PART II

THE ANALYSIS
CHAPTER 3
ORAL LITERATURE
Oral literature is one of the most important and large sector of folklore studies. Sometimes it is called verbal art or expressive literature. Under this large sector, spoken, sung and voiced forms of traditional utterance that show repetitive patterns. The oral literature or the traditional literature transmitted to us from generation to generation represents the most valid and appropriate expression of religious, mythological, historical and cultural milieu of the rural folk. It is a mirror in which the contemporary culture and civilization have been reflected. The folklorists have divided this wide field of study into two major subdivisions. They are: (i) Folk narratives (ii) Folk songs or Folk poetry.

3.1 Folk Narrative

Folk narrative encloses all genres of oral literature in prose. Because of their oral existence, narrative genres float in an unlimited variant under a limited number of plots. Therefore it is very difficult to classify the folk narrative on the basis of form, content and function etc. According to Linda Degh, ‘Narration is ageless. The impulse to tell a story and need to listen to it have made narrative the natural companion of man through the history of civilization’. (Dorson R.M. 1982, p. 53)

‘The term folktale can be used either broadly or narrowly. In the broad sense it applies to all prose narratives following traditional storylines, which are told orally, or were so told in previous generations. It thus covers fairytales, legends of all types, memorates, fables, tall tales, and humorous anecdotes. The original author is always unknown, in the rare cases where an individual who shaped the current version has been identified, the tellers are unaware of things. Most tales seem to have been formed by recombining
traditional elements or transferring an established plot from one hero, or one location, to another.

The narrow definition restricts itself to be avowedly fictional narratives in the above list, excluding legends and memorates, since these claim to be true.' (Wiki Pedia)

The folklorists have classified the folk prose narrative in various types and classes to make the study convenient. They are folk genre, legend genre and myth genre. Of the folk genre folktale has occupied an important role.

3.2 Folk Tales

According to Thomposon, 'All people, irrespective of age, sex, colour and religion, like to listen tales and a good story teller has always found eager listeners. His tale may be a mere report of a recent happening a legend of long ago, or an elaborately devised fiction. People hung to his words and satisfy their yearnings for information or amusement to heroic deeds or religious education, or release from the over powering monotony of their daily lives.'(Thompson . S. 1977, p. 3)

The characteristic features of folktale are, '.... It is traditional, it is handed down from one person to another by words or mouth or sometimes by written words, and there is no virtue in originality.' (Leach, Maria, (ed) 1949)

Folktales are of different types, such as: wonder tales, tales of rituals or religious tales, tales of claverness and cheating, humorous tales, etiological tales, didactic tales, etc.

Like other communities of India, the Bengali communities also have their own folk narratives in both prose and poetry verses. The Bengali folk of Chamaria and Nagarlera Mouza are not other than that. They have a big granary of folk narratives of bewildering variety. Bengali folktales of the study area cover almost all the categories of tales classified by the folktales. They have beautiful stories about animals, plants, family life, love and romance, humor, jealousy, cruelty, wickedness, foolishness, unusual heroism,
magic, chance of fate, ritualistic stories, story of deity etc. Some tales contains a combination of myths and legends.

Generally the stories are told by the old men and woman to their children in the evening and sometimes in day time in some special occasion. It is observed that, some narrators apply semi-dramatic devices like gestures, facial expressions etc. at the time of storytelling. The story tellers are not professional and they tell the stories of their own choice. In most cases, at the end of the story, the story teller or the audience give comments on the tale or on the characters of the stories. The main purpose of the folktale is to give entertainment to the listeners and at the same time to teach the moral or spiritual lesion associated with the story. How jealousy, cruelty, greediness and selfishness are invariably punished by some mysterious ways is shown through tales; how love and affection, service and sacrifice, courage and wit are rewarded is also exemplified by the story. Therefore the folktales have an educative value also. Some of the collected folktales from the study area are reproduced below:

3.3 Wonder Tales

Wonder tale is an important sub class of folktale which is considered as a precious document of human society. Various terms like magic tales, supernatural tales, wonder tales, fairy tales, marvelous tales, marchen tales etc. have been used to denote this sub class.

According to Linda Degh, 'The marchen tales themes center on man’s fascination with supernatural adventures. They tell about an ordinary human beings endowed with qualities that enable him to perform supernatural acts. The marchen, is in fact, an adventure story with a single hero.' (Dorson R.M. 1982). One such very popular wonder tale collected from the Bengali folk of the study area is given below:
3.3.1 **Story of Tara, Bhanu and Surya**

Once upon a time there was a great king. He had three queens but all of them were having no child. One day a saint came to their palace for begging alms. After conversation with the queens he came to know that they have no child. The saint gave them a banana and told them that, if they eat this banana after taking bath in early morning, they will conceive within a very short time. The third queen was very beautiful to look at and therefore the king loved her very much. Out of jealousy the two queens made a conspiracy to deprive her to become mother. Leaving her alone in home, they went to the river and after taking bath they ate the banana dividing equally. They became confident that after producing child the king will love them much more and hate the third queen. They came back home with full mental satisfaction. After sometime the third queen also came back home by taking bath in the river and asked them to give her share. Then the two queens replied her that they have already finished the banana and if she wants to take her share then she may search the rind in filth, where they have thrown it. Being helpless the third queen went to the filth and found out the rind of the banana and ate with faith and humble eagerness. After a few days the third queen became pregnant. Then again the spiteful queens made a plan to kill her issue. Showing great affection to her they requested the king to appoint a nurse to look after the queen and her baby before and after delivery. The king readily agreed their request. Then the two queens tactfully bring the nurse under their possession by giving some covetous things and asked her to cover the eyes of the queen with a piece of black cloth at the time of delivery, and to keep three puppies on her bed instead of her baby. They also asked her to take away the baby and leave in deep forest secretly.

The time has passed and the queen give birth three babies in time. The nurse did everything very promptly as she was instructed to do. She went to the king to inform about the strange, unfortunate, and shameful incident.
Hearing all about the happenings, the king became violently angry and immediately he ordered his constable to kill the puppies and cut the queen in pieces. The un-desisted king also ordered him to bring a piece of bone of the queen so that he can cease his fire of anger by beating every day before starting his court, until his death.

On that very day, on the way back to home, a confectioner (Ghosh) saw that, three new born babies were lying on the ground of that deep forest and they were crying for thirst and hunger. The confectioner had no offspring and therefore he brought them to his house. Of these three babies one was girl and the others were boys. The confectioner named them as Tara, Bhanu and Surya.

In course of time the three babies became young. One day they made a decision that, they have already spent a long time in the poor confectioner’s house and therefore they should not stay further more in his house. Seeking another suitable place, one day they secretly leave the house of the confectioner and sheltered in a magician’s house. The magician was a bachelor. They saw that he had a charmed stick and a charmed broom. Using the stick he can turn a man into a stone or a tree and by the use of the broom he can again turn the stone or the tree into a man. As soon as the magician saw the beautiful girl, he turned the two boys into trees and proposed her to marry him. The intelligent girl immediately contrived a means and told him that, she has no objection to marry him but he must accept one condition and that is, he must not be allowed to touch her body for six months. The magician agreed her condition.

The time passes on. In the meantime she learnt all the tricks of the magic perfectly. One day very tactfully she touched the magician by his charmed stick and turned him into a big stone. Then she touched her brothers by the broom and leaved the magician’s house without any delay.
Roaming here and there, one day they arrived at a king's court. They observed that, before starting the king's court, the king beats a bone with a rod and as soon as the king beats the bone, the bone utters three words, 'Tara, Bhanu, Surya.' They shocked by hearing their names and became very much eager to find out the mystery.

One day the girl collected all the bones of the victim by the help of her magical stick. She goes to the king's court and told him that she has the power to rebirth of any dead human being. The king invited her to prove it in his court. Next day the girl came to the king's court with all the pieces of bones and touched them with her stick in front of the audience. Surprising everybody a queen came out from these bones. They confirmed that she is none but the third queen. The king also became surprised and asked the girl to disclose the fact. Then the girl asked him, 'A few years ago you have ordered your constable to cut your third queen into pieces out of anger and shame. Is it true?' The king answered, 'yes'. Then she asked the wet-nurse whether she threw over the three babies in the jungle and put three puppies in the bed of the queen instead of her issues at the time of her delivery or not? The nurse also agreed her with guilty eyes. Then she asked the two queens to confess the truth whether they managed the nurse to do that or not. They also agreed the conspiracy made by them.

Understanding the ill motive of the two queens the king ordered the constable to give them deadly punishment. The constable took them to a deep well. He puts a thread over the well connecting both ends. Then the king asked the queens to cross the well through it. The first queen tried to cross the well but she could not, and fall down in the well. Then the second queen tried to cross the well, and she also died in the same way. But the third queen crossed the well very easily. Then the king requested the queen and her three children to come to his palace again, to start a new, happy and prosperous life together. But Tara, the intelligent girl did not agree to her father's proposal at
once, and she puts a condition before him that, both of them will lay out to their property. If the king can prove that he has more property then Tara, Bhanu and Surya, then they will go to his palace otherwise he will have to leave his kingdom. Ultimately the king has to loose his kingdom and the elder son Bhanu became the king.

‘Rajar chele raja halo, 
Ar, amar sastraro sesh halo.’

‘The king’s son becomes the king
And, my story is also becomes the end.’

3.4 Religious or Ritual Tales

The religious or ritual tales has a great importance in the socio-cultural life of the Bengali community. These tales are divided between vicious and virtuous human beings and supernatural characteristics. In the Aarne-Thompson catalog, the religious stories are divided in four topical groups. They are, God repay and punishes-truth comes to light-the man in heaven-the man promised to the Devil.

The religious folk stories are handed down traditionally from one generation to another although in the process it gains in variety and inventiveness from one narrator to another from one age to the next, without however, causing much damage to the original character and ideas. The Bengali communities of Chamaria and Nagarbera Mouza have a large number of such stories, which are associated with puja and brat. These popular stories are locally known as sastra, sadhu katha, brat katha etc. In some puja like, Subachani puja, Bipad Nashini or Bipattarini puja etc, these tales are told in the vicinity of the worshiping spot in day time or in the evening by the old or middled aged woman folk. A few such stories are mentioned below:

3.4.1 The Story of Lame Duck

Long ago in Kalinga there was a very powerful King. In his Kingdom a very poor Brahmin widow was living with her only son.
One day the unfortunate son told her mother that he wants to have a great meal with duck’s meat. Understanding his strong desire the fellow Brahmani became highly disappointed and said, ‘Son, I am unable to buy a duck for you because, I am very indigent and have not a single penny in my hand.’ Looking her helpless and weeping face, the son said to his mother, ‘Don’t worry my beloved mother, I will bring a duck by any means tomorrow and you just cook it deliciously for me.’

Next day he stole a lame duck from the king’s pond very cleverly and had a great meal with it. But on the other hand the king got the message about the missing of his lame duck from watchmen. He ordered them strictly to search the duck immediately. Out of fear of hard punishment all the watchmen jumped hurriedly in searching the duck and finally they found some feathers in the Brahmani’s house. They caught the boy and took him to the king’s court. The king ordered his watchmen to hang a big stone around his neck and put him in a solitary cell as a royal scepter. On the other hand, in the absence of her only son the poor widow started to scream in grief. As a result all the villagers gathered around her and advised her to pray Goddess Subachani. The villagers said to the bereaved mother that except Subachani Devi, nobody can help her in getting back her son.

At that night, Subachani Devi appeared in King’s dream and asked him why he gave such a serve punishment in a minor mistake to the little boy. She also warns him that, if he does not release the boy immediately and let the marriage of his daughter Sakuntala with him, then he will lose his kingdom very soon. In the morning the king released the boy from the prison and arranged the marriage with his daughter very gorgeously. The king presented a large number of horses, elephants, jewellery etc. to the bride and bridegroom with great pleasure. A few days later the couple came back to their own home with all the valuable things.
Getting the grace of Devi subachani, the poor widow arranged her puja once again for the welfare of the new couple by establishing and idol of Devi and invited all the villagers of her neighboring villages.

3.4.2 The Story of Guwalini and Chandalini

In a small village there was a milkmaid and a fisher-woman. They were very intimate friend. Once, the rain continues for several days. The fish and milk started to stale and dickey. Being helpless they decided to Pray Subachani Devi, if the weather clears up.

Suddenly the sky became clear. The two friends came to the market with the wares. On that day, the kings send two people to buy some curd and fish to perform the annual ceremony in honour of his deceased father. The two people immediately buy up all their curds and fish in high price without any bargaining. They became impressed on Devi and buy all the offerings in the market with this money. After performing the puja in the river side, they partak the praised and came back to their home.

A mean minded person was observing all this matter secretly. He reported to the king that, the milk maid and the fisher women have taken Prasad from the same container. The fishing community is regarded as uncleaned in the society. Therefore they were asked for the interrogation in the king's court. The milk maid and the fisher woman explained the fact and told that they just arranged and performed the puja but the actual bidder was none but the king. Because, without bless of Subachani Devi, it was not possible for him to honour his deceased father. Understanding the meaning, the king freed them and punished the man for giving him the wrong information.

From that day the milk maid and the fisher-woman continued to worship Subachani Devi and spent the rest of their life with much comfort.
3.4.3 The Story of Brahman- Brahmani

In a village, there lived a poor Brahmin family. The old Brahman Bramani had no child. Begging was their only source of living. One day, the Brahman came back home with his empty bag. He said to the Brahmani ‘Today I did not get anything. We will have to spend to night with empty stomach.’ The Brahmani had only two rupees in her hand, she asked her husband to go to the market to bring something. Taking these two rupees the Brahman went to the market, but he got such a little amount of food stuff that with that they could not relax their hunger at all.

Next day, taking his alms bag the Branman again went for begging. After some time an old women came to their house and asked for alms. Then the Brahmani became helpless and told her that they have nothing to give her because all their vessels are lying empty. Then the old women said, ‘Why you are saying so? I know that there is inexhaustible food stuff in your kitchen. If you don’t believe me then go and see, whether it is true or not.’ Then the Brahmani came back to the kitchen and saw that, the old woman’s saying is true. Taking alms in a pot she immediately came out cheerfully. But how strange! Nobody is there, but a golden idol is lying on the ground where the old woman was standing sometimes before. She also noticed that, a few sentences are written on the ground, ‘I am Nistarini. Do worship me to get relief from all troubles in life.’

In the evening when the Brahman came back to home, Brahmani told him everything from the beginning to the end. Then the Brahman and Brahmani arranged the puja of Nistarinin Devi inviting all women of the village. From that day they became relaxed from all their hardship and started a comfortable life.

3.5 Didactic Tales

Like other tales the didactic tales are also very popular among the Bengali community. In didactic tales, importance is given in its educative and
moral value rather than humour, cleverness or wonders etc. In each story there is a good lesson behind it. Some such stories are reproduced below:

3.5.1 Story of a Lewd

In a village there lived a very poor farmer. Although he was a hard worker his fate was not in favour of him. Therefore he and his wife have to spent their life in utter poverty.

One day his wife told him that, all the other people of our village goes to earn money, you too go somewhere and try to earn like them. The poor farmer became convinced in her words.

In that village, there was a very rich young boy. He became attracted to the wife of the poor farmer and proposed her to marry him. But only obstacle in their path was the farmer. Therefore one day they make a decision to kill him. The young boy gave her ten rupees to bring some muri, jiggery and some poison from the market and asked her to prepare some ladoos with these. He asked her to send her husband to some distant place along with these ladoos. Because, he is sure that in his long journey the farmer will feel hungry and eat the ladoos and then he must die. After his death they will be free to get each other. The wife of the farmer did everything according to his advice.

Walking for a long time, the farmer felt tired and hungry. Therefore, sitting on the shadow of a tree he opened his small packet of ladoos. But before having the ladoos he thought that he had only seven ladoos but still he had long way to go, and therefore he again closed his packet carefully. In the mean time a gang of dacoits came to that place by plundering some one's house. They too were quite wearied and hungry. So, they asked the farmer for some ladoos and promised of giving some valuable jewels in return. Without any delay he distributed all his ladoos among them. But after some time all the seven dacoits died one by one.

He was shocked that how could the dacoits die together after having the ladoos! Then he understands that his wife must have played some
conspiracy to kill him. He collects all the valuable things of the dacoits and returns to his home. He stands on his courtyard and asked if anyone was there in home. As soon as his wife opened the door he found that, abruptly something ran out of his house and hides under a raised bamboo platform of heaped thatch. Then he asked her, ‘what was that?’ She replied, ‘May be cat’. Then the farmer goes towards that and by hearing a rustling sound under the raised platform, without considering anything he takes a long stick and beats that suspected thing. When he looked properly, he found that, it is not a cat, but a man and he is already died.

Then he goes to the king’s court and asked the king to answer the following puzzle.

‘Kapale jadi thake dhan
Baisa mile sona
Gharer magi Khaibar disc
Marse sat jana
Baittye dekhi baghar san
Mars eek tan
Kherer balar tale
Marlo siddhisali
Raja balen amar
Prashner uttar ki.’

The king did not understand anything. He asked the farmer to explain the actual meaning of his riddle. Then the farmer explained the whole incident before the king and as a capital punishment the king ordered his constable to hang his wife.
3.5.2 Story of Two Fishes

In a beel there lived a goroi fish and a jedgedi fish. They were very intimate friend. The gedegi fish was very lazy and therefore she was neglected by the other fishes of the beel. One day the goroi fish asked the gedegi ridiculously, ‘Gede, if today a fisherman come to our beel and put a fishing, trap to catch us, then what you will do? You know that I am very much claver and intelligent. Out of hundred skills I will use only one and that is enough for me to escape. But, it is sure that except being confined into the trap you have nothing to do.’

Just at that moment a fisherman came to that place and putting his trap on their passes goes back to his home. Then the goroi fish showing conceitedness told her, ‘Gede, you see, how I am going to that side of the trap with a single rush. But as you are very lazy, you should better to think any other means to escape.’ Saying this, the goroi fish jumped into the trap but she could not reach the other side and confined herself under water-hyacinth. The goroi fish became helpless and fervently requested her to save by any means. Then the gedgedi told her, ‘Goroi, you always neglect me by saying lazy. But, as today you are in trouble I can give you a suggestion. As soon as the fisherman came back to collect his trap you feign yourself like a dyeing fish. Then the fisherman will throw you into water and I think your life will be saved by this way.

In the evening the fisherman came back to the beel and saw that only one fish is there in his trap and that is also decaying. Throwing the fish into water he returned to his house.

Then the goroi fish told her, ‘Gedgedi, I am defeated in the race of intelligence. One good idea is better than hundred dreadful ideas.’

3.6 Myths

A myth is a story that may or may not be true. Myths are generally very old. This means there are no records or other proof that they happened.
Some myths may have started as true stories but as people told and re-told them, they may have changed some parts, so they are less true. They may have changed them by mistake, or to make them more interesting. All cultures have myths. Stories about the Gods and goddesses are myths.

Many people once believed in mythological animals and gods. These animals or gods may have control or has power over a part of human or natural life. For example, in Hindu mythology the cause of thunderstorms was said to be the wrath of Indra, the Chief of all gods.

'Myths are the orally transmitted and comparatively long, sacred prose narratives usually related to theology and rituals, cosmetic events, accounts of creation and activities of gods and deities or a superhuman beings. The folk people believed them to be true.' (Maria and Fried, 1950, Vol-II, p. 409)

According to W.R. Bascom, 'myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past.' (Bascom, 1981, p. 98)

The above definitions reveals that, myths speaks about the creation of the universe, of mean, of animal, why a certain animal has its specific characteristics, how the rituals and ceremonies are coming to the earth, why some natural phenomena's occurred and so on. Myths play a vital role to serve the justification of performing the rituals with which the people of a community are associated. Usually the main characteristics of myths are non-human, but often they have some human attributes. The eternal quest of men to know the truth in the natural surroundings led them to invent the myths in which the rudiments of history can be discerned. The purpose of the myth is to explain matter in the science of pre-scientific age.

Like other communities in other parts of Assam, a big number of myths are found in the Bengali community of Chamaria and Nagarbera Mouza also. Most of these myths are generally based on rituals in comparison to other types of myths. Some of these are given below:
3.6.1 Myths of Trinath

Once upon a time there lived a man called Bidur. He lived with his wife, only son and daughter-in-law. The wife of Bidur was so vulgar and quarrel some that often she quarrels with him in every word. Likewise his son and daughter-in-law was also very immoral and ill behaved.

One day Bidur tethered his cow in the field. She was to be in calf. In the evening he went to bring her home but did not found her there. Gradually the darkness covered the field. Bidur came back home but he could not sleep well that night.

Next day, early in the morning he went again in search of his cow but all his hope goes in vain. In the evening he felt very much tired and take some rest under a big tree. Suddenly he heard a divine massage, ‘there are three paise under the tree. With these you bring some amount of mustard oil, three earthen lamps and three gua-pans and do my worship’. Bidur became surprised. In the twilight he saw that three coins are lying in front of him. Hurriedly he went to the market and bought all the articles and came back to offer puja at the bottom of the tree. But how strange! He saw that the entire place was packed with devotees before his coming. Before going to offer puja he again became confused. To whom and how he will offer puja? Then the divine message told him that he is Trinath, the combined form of Brahma, Bishnu and Maheswar. He came to the earth to save the people of ‘Kali youg’ from their sin and to fulfill their desires. Then he told him about how to do his puja.

Bidur everything accordingly and prayed to Him that, if he get back his cow and the happiness of his life then he will do his worship in every year. Coming back home, he saw that his wife is waiting for him eagerly with cheerful eyes. His daughter-in-law kneels down in his feet with great respect and his son is also coming with a calf in his lap and the missing cow is also coming with him cheerfully.
The news became spread in every where immediately and thus the puja of Trinath came to the earth.

### 3.6.2 Myths of Manasa Puja

Chando was a very prosperous merchant and a devotee of Lord Shiva. He refuses to worship Manasa (Padma) the serpent goddess and even inflicts indignities on her. Therefore to take revenge the goddess finally cursed him. As a result, Chandosaudagar lost his wealth, his ships sank, six of his children died after birth and his hardships continued. While he was going from one place to another, his seventh son, Lakhinder, was born. Luckily, this child survived and went on to marry Behula.

Chandosaudagar was alerted by Lord Shiva about the imminent death of his son. So, he asked Lord Viswakarma to build a iron castle for the newly married couple where no one could enter. However, goddess Manasa was able to convince Viswakarma to keep a small hole in the wall through which it is almost impossible for anyone to enter. Behula and Lakhinder entered this castle to spend their first night. While they slept, a snake slipped into the room and made his way to the bed and bit Lakhinder.

Next morning, when Behula woke up, she found her husband dead from the snake's poison. Chandosaudagar was at a loss, thinking where he went wrong in his construction of the iron-castle. At this moment goddess Mansa appeared and asked Chandosaudagar to offer his prayers to her. She promised that if he did so, his son would be blessed to live again. But Chandosaudagar was adamant to do so.

So, the body of Lakhinder was placed on a boat and made to float on the river. On his last journey, Behula accompanied her husband. One day Behula saw an interesting thing. A woman was washing clothes on the riverside and a child was disturbing her. Being disturbed the woman sprinkled some water on the boy and the boy became lifeless within a moment. Then after washing her clothes she again sprinkled some water on the boy, chanting...
some mantras to bring back his life. Behula rowed the boat towards the bank and asked the lady to teach her the charms. Then the lady told her that her verses don’t have the capability to being back the life of Lakhindar, as Lakhinder died due to the curse of a goddess. Instead, she asked her to go to heaven and pray to Lord Shiva for Lakhinder’s life. Behula did accordingly then Shiva said, ‘Manasa is my daughter. I cannot do such a thing to insult her. It is better for you to go back and ask father-in-law and ask him to offer puja to the goddess. Only then your husband will be alive again.

Behula came back and after much difficulty she found her father-in-law. Finally she persuaded him to worship Manasa. However, Chandosaudagar agreed only on the condition that he would offer his prayer by left hand. Thus, Lakhinder defeated death and lived happily ever after with Behula.

3.7 Legends

A legend is a narrative of human actions that are perceived both by teller and listeners to take place within human history and to possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude. Legend for its active and passive participants includes on happenings that are outside the realm of ‘Possibility”, defined by a highly flexible set of parameters, which may include miracles that are perceived as actually having happened, within the specific tradition of indoctrination where the legend arises, and within which it may be transformed over time, in order to keep it fresh and vital, and realistic. (wikipedia)

According to Bescom, ‘Legends are prose narratives which, like myths are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today’. (Bescom.1981, p. 98)

Legends are more often secular prose narratives supposedly based on historical facts, events and places. The main function of Legends in to provide
information and amusement. From the above mentioned definition we can characterize the legends as follows,- ‘Legend, typically, is a short (mono) episodic, traditional, highly ecolypified historicized narrative performed in a conversational mode, reflecting on a psychological level a symbolic representation of folk belief and collective experiences and serving as a reaffirmation of commonly and held values of the group to whose tradition it belongs.’ (Wikipedia)

The legends found in the study area are mentioned below.

3.7.1 Venom of Dhora Sap

The legend regarding the venom of dhora sap is runs like this. Once the dhora sap was also venomous like king cobra. One day goddess Manasa (goddess of Serpent) ordered all the snakes together in her house. All the serpents rushed towards the house of Manasa out of breath from fright. Dhora sap was also joined in this group. But on the way to Manasa’s house there was a pond with full of small fishes like goroi, puthi etc. The dhora sap was excessively gluttonous and seeing the fishes in the plash immediately he removed his poison from his mouth and covered it with some cow dung and goes down the water. Unfortunately, just at this moment some ants and insects like mosquito, leach, gad fly, hairy caterpillar, scorpion etc. saw this hidden venom. They finished all the venom within a moment. From that day the dhora sap has lost his venom forever.

3.8 Proverbs

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. They are often metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim. If a proverb in distinguished by particularly good phrasing, it may be known as an aphorism. Proverbs are often borrowed from similar language and culture, and sometime come down to the present thought more than one language.
Proverbs are the tease, didactic and sometimes metaphorical statements containing concise homely truth and traditional knowledge to various aspects of life. Like other aspects of oral tradition, proverbs are also learn and transmitted through oral tradition from person to person, from generation to generation.' (Leach and Fried, 1950, vol. II, p. 778)

According to Abrahams, 'Proverbs are short and witty traditional expression that arises as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings. Each proverb is a full of statement of an approach to a recurrent problem. It presents a point of view and a strategy that it self sufficient, needing nothing more than an event of communication to bring it into play.'(Dorson ed, 1982, p. 119)

'Proverbs are the shortest expression of the experience acquired in a long life. They deal with the fundamental behavior of people.' (P.C. Das, 1999, p. 131)

According to Alan Dandes, 'In proverbs, what is unsaid is much more important than what is said.' (Dandes. 1978, p. 350. In words of T.S. Eliot, 'Proverbs are objective-correlative.' (Eliot, 1950, pp. 124-25)

There are a number of proverbs in Bengali parlance, which reflects their fundamental behavior to a great extent. Some beautiful proverbs collected by the time of field study are given below.

i) 'Chul nai betir
Chuler laigyakande
Kachupater dhepa dia
Buira khopa bandhe.'
(She has no hair in her head, but cries for the big hair knot with the help of arum leaf)
ii) Kothai rani Rashmati
Kothai ba phedi napitani.
(Where the queen Rasmati and where the dirty wife of a barber)

iii) Sona china jai tai
Manush china jai rai.
(Gold can be proved by heat and man can be seen by his words)

iv) Chai nai kukurer
Bagh raj nam.
(A scurfed dog is named as royal tiger)

v) Misti anei poka dhare.

vi) (A sweet mango gets insects)

vii) Sunya patre dapdapani sar.
(Empty vessels sound much)

viii) Jahari jahar chine

ix) Bhomar chine madhu

ox) Sukarke sandesh dile

xi) Phele khai kachu.
(A jeweler can identify jewels, a Honey-bee can identify honey, if a pig is given sweets it will eat arum)

xii) Parer chele dekhte mota.
(Other's son looks handsome)

xiii) Surer mayer bar gala.
(Mother of a thief sounds much)

xiv) Chander also nasta karte
Ratrre marg pharkai jonai pok.
(To malign moonlight, fire, fly lightened the path of a night)

xv) Bhab nai, bhangi nai
Rada-Rani jhap kholo.
(order someone to do something without any sake)
xvi) Dhal nai, torowal nai
  *Trankularer nati.*
  (Pretending very powerful without any power)

xvii) Rao na karle, dewe parena.
  (The people who keeps mum has no enemy)

xviii) *Kumbhire chine aura*
  *Kamine chine kaura.*
  (A crocodile can identify the whirlpool and a bell metal worker can identify the bell metal)

xix) *Singher baceha singhai hai*
  *Bagher baccha bagh*
  *Kaker basai kukil chana*
  *Haina kabhu kak.*
  (Like begets like)

xx) *Ucha jagai jal baje na*
    *Nicha jagai jal baje.*
  (Water cannot be stored in highland but in low-land)

xxi) *Kothai Swarger Raghu*
  *Kothai beter ghugu.*
  (Where the Raghu (god) of heaven and where the rubbish of cane)

xxii) Bhab nai bhangi ache
    *Laph dia base*
    *Prasader kache.*
  (Pretending of great pious but thinking of self interest)

xxiii) Bara jale jaila
    *Bara hale haila.*
  (He is the real fisherman who has twelve (many) nets and he is a real farmer who has many pairs of bullock)
xxiv) *Gujai jeman sit haiya choye*
   *Bujle chai sit chayaner keman such.*
   (A hump-backed man feels what a pleasant to be slept in a straight way)

xxv) *karo poush mash*
   *karo arbanash.*
   (Somebodies trouble causes some bodies hey day)

xxvi) *adhik sanyshite gajan nesta.*
   (More advice spoils the real cause)

xxvii) *Baro mashe tero parlon.*
   (Unlimited festivals throughout the year)

### 3.9 Riddles

Riddle is a statement or question or phrase having double or veiled meaning, put forth as a puzzle to be solved. Riddles are of two types.

1. **Engines:** which are problems generally expressed in metaphorical or allegorical language that require ingenuity and careful thinking of their solution.

2. **Conundrums:** which are questions relying for their effects on punning in either the question or the answer. (Wikipedia)

   According to Dundess, 'Riddles are questions that are formed with the purpose of confusing or testing the wits of those who do not know the answer.' (Dorson. ed, 1982, p. 130)

   'A riddle is an ambiguous and concisely formed metaphorical question which is difficult to answer or which if apparently interpreted gives difficult meaning than what it actually incorporates.' (Leach and Fried. 1950, Vol. II, p. 963)

Riddles are commonly called forth during some special occasions during which such witty devices may be used in a properly playful contest.
situation. Riddles are of different types such as, descriptive riddles, joking questions, wisdom questions, puzzle etc.

‘Riddles are by their nature conventional. These conventions are important because provide the framework by which they are recognized and remembered. Each riddles announces itself as being of a certain type by its conventional phrasing. These conventional frame creates a pattern of expectation on the part of hearers, allowing them to hazard a guess at the answer, since the range of possible answer is limited by the riddle’s conventional mode of proposition.’ (Dorson, 1982, pp. 139-140)

Like other communities in India, the Bengali community also have a big number of riddles which they practices during their playful situation or to pass their leisure time. The riddles are locally known as Chillok. To translate the riddle from one language to another is a very difficult task. Moreover, in most of the riddles they use some colloquial language. Some riddles collected from the study area are given below.

i) Janme dhala, ante kala
   Golai lohar har
   Lampha dia parlo jakhan
   Mathai lejti tar.
   (It born as white with an iron neckless. Then it becomes black at the end. When it jumped, its tail remains in its head)
   (Ans. Khewali jal)

ii) Ja-la Madhya thake se
    Trikon sarir
    Kacchap nahe, kunbhir nahe
    Kon se beer?
    (He lives in the middle of jala
    Triangular is his body
    He is neither a tortoise
Nor a crocodile
Who is this veer?
(Ans. The twenty seventh letter of Bengali alphabet)

iii) Tin akhyare nam jar
Jale bash Kare
Madhyer akhar Kete dile
Sunye ural pare.
(His name is composed with three letters
and lives in water,
After deletion the middle letter
He fly in the air)
(Ans. A ‘Sital’ fish)

iv) Tin akhyre nam amar
Loke bale sura
Tin akhyre dake more
Amar bhaktera
Lej kata gete ami
Brikhya haiya rai
Matha Kata gele bairagider
Ahar jogai
(My name is composed with three letters
People called me as ‘Sura’.
My devotees (bhaktas) called me
By the three letters.
After cutting the tail
It becomes a tree
After cutting the head
It supplies the foods of the ‘bairagis’)
(Ans. The word Bottle)
v) Sastre ache, lokachare nai
Jyasthya bhaiyer putra hailo
Garbha sutra bhai
(It is in the scripture, but not in the custom
The son of elder brother
Born in the same mother’s womb)

(Ans. Yudhisthir and Karna)

vi) Dui gache chipa dia
Kali jai phurut dia
(Through the narrow passage of two trees
Kali goes quietly)

(Ans. A saw)

viii) Mamar barit gelam
Kher bichaye roilam.
(I went to my maternal uncle’s house (and)
stay there, covering my body with thatch)

(Ans. A cucumis melon)

ix) Sajya paira jaigo kanya
Beer purusher kache
Hate dhaira tipa-tipi
Bhitare dibar ashe
(Dite parle tumaro bhalo, amaro bhalo)
(Being well dressed and all the lady goes to her hero
The hero also squeezes her hand to penetrate)

(Ans. The act of wearing bangle by the seller)

x) Mamar bari gelam
Lash-Kari darailam
(I went to my maternal uncle’s house
(and) stay there hanging)

(Ans. A cucumber)
Besides these above mentioned conundrum type riddles, there are some enigmas type riddles also. Some of these are,

(1) A veiled lady came to a ferry with her baby on her lapse and asked the ferryman to take her to the opposite side of the river. Then the ferryman asked the unfamiliar lady to give her introduction. But, as par the tradition of Bengali society she is restricted to pronounce the name of her husband. Therefore she immediately framed a chillok,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tin tero dia baro} \\
\text{Nai dia purankaro} \\
\text{Tar pare bolo ram} \\
\text{Amar swamir ei nam} \\
\text{Par kaira dao barit jam.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Three times thirteen, put twelve and fill up with nine,
Then say 'Ram.' This is the name of my husband (now)
let me go to my house) 

(Ans. Sathiram)

(2) Rowing the boat, a ferryman left a lady on the opposite side of the river. But looking at her physic he became surprised. In the meantime her husband arrived there and asked the ferryman,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kire bhai ana-gona?} \\
\text{Dui paye haithy gelo tin jana.}
\end{align*}
\]

(What are you thinking my friend? Three person has gone on two feet)

(Ans. A pregnant lady goes with a baby on her lapse.)

(3) A bagger came to the courtyard of a rich family and asked for some alms. Then a newly married woman came out from the house and told the bagger,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Natunete lari-chari} \\
\text{Puranete Khai} \\
\text{Bikhya dibar adhikar} \\
\text{Amar nai.}
\end{align*}
\]
Then the bagger told her, ‘Path dekhaiya dao ami annya ghare jai’.

Then again the woman told him,

Annya bari jaibar path ektai
Seta dia ami Ambal Khai.

The meaning of the first chillok is, the young lady is a newly married daughter-in-law in this family. As a family tradition she has right to do all domestic work but the main authority of this family is the old one, that is, her mother in law.

The answer of the second chillok is the tamarind tree. By the fruits of this tree, they prepare a kind of sour dishes, which is called Ambal.

3.10 Charms

A charm is an assemblage or oral formulas, which are traditional in nature and used, requesting help of a particular god or gods, supernatural beings or human beings, possessed with some supernatural power to attain some ends.

Almost all sections of people widely believe in the practice of charms and spells. Charms are used in various purposes. Sometimes village medicine-men called oja or bez are called in to cure illness through charms. Charms are also used to remove the snake venom and spirit possession, which are called bhute dhara, pichase dhara etc. Sometimes charms are recited to avert evil eyes, to be witching a man or woman to the opposite sex and also to cure some killing diseases like cancer.

Even today most of the people of the study area believe that, some serious diseases, sudden death etc. are caused by ghosts or bhuts. To establish the faith and confidence on oja and to prove the act of spirit and the power of charms the oja asks some questions to the bhut or spirit. Such as, who is he? Why he enters into the body of victim? Whether he will leave the body of the victim or not? etc. The spirit also answers his questions by the mouth of the victim. Then the oja asks to leave the body of the victim and orders him to
exhibit indicates of his departure by making some sound like, sound of breaking something, sound of wind etc. Surprisingly, sometimes even really by breaking a branch of tree or making a sound the spirit leaves the body of the victim. In some other cases the oja gives the victim some incanted water, mustard oil etc. to smear, to massage or to eat or drink. Some charms collected from the oja of the study area are given below:

3.10.1 Charms to avert the spirit

*Suta Katen bane Ram kunrete bashiya*

*Hena kale kayek bhut ashila shutiya.*

*Lakhman bale bar-char ore bhut kal*

*Maribo ban tore samal.*

*Bhut gochra har gor bhenge karlam chur*

*Palare bhu tui na haise aro sthir.*

*Apan gunete tui kata haish bara*

*Jwatiti kariya tui amuk skhandha.*

*Kar agyen –*

*Shri Ram Chandrer agyen.*

*Kar agyen –*

*Shri Lakhmaner agyen*

*Sighra ja – Sighra ja*

The charm is recited for ten times continuously and each time before and after reciting the charm the oja blows air with his mouth on the body of the victim and mutters the name of the victim.

*Ek mutha saricha baro mutha rai*

*Chalre sarich tui kanuarete jai*

*Kanurer gat sei saricha parila*

*Narasisinghanather hate jwalite lagila*
Jajanerbhut-pret sethai na rai
Ag barhi pretgon durete palai
Sei saricha laiye guru Ram Chandra dila
Anandita haiya Ram jharite lagila.
Ja (amuker) anga hote prêt sighra kari ja
Natuba Ram Chandra tore dibaje re gha.
Kar agye –
Shri Ram Chandrar agye.
Kar agye –
Mantra guru Narashingha nather agye.

After reciting the charm the mustard seeds are sprinkled on the body of
the victim. This charm is used to avert the evil spirit.

iii Udagiri parbate maira kare ra
Solla sa singer atharo dhwani
Paneor sata kugyan kete
Bish tui gha mukhe ja
Singer kete gha mukhe ja
Kar agye –
Ma Manasar agye.

This charm is used to remove the venom of the snake. It is recited for
ten times continuously and the ojha rubs the body of the victim gently with
his hand from head to feet.

3.11 Folk Songs

Folk songs are the emotional outlet of long term experience of the
unlettered folk. It comprises the poetry and music of groups. The literatures of
these groups are not preserved forever by printing or writing media, it is
preserved by the oral traditions. Folk songs are based on land, air and water of
the village life. Thus the composition and the melody gives it an unique form
of amusement. Folk songs are the echoes of the hopes and aspirations of the village people. It expresses the pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, which may call the verses of their heart. These are established in the society not by the excessiveness of knowledge or intelligence but by the enlivening touch of the heart of the folk.

In the preliterate societies, music is used as an unambiguous signal for expressing human thoughts than as a finer symbol. Being present in all the human societies from very ancient times, music has unfolded in diverse forms. But it has a special role to play in the primitive society. In earlier stages of our society when language was not much more developed man relied more on his vocal tunes for his communication with the supernatural powers when he had to supplicate for food and drink, for a cure of illness, for protection against the enemies and for so many other daily necessities and for his personal pleasure and relief, music had much greater use in daily life of a man in primitive societies.

The term folk music was originated in the 19th century. Folk music is an English term encompassing both traditional folk music and contemporary music. Traditional folk music has been defined in several ways: as music transmitted by mouth, as music of the lower classes, and as music with unknown composers. It has been constructed with commercial and classical styles (wikipedia).

In the traditional type of folk music of the Bengali community in Chamaria and Nagarbera Mouza it is seen that the topic related to daily life range from birth to death. Songs occupies quite an important position in their lives. They have different sets of songs for different gods, festivals, and ceremonies. Some such songs are presented below.

3.11.1 Marriage Songs

Marriage is an important social occasion in human life. Besides the rituals of marriage the women folk of the Bengali community sung various
meaningful songs in different sequences of marriage ceremony. These songs are pertaining to different feminine rites performed during the marriage ceremony and are sung by the women folk every day until the whole ceremony is over. In most of the marriage songs the composer has used the names of the puranic characters instead of those of the people belonging to the world of reality. These songs are of different types. Such as:

(a) Descriptive songs which include the description about the birth of different things related to marriage, songs pertaining to the ceremony of welcoming the couple, different things used in marriage, song pertaining to vedic, feminine and general rites etc.

(b) Songs expressing deep feeling and emotions.

(c) Songs containing humorous any jokes about bride and bridegroom and their relatives.

(d) Songs pertaining to different light works related to marriage etc.

A few of these songs are presented below:

i Joraner git
(Songs of the fixation of the marriage day)

Oi Jagatai sagar dekhi
Nana ranger ure pakhi
Ure pakhi madhu khaibar lobhe
Giachilam uttar deshe
Dekhya ailam sundarire
Tabu babai na karalo biya
Hati besum, ghora besum
Tabu karum sundarire biya
Ki pan khuaila bali
Paner maje long — supari
Tor pane karlo desantari.
(Meaning:- The birds of different colours flyes above the see to collect honey. I went to the northern countries and had seen a beautiful girl, but my father did not allow me to marry her. Selling the elephant and horses I am ready to get her marry. What a magic you have done to me by giving pan, supari and longa to me by which I have banished)

ii Adhibasher git

Jamite janmilo guwa
Samunder niche
Shree Hari Hanumana anlo guwa
Lengurero piche
Rame lagaila guwa gash
Lakshman kure gati
Sita Devi lagaila guwa
Dhare rata – rati.
Jakhanei guwa gashe
Mela dilo Khum
Trish Kouti deva garhe
Paira dilo ghum.
Jakhanaei guwa gashe
Meila dilo pata
Trish kouti deva gane
Haisha dilo bera
Jakhanaei guwa gashe
Meila dilo bada
Trish kouti deva gane
Jurlo biyar khata

(Meaning:- It is a folk song of Hindu mythology about Ram, Lakhman, Sita and Hanuman about the planting of a betel nut tree near by see. When the
betel-nut become matured thirty crore of Hindu god and goddess discussed about the marriage of Ram and Sita)

iii Jal Sayoyah Git
(Songs of bringing water from river, to both the bride and groom)

Subal dekhre Subal
Kar ramani jale jai
Runu-jhunu sabda suna jai
Ulta peche bandhya chul
Khopa sajai nanan ranger phul
Madhur lobhe bharamar ure jai
Subal dekhre Subal
Kar ramani jale jai
Charo dike jwale jai
Sonar nupur dia ranga pai
Runu-jhunu sabda suna jai
Charo dike jwale jai
Nilambari pairan gai
Nilambari batashe urai
Subal dekhre Subal
Kar ramani jale jai.

(Meaning:- This is a folk song of a beautiful lady who goes to the river by wearing a blue sari, golden nupur in her red legs and with a beautiful hair knob in her head. The anchal of her sari flyes in the air and the humming less goes along with her)

iv Silaner git
(Songs for bathing the bride)

Babar desher ayogo
Maya nai sarirego
Kata jal dhalen tumra mathaigo

Babar desher ayogo
Maya nai sarirego
Kata jal dhalen tumra gayego

... (Meaning:- The meaning of the above songs are that, oh unkind womenfolk of my native village, how much water you pour on my body without any marchy!)

v Teasing songs during Bath

Nadir kule gamcha chere
Bara chilan kare
Soto Kaler housher gamcha
Ke Karilo chori
Koner mamire
Bara naughty
Gamcha Karilo chori
Tel dibar paisa dimure
Gamcha deha chari.

Nadir kule gamcha chere
Bara chilan kare
Soto kaler housher gamcha
Ke karilo chori
Koner pishire
*Bara batali*
*Ganji karilo chori*
*Golla khabar paisa dimure*
*Ganji deha chari.*

(Meaning:- The bridegroom takes both in the river leaving his gamocha on the river bank. By that time his mother, unti and some other relatives takes away the gamocha without his knowledge. The bridegroom requests his relatives to get back his gamocha by promising that he will give sweets and hair oil to them)

**vi Baraner git**
(Songs of receiving bridegroom at the gate)

*Dekha Shyam jaladhar aiteche*
*Rupete bhuban alo kariteche*
*Dekha Shymer mathar mohan chura*
*Chura bame hile pareche.*
*Rupete bhuban alo Kariteche.*
*Dekha Shymer hater mohan banshi*
*Radha Radha boliteche*
*Rupete bhuban alo kariteche*
*Dekha shyam jaladhar aiteche.*

(Meaning:- The Lord Krishna has arrived at the gate of the bride with a crown on his head and a flute in his hand. The entire world is enhanced by his charms)

**vii Kane Bidayer git**
(Songs during farewell of the bride)

*Jai maina uriya jai*
*Dak diya koiya jai*
Babago tomar pinjara khali
Baccha hote puchilo maina
Dudha bhata diyare
Jabar bela gelire maina
Buke shel diyare
Jai maina uriya jaire.

(Meaning:- The maina flies away saying to her father that his cage will remain vacant from today, and the father sorrowfully said that, from childhood onwards you have brought up on milk and rice but today you have left me leaving an arrow in my heart)

viii Neota Khawa git
(Songs during the feast in the house of the bride)

Oh Shyam,
Sasur deshe gelen Shyamre
Oh Shyam, Ki Ki paichen danere
Thali paichi, lota paichi
Sali paichi danere.

Oh Shyam,
Bideshi gelen Shymre
Oh Shyam, ki ki paichen danere
Sona paichi, rupa paichi
Sashu paichi danere.

(Meaning:- Oh Shyan, what are the gifts you have got in your in-laws house. The bridegroom answered that, he has got thali, lota, silver, gold, sister-in-law and mother-in-law from his in-laws house)
3.11.2 Holi Songs

Holi festival is celebrated in the month of Phalgun. It is a festival of colour. On the day of full moon, people of all over India celebrate this festival with joy. The joyfulness of the festival is echoed in songs like the following:

i  
Aji ki ananda
Pran gobinda dulche dolai
Sab sakhi mile kutuhale
Abir diche ranga pai
Brindabane sabai lal
Rai anga Karechi lal
Lale lale michi geche
Sakhira sab lal urai
Pran gobinda dulche dolai.

(Meaning:- Lord Krishna playing holi in Brindaban with the gopinis with pleasure and gaiety. All the gopinis smears red holi powder the foot of the Lord Krishna and blended with the red colours of holi powder with joy and pleasure)

ii  
Basanter basanti kushum
Kanane phul phuilache
Katai sobha haiyeche
A samaye pran bandhab
Kothai je rayeche

Pay or:  
Ali ure jake jake
Kokilai tamale dake
Suni kuhu dhwani birahini
Dwigun agun jwalaiche

(Meaning:- The flowers are blooming in the garden during spring season with colours and beauty. In such a moment the gopinis are searching their sweet
heart Lord Krishna in Brindaban. The hearts of the gopinees are burning whenever they hear the songs of birds and black-bees without Lord Krishna.

The Bengali community of Chamaria and Nagarbera Mouza perform different pujas round the year and most of the pujas are associated with festivals. One of the most important festivals of the Bengali community is the Charak puja. Three different types of songs are associated with this puja. These are, Chabki git, Kabita, and Baida-Baidani git. Baida-Baidani songs are of satirical nature.

3.11.3 Songs of Charak Puja

a. Chabki git

i  
Chande chande duli anande
   Ami ban phulgo
   Basantikar kanthe ami
   Malika dul dulgo

Chande:   Baner pari amar sane
          Khate ashe ratra-dine
          Phul phulano gangs aye jai
          Malika dul dulgo
          Ami ban phulgo

Pad:     Pratyek bhranar sudhao more
          Sonar maye namti more
          Bhorer balai Chandani rate
          Basar jagi Chander sathe
          Dul sishu dulgo
          Ami ban phulgo.

(Meaning:- It is an expression of the beauty of the spring season and a women who is like a wild flower in the garden)

ii  
Prem janena jijan
   Tare Kena diba man
(Meaning:- One who do not understand what is love, why should you give him heart? Oh my love, you are like a black-bee and sucking honey from each flower of the garden. Will you come back to me?)

b. Kabita

Brindabane rash lila
Karesen sai rashamai
Jamunar ghate giya
Haila udai
Annya gopigane par karitai
Naba karnadhar bai

Payer: Sangini rangini brined
Deke bale aigo rai
Jamuna ghate
Doi loiya jai
Oi je besa-kinar samay gelo
Deri kari karya nai

- 54 -
Payer:

Sakhiganer katha sune
Kishori barhila bal
Dadhir pachar mathe niya
Bale sakhi chal.
Amra bhal kimba manda pari
Pabi tahar pratiphal.

Pad:

Bhanga khani tari laiye
Jamunate khala bai
Sakhigane dak pare
Phire nahi chai
Bare rashiker shiromani
Dhire dhire baitha bai.

Payer:

Bahite bahite tari
Kinarete lagilo
Kate diba parer kari
Jai amai balo
Bhanga naiya sheya baiye
Jal sisili prangelo.

Pad:

Besha- kina kari jaite
Diba sei pare kari
Mazi bale mukher kathai
Biswahe na kari
Amar kuirai madhye
Baisa thako je bare sundari.

Prayer:

Radhe bale o - gobinda
A ki bar sarbanash
Kulabandhu paiya bare
Karla upahash.
Kari nitya natun besha- kina
Hate ami bara mash
Mazi bale twara kari
Basho aisha naukate
Thik haiya baisha thako
Doi ashe mathe
Eka ami hailer mazi
Dari, malla milena
Ujan jal baiya jaite
Jari chalena
Jumra keha dar tanite paro ki
Jai balona.

Pad :
Jamuna madhye giye
Bale he nagar kanai
Besha – kina haiye geche
Hater karma nai
Ekhan jugal haiya
Darao dekhi
Jugal Milan dekhte chai.

(Meaning:- It is an expression of rash-lila in Brindaban. In this song the love of Lord Krishna and Radha is described. Here Lord Krishna and Radha is regarded as common man and woman. Radha a milk maid, requests Krishna (who is a boat man) to take her in his boat to go to another side of the river. But Krishna opposed to take her in his broken boat. At last Radha and Krishna unvalid their real form)

ii Brindabane gacher gura
Nadiyai diache bera
Sai nabin chander gura
Pahra dai dujanai
Dui ranger ek phul phuteche
Ek sonar nadiyai
Nadiyai prem sarobare
Ki sundar dui hansha phire
Tare dekhle munir man hare.

(Meaning:- In this song the beauty and charm of Radha and Krishna is explained. Here they are compared with a pair of white goose)

3.11.4 Songs of Manasa Puja

The songs of Manasa puja deals with the myth connected with the snake goddess and her encounters with the merchant chando. The songs sung in this puja are as follows:

Baraner git

i. Guchao keore duwar
   Padma aiche ghare
   Ashiya bashilo padma
   Khataner bagale
   Padma ailore jagat janani
   Nanan beshi khai puja
   Padma binashini.

(Meaning:- Padma, the mother of the world has come to the earth to take puja offered by her devotees. Therefore open the door and let her come to destroy the misfortune of the human being)

ii. (Song of floting away the body of Lakhindare on banana raft)
   Bheshe deo ma bheshe deo
   Bheshe deo ma more
   Ami jalo uttam gangar jale
   Mrita swami laiye
   Bheshe deo ma bheshe deo
Purler katha naire mane
Kal ratrire dance more.

(Meaning:- Float away me in the river and let me go to the superior Ganga with my dead husband. I have forgotten all about my past. I am bitter by deadly night)

iii) (Behula with Lakhindar on float)

behula jaire naye naye
Lache phelai pao
Amar ghate chapa nouka
Sendur bariya neo
Ki karilo tumar sendur
Kal raiter ari.
Behula jaire naye naye
Lache phelai pao
Amar ghate chapa nouka
Sakha bariya neo
Ki karilo tumar Sakha
Kal raiter ari.

(Meaning :- Behula goes on boat ... Behula moor your boat to my shore and take vermilion and bangles. Behula replies – What is the use of you vermilion and bangles to me. I am an unfortunate woman)

3.11.5 Songs of Gorakhya Nather Puja

The songs of Gorakhya Nather Puja has three part. They are Bandana, Nachari and Rana respectively.

i  Bandana

Utter bandana kari Himalay parbat
Tahar madhye bashati kare burha Maheswar
Dakhyne banana kari kali Dash sagar
Tahar madhye basati kare chando sadagar
Charile lohar guli Chay mash nahai tal
pule bandana kari pule Bhanuswar
Pk. dige uday Bhanu Choudish Prashar
Pachime bandana kari Thakur Joganath
Toha Charane kari Pancha pranipat.
Hariye randhe bhat Brahman bashe khai
Tabuto Brahman jatir jati nahi jai
Mata garu, pita guru charan karilam bandan
Sadai jena gurur pade thake hena man.
Tar pare bandana kari kaler dugdha gai
Mata guru pita guru guru jyastha bhai
Hate bari diya jinni dain-baon sikhai
Suna, suna suna bhaire suna dia man
Gorakhya nather deva katha karechi arambhan .......

(Meaning:- In this prayer song Lord Siva, Himalaya, Sandosadagar,
Bhanuswar, Jagannath Thakur, father, mother, guru etc. are worshipped along
with the four direction of North, South, East and West)

ii. Nachari

Garu loye elo godhan dhenu charibar
Hater bari bare- chare jugjugantar- Hecho
Thum thumaya elo phakir jigir parlo bari
Ram kanur mai bale Nanda ghosher ji
Barite phakir aiche biday dilen ki.
Subarna patrer madhye pasti paisa niya
Pas pirer sanmukhete adhai holo jaiya
Paisa nenibo mora kari nahi nibo
Doi-dudh khaoiya deo dowa kari jalo-Hecho
Subudhi goyalir mayer kubuddhi phatilo
Sikar upar doi thoīya manic biday dilo.
Thak thak goyalir meye phire ja tor ghar
Ghar bichar karbo bathaner upar, - Hecho
Ghare mallo goyalini, bathane mallo gai
Kamala bachuri mallo lekha-jokha nai
Hai hai balia kanu hater phalai nari
Goyal ghare pare railo choidhya boja dari.
Hai kariya kanu mathai dilo hat
Kisher karane amar ei sarbanash-Hecho.
Age Jodi jantam ami tume manic peer
Age ditam doi-dughna piche ditam dhee r.
Kandite kandite kanu gelo pierer kache
Pieerer name dibo hazar Jodi dhenu bache.
Thum thumaiya ailo phakir marilo narir kari
Sat dinkar maro dhenu haithy ailo bari
Gai bandhio thai thai, bachur bandhio thai
Ratri kale mao-chawa dekha dekhi nai-Hecho
Gai duao gugal bhai, gamcha mathai dia
Kata mone dudh hai laiyore jukhiya- Hecho
Aga payer same bachuri bandhio
Pacha payer sane chandari lagaiyo
Ek dhar dugdha age basumatike dio
Tin dhar dugdha piche dukya laio-Hecho
Ek dhar dugdha Jodi nari-nama hai
Mar- dhar khaiya dhabali panjar bhangbar chai
Sani-Mangalbare jadi gobar nabila y
Sei barir pradhan gabhi bachare biyai -Hecho
Gobar phelaite Jodi kare ghin-ghin
Tahar barir dhenu-bachur bache aria din
Charge chilo devagan diya nimantran
Baisakh machete puja karche arambhan-Hecho
Baro bachariya nari tera naiche puje
Ek man, ek chitte gorakhya puja kare
Ghare jilo goyalini, batham jilo gai
Kamala bachuri jilo lekha-jokha nai-Hecho
Achilen Gorakhya nath bachilen khate
Gorakhyanather Prasad khani hate hate bate.

(Meaning:- The purpose of this prayer song is to express the greatness of god Gorakhya nath. The theme of this song is that, one day a pious man came to the house of a family for bagging. The housewife gave him five gold coins. But, instead of gold coin the pious man asked for milk and curd. Then the housewife refused to give him milk and curd and send him away with the gold coins. Due to this reason the entire cow population of the family was eliminated one after another in different disease within a few days. Knowing the reason, the family sent for the piousman and requests him to get rid of such incident. The piousman ask them to worship god Gorakhyanath describing his different forms and character along with different procedures to worship him. After doing this accordingly their entire cow population became alive again)

iii. Rana

Phuler kana phuler kuri
Gai kinto kobileswari
Dudh hai ki hari hari
Mama duwale bhanglo hari
Bhagin duwale bharlo hari
Bal rakhalra, siv-siv bal......
Siv-siv bal Shakal –saje
Kana –kuri jhumur baje
Bajok jhumur bajok tal
Ag duware phurche hal
Hal dekhiya dilam nur
Omni gelam Chilampur
Chilampur na Paikpara
Ghora ache atharo jora
Gharai ghorai taira nei
Chal goto nui maigya nei
Bal rakhalra siv-siv bal......
Sat-panch rakhale tuila mati
Seikhane bashilam kumar hati
Ore ore kumar bhai
Amar Gorakhyer dona jogao
Dhupti jogao, bali jogao.
Jomar Gorakya kemne chini?
Hate nari, mithai tir
Jei chiniba Gorakhya beer
Sat-panch rakhale tuila mati
Saikhane bashailam mudi hati
Ore ore mudi bhai
Amar Gorekhya tel jogao,
Gur jogao, chal jogao
Jomar Gorakhya kemne chini?
Hate nari mothai tir
Jai chinila Gorakhyya beer.
Sat- Panch Hakhale tuila mati
Seikhane bashailam bainahati
Ore ore baina bhai
Amar Gorakhyer mela jogao
Sendur jogao.
Jomar Gorakhya kemne chini?
Hate narim mathai tir
Jai chinila Gorakhya beer,
Bal rajhalra siv-siv bal....
Gire bale man diya more katha soon
Pratham baishakhe pat boon
Pate jakhan dharilo genje
Hailai halo bej
Pate jakhan dharilo mati
Gorakhyanathe dharilo chati
Pate jakhan bao khelai
Kalo kumara dao garhai
Ag phelaia, gora phelalia
Jar majkhan jale phelalia
Jale phataite halo kuya
Jar pare laila dhuiya
Bhadra maisha rodtai
Dia dila pat rode
Uttar thaikya aila ghora
Jaito banlam pater mura
Pate bale mai bara beer
Hathi bandhum hati sthir
Pate bale mai bara beer
Garu bandhum garu sthir.
Pate bate mai bara beer
Moish bandhum moish stir
Bal rakhalra siv-siv bal.....
Gorakhyer rakhal bazrer pata
Bhangiya ailo khuira kanta
Gorakhyer rakhal bazrer pata
Jata ache jangla kanta
Bal rakhalra siv-siv bal....
Kumar bari gelam, chui garhailam
Jai dia khashailam jangla kanta
Bal rakhalra siv-siv bal....
Ei bari khan adham nath
Gorui karilo purbaghat
Ei barikhan adham nath
Gorui karilo Pachimghat
Ei barikhan adhamnath
Gorui karilo uttar ghat
Ei barikhan adhamnath
Gorui karilo dakthinghat.
Dham kati kati paria nara
Ei barir apad balai jaik pub para
Dhan kati kati paria nara
Ei barir apad balai jaik pachim para
Dhan kati kati paria nara
Ei barir apad balai jaik uttar para
Dhan kati kati paria nara
Ei barir apad balaijaik dakshin para
Pub chowke baga ure
Charok baga charok pani
Daitya baga giro pani
Pachim chowke baga ure
Charok baga charok pani
Daitya baga kamar pani
Uttar chowke baga ure
Charok baga charok pani
Daitya baga ek bool pani
Dakshin chowke baga ure
Charok baga charok pani
Daitya baga ek matha pani
Daitya bagar laitya thoot
Pani khai chuper chup
Charok baga charok pani
Aj Gorakhyer laru bilani.

(Meaning:- In this prayer song it is described how to offer incense stick, resin, oil, vermillion, jaggery, garland etc. to worship Gorakhyanath. Moreover, the forms of God Gorakhyanath are also described here. Not only that, but the time and the process of cultivation of jute is also explained by the rakhals. In the last part of the prayer the joy of taking prasad of Gorakhyanath by the rakhals is also expressed)

3.11.6 Songs of Trinath Puja

The songs of Trinath Puja has two parts first part is called Agamani gan and the second part is called puja gan.

i. Agaman gan.

Trinath asho achare
Ei tomar gan tomarei tal
Tomar lila khela
Trinath ash achare
Tomar santane dake
Ei nidan pare.....

(Meaning:- In this song the devotees of Trinath requests him to come at the time of their distress)
ii. Puja gan

Payer: Tin paisate hai jar mela
Katite Trinather mela
Ek paisar pan-chupari
Tate nai ar Machala
Banaya paner khili
Sadhu mili khai
Aa bajai ek tala.
Kalite Trinath mela.

Payer: kalite Trinath mela
Ek paisar ganja aniya
Tin kalkile deo sajiye
Ganjai marche dom
Balche bom
Sadai bale bom bhola

Payer: kalite Trinath mela
Ek paisar taila aniye
Tin cahlta deo jwaliye
Jaila thakite uthiya gele
Abar dite hai mela.

(Meaning:- To worship Trinath only three paisa is necessary. One paisa for pan – supari, one paisa for Ganja and one paisa for oil.)

3.11.7 Lullaby:

Lullaby is a kind of song to quiet infants locally it is known as chele bhulano git. The women folk of this community sing such type of songs to invite sleep and soothe their baby.

For example:

Ai bristi chepe ai
Dhan dibo mepe
(Meaning:- Rain, come. I will give you rice. Our little girl is very vexatious. She wants to plant in dry earth. What I will give you? We have no money and we are unfortunate. Therefore the weather becomes burning and sunny)

3.11.8 Songs of Jest and Humour

The Bengali community of the study area have a special class of songs called Baida- Baidani git, which are sung by groups of grown up men while enjoying themselves in Charak puja festival. Obscenity, banter and social run through these songs. Some of them are presented below:

i  
_Babu janai selam_
_Bari amar Lakhyanpru_
_Sunil baida nam_
_Nagarbera thana_
_Thana Boko dham_
_Amar parichay janailam babu_
_Janailam selam_
_Bari amar Lakhyan pur_
_Sunil baida nam._

(Meaning:- Babu Salam, I am Sunil baida of Lakhyanpur village. Thana - Nagarbera, Boko dham)

ii  
_Jodi baida nite sao amare_
_Baida amare rakhite hale_
Tiner cho-chala ghare
Ami saner ghare subonare baida
Megh aile pani pare
Rakhite haile laida
Tiner cho-chala ghare
Ami patta bichanai subonare baida
Godi bichana dite hale....

(Meaning:- If you want to take me to your house you will have to build a four roofed rain proof tin house for me. I shall not be able to sleep in a light bed in your thatched house. So, you will have to prepare a soft bed for me.)

iii Karta selam bare bar
Namti amar Rasik baida
Bari Padmar par
Ostader nam Jogendra baida
Bari Hauli Gram
Karta silam bare bare
Namti amar Rasik baida
Bari Padmar par
Ami kari chatir kam
Amar Rasik baida nam
Saper mthati beng,nachaya
Mani beisa khai
Amar bhalna chinta nai.

(Meaning:- My name is Rashik baida. I live near by Padma River. I am a juggler. The name of my master (osted) is Jogendra baida. He lives in of Hauli village)

i Soon chacha momin bhai
Baidani amar Kamaleswari gai
Okey chowkey niya jai
Kata kamali ghash khicwai
Dugdha ami panch ser panai
Khaya-loiya bechigo haile
Loker kasha roj lagai
Baidani amar kamaleswar gai.

(Meaning: Our baidani is a milch cow. I give her plenty of green grass and she gives five liters of milk in a day. After consuming her milk I sale the rest of milk in the market)

ii Baida amar aphing khur
Dudh na paile baidar
Sukhaiya jai much
Chenga diya bhangbo moor
Basaibo gharete
Kerkeraiya baida
Khyepaishna more
Koler chele durego phele
Baida khai baidanir dudh
Dudh no paile baidar
Sukhiya jai mooch.

(Meaning: Our baida is addicted to Ganja. He cannot live without milk. Keeping aside his baby he snecks the milk of baidani.)

vii Didi chinloni amare
Ailam didi anek din pare
Didi Guwahati geshilam
Kata jinish anilam
Togo nayare ailam
Kata har biranger golapi chabun didi
Sarire bashna kare
Anlam Gujrati Kata baju har
Kaner gajamati har
Kata harbiranger reshmi churi didi
Hate dile sobha kare
Didi dela ekta pan
Amar asthir kare pran
Ami khuila lai dukan
Duita sokhyer, mukher hanshi didi
Tora laigya paran kande
Didi chinloni amre

(Meaning:- Sister, can’t you recognize me? I am coming, from Guwhati after a long long time. I have brought pink soap, Gujrati hair pin, bangle, gagmati neckless, earning, colourful silk sari and many other things for you. You have offered me a pan and I have open up my shop. Sister, you could not recognize me but my heart thrill for you)

viii  Amar bhabna kire are
     Amar baidani chalai rail gari
     Ami tikit mastar
     Amar bhabna kire are
     Jale chalai uru jahaj
     Suknai estimar
     Amar baidanir sane
     Yatra kari chollam Malibari sthane
     Abaseche bese ailam
     Mader dukane

(Meaning:- I have no tension. Our baidani drives train and I am a tiket master. We drive plane in water and steamer in the air. I went to Malibari with my baidani and at last I sale her in a wineshop)

ix  Ote thak thak baida
    Baran thak
Chanda fish as a helpless one, chital fish as having a thick waist fish, bami fish as a magistrate etc.

3.11.9 Miscellaneous Songs

Although the majority of the people of the study area are living with struggle, still there are some genuine singers among them who are embracing the traditional songs in original forms. In true sense these sons are the life blood of the village people. Almost all the villages it is a common scenario that, forgetting all the struggle of their day to day life often they gather in some convenient place (generally in some bodies house) to enjoy their leisure time by singing these traditional songs with traditional songs with traditional instruments. Among these songs Palli git, Lalan git, Bissedy git etc. are very popular. Some of these songs collected by the author are given below:

3.11.10 Palli git

Palli git is very popular among the Bengali folk. The composers of these songs are unknown but they are transmitting from one generation to another through month. For example –

Pinjarar pakhir matan
Tare ami uirah jaya dekhi
Kothaigo amar pran pakhi
Chikal katiya giache uirah
Giache kon ajan deshe
Amare bhuliya kar preme majiya
Amare banaila chira doshi.
Jodigo paitam, hridaye basaitam
Sunitam madhur buli.

(Meaning:- She is just like a bird in a cage. But, I have seen her flying away. Where is my sweetheart who is just like a bird? Breaking the chain she has gone to a distant place. Forgetting me she has fallen in love with some other.
If I meet her once again, I will establish her in my heart and make sweet conversation with her)

3.11.11 Lalan git

It is said that, the Lalan gits were composed by Lalan Shah or Lalan Phakir. There is a controversy about the year of his birth, place of birth and even about his birth, place of birth and even about his religion. According to some scholars he was born in 1772 in Kusthiya District and belongs to a Mohammedan family. Another group of scholars says that, he was born in 1774 in Jashor District and belongs to a Hindu Kayasthya family. Whatever it may be, he had enriched the Bengali folk culture through his sons which are known as Sadhan Sangit also. These un-written songs are still prevalent among the old generation of Chamaria. These songs are based on philosophical content. Such as:

\[
\begin{align*}
Jabe jedin smashan ghate \\
Baser jhulai chari \\
Hatir matan palown kata \\
Raibe sedin pari \\
Sange dib eek musta til \\
Gota chayek kari \\
Do sokhye tulsi pata \\
Sange matir hari \\
Dekhechilo pita \\
Smashan ghate sei cheleti \\
Jhabbere to slta. \\
Paramer dami kapor \\
Raibe jedin smashan ghate \\
Baser jedin smashan ghate \\
Baser jhulai chari. \\
Parake apon bhebere man
\end{align*}
\]
Bandhbe sukher ghar
Dayalje tor param apon
Arto sabai par.
Antim kale Hari bole
Dakbe Kale Hari bole
Jabe jedin Smashan ghate
Baser jhulai chare.

(Meaning:- On that day when the body will take to the grave yard to burn in a pyre, the body of an elephant like hero will also become meaningless. At that time of funeral people will give only a handful of til, six karis, earthen jars with him. They will cover the eyes with basil leaf. The first son will put fire on his face. All his valuable clothes, will be useless. Therefore people should remember the master of the universe. Because he is the only companion of man in this world)

Khashar bhitare achin pakhi
Kamne ashe jai
Tare dharite parle mon
Beri ditam pakhir pai
Ath kuthari nai darja
Madhye madhye jharna kata
Taropare sadar kotha
Aina mohar prai.
Mon tui raite khashar ashe
Kashaje tor kancha baser
Ek din khasha parbe khashe
Lalan phakir kende gai.
(Meaning:- Here, the life is compared to a bird in the cage and body is compared to a house with eight chambers and nine doors. The house is made of bamboo and one day it will fall off.)

3.11.12 Bissedy git

Bissedy git is a kind of song through which the pangs of separation from a beloved person like husband and wife or lover is expressed. The main characteristic of this song is – the sorrow of Radha and Krishna is taken as a symbol of love of common people, and the melody of the song is pathetic. For example –

i) Balgo nagari gour rupe jai balihari
   Ami eka bhulinaigo
   Rupe bhulaiche purush-nari
   Ki dibo ruper tulana
   A jagate nai tulanago
   Ami eka bhulinaigo
   Rupe bhulaiche purush-nari.
   Gaur kijani mohini jane
   Man-pran sahite tane
   Bolo ekhan ki kari
   Gaur rupe jai balihari.

(Meaning:- The meaning of this song is that, the beauty and charm of Lord Krishna is indescribable and uncomparable. He has the power of stupefying. Seeing the beauty and the charm of Krishna all the gopi and gopinies became stupefied.)

References:
12. Leach Maria and Fried Jeyme 1950 (Ed.): op-cit, p. 963.

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