taking into account the agrarian culture and other social cultures specifically out of the folk-culture revealed in the novels that have been already discussed previously. First of all the folk-belief, rituals and festivals have been taken up below for discussion :

II

Retuals and Festivals :

Folk Beliefs :
A critic stated while defining the folk-belief and folk-culture :
There exists almost a zero relationship between folk-belief and tradition, but, however, there is a close relationship between and tradition. The bunch of cultures passes on hereditarily, but it is true to say that the concept of worldly good or bad lies at the root of folk-belief or . We may study through analysis as to what sort of distinctiveness has come to lime light of the folk-belief and culture in the novels in question:

**Belief related to agrarian life:**

We have seen in the novel *Panchagram* that the peasants of the Radh area of Bengal hold a belief that it is not good to plough on a special (a lunar day), as because it leads to pain of mother-earth. Besides this, ploughing is prohibited on the days of *Rathyatra* and *Ambubachi*.

We get acquainted with a good number of agrarian beliefs and cultures in the novel *Lakhindar Digar*. Paddy in actuality seems to be a sign of wealth and prosperity to the peasants of Bengal. We see in the said novel that if any peasant on the spur of the moment stands on the sheaf of paddy, he then and there bows down to salute it. The peasants believe that stepping into the granary or threshing of paddy being shod invites evil omen.

We find in the novel *Lakhindar Digar* that the farmer Ram Digar was mentally broken down due to sudden death of (an ox used in ploughing), as they believe that there is no other sin as serious as the death of an ox. So we see that Ram wanted to expiate to reduce the weight of sins. He said:

There is also the reference of expiation in the novel *Operation ? Basai Tudu*. When the paddy-fields of the tenure-holder Rameshwar were burnt by the gang of Basai Tudu, Rameshwar expiated sacrificing he-goat and
buffalo. This condition of the paddy-fields indicates disgrace to goddess Lakshmi, so he did the expiation of sin through penance.\textsuperscript{14}

We also see in the novel \textit{Lakhindar Digar} that the peasants never take rice or anything cooked items to the paddy-field, as they believe ‘•••••••••••••\textsuperscript{15}

We get a chance to be familiar with the agrarian belief and culture of the Rajbangshi peasantry belonging to North Bengal in the novel \textit{MafaswaliBrittanta}. The Rajbangshi farmers’ family believe that courtyard is to be swabed with cowdung before sunrise, and in this way the house complex gets sanctified cleaning with cowdung, as throughout the day the courtyard is used for boiling and husking of paddy. They believe if the house is desanctified, the paddy causes to be destroyed. The women of a peasants’ family are to have their bath before boiling or husking of paddy. They also hold the belief that physical impurity leads to damage of paddy – ‘••••••••••••••\textsuperscript{16}

There has been detailed description of the Rajbangshi peasantry in Debesh Ray’s \textit{Tista Puran}. The Rajbangshi peasants of North Bengal believe that one should not take ‘••••••••••••’ and ‘•• (flattened rice and fried rice) sitting on the ridge of earth of an agricultural land.\textsuperscript{17} It offends the mother-earth. It also brings down the quantity of productions.

They too, believe that paddy is to be threshed with the weight of feet, but not the ‘••••’ (Sunned) paddy.\textsuperscript{18} There is reference of rain-related belief in the novel \textit{Tista Puran}. We see in the novel that the Chotadada even at the sight of the gathered clouds did not put ‘••••••’ (brolly) on his head, as they believe ‘••••••••••••\textsuperscript{19}

So, they do not use brolly on head while working in the paddy-field.

We also see in the novel \textit{Tista Puran}, the Rajbangshi farmers were surprised to find the ‘••••••••’ (of the down stream area) peasants interested in cultivating the fallow land for producing corn, peas etc. as because they
did not cultivate for such items formerly. They accept it that the thing which was not eaten by them, some other else should not be allowed to have it, the thing which was never cultivated and planted and grown by them, will neither be taken by them nor will allow somebody to take it. They also believe, the fallow land should remain unused, as the paddy-fields inhale through lands

We get the mention of an agri-related culture in the novel *Tista Puran*. It has been a very old culture amongst the peasants of Bengal to make a scarecrow in the agricultural field. The ailing Dhyamna considered himself as a scarecrow standing against evil look in the tobacco field.\(^{21}\) We also get the mention of scarecrow in the novel *Shalbani*.\(^{22}\)

We find the refernce of an agrarian belief in witchcraft in the novel *Mafaswali Brittanta*. The Rajbangshi peasants have a belief that the fairies come down at the dead of night in the fields full of ripened paddy in the month of *Kartik*. These fairies dance around the fields and if some one goes to paddy-field in the morning, he will see the corns have dropped from the cornstalk on the ground at the dangling steps of the dancing fairies. If some one notices very carefully even the footprints of the fairies seem to be visible. So, nobody should go to paddy-filed in the small hours.\(^{23}\)

**Other social beliefs and rituals :**

Apart from belief related to agrarian culture, the peasants of Bengal pass their life under the influence of various beliefs and cultures. Mentions of such of beliefs and culture are made in the novels which have already been discussed earlier.

We have seen in the novel’s *Ganadevata* and *Panchagram* respectively how the peasants believe both the natural and supernatural forces. The attack of Aniruddha’s wife in *Ganadevata*, with epilepsy appeared to be as an instance of anger of God to the simple and easy-going men of the
village. They believe that Padma suffers this calamity now for the sin of removing the food-offering by ignoring Budo Shiva and Bhanga Kali (elderly Shiva and broken idol of Kali). Tarashankar wrote:

Blind faith associated with dream is a well known matter in the rural society. We see in the novel Ganadevata, the dreaming death-like krait led to the birth of harm-making thoughts in the mind of Aniruddha. Another belief related to snake is deep rooted in the human society. The dreaming of a snake invites multiplication of a family or the birth of a child – and this what we have learnt from Jagan Doctor in the novel Ganadevata.

Jagannath Ghosh, as projected in the novel Ganadevata even being a qualified doctor advised that Padma should be drenched (the water with which the feet of a gracious person / god has been washed) of god and he added more that she should also use talismanically charmed amulet. The illiterate peasants and labourers of village very easily place their faith in the magic of incantations and amulet. Besides these supernal beliefs, there have been the references of different kinds of beliefs in the novels. The peasants of Panchagram believe that –

The snakebite and having faith in Ojha have been inseparably associated with the rural life of Bengal. When Durga in the novel Ganadevata feigned to be bitten by snake was asked to take forest-grown leaves by chewing and moreover she was asked whether the leaf tasted bitter or not in the mouth; as they believe if tastes bitter, there is nothing to worry. The folk-belief concerning snakebite and its remedy has been in practice in the rural society.
We also see in the novel *Operation ? Basai Tudu* that Domnachiti snake bit the wife of Betul, there also came up the necessity of calling in the *Daityari Ofha*. There is also a rural culture of setting a snake-bitten corpse adrift after performing the rituals by a priest and this too, has its mention in the novel *Operation ? Basai Tudu*.30

Belief related to good and bad, evil and auspicious is noticed in the folk society. We see in the novel *Shalbani* seeing a snake in ‘• •• •••• • • •• •••• •••• •• •• • ••• •••• ••• ••• • •••• ••• •• •••• • ••••• •••• •••• • ••••• •••• •••• ••…’31 that is, gliding away of a snake from left to right indicates something good. On the other hand, that the cry of a raven signifies evil omen became evident in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane* from the expression of peasant Bhajahari : ’• •• ••• • •••• •• •••• • •• •••• • •••• •• •• • •••••••••• • ••••• • • ••••• •• •• ••••• • ••••• •…’32 We also see in the same novel the earthen pot containing food for offering under the was broken to pieces falling from the hand of Balaram, and so everybody considered this mishap as an instance of extreme evil omen.33

There has been mention of belief related to a mark signifying anything good in the novel *Shalbani*. There are two red-looking clotted marks in the middle of both of the hands of the elderly Mathur of the village and seeing which Naran said : ‘• •• • ••• •••• •• •••• • •••• •• •• • •••• •• •• • •••• • •• ••…’34

Magical belief is ingrained in the very core of the folk-life. The peasants as projected in the novel *Ganadevata* believe in exorcism, witchcraft as well as the black art of bringing someone under one’s control. How the witchcraft, emerged from primordial belief, got rooted firmly in the folk society, has become evident from the very say of Jagan Doctor : ’• •• ••• •••• •• •••• • •••• •• •• • •••••••••• • ••••• • • ••••• •• •• ••••• • ••••• •…’35 The novel *Tista Puran* narrates the practice of (a dart-like force sent by means of black art to harm or kill the opponent). The peasants believed Bhuichali’s mother was affected with a magical arrow) before Bhuichali’s birth, so the mother could not survive.36 We see in the
novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane* that when cholera broke out in the village, Nime *Ojha* was called in. He was a great *Ojha*. Reciting the sending-out *mantra*; Nime *Ojha* talismanically put the village under incarceration as well as drove out *Olabibi* from the village. It was not only in case of *Olabibi*, when Balaram was not true to his word offered to Padma, the very sudden shock made Padma dumbfounded and speechless. The family members of Padma called in an *Ojha* with the assumption that Padma might have been under the influence of evil spirit. The *Ojha* induced Padma to take (*water that has been sanctified and energized by mantra*) and sanctifying a (*ligature*), the *Ojha* tied it around the hand of Padma, and even put the household under incarceration by means of *mantra*. This kind of magical belief in fact has been a very natural phenomenon in the folk society. We even see in the novel *Paye Paye Path*, that when Satyaprasad had a minor burn injury, Laksmam *Kabiraj* sanctifying a bowl of water by reciting *mantra* sprinkled it on the entire face of Satyaprasad and the whole village wholeheartedly believed that the very sanctified water worked behind the recovery of Satyaprasad.

The simple, easy-going and illiterate peasants are afraid of evil spirit. Jagan as narrated in the novel *Ganadevata* asked Aniruddha to go to the holy place of *Shivanath*, deity of goblin of Sawgram for the remedial treatment of Padma and incidently we have come to know ghost-story relating to *Shivanaththa*. The novel *Mafaswali Brittanta* registers a belief pertaining to (*ghost*). While Baishakhu and Bengu remaining without food for three days, had been foraging for food in the extensively stretched out paddy-fields, then Bengu decided to stay in the paddy-field till his death for the paddy to be ripened. But Baishakhu let him know that if he would die there, he would be a ghost after his death. It was only for the sake of rice, Bengu was ready to die. He appealed in a plaintive tone: "..."
Customs:

Each and every country and society of the world have their respective set of customs enriched with different rituals and festivals. The set of customs are dichotomized such as scriptural and non-scriptural rituals according to their mode of observances. The scriptural rituals are observed after the scriptural laws where the wishes and desires of this and the next worlds get prioritized. A critic said:

The folk-rituals and festivals are generally performed to please any god or goddess or any evil spirit, or to regulate the natural or supernatural forces, or to fulfil any good wishes, and to hoot out any evil force. In such performances, women take the leading part. Apart from family and society-centric customs and again this in the folk-life happens to be different occupation-centric. Here we are going to place the discussions about the customs related to agrarian life as portrayed in the novels in question.

Customs related to agrarian life:

It is in the opinion of a critic:

We see in the novel Lakhindar Digar that Lakhindar at the time of having rice put four morsels of rice and some water beneath his leaf. Its reason lies in the fact that Lakhindar believed that the produce what the mother earth gave them as ‘should be offered to her first. It is of course a belief-bound custom. We find the reference of (festival of eating new rice) in the novels Shalbani, Ganadevata and Panchagram
respectively. Though it is actually a custom, but it has taken a form of festive fervour amongst the peasantry. There has been the mention of some other customs such as, cooking and ploughing in *Ambubachi* is restricted in the novels *Ganadevata*. As a matter of fact the term which regards in earth drenched with water at the start of fresh rainy season as (bathed on the fourth day of one’s menstrual period) woman leads to the origin of *Ambubachi*. The term *Ambubachi* denotes draining out of water. As a woman’s conceiving capability becomes potent in the wake of her menstrual period, so also is the time for the earth that follows immediate after *Ambubachi* in growing crops. Ploughing during *Ambubachi* is prohibited, and that is exactly like a woman in menses not being allowed of having copulation with her male partner. It is according to the view of a critic: The *Poush Lakshmi puja* is a rural festival, but in connection with *Poush Lakshmi* is a custom. Tarashankar’s novel *Ganadevata* bears the narrative about a custom. It deserves to be mentioned here that Tarashankar himself called it a custom in the novel. According to this custom, the married women of the peasant families of the village paint in Chandimandap and praising *Poush* during the early hours of dawn that follows the *Lakshmi puja* keep watch over *Poush*. During this period there is no scarcity of paddy for the peasants, and perhaps for this reason of keeping *Poush* with them this very custom tends to be observed in every village. There has been a description about an agrarian custom of the district of Jessore in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane*. The peasants call the very last night of *Ashwin*, signifies the practice of offering (a ceremony for giving desired articles of food to a pregnant woman) to paddy. On this day everyone spends a sleepless night and during the last hours of night they beating (a winnowing tray) sing songs aiming the paddy plants.

During drought the peasants belonging to both Hindu and Muslim
Communities arrange the marriage of frogs with the hope of rains to fall. Of course, it is mainly a phallic custom. The system of bringing down rains through the marriage of two frogs proclaims the fertility-centric idea. It is in the novel *Panchagram* we have come to marriage-songs of frogs for inviting rains as well as that of ‘she-frog’ from Raham.49

**Other social customs:**

In order to know the gregariously patterned of life perfectly, it is necessary to analyze their rituals and practices. It is a rural custom to sound (Blowing one’s mouth) on the occasion of anything auspicious. We have seen in the novel *Paye Paye Path* that the girls of the village with blowing of their mouth and that of conch shell even during the crucial time of Tebhaga Movement cut the sacred ribbon of starting the movement.50 We have also heard the on the occasion of *Itu Lakshmi* and *Poush Lakshmi pujas.*51

The remarkable customs amongst the Bengalis are those observed after birth and death. There is the reference of (worshipping of goddess *Shashthi* after the birth of a child on the sixth day of a lunar fortnight) that takes place after child-birth in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane.* There exists a belief behind this custom that after six days of the birth of a child the Providence personified writes down the future of the newborn baby on its forehead. We see in the novel that the elderly Sukhlal blamed the unfair Creator for the premature death of his two sons.52 We find the mention of another form of *Shashthi* observed in the post-natal period in the novel *Shalbani.* The worship of *Shashthi* was done on the twenty first day of the birth of Shamli’s son through various feminine rituals.53

The novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane* registers the customs relating to marriage ceremony, such as. and many of the ilk.54 In fact, some feminine rituals are observed on the occasion of wedding on the background of society and culture amongst every community irrespective of Hindu and Muslim. Each
and every phase of such ceremonies is painted with the brush of religious belief and culture. It needs to be mentioned here that the feminine rituals like have linkages with fertility. The shapes of betel leaf and do represent the sex-symbols. That is why these symbolically stand for fertility. The act of (smearing with cowdung) in respect to any auspicious function is itself a custom. It so happens not only in term of any puja and festival, we have seen in the novel Tista Puran, the courtyard was first coated with cowdung before keeping the deadbody of Dhyamna there.\textsuperscript{55} To speak the truth, this custom owes its origin to rural culture. The novel Ganadevata lets us know that Debu after the death of his wife observed \textsuperscript{56}

The Adivasi community of Bengal has some beliefs, cultures and customs of their own. Out of all these the unique one is the use of ‘\textsuperscript{57}’ (knot) or branch of Shal tree. They send Shal Gira (Knot of shal) in case of despatching any urgent information to some other place.\textsuperscript{57} There is a good of customs amongst the Adivasis regarding marriage affairs. The system that rules their marriage is that first getting the ‘\textsuperscript{58}’ (good or bad) considered by a \textsuperscript{58}(match maker) and offering ‘\textsuperscript{58}’ (blessings) as well as money, rice and other articles and thus the marriage between a boy and a girl is held.\textsuperscript{58}

During war time or other such emergency, it is not advisable for the girls to remain virgins and it emerges from the belief that if the boys during danger hours paint the forehead of the girls with oil, then naturally matrimonial knot is tied. This kind of marriage is called ‘\textsuperscript{59}’ marriage by them. This is actually a social custom.\textsuperscript{59}

Festivals :

Various festivals expose the soulfulness of community life. The chief purpose of any festival is to meet together. The pleasure and creation of festival lie in the union. Rabindranath wrote realizing the significance of festival:
It is an admitted fact that a festive day is quite different in character than other days. Every walk of life, whether aristocratic or folk one, seems to feel the presence of the rhythmic vibration of its own through festival, and especially, it brings forth a new rhythm of life for the world of folk-life. Paying less importance to the wants, scarcity, sorrows and poverty of daily life as well as ignoring the disgracefulness of everyday life, each and every person gets themselves lost in the fervour of festival. If we want to know the picture of life of the peasants of rural Bengal, we should be familiar with their festivals, worships and fairs etc. The nature of festival tends to be either religious or secular. out of all these festivals, some are observed by women, and while others by men. Festival is of two kinds • family festival and social festival. So far the family festival is concerned, women play the dominant role. The protraiture of different family and social festivals available in the novels in question has been discussed below :

**Festival related to agrarian life :**

We have stated in the seminal state of our discussion relating to customs that *Nabanna* happens to be a part of custom, but ultimately it took the form of an festival in the rural agrarian society. This festival is observed in every house after the shifting of new *Aman* paddy in the month of *Agrahayan*. But it is neither a *brata* nor a *puja*, but a crop-centric ritual and a festival that celebrates the new paddy. There has been a detailed description of this festival in Tarashankar’s *Ganadevata*. The *Nabanna* festival starts from the last day of *Kartik*. On that very day reaping two and a half handful of paddy plants, the *Lakshmi puja* is performed. And when the autumnal paddy gets ripened, rice is separated after husking and from it food is made to offer in honour of the region of manes and abode of gods followed by the *puja* of
Dhanya Lakshmi (symbolic representation of paddy as the god of fortune). We see in the novel that according to the existing custom of the village, the Nabanna festival starts only after the offering of ‘••’ (food) to the temples of ‘••••••••••••••••’.” 61 Tarashankar called this festival as ‘••••••••••••••’.” 62 Lakshmi Devi has a coincidental link with Nabanna, as every person living on agriculture believes that it is due to graceful favour of Lakshmi Devi. Their paddy-field becomes full of golden paddy.

Another kind of festival is also performed after the shifting of new crops; and what is known as Itubrata or Itu Sankranti. Ganadevata bears a threadbare discussion about Itu Lakshmi. This festival is celebrated in the respective threshing-floor of the peasants. Tarashankar wrote:

Tarashankar, incidentally, let us know that ‘••’ or ‘•••••’ starts in some place of Bengal from Kartik Sankranti, and it ends on the day of Agrahayan Sankranti. It origined basically from the worship of Sun. Perhaps this puja is performed on every sunday wishing good to rabi crops. But in Birbhum there is no pressing demand for rabi crops, the main agricultural work centres here around paddy, so there this puja is regarded as an festival of commencing the act of threshing and winnowing of paddy.” 64 A critic wrote about Itubrata:
Another critic called these type of rituals and customs related to worship of corn as ‘Garden of Adonis’. There is another important agrarian festival of rural Bengal is Poush Parvan. When the new crops are shifted to home, the peasants get themselves busy with a delightful festival. This particular festival starts after a month and half from Nabanna. Sweet pies are made in every house on the occasion of Poush Sankranti. There has been the reference of ‘••••••’ (worship of tutelar deity of a homestead) on the occasion of Poush Parvan. The novelist narrated:

A researcher wrote about Poush Sankranti or Uttarayan Sankranti:

Most probably this festival is also known as ‘••••••’ But different new phases are marked in the same festival from locality to locality. We find the description of the mode of celebrating ‘••••••’ in Radh area in the novel Ganadevata. The worship of Poush Lakshmi is done in this locality on the day of Poush Sankranti; and that of Mutho Lakshmi is done prior to Poush Lakshmi on the day of Kartik Sankranti. That day dry straw of paddy plants is piled up. Making rope with that dry straw on the day of Poush Lakshmi, every household article is to be tied with it. Apart from sweet pies, the additional ritual of binding with rope, known as ‘••••••’
binding, is a special part of this festival. The purpose of this binding is to bring the ears of ripened paddy to home and making braids with them on the day of *sankranti* or in case of absence of ears of corns, stretching out two-three dry pieces of straw and then twisting them like a rope, *is made in terms of a symbolic mark of shifting the autumnal *Aman* paddy for the first time to one’s home, and this *is tucked under everywhere right from barn and husking pedal.* Actually this festival is celebrated in order to bring prosperity to the peasants family.

One of the unique agrarian festival of North Bengal is *Debesh Ray has presented an extensive description in his novel *Tista Puran*. This festival is celebrated on the day of *Kartik Sankranti*. Bathing the cows, its forehead, horns, hooves, are touched with oil, vermillion, turmeric paste, paddy, grass, betel leaf and *nut*. On the very same day *too, is held. The wives of the peasants massage the body of their husbands with oil and vermillion as cowherd and sing songs followed by *Bakhar* is made by mixing matured gourd, onion, spices, grass mowed afresh with water and salt and then it is given in a new *a container generally with wide open top and in circular shape* for the cows to eat.* We find the reference of an agrarian festival named *in Mahashweta Devi’s novel *Sidhu Kanur Dake*, but the novelist did not give any description of the festival. A researcher let us know that this *puja* is performed in the hope of rainfall as well as to prevent the losses and damages to the crops and that is quite before tilling the land for the first time in the month of *Jaishthya* during the first shower of rains in the rainy season. There exists a description of a ritual called *in the novel *Shalbani*. The Adivasi people on the day before* celebrate this festival beating drums. A pig on that day is butted to death by other cows having horns.
Though the event is cruel one, yet it is observed in the Advasi community for the welfare of cows, cultivation and paddy seedlings. Of course, it is mandatory before the performance of **Chadak**. Apart from the festivals directly associated with agriculture, a good number of festivals are celebrated in rural Bengal which bear affinity with fertility and such type of festival is **Chadak** and **Gajan**. There runs a description about **Gajan** in the novel *Ganadevata*. It is indeed a popular festival of rural Bengal. The **Gajan** is observed in different areas from the second fortnight of **Chaitra**. Types of rituals connected with this festival vary from place to place. This Gajan festival primarily originated centering **Shiva** and **Dharma Thakur**.

We get the description of **Gajan** relating to **Shiva** in *Ganadevata*. The worship of **Chadak** or **Shiva** is done in the day of **sankranti** after some other rituals as lying of a votary on **Chadak-Kanta**, that is, on a piece of plank studded with iron-thorns ands The entire village go on fast during he **puja** of **Gajan** or of **Chadak**. In the evening **Shiva** or **Dharma Thakur** is held.

The novelist Mahitoush Biswas in his two novels, namely, *Mati Ek Maya Jane* and *Paye Paye Path*, has extensively given the descriptions of **Gajan** and **Chadak**. Events like **Shiva** take place everywhere on the occasion of **Gajan**. But the description of **Gajan** festival in Jessore in both the novels is indeed pregnant with distinctiveness. The last week of **Chaitra** registers and this **puja** is also called **Paat puja** by them. Every year after the **puja**, jute is piled up with utmost care and on a specific day the jute is taken down with the beating of drums. Before the some one of the village in the guise of or is to explain the secrets of jute and even the song related to is also sung. This jute is the holy seat of **Shiva** and then followed by **Shiva** and then followed by **Shiva**. The people of the village taking the names of **Matsya, Kurma, Baraha, Narasingha and Baman** etc. creates hurdles to that act of bathing, but reciting **mantras** remove all these sorts of obstacles. Then comes the moment
of bathing and Paat puja. The first night out of the last three days of sankranti is called and the second day known as The peasant Balaram of the village plays the role of This go on begging from door to door covering his face with something, as well as the too, starts at the same time. The group of when climbs up a thorny date-palm tree, then the gives a touch to their body with a sanctified stick in order to avoid the running of any thorn into their body. Afterwards cooking bhog (food) with the rice received as alms, the offers bhog at at night far-advanced. We see in the novel Mati Ek Maya Jane that the villagers were overtaken with a sense of fear at the breaking of the pot of bhog of Balaram. Thus the Chadak festival comes to an end. There exists enough similarity about the descriptions of Hazra puja and the offering of bhog at Hazratala given by a critic and the novel in question. A researcher narrated the rituals pertaining to Chadak festival from a different perspective. It is in his opinion:

A chain of linkages seems to be present between this festival and fertility. The Chadak tree is regarded as a symbol of eroticism. Many people regard the act of revolving round the Chadak tree after planting it by the Gajan-Sanyasi as the symbolic representation of the end of solar rotation. If it is looked at from this angle, it has to be accepted, that there runs the tradition of worshipping the Sun even in this festival. The Solar-centric religious tradition
is intimately connected with fertility-oriented religious tradition. If considered from this perspective, both Chadak and Gajan may be labelled with a tag of agrarian festival.

The novel Ganadevata registers the prevailing practice of the fresh account book or ledger opened usually on the Bengali / Indian New year's Day for the coming year. There has been the reference of reading out (astrological calculations in determining the course of events likely to occur in a new year) as well as (analysis of Zodiacal predictions set by almanac) used to take place in Chandimandap. Actually, the first day of Baishakh and are held on the very following day of Chadak. The agrarian culture has a link with the celebration like It is in the real sense that fertility-centric culture has been dichotomized and which got mingled with the tradition of growing crops and begetting children as well, and hence the occupation and worldly desire interlinked with this culture happen to be agriculture and sexuality. Basing on this infrastructure different festivals have come into existence. Once Nababarsha was celebrated throughout the world centering the shifting of crops to home. That is why once upon a time and Holi were regarded as preface to Nabavarsha, but subsequently for different reasons it has been observed in other seasons, too. The economic system of the agriculturally based medieval society has got an interconnectedness with the ritual of held on the occasion of Bengali Nabavarsha. The keeping of accounts of the new year starts to be maintained in or in new ledger. The keeping and fresh opening of during Mugal period began on the date of the collection of crops and revenues. The day that marked the mandatory collection of taxes from the tenants led to the introduction of and the that was going on in Chandimandap in relation to as delenated in Ganadevata registered the presence of Shreehari there. It is indeed correct to say that the system of Halkhata seems to be
an unfailing source of exploitation for the tenure-holders like Shreehari.

The episode regarding of Lakshmi and Janardan to the house of Dwaraka Choudhury has been mentioned in Tarashankar’s novel Panchagram. As because the life story of both the Hindus and Muslims has been portrayed in the novel Panchagram, hence naturally there goes the mention of the Muslim festivals side by side with that of the Hindus.

**Other Social Festivals and Worships:**

The reference of Durga puja is found in the novels, namely, Paye Paye Path, Panchagram and Mati Ek Maya Jane respectively. It is worthy to be mentioned here that the ideas and thoughts of Shreehari associated with Durga puja festival in Panchagram actually manifested his bragging of power. Shitala puja has been mentioned in the novel Lakhindar Digar. We see in the novel, Lakhindar’s son arranged Shitala puja in the village during Dol Purnima. The novel Operation ? Basai Tudu gives the reference of Poush Kali puja. The novelist has given the description of Ghentu puja in Ganadevata. This folk-god is generally worshipped in the 24-parganas of West Bengal. Tarashankar wrote in the novel that the Ghentu is not of almanac. He is (a ghoul) god opposing Vishnu. According to a researcher happens to be the god of mental and physical ailments. But in the later time due to the influence of Aryanization, he stood to be anti-Vishnu, and he converted himself into a god with his adherance to Shiva. There has been the description of the holy festival of Id-Ul-Fitre of the Muslims in the novel Panchagram. Tarashankar attempted to analyze the reasons supporting Muslims to go on fast in the month of Ramjan on the occasion of Id. As the Islamic festivals are determined on the basis of lunar calendar, hence the difficulties faced by the peasants of Bengal knows no borders. When this festival is celebrated in the months of Agrahayan, Poush, Magh and Phalgun, then the joy of the life of peasants touches the Himalayan peak, but when this festival falls in the months of Ashadh, Shravan and
Bhadra, then the festival is performed somehow due to merciless flogging by the dragon of wants of scarcity.\textsuperscript{89} The novel also keeps us informed that the festival Shab-E-Qudre is held on the twenty seventh day of Ramjan.\textsuperscript{90} There goes the reference of the worship of a god named •••• in the novel Shalbani, this puja is done making many kinds of sweet pies as well as sacrificing a he-goat.\textsuperscript{91} The name of the god is mentioned as •••• in the novel. The •••• is worshipped with great pomp and grandeur in the western border of Bengal, that is, in the districts of Bankura, Midnapur, and Purulia. Most Probably, •••• as projected in the novel, herself seems to be •••• because the description relating to slaughtering of a boar on the occasion of Badam puja has been given in the novel, even the same subject is found in the dissertation of a researcher.\textsuperscript{92} This very novel provides information for us that the Santhals worshipped Salui Baba and Salui Ma and even billy-goat was sacrificed in this puja, and then the blood of the he-goat was sprinkled over the head of Salui Baba as well as over across the field.\textsuperscript{93} The primitive tribes believe that the sprinkling of blood on the land or paddy-field enhances the growth of crops.

The Rajbangshi peasantry has a festival of their own called Tistabudi. The descriptions of Tistabudi puja are available in Debesh Ray’s Tista Parer Brittanta and Tista Puran. Sushir talked of the Tistabudi Puja in the temple of Jaleswar in the novel Tista Parer Brittanta with reference to opposition of Tista Barrage.\textsuperscript{94} There has been the reference of •••••••• in the novel, too in connection with Tistabudi puja.\textsuperscript{95} Actually the Rajbangshis worship Tista with a godly sentiment. This puja is done taking into consideration the horrifying nature of Tista so that Tistabudi should protect all and sundry from dangers.

The worship of Dharma Thakur is an important one in the Radh area. The folks believe that any illness is remedied in the name of Dharma Thakur.

Tarashankar Wrote in his novel Ganadevata that the village folks
promising a sacrifice give away horse at the holy seat of Dharma Thakur.\textsuperscript{96}

**Folk god:**

We have mentioned quite a good Number of folk-gods in course of our discussion relating to festivals and worships. The root purpose of worshipping gods out of the pantheon of folk-gods remains with the question of fulfilling any desire. Many gods are worshipped in order to save the rural society from the attack of diseases and epidemics, protection from wild animals, from snakebites. Moreover, a huge pantheon of folk-gods and goddesses came into existence with the desire of getting bumper crops, resisting the drought and scanty of rain fall, of enjoying better monsoon, of enhancing the fertility, as well as to save the village from any disaster. The folk-gods and goddesses available in the novels in question, already appeared in our earlier chapters, are as detailed below:

a) **Olabibi:** The reference of this goddess is found in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane*. She is the goddess of • • • • • or Cholera. • • • means going down or to have loose motion and • • • means to go up or vomitting. That is the other name of Cholera is • • • • • When Cholera took an epidemic form in the village Bakshi, then the peasants of the village getting the village saved by a protecting circular line by an ojha, at last drove the goddess out from the village. Actually she is a malevolent goddess.

b) **Shitala:** The description of the worship of this goddess is given in the novel *Lakhindar Digar*. She is the goddess of pox. Dr. Asit Bandyopadhyay is said to have found a parity of *Shitala* with *Parna Shabari Devi* of Buddha religion.\textsuperscript{97} Again according to Ashutosh Bhattacharya that the Deccan folk goodess *Shitalaksha* and *Shitala* of Bengal are identical. The very name *Shitala* belongs to mythological stock. Since this goddess gives relief from the burning pain of pox, hence the name *Shitala*.\textsuperscript{98}

c) **Manasa:** Goddess of snake. There has been the reference of reciting from the • • • • • in the novel *Ganadevata*. Generally this goddess
is worshipped throughout Bengal to save one’s from snakebites and for increasing fertility.

d) **Tistabudi** : is an aqua-denoting term. This goddess is worshipped in Jalpaigudi, Darjeeling and Cooch-Behar with the hope of getting water. We see in the novels *Tista Parer Brittanta* and *Tista Puran*, the tradition of worshipping Tistabudi and songs associated with her. This goddess is worshipped for allround well being and welfare.

e) **Salui** : God of Santhals. *Salui Baba* holds arrows in his hand and *Salui Ma* is a housewife with bangles made of conchshells around her wrists and vermillion on her forehead.

f) **Badaam** or **Badam** : This goddess is worshipped in the rural sectors of Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur. The description of the worship of this goddess is found in the novel *Shalbani*.

g) **Mashan** : He is a malevolent god, a monstrous god. This worship is done for the recovery of a diseased and delirious person. There has been the reference of Mashan in the novels *Mafaswali Brittanta* and *Tista Puran* respectively. Double sexes* male and females* exist in Mashan. Different forms of Mashan have been referred to by a researcher.\(^99\) We get the reference of *\(\cdots\cdots\)\(^{100}\) in *Mafaswali Brittanta* and *\(\cdots\cdots\)\(^{101}\) in *Tista Puran*.

h) **Ghentu** : God of skin disease. We have come across the practice of Ghentu puja in the novel *Ganadevata*.

i) **Dharma Thakur** : He is a combined form of Surya, Yama, Shiva, and Buddha\(^102\) and who is worshipped in Radh area. The novel *Ganadevata* keeps us informed about the holy seat and worship of this god.

j) **Saitor** or **Saiton Devi** : The sterile women of Jalpaigudi and Rangpur perform the puja and brata of this goddess in the hope of getting a child. There has been the reference of Saiton Devi in the novel *Tista Puran*\(^103\)

k) **Garam Devata** or **Garam Thakur** : The reference of this god is
This puja is an ancient evidence of folk-culture prevailing in the district of Jalpaigudi.

**Brata:**

The term ‘Vow’ is a right English Synonym of the word *brata.* The rituals which are observed in fulfilling the desires register the basic purpose of holding a *brata.* Though this *brata*-observing practice lies among women primarily, yet there are a few *bratas* observed by men also. The feminine *bratas* may be divided into three categories, such as, ‘****’ (*brata* by virgins), ‘---’ or ‘--’ (*brata* by feme covert), and ‘-----’ (*brata* by woman folks). The importance of mantra, image of god and painting of *alpana* is generally found in the *bratas*; but at the root of everything there works a sense of magical belief. The religious practices present in the agrarian economy consider the symbols representing a crops and fertility as auspicious ones, and these are used in the rituals associated with *brata,* such as, a bundle of paddy, picture of a snake, sun, water and owl etc. The different types of festivals, worships seem to be like spinal cord in the body of agrarian social life. The role of *brata* cannot be ignored in highlighting the thorough identity of the life of peasants.

Tarashankar in his novel *Ganadevata* described various forms of *bratas* observed in the agrarian life. The remarkable *bratas* are observed throughout the rural Bengal, but Tarashankar assembled them keeping regional distinctiveness intact. The *bratas* as observed in *Ganadevata* are as follows:

a) **Itu Lakshmi**: This is observed on the respective threshing-floor of the peasants. This *brata* is basically observed in the Radh area as a festival declaring the auspicious commencement of threshing and winnowing of paddy.

b) **Lakshmi**: This *brata* is observed painting *alpana* with rice-power, as well as making different kinds of sweet meats, sweet rice and which is held on the day of *Poush Sankranti.* Padma as projected in the
novel, very sincerely observed this *brata*.

(c) **Neel Shashthi** : This *brata* is generally performed in order to get a child and for the well being of the children and which is observed on the day that preceeds *Gajan Sankranti*. The issueless wife of the blacksmith Aniruddha performed this *brata* to have a child.

(d) **Ashok Shashthi** : This *Shashthi brata* is performed in the month of *Chaitra*. It is believed that the observance of this *brata* prevents sorrows and griefs hitting any family. Padma and Debu’s wife Bilu observed this *brata*. Tarashankar in his *Ganadevata* gave reference of twelve number of *Shashthis* observed in a full calendar year, such as, *Chandan Shashthi* in *Baishakh*, *Aranya* in *Jaishthya*, *Bansh* in *Ashadh*, *Lunthan* or *Loton* in *Shravan*, *Charpata* or *Chapad* in *Bhadra*, *Durga* in *Ashwin*, *Kali* in *Kartik*, *Mula* in *Poush*, *Shitala* in *Magh*, *Govinda* in *Phalgun* and *Ashok* in *Chaitra*.

Mahitosh Biswas in his *Paye Paye Path* mentioned *Kalui Chandi brata*. It is a female-centric agrarian *brata*, and which is observed in the last week of *Poush*. It is known as ••••••••••• in common. Collecting ‘•••’ (praying for begging) throughout the week from locality to locality, at last *Kalui Chandi* is worshipped on the day of *Sankranti*. It is believed that this *puja* helps remove the dangers and difficulties of a family.

The reference of ••••••••••• on the occasion of *Tistabudi puja* has been there in the novel *Tista Puran*. It is practically not a game, but a *brata* observed the Rajbangshi women; which starts from the very first day of *Baishakh*. The wives of the peasants visiting every house collect ‘•••’ through songs and dances, and at last the *puja* of Tistabudi is performed.

**Fair** :

The significance of ‘•••’ (union / get-together) lies in the very core of the word ‘••••••••••• (fair), that is ‘•••’ and ••••• (concourse of people) •••• happens to be an inseparable part of rural Bengal and which
has an unfathomable importance on the socio-economic life. Generally fair
 gains its momentum centering the festivals relating to folk and religious gods
 and goddesses irrespective of both Hindu and Muslim communities. 
 Rabindranath Tagore identified and indicated fair as the best window of
 realizing the country deeply. He said:

A sense of unity and solidarity amongst Homo Sapiens is seen to be present
in the atmosphere of fair and festival; and fair even plays an important role
in the field of mass education. Different kinds of food-items, fancy-goods and
toy-dolls including articles of daily necessity related to rural life, handicraft
goods, agricultural tools, items by cottage industry, saplings, paddy seedlings,
etc are sold and purchased in fair and which creates a source of livelihood
for a large number of people, and in this way fair plays an important part in
the rural economy. It may be said that fair is a big classified field of production
of goods, exchange, marketing. Fair is held in Bengal on the occasion of
different festivals. Both fair and festival are on many occasions inter-related.

We see in the novel Paye Paye Path that on the day of Chaitra
Sankranti a fair is arranged in the evening. There is description of or
in the novel Mati Ek Maya Jane on the occasion of Chadak puja.

There is reference of fair in connection with Dharma Thakur in the
novel Operation?Basai Tudu

Tarashankar has given the description of Gajan fair in Ganadevata.
Arrangements for Bolan song, Jhumur and Kabigan are made in this fair. Each and everyone, say, shop dealing in oil fried stuffs, cosmetics, bangle-seller, Bairagi are present in this fair.\textsuperscript{116} There has been the description of fair in respect of Rathyatra in the novel Panchagram\textsuperscript{117} including another fair by the Vaishnavas on the same occasion.

**Hunting :**

The practice of hunting is associated with some festivals in the Adivasi folk-life. There has been the description of hunting in the novel Shalbani on the occasion of Badam puja. A group of both males and females go for hunting for the whole day. There has been the description at length in the novel of hunting of boar and hare going to a big forest by Pachai, Phulmi and Shamli.\textsuperscript{118} It is described in the novel Tista Puran that on the day of ‘’prevailing in the Rajbangshi folk-society of North Bengal, the practice of hunting has almost become customary. It is indeed worthy to be mentioned here that the novel has a chapter entitled ‘’The novelist has given the description of hunting done collectively by Chhotadada and other peasants.\textsuperscript{119}

**III**

**Folk-literature :**

Dividing the folk-literature into some categories and focussing on their applications in the novels in question, we have taken, the command of their influence on the agrarian life into the ambit of our discussion. The genres into which the folk-literature have been divided are as follows : rhyme, proverb, riddle, tales, songs, myth and Panchali.

**Rhymes :**

Rhyme is remarkably a great branch of folk literature. A critic wrote while determining the definition of rhyme : Rhymes
have been created and said in the human society from time immemorial. Rhymes may be divided into some categories:

a) Nursery rhyme
b) Rhyme concerning magic
c) Rhyme concerning brata
d) Rhymes concerning mockery
e) Rhymes concerning work and labour

The nursery rhyme that we get in Tarashankar’s *Panchagram* through the album of Debu’s memories are as stated below:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When there is scarcity of paddy in the house of peasants, then the necessity of a platter to have riceform is quite meaningless. The off-screen picture of the peasantry destitute of food has come to limelight through the stream of thoughts of Debu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

We can also hear nursery rhymes from Padma in the novel *Ganadevata*:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We also come across a rhyme concerning mockery in <em>Ganadevata</em> mouthed by the priest. When the married women and girls of the village passed acrimonious remark aiming at the horse of the priest, then the priest himself poking fun at his own horse said:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

There is a rhyme in *Ganadevata* concerning brata. During the time of praising *Poush*, we have come to hear this rhyme from Bilu and Padma:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a rhyme in <em>Ganadevata</em> concerning brata. During the time of praising <em>Poush</em>, we have come to hear this rhyme from Bilu and Padma:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
There is quite a good number of rhymes in the novel *Shalbani* concerning mockery:

- •• •••• •••• ••• ••• ••••• ••••• •• (p.4)
- •• ••••• •• ••••• •••••• ••• ••• ••• ••••••• •• • • ••••• • •••• • •• (p.21)
- •• •••••  
  ••••••••• ••• •• •••• •••• •••• (p.36)
- •• ••••• ••• •••• •••• ••• ••••• ••••••••• • • •• •••• •••• (p.134)

There is a rhyme in *Shalbani* concerning *brata* also. Duli’s mother recited the following rhyme on the occasion of *Shashthi puja* performed on the twenty first day of the birth of Shamli’s son:

- •••••• •• ••••• • ••• •• •• ••• •••• • •• ••••••• ••• •• •• ••••• •• •• •• •• (p.259)

The main objective of this *brata* lies in wishing well being of the children and that what is revealed in the rhyme.

Quite a good number of rhymes are seen to be used in the novel *Tista Parer Brittanta*. These rhymes are closely knit with the life of the Rajbangshis:

- •••••• •••• • ••• •• •• •••• •••• •••• (p.14)

The said rhyme bears the testimony of the knowledge relating to sales and purchases of rural *haat* (a market that is held on fixed days of a week). Now let us have a look at the rhyme concerning mockery that appeared in the novel *Tista Parer Brittanta*:

- ‘•• ••••• •••• •••• •••• (p.184)

The two foes, namely contractors and engineers, of the life of peasants
have been flogged sarcastically through this rhyme.

A rhyme concerning sports and pastime is seen to be used in the novel *Tista Puran* and which is cited below:

**Rhyme dealing the play of *Paitan***:

```
....
.......

(p.75)
```

Here comes a rhyme relating to rains:

```
.......

(p.188)
```

The rhyme associating with eating and drinks in the Rajbangshi community:

```
.......

(Tista Puran, p.191)
```

Here follows a series of rhymes regarding forming of ‘**==**’ of *Budima* in *Tista Puran*:

```
.......

(p.177)
```

**Proverb**:

The oldest part of folk-culture happens to be proverb. It is stated in
a Spanish definition about proverb: ‘A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience’
that is, the proverb is the product of accumulated experiences spanning over a long period of time. Proverb comes into tangible form basing the course of human life. Proverbs centering agrarian factors like other walks of life have been too, created. There is no such matter relating to agrarian factors that has not been discussed within the purview of proverb. The store of proverbs, that has been used in the novels in question already mentioned in the preceding chapters, may be brought before our visual lens:

**Direct and indirect proverbs associated agrarian factors:**

- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Ganadevata, p.126)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Lakhindar Digar, p.45)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Lakhindar Digar, p.53)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Shalbani, p.13)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Tista Parer Brittanta, p.14)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Tista Parer Brittanta, p.233)

**Other proverbs:**

- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Ganadevata, p.307)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Ganadevata, p.35)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Ganadevata, p.104)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Panchagram, p.11)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Panchagram, p.87)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Panchagram, p.178)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Panchagram, p.192)
- .. --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (Lakhindar Digar, p.78)
Sayings of Dak & Khana:

appear to be a unique member in the family of Bengali proverbs. A critic wrote regarding folk-sayings:

The people of Bengal living by agriculture, believe the folk-saying wholeheartedly. The sayings of Khana state the rules and principles relating to family life, tending of animals as well as methodological hints and tips regarding agriculture. The folk-sayings and sayings by Khana that have been employed in the novels in question are as given below:

Sayings associated with right time and method of sowing and planting:

(Ganadevata, p.126)
Sayings dealing with reaping of crops:

(Mafaswali Brittanta, p.31)

Sayings in terms of season of paddy:

(Panchagram, p.68)

Sayings concerning climate:

(Panchagram, p.71)

Sayings regarding natural calamities like flood, rains, drought:

(Panchagram, p.150)

Moreover, there has been reference of a saying about milk and honey of family life in the novel Panchagram:
There appears a saying in the novel *Mafaswali Brittanta* of the directions governing the building of a house:

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( p.91)
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**Riddle:**

Riddle is an indispensible part of folk-literature. It is in the opinion of a critic: ‘Riddle generates multi-colouredness in the run of wearisome and monotonous life. Generally a riddle is formed in the pattern of a question and where one or two clues are hidden and following secret of that indicative, the answer is to be searched out. There is no mention of riddle in a large scale in the novels in question, except the novel *Tista Puran* where a single riddle has been presented:

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(Tista Puran p.78)
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The answer of the riddle of no. *••*) given above has not been furnished in the novel. It deserves to be mentioned here, that in North Bengal riddle is known by more than one name, such as, ‘etc. but in the novel *Tista Puran*, this is known as *••••*  

**Folk Tales:**

Folk-tales have occupied a bigger space in the world of folk-literature. A critic said:

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(Tista Puran p.78)
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Folk-tales are the stories of different tastes and natures which are orally transmitted. There exist different genres in the realm of folk-tales, such as
fairy tale, fable, moral tale, legend, myth, *brata* etc. We see the use of folk tales in the novels in question, and their influence on the folk-life of Bengal is very powerful. They believe these folk-tales heart and soul. First of all let us see how myth exercise its influence on the folk-life:

**Myth:**

It is according to a critic that myth emerges from the necessity of discovering the source of natural phenomena occurring constantly in the ambience of society. Though the outward look of myth is painted with an unbelievable brush of supernaturalism, yet the practices and systems of the social mind of a specific age have been lying hidden behind it. The world of myth develops centering the matters like self, practices and customs, birth and death, virtue and vice, creation-preservation-dissolution, day and night etc. Nyayaratna in *Ganadevata* told story one after another for Debu. Though the first story was by Nyayaranta himself, but told by Dwaraka Choudhury. The story speaks of the ascension of man to heaven at the start of the *Satya Yuga* (the first of the four ages). He wanted to teach man the ultimate consequences of greeds from the narrative that how man one after another failed to ascend heaven blinded by greeds.

A shadow of description pertaining to ascension of the five *Pandavas* to heaven seems to be found in the tale. It is narrated in the novel *Lakhindar Digar* that Lakhindar told a tale to his children how a poor cowboy named *Binanda* himself became a king producing golden crops through cultivation and at last the king Birat entertained him by giving him half of his kingdom as well as his daughter. This myth also developed in the line of the king Birat of the *Mahabharata*. The picture of ascension of the livelihood by the grazing of cattle to that by agriculture.

**Legend:**

The folk-society believes that the tale that has been narrated in legend might have occurred practically someday, and that too, in their locality. There
may be or may not be the slight presence of historical thread in the embroidery of legend. Debesh Ray in his novel *Tista Puran* has given a threadbare description of a legendary We find the reference of one more legend in *Ganadevata*. The flood-resisting embankment that stands in the field of Panchagram close to the river Mayurakshi, has a tale of its own. Everyone calls this embankment 130 We find the reference of one more legend in *Ganadevata*. The flood-resisting embankment that stands in the field of Panchagram close to the river Mayurakshi, has a tale of its own. Everyone calls this embankment 131 When the five *Pandavas* in disguise were returning with mother *Kunti*, then flood occured in this locality. The five *Pandavas* built this embankment to resist flood and thus it is called In this way legend and myth got well knitted in the tapestry of human mind.

Besides these tales, we have come to hear two more tales from Nyayaratna in *Ganadevata*. The tale runs as such—when a Brahmin gave goddess of misfortune and misery) a shelter in his house, then goddess of fortunes and prosperity), goddess of fame and glory) and (The guardian goddess of fortune of a family) deserted him, but when *Dharma* wanted to leave him alone, then the Brahmin prevented him from going away. 132 Actually the religious minded Nyayaratna through these tales liked to teach the lessons of morality. He is proud of seeing Debu adopted the principles of *Dharma* as the ruling means of his life. The third story told by him is actually the last part of the second one. Nyayaratna believes that Debu’s wife and son died of Cholera because of the fact that he committed a sinful act of going to burn the deadbody of a person belonging to lower caste of the society. So he told the tale for Debu — the Brahmin even upholding *Dharma*, how one day bringing a (a black-geode worshipped as the symbol of *Vishnu*) from the (a small wicker-basket shaped like high rimmed tray) of a female fish-seller and installing it in his home was utterly ruined 133 and this is the main theme of the tale. In this way the orthodox Nyayaratna, upholder of *Brahmical Dharma* and believer in casteism, wanted to teach Debu the lesson of ethics.
The Tales Of The Brata :

The tales of the brata’s exert a tremendous influence upon the folk-life of Bengal, and especially the brata-related anecdotes are of immense importance upon the life of women. The women-folks learn the lessons concerning devotion to one’s husband, to divinity, love and affection, doing something for others from these anecdotes. Women believe that if someone lends her ears to bratakatha her heart’s desire will be fulfilled. Actually the salient objective of the observance of brata lies in the fulfillment of one’s desire. In this regard, Abanindranath Tagore wrote in his book Banglar Brata:

It is in Ganadevata where Bilu performed Itu Lakshmi brata. The woman who observes this brata becomes a lucky one. Goddess Lakshmi remains in her garner in a steady manner. It is narrated in the Poush Lakshmi bratakatha about the growing of crops by a cowboy as well as achievement of happiness and prosperity. The cowboy is destined to have the blessings of Lakshmi. It is indeed remarkable to note here that at the end part of every brata panchali (doggeral poem) there visits the fulfillment of desire. The bratakatha of Chaitra Lakshmi narrates the arrival of Lakshmi Devi in the house of a peasant to repay the debt of til (sesamum) flower. The novel narrates the ritual of eating six buds of Ashok flowers listening the bratakatha of Ashok Shashthi. If this brata is done, sorrows and griefs cannot visit a house, and moreover, the folk-society even believes that And in this way the bratakatha very firmly gets rooted in the bosom of society.

Panchali :

Swarna and his father Tinkadi recited the Manasa panchali in the
novel *Panchagram*. The *Manasa puja* has been in vogue in Bengal which is irrigated and watered by rivers in order to remove ophidiophobia. Lakhindar in the novel *Lakhindar Digar* was heard reciting from the *Ramayana*. In the novel *Shalbani* too Mohan recites *Ramayana*. In fact, reciting from different kinds of *Panchalis, Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* all these happen to be the part of rural culture. The rural agrarian folks read all these sorts of books and they wholeheartedly believe the tales embedded in them.

**Folk Song:**

Folk-song is treated as the most prosperous and volatile part in the realm of folk-culture of Bengal. A critic said: ‘It is the gift of multi-colouredness which has made it so vivacious. The presence of respective vocabulary, the rules of pronunciation and regionalism in the numerous dialects of the Bengali language has added multifariousness to the folk-song. A researcher stated in course of his giving definition of folk-song:

Folk songs comprises the poetry and music of groups whose literature is perpetuated not by writing and print, but through oral tradition... Folk song is thus part of Folk culture; which is distinct from that of the cities and represents only certain facts of the culture of the nation.

The very definition is equally applicable in case of folk-culture of Bengal. Actually, the hopes and desires, smiles and tears, weal and woe of the folk-life of Bengal have got their expositions through songs. Hence it is said that ‘The nature and character of the folk-songs of the different regions of Bengal have been evident in the agrarian novels already discussed earlier. Here a stream of discussions is moved forward regarding those songs:’
There has been the reference of *Bhawaiya song* in the novel *Tista Puran* and *Tista Parer Brittanta*. Bagharu in the novel *Tista Parer Brittanta* sang a song about ...

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Bagharu in the song seems to have done an impersonation of  and he himself turned to be the estranged heroine of  Lyrics composed on  and  have been in popular practice both in North Bengal and Assam. We see the application of this great ‘’ song about  and  in the novel *Tista Puran*. This song has been employed in connection with the drowning of ‘elephant in the alluvial-land of Tista. :

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Debesh Ray wrote when the women of a family call up their beloved, then they sing this song of separation. He wrote :

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We have heard two such love-sick songs in the novel *Panchagram* from Durga; and there appears the commixture of Radha and *Krishna* in both the songs :

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And the second song is :

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The mental affliction of Durga has been expressed through these two songs.

The light version of *Bhawaiya song* is ‘’ song and such a type of
song is there in the novel *Tista Puran*. A village married woman with out of joy of her free movement on her way to *haat* sang a song adressing her *(younger brother of one’s husband)*:

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                                          (p.230)
                                          (p.211)
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is a song of a single individual woman, but in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane*, the *song was sung in the voice of peasant, Bangshi*:

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                                          (p.172)
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Though the novelist mentioned the song as *(p.172)*, but according to our consideration it is a *song. Nothing like the descriptions of month and nature, as it happens in case of *song, is present in this specific piece of lyric.

The chief character named Balaram in the novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane* sang a song remembering his sweetheart Padmakali. A tone of separation of a *song pervades this very song:

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                                          (p.11)
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The father of Ghatowal in the novel *Tista Puran* sang a *(ecstatic song) addressing river*:

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                                          (p.99)
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We can hear *song in the novel *Paye Paye Path*, but which was basically a part of *Kabigan*, however, in the said novel it was subsequently sang repeated in the voice of the cowboys:
The tone lamentation of the exploited life of the peasantry has been revealed in the song. The peasant Raham at the time of cultivation, projected in the novel *Panchagram*, sang a song of the marriage of frog:

And in the same novel there goes a *Rakhaliya* song, but this is a love-song:

Again we have heard Raham singing a song while tilling the field, and there the reference of Hassan and Hussan has come up.\(^{146}\)

There is a song in the voice of one of the important character Kali Santra in the novel *Operation ? Basai Tudu* and which helps in boosting the peasantry as well as to stand them against injustices and exploitations:

Identical type of song of encouragement and exaltation is even there in the novel *Sidhu Kanur Dake*. The Santhals declared war against the architecture of exploitations of the British Government, mahajans and zamindars. The integrated peasantry involved themselves in the fight for the protection of their rights. Song of protest and avenge was there on their lips:

Songs of sportiveness and mockery, too, touch the pages of the novels, which actually entertain the peasantry. Winds of merriments blow, as a result of such entertainment, over work-laden life. Such type of song is available in
the novel *Tista Parer Brittanta*:

There appears a song (jocular song) in *Operation ? Basai Tudu*:

The novel *Panchagram* registers the song of voiced by the Muslim workers and peasants of Kusumpur. Actually, the musical band run by the workers and peasants is known as The contractor of Itpada sang a song:

Such song on many occasions appears to be an instance of sportiveness.

The spontaneous origination of delight that touches the mind of the peasants at the time of reaping paddy gets its flawless expressions through songs. The peasant women hardly get time to take rest at the time of reaping ripened paddy. They are to return home with paddy bundle by bundle on their head and during this time they purchase their little fancy goods. Such a song is there in the novel *Mafaswali Brittanta* in the voice of Tultuli:

There appears a song in *Tista Parer Brittanta* Which is sung by mothers while bathing their children:
The wedding song, like other folk-songs, is a part of the culture of the folk-society. The wedding song is the most unique means amongst the Hindus and Muslims irrespectively of bridging the humanity. There is the mention of such a song in *Tista Puran*, which, said Debesh Ray, is sung at the time of marriage ceremony (p.230) The song is:

\[ \text{(Tista Puran, p.230-231)} \]

Many qualities of the young wife have been described in the song. Women in the novel *Shalbani* sang the wedding song in relation to Shamli’s marriage. A researcher said about the wedding song:

\[ \text{147} \]

The meaning of \( \text{or } \text{is sport or competition.} \)

\[ \text{So, } \text{signifies ' (regatta) or boat race competition. As everyone of the village enjoys joy through regatta, so it also helps to physical exercise. The novelist in *Paye Paye Path*, has given the detailed description from the making of boat to competition. The boatmen during this competition sing songs. There exists (sport event of boats) related songs in the novel also:} \]

\[ \text{148} \]

The team who wins the race also sings out of delight of victory. Such a song is:

\[ \text{227} \]
The songs related to regatta is called ‘song’. This song or one who sets to tune is called professional versifier or composer of a song-tournament. Both the sides representing for and against the topic seem to be the source of the dramatization of Kabigan. Generally, Radha-Krishna, Uma Sangeet, Shyama Sangeet turn to be the chief components of this type of song. The contest started in the assembly of Kabigan, projected in the novel Paye Paye Path, over the issue of settling as of who between Balaram and Krishna of the Mahabharata is superior and great. The old versifier Nakul Sarkar has been placing arguments in favour of Krishna and the rising leader Nitai was in support of Balaram. The history of the deprivation of the peasants has become evident in the song of versifier Nitai:

We can also hear folk-songs on the occasion of various pujas. The Rajbangshi peasantry of North Bengal sings songs on the occasion of Tistabudi puja:

There has been the description of a specific genre of song in the novel Mati Ek Maya Jane on the occasion of Gajan. Two musical troupes were formed in connection with Pat puja, one is called Balai-er Dal or Dhaker Sur and the other is Ashtak Ganer Dal or Hara Gaurir Dal. The novelist mentioned on the ground that everyone has a greater degree of inclination towards Ashtak Gan. Satish sangs songs in the musical functions of Ghentu in
Ganadevata on the occasion of Ghentu puja. All the contemporary factors have got a place in this song:

We have heard the peasantry in the novel Panchagram singing Palagan of Mangalchandi, and on the other hand, everyone was madly involved in Phullara’s Baromaisya:

Phullara exposed her numerous tales of sorrows to Ma Chandi. Debu thought hearing this song:

These musical plays are closely connected with the folk-life.

The holding of Kirtan (songs in praise of God) and reciting from panchali on account of different pujas and festivals happen to be the part of the culture of folk-society. There has been reference of Kirtan in Paye Paye Path on the occasion of Satyanarayan puja. The novel Panchagram is embedded with (a folk song celebrating activities of Behula). Tinkadi Modal and his widow daughter Swarna sang this song. This is also called Singing the glory of Manasa is the prime component of this song. Swarna in the novel sang:

The Bhasan Ganer Dal (troupe of folk-songs celebrating activities of Manasa) is also called Behular Dal in Birbhum area as mentioned by Tarashankar.
There has been the reference of musical function of Bolan Gan, Jhumur and Kabigan on the occasion of Gajan in the novel Ganadevata.\textsuperscript{156} We hear a song denoting glory of cattle-wealth in the voice of Satish Bauri in the novel Panchagram:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \ldots (p.190)
\end{itemize}

It is indeed a fact that a larger space of folk-culture of rural Bengal has been occupied by a medley of songs. As their songs appear to be fountain of their entertainments, so also it is associated with smiles and tears of their life. Hence, if we want to know the rural folk-culture, we should have our acquaintances with their folk-songs.

\textbf{Folk Drama :}

Although the actual objective of folk-drama lies in doling out dramatic purport and entertaining the spectators, yet in addition to that, one the biggest objectives of folk-drama is to give mass-education. Sometimes lessons on justice and uprightness are taught through the stated genre. Hence, the folk-drama plays the role of a protester against injustices, oppression, exploitation and discrimination. Now let us see how he folk-drama has been employed in the novels in question:

There has been the reference of Alkatar Cup and Merachiner Dol in the novel Panchagram.\textsuperscript{157} The description of Yatra Pala is found in Tista Parer Brittanta.\textsuperscript{158}

\textbf{Folk Dance :}

Folk-dance, too, like folk-drama and folk-song, has equally enriched and vitalized the folk-culture of Bengal. The references of folk-dances that we get in the novels is question are as given below:

There is the description of \ldots dance in the novel Panchagram. \ldots actually a \ldots (War-dance). People like Bagdi, Bauri, Dom etc.culture this kind of dance. The mention of this dance done by Bhalla and Bagdi is there in the novel.\textsuperscript{159} The novel Ganadevata writes of Ghentu
dance on the occasion of Ghantakarna puja.\textsuperscript{160} The reference of Mechheni Khela on the occasion of Tistabudi puja is made in the novel Tista Puran.\textsuperscript{161} This sport is practically a function of dancing and singing.

IV

Materialistic Folk Culture:

Folkitems:

\textbf{Household items:}

\textit{Ganadevata:} wicker-basket), shallow-cup), (coarse mat of palm-leaf or cane or thin bamboo-slice), (water-pot with a spout), (stool of wicker-work), earthen pot), pan), chest), mat), (bowl of a hooka which holds tobacco), hurrican-lantern), kerosene container), (winnowing tray), (rope made of hemp), (cowrie), (a small pitcher), (a small earthen pot), (an earthen barrel) etc.

\textit{Panchagram:} (a spud), (Umbrella), (tumbler made of Lotus leaf and lid of a bowl), (a lamp-stand), (stick), (pitcher), (a piece of long and bent pole borne on one’s shoulder for carrying loads fastened to its ends), (a large portmanteau usually made of steel), etc.

\textit{Mati Ek Maya Jane:} (lamp), (low wooden seat), (broom), (round earthen pot), (wicker-basket), (round pot), (rope made of jute), (husking padle), (a large hollow basket for keeping grains) etc.

\textit{Paye Paye Path:} (turban), (platter of bell-metal), (plate of stone), (seiver), (needle), (a long
knife with two legs for dressing vegetables), (earthen lid) etc.

**Lakhindar Digar** : (a large basket), (box), (earthen lamp), (rope of straw) etc.

**Shalbani** : (thread), (mat made form palm leaf), (bier), (lantern), (mirror), (comb), (roll of cloth or straw used as a buffer for the head when carrying a burden on it), (cone-shaped case made of Shal-leaves), (water pot), (a small case with a lid made of tin), (cot), (gunny), (bag), (large goblet) etc.

**Mafaswali Brittanta** : (small basket) etc.

**Tista Parer Brittanta** : (container made of folding the smooth bark of the plantain tree), (container made of calabash), torch etc.

**Tista Puran** : (brolly), (brolly), (sack)

(broomb made of bamboo), (broom made of midrib of coconut-leaf),

**Sidhu Kanur Dake** : (earthen vessel), (mat made of palm-leaf), etc.

**Operation ? Basai Tudu** : (palm-leaf hat), etc.

**Tools used in agricultural works** :

We see in every novel in question the use of same tools, these are : (plough), (plough), (sickle), (spade), (rope) (ploughshare) etc. In addition to that, some area-wise new tools are found to be used. These are:

**Ganadevata** : (brolly), (brolly), (stick),
(fish-spear of a plough), (lattice) etc.

Panchagram: (rope made of Babui grass), etc.

Mati Ek Maya Jane: (yoke), (brolly made of palm-leaf).

Apart from these, there have been the references of (Small spindle) in Shalbani, and the different kinds of (sickle) in the Tista Puran including that of and The use of is seen in Mafaswali Brittanta for muzzling the mouth of cows.

Folk Tool:

Gandevata: (dao), (axe), (hammer) (chopper), (hatchet), (pincers), (razor), (sword stick) etc.

Panchagram: (knife), etc.

Mati Ek Maya Jane: (a kind of large chopper), etc.

Paye Paye path: (bow and arrows), (torque), (harpoon), etc.

Tista Parer Brittanta: (a quiver of arrows), etc.

Tista Puran: (spud), and the use of different kinds of sticks is also found, such as stick used for frightening away tiger, (dusting off plank), piling up the heap of straw, driving away elephant and stick use while going to see flood. Moreover, we have the references of in Lakhindar Digar, and , , , as well as the use of stone as a tool in the novel Sidhu Kanur Dake.

Fishing item:

Ganadevata: (fishing hook), (casting net),

Panchagram: (harpoon)

Mati Ek Maya Jane: etc.
Paye Paye Pathn : ••••••, ••• •• (seiver), ••• •
Shalbani : •••••, •••• (large basket) ••• •• (fishcreel), •••
* ••• (encircling net) etc. are seen to be used.

Folk Vehicle :

Shalbani : Bullock cart, boat, •••••• (palanquin)
Mati Ek Maya Jane : •••••• (raft made of palm-tree)
Tista Puran : ••••• (a type of boat)
In addition to that the means of transportation are shown in the novel riding on buffalo or horse back.

Folk Music :

Ganadevata : ••••••••••••••••••• (drum), ••• (cymbals), ••••, ••••, •••••
••••• (musical instrument of Bell-metal played on with a stick), ••••, •••••
Panchagram : ••••• (kettle-drum), •••• (bell), •••••, •••••
Paye Paye Path : ••••• (two-stringed instrument), ••••• (large drum).

Tista Parer Brittanta : •••• (a kind of tom-tom), •••••
Tista Puran : •••••, ••••, •••••
Sidhu Kanur Dake : ••••••••••••••••••• (tambour), •••••
And there is the reference of ••••• in the novel Shalbani.

Folk Ornament :

Ganadevata : •••••• (ear-ring), •••••• (nose-ring), ••••• (ear-ring), •••••• (a kind of necklace), ••••, ••••• (bangle), •••• (ribbon), ••••••, ••••• (lac-dye), •••••• (vermillion)*
Panchagram : •••••••, ••••• (wristlet), ••••• (bangle)
Paye Paye Path : •••••••••••••••••••
Shalbani : •••••••••••••
Tista Puran : ••••• (nose-ring), •••••••••••••••••••, •••••••
Sidhu Kanur Dake:  
- •••• (comb made of brass)

Folk Cloths:
- •••• (napkin), •••• (handkerchief), •••• (cloth having an artistically designed border), •••• (cap laced with gold or silver thread), •••• (striped sadi), •••• (gaberdine), •••• (fez hat), •••• (cloth without coloured border or edge), •••• (scarf), •••• (vest), •••• (loin cloth), •••• •• (vest), •••• (cloth without coloured border or edge), •••• (scarp), •••• (type of mat), •••• (quilt), •••••• (tatters), ••••• (silk chaddar) etc.

Bedding material: 
- ••• (a rag), ••••• (blanket), •••••• (coarse cloth), •••••• (type of mat), •••• (quilt), ••••••• (tatters), ••••••• (silk chaddar) etc.

Flok Food:

Ganadevata:  
- •••• (fried rice), ••• (molasses), ••••• (steamed pie), ••• (flattened rice), •••• (thickened milk), •• (sweet rice), •••••• (solid thickened milk), •••• (a kind of sweetmeat), ••• (milk), •••• (parched paddy), ••••• (ball of mudi), •• (thin slice of sugarcane), ••••• (a kind of cake of sugar or molasses). Besides these, •••••• •••••• (chatni of elephant apple), •••••• (fried leguminous seeds of pulse) an well as different kinds of fruits, fish and vegetables.

Panchagram: 
- •••• (hotchpotch) and fish including different kinds of vegetables.

Mati Ek Maya Jane: 
- •••••••• (offering of sweets etc. made in the name of God or some saint).

Paye Paye Path:  
- •••••• (sweet rice), •••••• (grated coconut-kernel) etc.

Lakhindar Digar: 
••• (bread), •••••••• (fried rice and molasses
that have been kneaded), (boiled rice steeped in cold water).

**Shalbani** : (water-snail), (whey),

**Tista Puran** : (boiled rice mixed with water), (potato that is slight burnt),

In addition to that, there have been the references of (barley meal) in the novel *Sidhu Kanur Dake* and that of tea in the novel *Operation? Basai Tudu*.

**Intoxicants** :

(hemp), (hemp), (hemp), (tobacco), (bowl of a hooka), (country liquor).

We also see the use of (betel nut), (clove), and (betel leaf) as (that is chewed to expell bad odour from the mouth) and (cowdung cakes) including dry wood and leaves of the forest and (woody stalk of a jute-plant) as fuel.

**Folk treatment and medicine** :

The folk-medicine and the art of healing are not only confined in the application of medicine but with it the belief and culture related to art of magic and supernaturalism has been interconnected. This sort of folk-treatment is accepted on the ground of unscientific and blind faiths. The folk-treatment and the administer of medicines are seen in the novels in question and which is going to be discussed below:

It is seen in the novel *Ganadevata*, When Durga had a snakebite, she was given by Satish a piece of root to eat by crunching it. In the same novel it is projected while Padma was under the attack of epilepsy, Jagan Doctor himself advised her to wear talismanically charmed amulet. The novel *Panchagram* narrates, while Dwaraka Choudhury became ill, a *Kabiraj* (an Ayurvedic practitioner) was called in. The novel *Mati Ek Maya Jane*
presents that when Balaram had sores in the gaps of his toes, what is called
by the villagers, he rubbed there soaked mulberry.\textsuperscript{165} It is seen in the
novel \textit{Lakhindar Digar}, When Lakhindar had a head injury from the strokes
of staffs, the juice of grass-green was administered there.\textsuperscript{166} The novel \textit{Paye Paye Path} portrays that the \textit{Kabiraj} applied the juice of leaves on the burn-
affected area of Satyaprasad’s body, as well as sprinkled the sanctified water
in his eyes and on the face.\textsuperscript{167} We see Tultuli in the novel \textit{Mafaswali Brittanta}
extracted pieces of root from the forest. It is believed if such root is taken
after pounding it to a finer powder, it helps develop labour pain and remove
throes of labour.\textsuperscript{168} The use of neem oil is seen in the novel \textit{Sidhu Kanur Dake} in healing the sores.\textsuperscript{169} The novel \textit{Shalbani} narrates when Kamini’s leg
affected with burn-injury developed blisters, Shamli dressed the affected part
with the leaf of \textit{soaked}.\textsuperscript{170} Luski is seen in the same novel to have
advised to wash the leg of Kamini with water boiling \textit{that is, root or creeper.}\textsuperscript{171} The eggs of red ants, as narrated in the novel \textit{Shalbani}, after
frying them in ghee or oil, were given with \textit{to take for the relief from
whooping cough.}\textsuperscript{172} The novel \textit{Tista Puran} narrates if leg get sprained, the
affected part is to be dressed with the leaves of \textit{after crushing it to
a pulp followed by applying warm lime and turmeric paste over it} \textsuperscript{173} and in
the same novel it is seen if somebody was attacked with \textit{(malarial
fever), water was poured on his head and he was given to take juice of neem
leaf.}\textsuperscript{174}

\textbf{Folk technology :}

The folk-technology developed according to the pressing necessities
of everyday village-life with the materials which happen to be within easy
reach of the people. Though it rests on scientific foundation, yet it needs
enough knowledge of workmanship. So far the agrarian life is concerned,
many tools associated with agriculture, fish-catching items, different things
made by blacksmiths, folk-weapons, materials required for everyday life,
such as, ‘•••••••’, ceramics, various kinds of folk-musical instruments, wooden furniture, all these are made through the skills a folk technology. There are other remarkable things that fall under folk-technology are bullock cart, palanquin, boat, pinnace boat and cone-shaped case made of palmyra-leaves, and even the making of ‘•••••••’ (alter for holy basil) falls with the circumference of folk-technology. Apart from that, the husking padle, ‘•••••’ or ‘••••••’; the integral part of folk-life, are also covered by the skills of folk-technology. Besides all these, the role of folk-technology is equally remarkable in the matter of constructing a house.

V

Folk Game:

The most popular part of folk-culture is folk-game itself. Different regional characteristics are present in folk-game. So game is the means of entertaining oneself in one’s leisure time. We see the references of folk-games in the novels in question, and these are:

**Shalbani**:

a) Reference of the game *Ha-do-do* (p.63)

b) There has been the description of a team game named *Chika* (p.11)

(c) The description of a most popular folk-game called *Kanamachi* (playing the blindman’s buff) (p.154)

**Tista Puran**: The description of *Chakkour* or *Paitan* is given (p.75)

**Ganadevata**: Description of playing *Kanamachi* (p.212)

**Lakhindar Digar**: The mention of playing *Agdom-Bagdom* is made. It is purely a homely game which carries the folk-tradition (p.150)

**Paye Paye Path**: We find the reference of play *Goru Dabarh* (p.35)
**Panchagram** : *Amutir Ladai* (p.29) is a wrestling competition which is held amongst the peasants on the occasion of *Ambubachi*. Generally this wrestling in connection with *Ambubachi* is a festival of joy for both the Hindus and Muslims. Tarashankar wrote about this wrestling: ‘•• •••• • •• •••• ••••• • •• •• •• ••• •••• •• ••’

VI

**Folk Art** :

There is a close association between folk-art and folk-technology; yet there exists a subtle difference so far folk-art is concerned, the aesthetic and artistic factors are related to it, and the painting-centric sides of the folk-art are as:

**Alpana** :

Padma and Bilu in the novel *Ganadevata* painted *alpana* on the occasion of *Poush Lakshmi brata* with liquified pigment of rice-powder. Moreover, Bilu worshipped *Lakshmi*, painting foot prints of *Lakshmi* and the lotus.\(^{176}\)

**Pot and Potuya** : There has been the mention of *Potuya* (painters) in the novel *Ganadevata* and the reference of sending Nalin to painter Dwijapada to learn the art of painting.\(^{177}\)

**Nakshi Kantha** : There is the reference of *Nakshi Kantha* in the novel *Paye Paye Path* \(^{178}\)

Besides these, though the skills of folk-technology are present in the items made of bamboo and cane, such as, *dhama, jhudi, chubdi, kulo, dala* etc; yet its aesthetic value cannot be ruled out. Likewise, we can too find out the traces of folk-art in the objects like *mathali, mathowal, toka, thonga* of Shal leaf, platter of Lily leaf, lid for water container, *pankha* made of
pitch-board, broom made of thin sticks of bamboo and coconut-leaf, *sika* made of jute, rope made of jute and *babui* grass and different kind of dolls and toys.

We have discussed above under different sections regarding various components of folk-culture. In addition to that, there is an important part of folk-culture in the form of *haat-bazaar*. The existence of *haat* has an inseparable relation with rural Bengal. Besides its economic importance, *haat* has an important social role, too. *Haat* is a unique place of meeting everyone, having discourses, as well as to be in knowledge of one another’s condition. The novelist Debesh in his novels *Tista Parer Brittanta*, *Tista Puran* and *Mafaswali Brittanta* has given a detailed description of *haat*. Not only the man alone, but the women too, are deeply attracted to *haat*, which as if, heralds the taste of liberation for women. And in this way, *haat* has been inseparably connected with the life of the Rajbangshi peasants of North Bengal. Thus many proverbial sayings pertaining to *haat* have turned to be the part and parcel of their life:

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( *Tista Puran*, p.228)

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( *Tista Puran*, p.229)

Debesh Ray in his above mentioned two novels has given the description of different kind of *haats* of North Bengal: *Latagudir haat*, *Changmarir haat*, *Odlabadir haat*, *Krantir haat*, *Dhupgudir haat*, *Chalsar haat* etc. He wrote that the Rajbangshi peasantry believes that *that, the habit of frequenting to haat helps the boys to grow up, get habituated with intoxicants, as well as attain social and political maturity having interactions and familiarity with different people of different places.*
We have come to know though the above discussion that if we want to present a thorough portraiture of the agrarian life, we should have to know their culture. We have too, come to know, on the basis of the selected novels that narrated rituals, beliefs, festivals, rhymes and proverbs, riddles, singing and dancing concerning the agrarian social life of Bengal, that in the fields of magic, supernatural power, divine entity and in other identical matters, it is the faith which is the source of the pujas and festivals of agrarian rural Bengal. As a result of that the tradition of worshipping mother, cult of fertility, and worship of sex-symbolizing object and what not came into existence. Both child and corn have become synonymous terms. Various pujas, bratas, festivals, painting of alpana etc. have come into practice centering the desire of attaining crops and child. Again the oral literature, such as rhymes, proverbs, riddles, drama, songs etc. not only became the medium of exposing the hopes and desires, weal and woe, attempts to save themself from the cruelties of Nature and entertainments, rather simultaneously the very mediums became the exposing platforms of secret experiences about life. The novels themselves carry the ample evidences of the peasants relating to their agri-centric experiences and knowledge; such as, the agri-centric knowledge about the appropriate season of sowing seeds, of harvesting, making of manures, different anti-crop bodies like insects, birds, water-rain-weather-bright half of the moon and darkhalf of the moon etc. All these factors perfectly made the novels in question agrarian ones. The major part of the life of the peasants is whiled away in producing crops. They love the paddy-fields and in this way they pass their life. Hence, their everything, say, puja, festivals, song, dance, drama from some way or other is ultimately connected with agriculture. The very dress, ornament, food of the peasants, as if, declare their relationship with the land. The materials that they use are certainly devoid of urban glamour,
nevertheless, these things bear the marks of their work and labour. The illiterate peasantry does not use modern sophisticated tools, weapons, and house-hold metal utensils and allied articles but the artistic beauty that has been present in the articles made by them, such as, earthen items, brolly made of leaves and *pankha* etc. may not be found somewhere else. We have made an attempt to focus the culture of agrarian life in the chapter in question. However, it is an irrefutable fact to note that the lot of novelists in the novels in question, as we have already ploughed the field of discussions in our earlier chapters, narrated the chronicles of the ups and downs related with the socio-economic and political conditions of the peasants, and in a parallel manner too, the novelists concerned highlighted in an extensive fashion the flow of culture of the peasants. Hence, from this perspective, the novels in question have been successfully able to attain their berth in the gallery of agrarian genre.
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