Special usages of women

Women of Bengal have maintained a special set of nouns, noun phrases, verb phrases and expressions, which are used only by them and not by their menfolk. Due to the spread of culture and education, women's speech has become more generalised but in rural Bengal, they still have some special usages. Besides nouns, phrases and expressions women of Kandi sub-division enjoy quoting rhymes which are full of fun, sarcasm and sometime pathos. I have quoted the rhymes first and then the peculiar usages of Kandi womenfolk.

(1) gideri gider koriś ne
dilpo jole bheēe jabi
bhater pabi ne

Proud woman, do not be so proud, you will be washed away in shallow water and no husband will come your way.

(2) æto ṣuk tur kopaḷe
tobē kæno chērā coṭ bögoḷe

If fortune favours you so, why do you need to tread in rags?
The constant scrubbing of the metal pot has made it lose its luster; having been overfriendly with my neighbours, bad blood has swept in, resulting in constant bickering.

With neatly parted curly hair, he flirts with widows.

Your nose-ring swings as you walk, but it is made of bronze - you who flirt with young men.
(6) garî lubô dhuri lubô
tulbo maṭhe dhan
tai bule ki chere dubo
kurutâger nañ

I will take the cart, its accessories, take the rice crop but inspite of that will not leave my paramour.

(7) kota chûrî bhajše uñfi
dokkhin duïore
kota chûra išna kore
borgache core

A fair girl fries puffed rice on the southern portico, a fair boy signals from the top of a banyan tree.

(8) amar koto šader aekṭa biti
cul nai to culo jhûṭi

My only daughter, a precious child, has no hair, let alone a hair style.
I cut fish into pieces, sprinkling salt on the m;
which woman would strain herself for my husband. My
husband is wicked; slyly he goes to the prostitutes;
what fun does he get there? Only slippery dhal and
fried palav.'

Climbing the banyan tree, father of my son, see how
much of the night is left.

When serpents flaunt the flute, frogs jingle vessels
and insects make a home in my house, it is time to
leave for Gaya and Kashi.
(12) शोशुनि सङ्ख तुल्ते जेलाम
पा पेखुली पोरी जेलाम
भाशुर देखौली ता तुलाली ने
तूर भेयो बहत घाझो ना
कहैचक दुम कहैचक दुम
बिच्ना पेरे दे मारी घुम

I went to pick 'sosuni sak' and slipped and fell. My brother-in-law saw but did not pick me up. I will no longer eat in your brother's home. Make my bed and I'll go off to sleep.

(13) ओलो ओलो कौरी ने
ओलो की शुदू एसेचे
कोटो बजना बेजीचे
तो ओलो एसेचे

Don't keep saying 'olo', 'olo' (i.e. a form of address of one woman to another) to me, 'olo' did not come like any other person; when I came music greeted me at the door.

(14) अर की अमर शिडीन
अङ्क कहौली पण दुःधि
शिडीन जेलीचे बोिे
अटे कोकु खेिे

Those were bad days when I had to eat a piece of betel leaf for two days. Those days have passed eating esculent roots.
When there was no one, I was by; now that you have everyone, where am I?

When I was youthful, then there were plenty of boys; when I was ripe then there were many more; but now that spring has gone, my husband is all I have.

At early dawn, in a sleepy state, I had cursed him harshly; do please explain to him and persuade him to come tomorrow.
You shameless woman, don't have any shame? If I had any shame would I be so shameless?

When I was plump and good looking, I had armlets on my upper arms and pins for my hair.

The old man has fallen for a sixteen year old wench. It is not necessary to put tin over a tiled roof. If he wants to die let him drown; he is acting like a clown in his old age.
(21) aek šundor tumar baba
tar šundor tumi
thake theke jhôlok dichi
punîmer cãd ami

Father and son, one more beautiful than the other
(is. very ugly indeed); in the midst of darkness I
twinkle like the full moon.

(22) aek ghôra jol ūgur ūgur
lodite ćiatar
choṭo bou ëto dine
bhasur ke kolë go bhetar

One vessel full of water, swimming in the river; at
long last the youngest wife in the family (after being
a widow) has a married her brother-in-law (husband's
elder brother).

(23) thakurjai mašre kamai
mašo dubar eso
thakurjhike jëmon tæmon
amake bhala bešo

Thakurjai (husband's sister's husband) you have been
absent for a month. Treat Thakurjhi (husband's sister)
as you wish, but don't forget to love me.
(24) সোসুনি সাক বলে আমি চাজে কোঁ পাটা  
বোঝি তুলতে জেলে কোঁ দুখ্যের কথা  
কলমি সাক বলে আমি পুকুর জালে থাঙ্গা  
বোঝি তুলতে জেলে কোঁ করো না মানা  
সাজনি সাক বলে আমি ঝকল সাজে হৌলা  
ামাকে তোঁই কোঁ তানাংনির বানা  
হিঙ্গে সাক বলে আমি ঝকল সাজে আজা  
বাই পিঠি নেঃ কোর্বো মানুষ কোর্বো তাজা  

Sosuni sak says leaves I have four, when women come to pick me  
they relate tales of woe.

Kolmi sak says I embrace the pond, when women to pick me, do  
not forbid them.

Sajne sak says I am the least important of all.; I am sought  
when there is shortage of food.

Hingce sak says, I am king of all; I get rid of bile and  
increases a man's vitality.
Two sticks of 'sajne' plant, elder sister has gone to the next village; 'jamaidada' (sister's husband) has reddened his eyes by crying. At the time of eating he remembers and feels like keeping her under his tongue; when going to sleep he remembers and sits on his bed and cries.

My mother gets up at dawn; she sits at the side of the pond and while cleaning vessels gets covered with mud and water; my heart breaks when I see her thus.
At a very young age I started courting by the shade of the palm tree when the young man stopped me because of the cold. in the month of 'pos' (mid December to mid January).

One who comes back after working hard has to sit and wait, while the one who sits at home doing nothing has lots to eat.

On the leaves of the 'pakur' tree, there is a lot of love-making; the leaves of the banyan tree are high and mighty; yesterday you were newly in love, why are you so serious today?
(30) aler kole bogli dole  
    khae kuśumer phul  
    porer bhatar dekhle pāre  
    olie dilo cul  
    By the embankment cranes eat the pollen of flowers; the woman lets down her hair when she saw someone else’s husband.

(31) bārīr kache nomba dighi  
        khambā bō̄sabo  
        jar māthate ṭeri kaṭa cul  
        tari bhat khabo  
    By the side of the house of the house there is a large pond, and I shall put up an embankment; I shall eat the rice (ie. I shall marry) of that man who has neatly parted hair.

(32) am dhore thoga thoga  
        tētul dhore bē̄ka  
        kōkhono dekhini mago  
        arer hate tākha  
    Mangoes grow in bunches, tamarinds are twisted; never have I seen a widow wearing shell bangles (ie. a widow remarried).
(33) kulo dātī mulo kāṭī
geṇī jeli more
thak thak thak thaebra nēki
dhōrne rakhbe tore
You woman with big teeth and skinny have overtaken me;
you flat-nosed woman, you will be kept by God.

(34) ṣat giderer ghor
kaurī elo matha dhōra
kaurī elo jor
A house with seven mistresses; some have a headache, some
feel feverish (ie. no one is willing to work, everyone
expects the others to do the work).

(35) aek ghorā jol ūbun ūbun
didi gubeche
jamaidada ar kēdo na
didi uṭheche
One vessel full of water, elder sister has drowned;
'jamaidada' (sister's husband) do not cry any more,
'didi' has got up.
(36) 

kaṭrabhaṇāe ṣak lagalam

ষাক দোলমোল করে

ষাক বিচে শেষ্কা পৌরলম

ষোটিন জোলে মোরে

I sowed 'ṣak' at the site of my broken home, and it grew in abundance; I sold 'ṣak' and bought shell bangles to wear, seeing which, husband's other wife burns with jealously.

(37) 

je amar bhatarer ṣuk

ঝর্ণেন পোক মােফে অমার ভাতরে দুক

My husband is so fond of comfort (i.e. he is so lazy) that even in the months of 'aghran' and 'posh' (mid November to mid January, when harvesting takes place and therefore there is rice in plenty) I have nothing to eat.

(38) 

jhairte jemon cul Nachē
goila'm nager kache
gaj micki micki hāše
gaj ṭodai bhalobāše

I went to rub my hair on the road and met my paramour; my paramour smiles a little and loves me always.
(39) rampur haṭe kāler ḍhāki
inde bhanani
hat bulani paneśtori
mathae ciruni

In Rampurhat there is a thrashing machine; she goes there, beloved, lazy with a comb in her hair.

(40) sajne gache jor bāśi ore jor bāśi
jor bāśi lōe jor bāśi lōe
bhatar jak phāśi

There is a loud noise on the 'sajne' tree. There is no need for the noise, let my husband be hanged (I'm interested elsewhere).

(41) char kōpale chata
maj kōpale jhāṭa

There is fungus on the head of the luckless and is hit with a broom on the forehead.

(42) ešoti ušotī
mag lie jāẽ lo hoire tāti

After flirting with various women, my husband has taken away the woman who weaves.
I have not yet learnt to wear the dhoti with a narrow border (such as a widow wears) nor can I tie my hair. At such an young age you went away to another place leaving me bereft.

A blackbird sits on the upper branch, its nest is on the lower branch. I earnestly wish to be in love with you.

I went to the market and bought cucumber. At the time of eating, he flirts, and when it is time to sleep he is angry.
The followings are some of the verses the women of Kandi recite during their favourite festival 'bhajuier boto', cf. SCB, /bhadur/. The women plant seeds of black 'urudh' daf in a vessel made of mud. The songs are dedicated to these plants.

(1)

baro hat kapor khani
tæro hat doøi
ghorae phirae kākalo kāloøi
kāketo dodoøi mathae pušpo dali
ruja rujo jabon re bhai
sēekrabhaier bari
sēekrabhai sēekrabhai
bōso lago caøde
semon kore bāk gōrabō
amar bhajuike ṭajā
sajte gujte ghamlo ga
koj:acisøe soro bihen batak kore ja
sonar kancon die muche phele ja

The twelve-feet long sari is worn gracefully round the body with a vessel resting on the waist, bangles on the arms and flowers in the hair, I will go straight to the house of the jeweller. O jeweller, do sit down; I want to make an anklet for my 'bhaju'. While dressing, the 'bhaju' started perspiring; come and fan her, and wipe her with a golden cloth.
pāc dinkar bhajui amar
cho dilo pa
tobuo ṣonar bhajui ga tule na
gē tolore bhajui ga tolo
boṣte dibā ṣetol pati
khete dibō noni
jolanośa poirlo, ma ḅbolo tumī
ma bolei bōro kōṭhati bōle jadumoni
jaduke khete debo khīrer ēroni
khirkīreṭi khīrer laṇu
bōrdomaner ola
ga tule bhojone boṣo
oinonder mala

My 'bhajui' is five days old and has stepped on the sixth days; still my golden 'bhajui' is not raising itself; lift your body 'bhajui' lift your body; I'll give you a cool mat to sit on and will feed you cream. Please call me mother, and I will feed my precious one with thick milk. O 'bhajui' sit down to eat sweet-meats made out of the thickened milk and the sweet brought from Burdwan.

(3)
cād para māṭhe rebhai
bhalūke kore māṭi
pīṭher jāelo chal camṇa
gōlar jāelo kēthi

In the field at 'cand para', bears dig the earth. The bear attacked and my the skin of my back was torn away, and I became hoarse with shouting.
(4)  
bhajuir ma jio na bile bile
ঝুঁকিচালে চো মাইরবে
গার্কে পুঠি বলে
bhajuir ki khabar mon
হাতে ঠাঙির মাক বারির বেগুন

Mother 'bhajui' do not go walking round the lakes, will swoop
down mistaking you for small fish. What does 'bhajui' want to
eat? Fish from the market or brinjal from the house?

(5)  
upereader bhajuigulan সৌরা গচ্ছের ভূত
amader bhajuigulan dekte koto up
upereader bhajuigulan pat kathir bojha
amader bhajuigulan hat dekbar ojha

The 'bhajui' of the next neighbourhood look like ghosts; our
'bhajui' has so much beauty; the 'bhajui' of the next neighbour­
hood are a collection of sticks; our 'bhajui' as expert as a snake-­
charmer.

(183)