CHAPTER – X

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Riddles are an important part of folk literature which is deeply rooted in it. A lot of examples of Riddles can be seen in ancient literature. In Mahabharata, information about importance of Riddles are found in the form of conversation between Yudhisthir and Yaksh. Even in Sanskrit Kavyasastra at the time of Acharya Dandi, we find the existence of Riddles. Riddles which were popular in verbal form in the age of Prakrit and Apabhransh era, now occupies an important place in different areas of folk literature, magazines and newspapers. Generally, Riddles are a branch of folk literature which are traditionally popular in their verbal form.

Just as research projects are being undertaken in various genres of literature all over the world, now-a-days, much research is being conducted on folk literature as well. Importance of Riddles lies in the fact that it is not only used by common people but also used by well cultured civilized society. Riddles were much used by our forefathers. It is accepted without any controversy that Riddles are more used by illiterate people rather than literate, women rather than men and rural people rather than people living in urban areas. This is an indication of its popularity among the masses since time immemorial.

It has left its impact everywhere in Indian languages. It was famous as ‘Bhramodaya’ in Vedic era, ‘prahelika’ in ancient time puranic era, ‘dristikut’ in Bhakti era while ‘pahelee’ in Riti era (an era of aesthetic in Hindi literature). In regional languages, Riddles are known by various names such as Bujhowal, Walathasia, Kahlukarani, Parsi, aari, dhakoslae etc.
Glimpses of philosophy of human life are nicely picturised in Riddles. That is why, the topic of this research study mainly focuses on a comparative analysis of Hindi and Assamese Riddles so that we can share some knowledge of their culture, rituals, traditions of these two language belts. Apart from this, a comparative study of Riddles also helps us to know about the similarities and dissimilarities of cultural unity and social values of different places. This study is a humble attempt to reach at a possible conclusion by considering all above mentioned factors.

The necessity to undertake this research study on Riddles of two different languages is to inspire and uphold age-old values present among the people of these two language belts. This is required to preserve this wonderful art from any adverse effect of Globalisation. On the other hand, it is intended to boost the Riddle-culture amongst the young generation for their mental development and intelligence so that it can be traditionally forwarded to all generations from an era to another. Riddles when applied in languages and literatures add to the elegance of languages. They are like capsules which make language and literature healthy and beautiful.

Riddles are in no case less important than proverbs, idioms or sayings. Few scholars consider Riddles under folk sayings but this is not actual point and both are different. Like proverbs and idioms, Riddles also have their inner hidden meanings. Whereas proverbs and idioms are based on experience, Riddles are based on mental intelligence.

Human nature is mysterious. When a person wants to play pun and add mysterious effect to his thoughts, he then uses such a form of language which is entertaining as well as thought-provoking to a common man. Ultimately it takes the form of a Riddle. Thus Riddles are outcome of the mysterious nature of human beings.
To begin with, comparative analysis of the Riddles related to agriculture in both the languages has been made. The study found out all the facts regarding this area. It further pointed out as to how the Riddles refer to various tools used in agriculture. The study on agriculture related Riddles is quite extensively done.

A comparative study of agriculture related Riddles of both the languages revealed the fact that agriculture is one of the most important sources of employment in both Hindi and Assamese belts. Importance of agricultural activities like sowing, harvesting etc. are broadly depicted in Riddles of both the languages. We get knowledge about agriculture and the relevant utility of agro-farmers of both the languages through the Riddles and also how they use these Riddles for the purpose of agricultural activities.

A broad analysis has been made on the use of Riddles related to Nature and its similarities and dissimilarities found in Hindi and Assamese languages. It has been seen how people are dependent on nature and how Nature influences their living-style, food habits etc. Moreover, nature plays a vital role in influencing the character formation and life style of people living in any region.

Man has its close relationships with nature and this relationship is everlasting. Men without the Nature is virtually impossible. Therefore, Nature has its serious role in the creation of Riddles. Natures related Riddles of both the languages are much similar in terms of their expressions and meanings. Such Riddles which indicate co-relation and cultural unity of human life with environment are of great concern. Certain dissimilarities are also furnished in the analysis. It is seen in the Riddles of both the languages due to the impact of food habits, customs and traditions, geographical circumstances and climatic differences. Nature has its great impact on the people of both the languages.
Man is a social being. His aim is to go forward towards civilisation living in the society. He is associated with different elements in the path of development. On this juncture, the role of creatures becomes quite important. After a thorough analysis, we can conclude that there was a reciprocal relation between man and animal. It is different for one to live without the other. From the Page s of history it is clear that not only Indians show respect to animals but foreigners also have great sympathy for them.

From the study of Riddles of both the languages it is clear that birds and animals have equal gravity and importance. People belonging to both the languages have considered pet animals as an inevitable part of their life. Accordingly, farmer's life is dependent on their animals. Also, we have disclosed the non-availability of some animals in all the places. Due to the different natural environment and climatic conditions, we donot find pet or living animals of similar nature. That is why Riddles related to certain birds and animals are probably found to be the same in both the languages and also it is found that Riddles on certain animals are found in only one language belt but not in other. What so ever, it is seen that men-animal relationship is very close to each others. This evidence has been revealed in Riddles.

Food is essential to keep our body healthy. Not only men but animals and birds also need food. An attempt has been made on the study of food items taken by the people of Hindi and Assamese regions and how Riddles are composed on these items.

In Hindi language, we find many Riddles related to wheat and in the same way many Riddles related to rice are found in Assamese language. The main reason behind this, is the basic food of Hindi belt is- wheat, grain and in Assam it is rice. Apart from this, other fruits and vegetables have found their usage in the Riddles of these languages; and also noticed their similarities and dissimilarities. Dissimilarities are noticed because of
the effect of climatic and geographical changes and many other factors. This is why, the Riddles related to these food items are not available in other languages.

As it is said that ‘Healthy mind lives in a healthy body’, the same is also narrated in Assamese as – ‘Deha thakilehe beha’. It is useless if someone’s body is not sound and healthy. Human body is formed by different small and large organs or limbs. The imagination of a healthy body is meaningless without healthy limbs as these are having their individual role to form a healthy body. Names of different body parts and their different functions are also pointed out in the study. Life remains incomplete if one is not having a healthy body, seems to be the message carried by these Riddles.

Here Riddles related to different body parts are mentioned. There are many Riddles available in Hindi and Assamese language related to different body parts of human body. Maximum of them are similar in nature. In few Riddles, some dissimilarities are also found. It is because in spite of having same functioning in every place, certain parts of body get affected by the climate of the region and also the thoughts, feelings and values of the people of that region.

Riddles related to domestic appliances are found in Hindi and Assamese languages. Things related to Riddles in day to day use in family life or home are seen in both the societies which have a great role. These are important things without which it becomes difficult for the people to run the homely life smoothly.

While comparing Hindi and Assamese Riddles related to domestic appliances it is seen that they are similar in certain respects. It is because the domestic appliances for daily use are generally the same, but can be commonly known by different names. The domestic appliances used for daily purposes are more or less same for Hindi and Assamese speaking people. Though differences are mentioned in certain things due to their degree of use. For instance, maximum use of 'Dheki' is seen in Assamese belt but
it has gone least importance in Hindi belt, 'Okhal' is more important though utility of both are more or less the same.

There are some Riddles, which are difficult to categorise. Apart from Riddles indicating different types of social, religious and economic conditions, certain specific things related to man-woman relationship have also been noticed. With these, Riddles related to ornaments, cosmetics, social relations & God, have also been found. Miscellaneous Riddles are so vast in number that detailed study of all of them in this research work is quite a herculean task. This is why the discussion of such Riddles is done in gist and not in details. Thus, we can conclude that through a study of such miscellaneous Riddles, it is found that the contribution of Hindi and Assamese people towards the popularity and usage of these Riddles along with thoughts prevalent in the society, has immense influence both as an Art and a source of entertainment.

The findings of the entire study can be put like this – ‘Riddles are expressions of different experiences of human life which are used by human beings from the ancient time and whose effects are still intact on social and cultural life. Riddles carry a true and clear picture of every aspect of social life which, if separated from literature or social life will make them charmless and non-attractive which may affect the rhythm of our social life to a great extent.

Similarities as well as dissimilarities are seen in Hindi and Assamese Riddles. The area of Hindi Riddles is rather vast whereas that of Assamese Riddles is rather confined. This may be due to the geographical and demographic differences of both the regions. Like proverbs and idioms, Riddles have a hidden meaning. This characteristic is found in both Hindi and Assamese Riddles.

Proverbs and idioms are based on experiences whereas Riddles are based on intelligence. From the ancient time, Riddles are prevalent in folk languages ; on the
other hand, an intelligent person can also immediately compose a new Riddle. So, it is
difficult to say which Riddle of Hindi and Assamese languages came from tradition and
which are newly composed. Some Riddles are also available in their new forms which is
equally important like traditional Riddles and have a scope of further study.

To make the Riddles suitable to the new environment; changes and modifications are
being done. Adaptability with the local environment is a must as it reveals common truth
and that is why they are very popular. But now urbanization has gradually effected the
rural areas also, for which Riddles are getting extinct because of its minimum use. In
this juncture, It is necessary to find, collect and transmit them in a more adaptable way
as the scope of Riddles is very vast. Its expansion publicity and prevalence are there in
every corner of the world.

To conclude, it can be hoped that this study will contribute generously towards the
cultural unity and integrity of the two regions. It is also hoped that it would play a
valuable role in strengthening national unity amidst all its diversities.

This study will act as a gateway to the future research on Hindi and Assamese
Riddles. It is also intended to inspire further study in various branches of Hindi and
Assamese literatures, with special reference to folk literature and culture, their
linguistics possibilities keeping in view the importance given to comparative study of
literatures now-a-days and in the process enrich them a little more than what they are
today.

It is firmly believed that this study will take its readers to the world of mystery,
excitement, innovation, knowledge and entertainment.

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