Chapter V

FOLK SONGS

ORAL LITERATURE

Folklore is a wide ranging expression of rich and complex, archaic culture. It is a vital element of a living culture. It represents the ancient thought of mankind, their feelings and world view, their shared experiences and wisdom. Oral literature forms a major and integral part of the folklore. Folk is synonymous with people. This term is defined in Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary. “The great proportion of the members of a people that determines the group character and that tends to preserve its characteristics form of civilisation and its customs, arts and crafts, legends and traditions and superstitions from generation to generation.”

Oral literature also called as verbal art or expressive literature are spoken, sung and voiced form of traditional utterances. Oral narrative is a broad sub-division having its manifold distinctions like myth, legend, tale, anecdote, joke etc. Another major division of oral literature is oral poetry or folk poetry which has its own family related forms i.e. folk epics, ballads, folk songs, lullabies, work song, Deh bichar git, zikirs and jaris and songs associated with rituals and rites (samskaras) of birth, marriage, death etc. Also included in this category is the rich oral poetry connected with festive occasions, feasts and ceremonies, proverbs, embodying customs and riddles with enigmatic question paired with a
deceptive answer still function in folk society as important devices for imparting knowledge about cultural semantics, logical and behavioural patterns among the younger members. The folk speech embraces the local and regional turns of phrase that deviate from the standard language, which are sometimes taboo words or expressions from passive vocabulary characteristics at the level of grammar, idiom and even phonetics and nonsense sentence – of such slang is defiant to prominence because of its string of assonances. In this category, minor forms like beliefs or superstitions, charms, prayers, laments and cries can also be enumerated. So oral literature i.e. folk literature encompasses the varied songs and narratives transmitted orally from generation to generation. These are ‘spontaneous overflow’ of prolonged wisdom of the unlettered folk through the ages.

Prime concern in this chapter is to deal with folk song a popular genre of oral literature. Folksong is an integral part of the folk. Folksongs are the emotional outlet of prolonged experience of the unlettered folk. It has been well-defined as a “lyric poem with melody originating anonymously in times past among the unlettered folk and remaining in currency for a considerable time usually centuries.”¹ On the other hand, Leach defines it as “songs which are current in the repertory of a folk group.”²

Any kind of singing is universal in human society; it is a manifestation of finer aspects of human life. Often poems and songs
give us a clearer insight into a people's soul than the most lengthy discussion. And, in the poetry of those unlettered and unsophisticated lie certain important clues to their philosophy of life. Even though the folksongs are used simply for the pleasure of singing or listening, they also act as “the medium for the expression of ideas or emotions held in common by a group.” A community whether agricultural or otherwise, expresses itself passionately and imaginatively through its folksongs. These folksongs are live human documents reflecting actual historical processes and phenomena of different ages. Though the relationship between the members of a community or a group, in some cases, must have been based purely on their basic necessities, the superstructures of religion, philosophy and literature also penetrated deep into the reality of their social situation as is seen in much of the world everywhere. Therefore the cultural traits of their rich folk-heritage can be discerned mostly in their folksongs and rhymes.

As a matter of fact, in many places these songs are of great importance and sung at the functionally important junctures of various rituals ranging from harvest festivals to marriages, births and deaths; while in certain regions, the songs are used to infatuate and enrapture the hearts of lovers or to serve as a part of religious ceremonies and secular rites, or to depict past exploits of the heroes. Through them, the group also lighten the burden of communal labour in some preliterate groups, the songs are used as recital of incantations to invoke blessings from the supernatural powers or for magical efforts to cure illness, or to thwart enemies.
Thus the folk songs mirror the life and spirit of the people, their hopes and aspirations, their weal and woe, these are pulse of the people, the life blood of the village people. Folksong has three characteristics features—

(i) Rural or unsophisticated,

(ii) Group character and

(iii) Orality.

Folksong comprises the poetry and music of groups whose literature perpetuated not by writing and print, but through oral traditions. These groups, primarily, rural, are better able to preserve some of the older culture of national unit of which they form a part than the population of the cities with its more sophisticated more international civilization, which is subject to faster changes and fluctuations, Folksongs flourish in rural areas in the western world, and also in the Orient and the far East.

The folk during various occasions in life starting from birth to death, in agricultural life, in fishing and hunting, in sports and games, in feasts and festivals in prayer and worship indulge in singing. While doing household work like grinding or pounding in the hours of dawn, the women folk used to sing songs. Songs of birth ceremony, naming ceremony, cradle songs, marriage songs, farmer's songs and many other folksongs constitute the rich heritage of our culture.

The Muslims of Hajo area constitute a very important section of the various races and ethnic groups of Assam with their distinctive
cultural and linguistic traits. They have also their rich tradition of folksongs. Specially songs of marriage, boat-race, zikirs, dehbichar songs, baul songs, murshid gits and baramahi gits have ample scope for studying as a means of understanding the real nature of mutual relations between Hindus and Muslims for establishing social harmony and peaceful existence and these may eventually solve many difficult problems of ethnology. A few of the songs are exclusively practised by the Muslims only and others are songs of assimilation with common traits.

The themes of the folk songs are many and varied. Love, courtship and marriage are the topic of innumerable songs; teasing songs to pair off courting couples and songs of elaborate marriage rituals are common. Burying the dead is an important social occasion in the life of the village. While the wailing and the dirges furnish socially patterned outlet for grief. Another large group of songs may be called calendric. Such songs are recited on special days or during special periods of the year. Songs connected with agricultural activities include various types of work songs such as harvesting and threshing, songs connected with the culmination of different plants.

For the convenience of study the folksongs prevalent among the Muslims are discussed under following heads.

(a) Songs related to life-cycle,

(b) Songs associated with children’s sports and past times,
(c) Work songs,
(d) Songs of Seasonal Festivals,
(e) Songs associated with religious context or devotional songs.

(a) Songs related to life-cycle

Songs and ceremonies are universal. These express their beliefs and superstitions, customs and traditions, rites and rituals. The songs of life-cycle differ from community to community. In Muslims society, the life cycle songs comprise of songs connected with birth ceremony, aququa, circumcision, puberty, marriage and death. Let us discuss the songs practised by the Muslims of Hajo area.

(i) Song of birth ceremony: Birth or creation is a matter of joy for all. The birth of a new baby brings happiness to the family. Birth of a child is the ultimate result of a couple’s union through marriage to prolong human family. The Muslims usually express their sukria to Allah for his blessing. Some sunnats are practised by the Muslims at the time of birth of a new body as stated below –

(a) Wash the child clearly,
(b) to recite Azan and
(c) to give khejur in the mouth of the baby chewed by a buzurg (Alim).

In the villages, the services of a midwife are requisitioned who helps the mother with the delivery and performs such essential functions as cutting the naval cord and giving the baby and the mother the attention
needed at the time. The traditional practice is to put the new-born baby on plantain tree. A smouldering fire is kept constantly burning with paddy husking. A sickle or a chopper is placed under the ‘bed’ where the child is kept and also the mother’s bed as a precaution against the danger from evil spirits.5

The whole family, specially the mother and the child are considered to be in a state of uncleanliness (chua). The first step towards the removal of the unclean state takes place on the performance of a simple function on the fifth or seventh day.

The Quran is read and prayer is performed by maulavi for the good health of the body and the family.

Aquiqua is an important ceremony observed by the Muslim at the birth of a child. Though there are no folksongs sung at this function still, some rituals are observed. The Quran is read by Maulavi who also prayed (made dowra) to Allah for the good health of the child.

Musulmane git: (Songs of Circumcision)

Circumcision is an important ritual for the Muslims. It is known as khatna or musalmani. The musalmani geet or the songs of circumcision ceremony are closely related with the circumcision rite. These songs are exclusively current among the Muslims in different parts of Lower Assam. Although most of them are particularly the marriage songs sung at different stages of the ceremony, a few have their own speciality which are
connected with the circumcision rite only. Circumcision means cutting the fore-skin of a male organ at an early age. Usually on the day of circumcision the boy is given ceremonial bath in the morning. The boy is institutionally made to read kalima 'la ilaha illalah Muhammadur rasulullah' meaning 'there is no master except Allah, Muhammad is his rasul (messenger). A man called baidar performs this operation. Today doctors also perform this function. After three of four days, when the cut got dry, the neighbours and relatives specially the women come and bathe the boy, throw popped rice (akhoi) etc. on him. Some songs commonly known as sunnatar git or musalmani git are sung in connection with the ceremony. The songs are quite similar with the songs of telar git or teldiya git during marriage ceremony. Some specimen of such song collected from Doloitola of Hajo are as follows:

Mother smears narayani oil
Grandmother is looking at the beauty
No need of smearing narayani oil
My grandson is like the petal of champa flower.
The boy is sitting on the low stool.
Elder sister-in-law smears narayani oil
Elder brother is looking at the beauty.
No need of smearing narayani oil
My brother is like the petal of marigold flower
The boy is sitting under chaya mara
Elder sister smears narayani oil
Marriage Song

Marriage is the most important occasion in human life. In its legal aspect, it is a contract and not a sacrament. There can be no marriage without consent. In its religious aspect, marriage is considered to be essential (Farz) in Islam. It is not only a contract, but also a sacred covenant. However, marriage is an institution for the continuance of human race.

According to the Quran and the Islamic tradition marriage depends on three facts —

(i) The assent of the parties,

(ii) The evidence of two male witnesses, and

(iii) The marriage settlement i.e., the mahr If any of these three are wanting the marriage is void. The actual name of the marriage service is nikah. The marriage customs of Assamese Muslims are characterized by a curious mixture of Hindu and Muslim rituals. Most of the customs and rituals except the performance of nikah are identical and homogenous. The practice of cross cousin marriage is encouraged among the Muslims – Such a marriage is regarded incestuous in Hindu society. In Hajo area the custom of presentation (Joran) or Telar bhar is also prevalent. This is a custom observed by the Assamese Hindus. The Muslims like their Hindu neighbours, fix the date of marriage in
consultation with a panjika (almanac). The Muslims usually do not plan marriage during the month of Ramadan. The local Muslims of Hajo area used to have the services of ghatak (go-between) and formerly there was the practice of demanding and paying the bride’s price. Before the finalization of marriage the bride’s relatives visited the house of the bridegroom which is known as gharbar chowa. On the day of fixing the marriage date the groom’s party used to take fish, doi, chira, banana, cloths etc. it is popularly known as khatir bhar in Hajo area.

A marriage consists of two formal ceremonies – the ring ceremony (angathi pindhowa) which is followed by actual wedding (biya). It is seen that the ring ceremony is not performed by all. Sometimes before the actual marriage ceremony takes place, it is registered by a quazi. The custom of presentation (Joran) or gohona pindhowa is an important prenuptial ceremony. The new cloth called Tel haldhi logoa kapur or Shingreni Kapur (which is often red bordered white sari), vermillion (becoming obsolete now), conshell, bangles, comb, mirror and other cosmetic articles are usually presented to the bride.

Although the marriage ceremony is usually spread over three days, known variously as marowa, neota and biya, yet many Muslims observe it in two days. On the preceding day of the marriage the bride and the groom are given ceremonial bath with water. In Hajo area the marriage is observed in two days. The first day is the tel biya or telor bhar (joran diya).
The first day which is called marowa is the beginning of marriage ceremony. During this day the marriage pandal is prepared with banana plants planted in the four corners and this pandal is called samiana or chayamara. It is worth noting that inside a hole of the first (in some places middle) planted banana post, some coins, an egg and an ou fruit (Dillenia Indica) also put as offerings for this auspicious occasion. In the evening various minor customs and rites are also performed by the women and the girls.

The 2nd day or the biya is the actual marriage day which is observed with many customs and practices. There is a local custom known as hengar dhara or putting barrier to the bridegroom and his party on their way to the bride’s house. People of both party enjoy fun. It is customary for the grooms party to carry sufficient number of tamol-pan (betel nut and leaves), biri, cigarettes and sweets or sugar which are offered to the members of bride’s party. The formal biya is conducted by the moulavi as soon as ukil and the witnesses give permission. After few days, another brief ceremony is also observed called randhan hatot diya or kharu jakorowa bhat and from this day the bride is entitled to cook and serve anything in the house. The custom of athmongla is also observed by local Muslims. The bride and the groom are invited by the bride’s parents on the eight day following the marriage and they are entertained a feast. In Hajo area on the 2nd day the feast is entertained.
Mariage songs have several versions and one particular version being popular in a particular area never the less. Some of the marriage songs current among the Muslims in different parts of great Hajo Area of ancient Kamrup district are given as specimen. The Muslims generally start a work in the name of Allah. While arranging marriage, chira, sandah, gur are prepared, milk man is contacted. And some of the songs current among the Muslims occasionally contain Islamic flavour as in the following songs –

(i) In the name of Allah rice is pitted in dheki
    In the name of Allah advance given for milk
    O my goddess of snake

Reference to snake-bite of Beula and Lakhindar nag is the sign of evil Hence expression of fear.

Still milk is yet to reach the bride grooms house
Bride’s milk has already come.

(ii) According to the custom of Joran, when clothes, ornaments, oil, soap etc. are sent to the bride from the groom’s house, the bride maids sing –

    I’ve cut the tree and made it fall at once,
    Home fashioned a chaitan’s dheki
    Dear son, (you) don’t go far,
    Play the golden dhunjari at home

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I've prepared sandah in that dheki,
For Bhadruman sahib.
Bhadruman sahib sent oil
The hair-knot is tied looking the mirror
Don’t touch the bride’s knotted hair,
Coins will fall at once:

(iii) In order to avert the groom from the effect of evil eye or black magic the woman sing—

The pulses and turmeric of public of mine
The Narayani tel of Ramdia people
Elder brother throw, Elder-sister-in-law (bou) throws
(we) don’t know whose Evil Eye fall on the Dola, omy beloved son
Dried fruits of six months, and seed of cotton
With these the effect of the evil eye on the Dola will be defused.
Ghatar Duburi batar duburi
With these the effect will be defused.

The following song is sung at the time of ceremonial bath of the bride.

(iv) Don’t smear with the paste of raw pulses,
The body will smell as pulse,
On hearing this, the mother of Jalali,
Will wash the body with red sandal
(And) the body will smell as red sandal
Bless me oh mother
Will be a mother of five daughters
And five sons,
The cattle shed will be full of cows,
Life will pass in happiness and over joy
Don’t smear with the paste of raw pulses.

Traditionally, the bride groom is welcomed while reaching the bride’s house and it is called bari niya. In the function ring, cloth are offered to the bridegroom from the bride’s side and he is taken to the chayamara. The womenfolk sing song all the way chayamara.

(V) Come and carry forward to chaya maya
    I call (you) brother in law, carry me forward
    Carry me forward with borkapur on my head
    Brother-in-law does not come out of grief
    Come & carry forward .... .... ....
    Offering garland on the neck, carry me forward.
    Sister-in-law does not come out of srief
    Come & carry me forward .... .... ....
    I call (you) Uncle-in-law, carry me forward
    Wearing me cheer Anguthi (golden ring), carry me forward.

(vi) When the groom sits under the rabha or marriage pandal
the girls and women song –

    The groom glitters like diamond and pearl
    Bside the banana tree,
Groom who has advised you to sit
Under the marriage pandal
We venerate our parents giving betel-nut at hand
According to their advice we’ve seated
Under the marriage pandal.

(vii) Usually the grandmother or sister-in-law of the groom conduct the ceremonial bath. At this moment the women sing jokingly –

The Shoulder is like a sal fish
(you) know only the taste of eating,
Don’t know how to give bath
To your grandson
There is a pond nearby
He takes bath by swimming
But the dirt has not gone from the body.

(viii) On the marriage, at the late afternoon especially in the time of ceremonial bath of the groom, the following song is sung –

The aheri of the path is red and purple
Its leaves creates rustling sound,
Giving bath to the son of a good man
His body glitters with gold and silver
Don’t smear raw turmeric on the body
The body will smell as raw turmeric
On hearing this, my loving mother,
Will anoint my body with the paste of Red sandal wood.
(ix) After the bride had her ceremonial bath the maids sing –

The bath is our – fruit of tree
(She) asked her mother
O mother what clothes I should wear ..... 
In Hari is the mekhela of cotton
That you should change ..... 
What bird flies – (on the) fruit of tree
On the tree – (On the) fruit of tree.

(x) At the time of wearing dress, generally the friends of the groom help him. In that moment the women sing jokingly.

The groom is pump and stout
Can’t put on the cap,
He seeks help from the companions
The cap falls down in front of the public
In shame the groom feels anxiety.

(xi) At the end of the actual marriage function, at about dawn the following song is sung –

Cock crows, the night is over
Get up grand mother of my house,
The night is over now
Give we one chilim of tobacco,
Smoking that (I) will go home
The night is over now
Give one jug of water

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To perform the *oju*

The son of goodman has come,
Bid farewell to him soon
The night is over now.

(xii) The bride is handed over to the groom in the presence of elder and respected members of the village. At this moment the bride maids sing—

I’ve given you cups and plates by one hand.
By the other hand, I’ve given
My beloved daughter
O headman of the village
You will be the witness
Right from today I’ve handed over
My daughter to son-in-law.

Marriage songs in the Assamese society are very popular. Besides, debates, jokes, funs, frolics, taunts etc are made through marriage songs unlike Kamrupi damsels who sing in their dialect, make jokes, sometimes taunt ridicule the groom’s party. Similarly the groom’s party also gives sharp answers through a singing voice. In the words of Goswami, “An Assamese marriage is a musical marriage. At every stage of the celebration from the early negotiations to the end, women sing appropriate songs. The delicacy and refinement of a woman heart come out in caressing tunes when the *Namati* or the musical leader of the gathering has to describe the beauty and grace of the bride, when the later is bathed in sanctified water, when she sits among her companions, the bridegroom
is to be greeted, when she is ritually offered." Dr. P. C. Das describes the marriage songs as well as teasing songs prevalent among the people in Hajo area. He says, "The noticeable feature of the marriage songs of Hajo is that in a Muslim marriage the women folk of the community sing almost identical songs sung by the women folk of the Assamese Hindu. The mention of Radha, Rukmini, Narayani oil, Vermillion, turmeric etc. are regular features of those songs."9

A most interesting feature of the marriage songs of Assam is the teasing song. Such teasing songs are known as *khica git*. They are often characterized by repetition and nonsensicality in structure and hardly any coherence of thought in them. But the *khicagits* mostly sung at the marriage pandal of the bride’s house, give relief to the sorrow and sadness prevailing at the late night in the house. Teasing songs are sung in the bridegroom’s house also for more amusement. In the family life the *deor* (husband’s younger brother) has informal and joking relationship with his *bou* (sister-in-law) who takes an intimate part in his marriage ceremony. She is a favourite target in the *khica gits*. The more pungent teasing songs are sung at the marriage pandal. But the most pincing of the teasing songs are those exchanged between the parties of the bride and the bridegroom after the bridegroom’s party arrives at marriage pandal. Each party attacks the other with mock-seriousness.

Thus we see that marriage songs enliven the marriage proceedings in almost all parts of India. But the importance attached to their singing
seems to play a significant part in Assam. Some songs sung in both the communities are identical and homogenous. The marriage songs practised by the Muslims also include the names Narayani oil, Radha, Rukmini as in Hindu marriage songs. Songs sung at every stage of marriage starting from the prenuptial rites to the post-nuptial ones. In fact, the singing of the songs is intimately connected with the various customs and rites. There is a big volume of such songs avidely sung by the women folk ventilating their ideas, feelings, social protest and sometimes their identity. Although local variations do occur, all these songs have much in common in the matter of sentiments expressed and the technique adopted in making them effective. These songs are the creations of the unsophisticated village women and while many of them betray the lack of polish, they are not without literary value. Their charm lies particularly in their ability to create mood and atmosphere with rare poignancy using simple homespun words and images.

**Songs of burial (Death)**

The 'dead' is called *murda*. It is prepared for cremation after washing the deadbody ritually. Generally the aged and pious persons washed off the dead wore the dead with *kafan* i.e. white clothes, on a *changi*. Four people usually sons and relatives shoulder the dead to the *kabarkhana*. The scene is very painful. The futility, transistoriness of human life, the life after death, the sufferings in *dojokh* (hell) have been described in some songs which are a kin to *dehbichar git*, *baul git* and
zikirs. Some of the songs deals with the description of our organs that are constant witnesses or vigilants of our activities, what we do – sins and virtues. The people sing while carrying the dead to the cremation ground —

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Allah Allah balo bhai} \\
nabi karo sar \\
nabir kalima parhi \\
haya zaba par.
\end{align*}
\]

\textbf{murdda dhua git}

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{la-illaha illallah subhane rabbile} \\
\text{la-illaha illallah subhane rabbile} \\
\text{chir Allah chir Allah sizda dim moi kake} \\
\text{Allare hukume sizda dim moi allake} \\
\text{Bukur gunah maf karo subhane rabbile} \\
\text{la-illaha illallah Muhammad rasule} \\
\text{sakur gunah maf karo subhane rabbile} \\
\text{hatar gunah maf karo subhane rabbile} \\
\text{la-illaha illallah Muhammad rasule} \\
\text{chir Allah chir Allah sizda dim moi kake.} \\
\text{Allare hukume sizda dim moi Allake} \\
\text{kanar gunah maf karo subhane rabbile} \\
\text{la-illaha illallahu Muhammad rasule.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Collected from Doloitola)
Besides, there is a tradition of *kitap parha* or *puthi parha* at the household of the dead. Generally ‘Kachachal Ambia’ and ‘Khairul Hasar’—these two books are read at evening time. They deal mostly with certain selected parts like the ‘birth of Muhammad’ as a turning point in world History, the punishment in hell (dojokh), sowal (question) and jawab (answer) in *kabar* (grave). The passages aim at the teaching the people the lessons that the sinners would be punished in hell and the virtuous would be rewarded in ‘behest’ (paradise). On 7th day or on 15th day after death *milad sharif* is arranged. Verses from the Holy Quran is read by maulavi. Prayer is done for the peace of the soul of the deceased. Specially in milad sharif the people uttered verses from the Quran, read *durud* expressing reverence to prophet Muhammad and usually stand in honour of the prophet and sing as follows:

- *Iiya nabi assalamu alaikum*
- *Iiya rasul assalamu alaikum*
- *Iiya habib assalamu alaikum*
- ...

**Songs associated with children’s sports and Past times**

Play is form of expressive behavior common among all human beings and manifested overtly in all cultures. Games are moments of recreations and enjoyment, means to have temporal and spatial detachment from reality. Games, though non-productive, contribute to the physical, social and psychological growth and development of the individual. Since
time immemorial people used to play and sing; they express themselves through their popular culture.

The folk mind is reflected in the popular culture more intimately than in the elite culture. Therefore, the study of popular culture or folklore has a significant value from this point of view. Hajo has rich heritage of popular culture. We have seen that people of different ethnic groups from various walks of life assembled in the area from time to time. These people carried with them the multi-coloured popular culture from their original homeland. Besides *nao-khel, hao-khel*, Horse race, Bulbul fight are popular among the people. *lathikhel, jathikhel, larukhel, dhopkhel*, etc are some other games of children’s past times.

Moreover, children are fickle and unstable by temperament, they play, they sing and they jump and they love to do something. They get used to playing, racing, rowing and hunting. They express their emotion in short rhymes and songs. In agricultural life the people have enough scope to let loose their emotion in fishing, grazing, rowing, playing and swimming. Some popular songs of children’s sports and past time mentioned by my guide Dr. P. C. Das in his book ‘The Blessed Land’ are:

(i) O’ little weaver bird
Don’t eat our paddy
Go to maternal Uncle’s house
Eat their paddy
You will be offered one pura of paddy
Sit on a branch and cat
When the branch breaks
Go to oil man’s house
The oil man will give you tel-pateni
The gardener will give you flours
When our baby will get married
Who will beat the drum?

(ii) Cradle songs and other rhymes

The cradle songs and rhymes connected with the children’s world constitute an important part of the oral literature. The noticeable feature of this type of literature is that these songs and rhymes move in a world of fantasy where logic and coherence are conventionally dispensed with. Yet as Goswami says, “they reveal a delicacy of sentiment which is beyond the reach of literary poetry” In the lullabies the moon occupies an important place. In Kamrup and Goalpara the moon is Brother Moon (Jan Kaka). In Hajo it is addressed god moon (San Gohain)

In the lullabies (Cali ghumewa git), the children are taught to address the moon in different names (Doloitola)

(a) God moon, come
    We will give you rice and fish
    And also a shelter under the bed
    In the morning, fall night on the head of our baby.
(b) O weasel don’t come
Stay under the banana tree
The tiger is roaming ground
Sleep my baby.

... ... ... ...

O bapu gosai come quick
Taking the stick
We will give you rice & fish
And also shelter under the bed
In the morning fall right
On the head of my baby.

haukhela

In haukhela the boys sing some which are broken in thoughts
and ideas and sometimes nonsensical –

(i) hau kut kut makara jali, ghorai
    nakhai bilar pani
    ghora gel uttare, sal mash (fish) gujare
    salar vitare sakuri beng, garyiai nakhai kasar theng.

(ii) hawre hamala, parbat kati damala
    parbatar maje, Bar dhonia gaje
    bar dhaniar pate, tok marim ek sate.

(iii) hau hau, Jakeir chingil bao
    pama kather khari, randheni ase mari.
Amir Ali from Dampur sings—

(iv) haure Hari
bar dhan kari
majo kokai dhan kate
ghes ghes kari.

(v) haure Habba
relar dabba
relat uthi kene juti
juti juti juti.

Lullabies

Lullabies and other rhymes are also popular in the area—

(i) dhule dhule
dhulai lagi pare
hathi melli pakhi
gohain gharar kathi
amar bapu saru
baipake sasi de sal gassar laru.

(ii) hur hur bata sarai
ahu dhan nakhabi bata sarai
dhano kham pano kham
champwatik biya karai
ghare lai jam.
This song refers to the ballad of Champawati, who was given marriage to snake god.

(iii)  
\[
\begin{align*}
  & \text{lai batu behar batu} \\
  & \text{amar bapak bhutat besu} \\
  & \text{bhute bule nalage} \\
  & \text{boja baba najane} \\
  & \text{lai kutu kutu.}
\end{align*}
\]

(iv)  
\[
\begin{align*}
  & \text{jon bai eiah ah} \\
  & \text{bhat dim mas dim} \\
  & \text{dalat bahi khabi} \\
  & \text{pua hali eri dim} \\
  & \text{bhurutkei jabi.}
\end{align*}
\]

The rhymes associated with games are meant for grown-up children such songs are almost similar to the game songs current in the other parts of the state. But in certain songs we get reflection of the socio-cultural and socio-political condition of the area. Some songs are difficult to find meanings. However, the text of the songs shows that it was composed by some persons with poetic ability. It is extremely difficult to make out the exact meaning of the words.

\[
\begin{align*}
  & \text{abu ai abank} \\
  & \text{caul di cabang} \\
  & \text{puthi machor lej khara}
\end{align*}
\]
Boat-racing

Boat-racing is a popular game in Assam specially in Hajo area. Some specimen of boat-race song sung sportingly are as follows:

Songs dealing with the love and marriage of the youth:

O don’t call me bhini
If I would live this time
I’ll marry you
O don’t call me bhini.

Song of cakes preparing

ayo mor hapena pitha oi
o kene dekho atha oi
kene dekho atha
rati hali urba lage masta ekhon katha.

Song of Flood

The song reminds of flood, a regular phenomenon in Assam as well as the custom of offering cows to a bridegroom as dowry in marriage.

Flood float the grasses on the way
Get prepared your own daughter
Don't see to cowshed elder brother cows are there.
You can plough with the bullock
You gave to me
I want no bullock
But I want cows
I give cows for milk, bullock for plough
And I gave elder sister to you in marriage
To live like a queen.

Song of Fishing

(It was a popular practice of the Assamese women and girls to catch fish and sportingly sing.)

My uncle prepared me Jakhei when I was a child.
To catch small and young fish
Don't give shame, don't give me blame
Uncle I shall get too much shame.
She was a beloved of her father
And told weeping to his father.
I got very shame
Uncle prepared me coak (bag) for fish
To catch small fishes
For frying with onion.
SONGS ASSOCIATED WITH SEASONAL FESTIVALS

Most, if not all, of the societies of the world periodically set aside portions of time for celebration. These are moments of special significance to the group or community. They may be moments of transition, from one season to another or from one stage of life to another; they may be anniversaries of historical events, of the legendary day of the birth or death of a hero or a god; or symbolic re-enactments of events in the life of a religious leader or the founder of society. They may be moments set aside to honour some living person or some group, or occasions for commercial work with feasting and play added. These periodical significant celebration are called seasonal festivals.

People need periodic times of escape from work, times in which they can be joyous together. Some festivals are participated by the whole community others are of limited participation. At the best, the festivals seems to be some occasion for men to rejoice together – to interact in an ambience of acceptance and convivality.

The festival is a prime device for promotion of social cohesion, for integrating individuals into a society or group and maintain them as members through shared, recurrent, positively reinforcing performance. It is indeed, “the most concrete expression of collective and loyalties.”

Hajo has maintained a tradition of its own in the matter of colourful festivals and fairs. The fairs and festivals celebrated in the place can be surveyed under two heads – religious and seasonal or agricultural.

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A festival celebrated by the Muslims of Hajo and now became defunct was known as khodai. The festival was celebrated in the month of Romzan. The Mulsim people of Fakirtola came in procession carrying the Tazia and a palanquin, singing songs and demonstrating mock-fighting with swords and spears. They started the procession from the Poa-mecca shrine and assembled in a place at a short distance from Poa-mecca to the west. They performed certain functions and rituals there and then returned again to Poa-mecca. Throughout the journey the participants recited *Jari git* or songs related to Hassan-Hussain episode of Islamic history. They also recited the ballad of one Hajor Gazi of Haidar Gazi.

**Song of Haidar Gazi**

After having meal Haidar Gazi
Gives hookah at the month
The summon of King’s house has come
Gets shock in mind
Oh! What happened clever Haidar Gazi,
I salute you lakh times.
The summon of king’s house has come
Tell elder brother to go
And in the name of Allah (I) touch
Both feet of mother.
The festival of Id-ul-fitr is in a way the culmination of the month long fast of the month of Ramzan. Fasting is an ancient practice, associated with all major religions and even faith followed by tribal people. Fasting has certain purposes one being controlling the natural appetites so that the body become fit to contemplate the higher matters of religion and the other is the good influence that it has on health. Fasting and prayer are old customs found not only in traditional Indian religion but also in Christianity and Islam.

The Quran prescribes the month of Ramzan as the most suitable for fasting for it is in this month that the teachings of the Quran were received by prophet Muhammad. During this month, Muslims get up at dawn, take little food (Sehri), then remain fasting the entire day till sunset, when they are allowed to eat light food (Iftar). During the day they can not even drink a drop of water. Prayers and helping the poor (a tenet of Islam) are characteristics of this month Quran-khatam i.e. the reading of whole Quran is regarded as an act of virtue during Ramzan. When the Ramzan is over, the new moon is seen, the roza or fast is broken. There is public namaz or prayer of well-dressed people on an open ground (Idgah) and then there is Idd-ul-fitr or the feast in the evening. Idd is an occasion for wishing well of others and of inviting even Hindu friends. It is a period of happiness and merriment. The songs of Azan Fakir namely zikirs are sung during the celebration. zikirs and ghazals are served during the festivals specially kerat path or verses from the Quran is sung.
Urs or Urus means the union of bride and bridegroom. In Islamic belief death symbolises the return of the soul to its creator, Sufis consider this return as the merging of the lover with his bride or beloved. Urs therefore, is associated with the death anniversary of saints who after a fruitful existence in the world return to their beloved god. The well-known Urs at the dargah of Poa-mecca at Hajo celebrates the death anniversary of the Sufi saint Ghiasuddin Auliya.

This Urs is one of the most important festivals for the Muslims of Assam. Pilgrims from every part of India gather at the shrine at the time of Urs. The festival begins from the first day of Magh and continues upto the month of Bohag. The full-moon-day in the month of Magh is known as Purna Urs.

The Urs starts with the fatiha prayers at the tomb (mazar) of the saint on the Poa-mecca hillock. The prayers are recited by Mullah while the gathering joins him in asking for the blessings the saint. A part of the festival is a distribution of food to the poor. In the evening Zikir which implies the recitation of the name of God is also performed. Both Hindus and Muslims join the festival. The bhaktas sing murshid git, baul git and zikir etc. some of the zikirs are as follows:

Late Dilmohammad Ali who was once a khadim of Poa-mecca dargah wrote a zikir like song as mentioned below dealing with the advent
of Ghiasuddin Aulia to Assam:

(i)  illalah Illalah
      muhammad mustofa
      la Ilala Illalah
      he tomar Aowlia.

(ii) jalaluddin Tabriji
       jur bilai dila
       mukut eri
       jubba pindhi
       amar hai rala.

(iii) baghdad eri jagat ghuri
      bharat bhumi uthila
      ghiasuddin name tume
      ki ful futile.

(iv) dilli eri asamat
     jinda pir nam lai
     din jari karila.

(v)  lutfulla silpi
     nimsatullah Siraji
     parbat bagai jangal kati
     masjis nirman karila.
Another zikir collected from Doloitola

zikir karona manurai zikir karona
zikir ate Allah rasul bule Rabbana
manurai zikir karona
sei zikirate hoi jaba tor behestar khabir
manurai zikir karona
zikir karana manurai zikir karana
zikirate Allah rasul bule rhabana
manurai zikir karona
dame dame dam Allah, damer malik tumi Allah
har dame mile Allah
la Ilaha Illah
ali Ali Hazarat Ali Fatema hatat tir
jun mukhe aisa bala sei mukhe phir.

(The above zikir signifies that zikir i.e. remembering the name of Allah repeatedly is the key to salvation and it is essential to obtain behest (paradise). The Almighty Allah is our survivor. We should take the name of Allah in every breath. Hazarat Ali and Fatema would supposed to help us in pulserat, they would get rid us of distress.)

BIHU GIT

Bihu is a national festival in Assam. Bihu songs are popular in Assam among both Hindus and Muslims. Having both seasonal and agricultural significance, the three bihu festivals are known as Bohag
bihu or Rongali bihu, held in mid-April on the advent of spring, 
Magh bihu or Bhogali bihu held in mid-January, the coldest time of 
the year and Kati bihu or Kongali bihu coming off in mid-October in 
the autumn season.

Hajo has maintained a tradition of its own in the matter of colourful 
fairs and festivals. During Magh bihu a Samannay Jatra is held from Poa-
mecca to Madhab-temple every year participated by all sections of people.
Some bihu like song prevalent in the area among the Muslims are –

(i) Mahammad Ali and Sankat Ali
    both are brothers
    government imprisoned them
    under what provision of law.

(ii) Bihu song prevalent in Dampur area –
    Oh grand mother, oh grand father don’t name banana as banana
    Flying bat will eat it
    Don’t give place to foreigner and
    They will take (everything) from us.
    Oh grand mother flower blooms
    If there is none who will pick the lotus
    If there is none to love when one is adult grown up.
    Who will take at old age
    Oh grand mother front side is beautiful if there is betel nut garden
    Back side is beautiful if there is pan
    Oh Barghar is beautiful with matured girl
Dr. M. K. Saikia also comments that the Bihu song exerted remarkable influence on the life of Assamese Muslims specially in composing Assamese zikirs and jaris. The Bihu festival comprises of two distinct parts called ‘Husari’ and ‘Bihu’. In Husari the revellers make a circular movement, singing and dancing around the leader of the group. It seems that this part of the performance greatly influenced the zikir and jari dances of the Assamese Muslims.

MOHOHO

From the evening till mid-night young men and boys in groups room about the village from door to door. They carry bamboo sticks and sing songs to drive mosquitos away from the compound and also from the village. ‘Both Hindus and Muslims, tribal and non-tribal, high and low celebrate mohoho festival’.

\textit{o Raja Mahoho}
\begin{verbatim}
mah khedba tokan lo
mahe bule maillure
tepal pura khailure
tepalat nai nun
saul kare eko dun
saul nidi dila kari
aiser ghar lari sari
lari sari jaute
sonar kari paute
\end{verbatim}
sonar kari rupar mala
aiser ghar dekhiba vala
endhe khai sake
mah jai jake
endhe khai kumrar suthi
mah jai mudhfuti
endhar gharat tuhar dhoha
chali kande toha toha
bahar pat pakka
amak lage taka

MUHRAMAR GIT OR JARI GIT

Jari git is a kind of elegiac verse in character and content and may also call a form of marshiya. These Jari songs are closely related to the famous and tragic history of Karbala and very much popular among the Assamese Muslims. Song’s connecting with the tragic history of Karbala are found not only in Assam or India, but in many Muslim countries all over the world. “The jari gits or marshias cannot be conclusively attributed to Azan pir.” They are not necessarily part of Islamic tenets; but the story of Karbala behind them, as Prof. Abdul Malik says, sung in the saddest possible tone characters, drawn from the distant Arab world, have adored the Assamese garb in jari’s. Sometimes Jaris are classed with devotional songs along with zikirs but it is known that Jari songs were sung in Assam even before the
advent of the re-knowned Saint-poet Azan Fakir. The fact is corroborated by the following stanza composed by this Saint-poet –

\[ \text{marshiya gitak suni banda} \]
\[ jage chaupar rati \]

(On hearing the marshiya song the man woke up the whole night.)

These songs are full of pathos, sung specially during the Muharam Festival. The performance of these Jari songs is like a lamentation, not closely related to the rituals and doctrines. The songs are performed by a group of persons with a dance which is simply a rhythmic motion. In the Jari dance the theme of lamentation and mourning is reflected. The dance is performed circulating the area with a slow motion of the step with clapping and beating of the chest with hand. However the main objective of these Jari songs is to express grief, commemorating the tragic demise of Hassan and Hussain. Reference to Hazarat Ali, Bibi Fatima, Hassan, Hussain, Quasim, Saharabanu and Sakina are common. A fairly good number of jari songs are current in different parts of Assam. The following is a song current in Hajo Area –

(i) Don’t lament mother, I am imprisoned incurse (preordained) (you) can’t see the face of your beloved son Hassan again. Oh my mother don’t grief. Cruel Ejid cheated us calling to (Kufa) Surrounded us at Karbala Oh my mother, surrounded us at Karbala.
(We) can not return to Madina again
We don’t know why
Our hearts severed time and again!
Alas! Our hearts trembled in fear

At one time prophet Muhammed told his grandson about there (musibat) danger in Karbala. It is preordained as sung in the song –

*ghorar khura bahi jai*

*kalamati ranga hai*

*hai hai hai eikhane Karbala hai.*

(This is Karbala wher earth becomes red and horse roof goes down the earth.)

Kasim is newly married to Sakina. But he is going to the battle at the night when he was married. The following song deals with his preparation for the war:

Give me my shirt (armour) I’ll go to battle
Ho, how much it fare, Kaolenis mother
Oh Alas! Qasim is going to battle
Weeps falling on the dust, oh Alas!
Give me the dhuti, Oh! Mother I’ll go to battle.
Oh, how much it fare Kaolenis mother Alas!
Oh! Alas Quasim is going to battle
Weep rolling on the dust Kaoleni’s mother.
Quasim has gone to the stable
Fetch strong and stout Duldul selecting from the stable

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Quasim has come home
And where grandmother has gone?
O mother clean the road and yard
Also bring 25 pitchers of water.

(ii) Quasim prepared himself to start for the battle. The following songs describes how he forbade his mother and relatives –

One piece of betelnut was cut into two
One piece was offered to mother
Cutting the piece of betelnut Quasim salutes his mother
And said – He is going to the battle of Karbala.
(Mother) said that your father was so strong
Still he did not return from Karbala.
Oh Alas! Quasim was married young
O Quasim got adulthood
O in the name of Allah Quasim enters the Mahal
He told Sakina about his preordaind death
If the letter remains white, he would return alive
It the letter blackens, he would die in battle.

(i) jari git collected from Dampur –

(a) *Ali Ali mortoja*
* dul dulle sowar*
* o balar upare Ali*
* mare julfikkar*
* hak! La Ilaha Illalah.*

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The folk usually sing various songs while doing different activities in their day to day life. Since the early hours of dawn they become busy in their agricultural activities like harvesting, threshing, grinding and pounding. Sometimes the ancient folk event on hunting and fishing endowing sometimes on merchandise by boat to distant land. So they indulge themselves in singing to lessen their burden of works, or to have force or refreshment. Some of the work songs prevalent among the Muslims of Hajo area are as follows—

In agricultural life cow is a main source of power. The cowherds while grazing in the field or in the river island, they sing in joy or to lessen their suffering in the job. The cowherds while bathing the cows during bihu sings:

\[
\text{dighlati dighal pat} \\
\text{garu kubai jat jat} \\
\text{maire saru baipere saru} \\
\text{toi hobi bar garu}
\]
Sugarcane production was in large scale in ancient times in the river island areas. People used to produce gur. But it is difficult to find juice from the sugarcane. The folk in the village did it in group by singing songs to lessen their labour in the following way—

(i)  

\[ \text{Diha} - \]

\[
\text{ki o, masurare dali ga pare hali}
\]

\[
\text{sarute sar dadi jakhe bui dichili}
\]

\[
\text{oi puan mash mariba buli naloi}
\]

\[
\text{masurare dali ga pare hali.}
\]

(ii)  

\[ \text{Diha} - \]

\[
\text{o mor dehi oi}
\]

\[
\text{mok biya dili nadi sipar kari}
\]

\[
\text{ha mor dehi oi}
\]

\[ \text{Pad} - \]

\[
\text{agate koisilo biya mok nidibi}
\]

\[
\text{biya mok nidibi nadi sipar kari}
\]

\[
\text{ha mor dehi oi}
\]

\[
\text{nidibi kalbarit biya}
\]

\[
\text{kal gasat bandhibo}
\]

\[
\text{kal thari chingibo}
\]

\[
\text{mor gae sahibo nare nale}
\]

\[
\text{Ha mor dehi.}
\]

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OTHERS SONGS OF HUMOUR AND SPORTS

kayamuri git:

hai hai kae muri e
hal baba jam moi, hai hai kae muri e
hal baba jabi toi, hai hai kae muri e
dhara pari ghumam moi, hai hai kae muri e
dhara pari ghumbi toi, hai hai kae muri e
halar laru singim moi, hai hai kae muri e.

BANPANIR GIT (SONG OF FLOOD)

ban pani utai nila batare dubari
saji kasi ulai thoila nijare jiari
galit dekhi nasbi kaka galit ase garu
o amak diya haila garu
halbaba para
nalge nalge haila garu
mok lage kalla garu
gai dichu gakhir khaba, haila dichu baba
o tare lagat baideuk dielu maharani hoba.

SONG OF BOAT-RACE

Boat-race is one of the main components of the folk-culture. It is an ancient sport that was in vague in the river like the Temas, the Nile, the Volga etc. In our country, too, it has been practised since the hoary
past. Lord Krishna has been described as boatman in many Vaishnava songs. The existence of boat was also mentioned in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In Assam, the tradition and heritage of the sport of boat race have been found mentioned in the Haribangsa and the copper plates of Bhaskarbarma and of Banna (Tezpur). In the annals of the Ahom kings and in the hagiographies of the Vaishnava saints of Assam, references have been made to this sport. During the famous battle of Saraighat, boats were extensively used on the river Brahmaputra. The Ahom king Rudra Singha was very fond of the boat-race.

Boat race is an indigenous sport of Assam and is popular among the masses. The sport is prevalent in many places of the lower Assam such as Barpeta, Nalbari, Ulabari, Hajo, Sualkuchi, Palasbari, Kukurmar, Samaria, Damdama, Dharapur etc. In the district of Goalpara and Darang also, boat-race is a popular sport. The aim of this sport is to foster unity and harmony among the people.

"Boat-racing is a favourite sport of the riverside folk, who constitute a large portion of the Muslim inhabitants. In the rainy season long boats, manned by numerous oarsman, dart swiftly along the river Lokhaitora, their crew singing songs about Manasa, the snake goddess and Beula lore."¹¹ Not only songs of Manasa sung but also songs about the gods and goddesses of Hindu mythology and other sportive songs are sung in chorus in great enthusiasm by both Hindu and Muslim oarsmen. According to Dr. Lila Gogoi, sometimes, the saud (merchant) who went abroad to distant land for business by
boat leaving their wifes and dear ones at home, they sang in lamentation
Love song of Radha-Krishna sometimes becomes the Subject matter
of boat-race song.

Songs of boat-race are popular lore sung both by Hindus and
Muslims oarsmen. It is seen that most of the people associated with
boat songs are Muslims. In verses of boat songs references are made
to Beula, Lakhindar, Padma-purana, Hassan-Hussain episode and
songs related to Islamic theme. These songs reveal the deep religious
faith of the people while under taking a great task. The very important
point to be noticed in the song is that Muslim oarsmen sang verses
related to Vashnavite themes, Radha-Krishna, Arjuna and Manasha
lore. It reminds us that forefathers of these Muslims were some
Hindus. The songs were transmitted orally from generation to
generation. They could not give up their old faiths totally. Boat-race
is a common sport participated by all and the songs spread the lesson
of unity and harmony. While starting or preparing the boat for race
the following song of Islamic tune is song –

(i) \textit{Allah Allah balo bhai jato momin ganare}
\textit{Nabir kalima parhi haya jaba parare}

While the boat is turned for race the oarsmen sang song
mentioning Hindu religious figures like, Arjuna, Krishna, Sankardeva.

(a) \textit{Arjunar rather sarathi narayan harie;
(b) Jagat guru amare sankar guru amare
Lukai asa dekha neda manikutar bhitare.

(iii) A song related to Manasa sung by Alimuddin of Loharkatha
is as follows –

O Lakhindar, beloved son of (Chando) merchant
One-month sanekar becomes one-month old
Two month sanekar becomes two-month old.
Ten months sanekar becomes ten months old.
One son namely Lakhindar was born
Day by day he grows up
(He) was taken to a Brahmin for study
Lokhai becomes a learned man under his care
He goes to school on elephant.
Padma noticed Lakhindar on the way
West wind blows on him
Lakhindar’s books fell on the land
(He) looks to and fro, none was there
Brahmin’s goes to throw cowdung
Lokhai told her to give betelnut
And ask her to give the book on his hand from land

In another song the oarsman sing –

Neither sister is at home
Husband died of snake bite
Where shall I go … … …

… … … … …

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O bride Phuleswari eh
Around the mer ghar sowed the seeds of coriander
My cordial husband died
(He) was of so sweet voice.

(iv) O my dear ones
(You) gave me marriage across the river
O my dear ones
Formerly I told you not to give marriage across the river
Across the river
O my dear ones.
Don’t give me marriage in Kalbari
(They) bind me in the banana tree
(They) punish me with banana leaves
I cannot tolerate such a painful torture
O my dear ones.
I said to my uncle
Don’t give me marriage to dhulia (Drummer)
Sleep do not come the whole night
For the sound of drum
O my dear ones ......
I told father, O my dear father
Don’t give me marriage at Basbari (place producing bamboo)
(They) bind me in the bamboo, beat me with stick
I shall not be able to tolerate
O my dear ones ......
SONG OF CUTTING BETELNUT

*Tambula, sarai* are integral part of our culture. A song of love yearning and sorrow –

Cut betelnut sitting
Sarai of brass metal in hand
Cut betelnut sitting
Oh my beloved give me betelnut
Household activities
Alone I did
Still I was an enemy for mother
From today (you) do it alone.

CHIKARAR GIT (HUNTING SONG)

People in old age were fond of hunting animals specially deer in the jungle. In a song a deer who was caught in net of hunter, laments and prays for her release to feed her children. In the meantime prophet Muhammad who was known for his faithfulness and kindness happened to be there. The deer prayed to Muhammad for her release. The following song tells the story –

In the name of Allah the huntsman takes his axe
He goes to the backside to cut bamboo.
Calling bismillah the huntsman he prepared the ‘trap’
The huntsman placed the trap under the earth.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
(E) DEVOTIONAL SONGS

Devotional song or bhakti gits are popular among the Muslims. They express their deep faith in God or Allah through various devotional songs like zikirs, zaris, deh bichar gits, baul songs, manasa gits, marfati gits, murshid gits, satyapirar git, song of small pox, ghazal, cheradhek etc.

The Zikirs

One of the most outstanding and sustaining contribution of the Assamese Muslims to the verbal art or the popular literature of Assam is the zikir and Jari. The zikirs are devotional songs which embody the tenets of Islam written in the type of Assamese Vaishnava poetry. The term ‘Zikir’ derives from dhikir or zikr, an Arabic word which means to recollect and chant the name of the Almighty Allah in the liturgical form. It means singing or remembering the name of Allah.

The zikirs are attributed to several composers but Azan Fakir is the foremost among them. He hailed from Baghdad to Assam approximate in 1630 A.D. and was a disciple of Khawja Nizamuddinn Aulyia. He alone composed eight score Zikirs. He married a local Ahom woman and settled at Gargaou near modern Sibasagar town and had a math built there.

The zikirs aims at the glorification of the Almighty Allah and the inculcation of those human attributes and graces which bring peace of the soul and establish harmony among the people.
It also aims at the recorganisation of the Muslim society of Assam, to bring religious awareness by regenerating their faith and love for Islam. Besides this sufi poet, a good number of Assamese Zikirs said to have been composed by many other saint poets in different times. Among them the name of Chand Khan or Chandsai, Maznudil Fakir, Sheikh Farid, Syed Martoza, Bandar Fakir, Ghulam Hussain, Muniya Dewan, Bethai Suwal, Hari Das Kumar etc. can be mentioned. The last two poets might have converted into Islam and assimilated with the Islamic faith. These saint poets might have been influenced by the contemporary Vaishnave poets. The Zikirs which Azan Fakir composed during 1635 – 42 show that in language and style they conform to the Vaishnava verses composed by Sankardeva (1449 – 1568) and Mddhabdeva (1498 – 1569) which are popularly known as Bargeets.

The zikir is performed usually at night, sometimes at wedding or community feasts, by a group of male singers. They sing the Zikir with a form of dance circulating the area by clapping their hands without the accompaniment of musical instrument. There is an oja or leader of the singing group who leads them in performing the zikir right from the beginning. Women also sing but do not dance.

Some zikirs notably those of Azan Saheb are direct teachings of Islam told in simple language: ‘Kalima Zikirar mul’ – Kalima is the source of zikir. Others show Sufistic influence and poses deeper meanings. The Second type is in line with deh bicharar gits, speaking of the relation between the body and the soul, of the uncertainty of this mundane life.
and thus trying to lead people to the path of righteousness. Some zikirs contain stories, divine characters and allusions to the contemporary tantric, Sakta or Vaishnava beliefs. For example A number of zikirs composed by Azan Pir rose above narrow communal feelings.

\[
\text{karane purane} \quad \text{choke kaish} \\
\text{bujaba mahanta lok,} \\
\text{ei duniya} \quad \text{ache dui bese} \\
\text{murside bujaba tok.}
\]

[The Quran and the Puran tells the samething; understand O Mahanta; in this world they exist in two garbs, Murshid will teach you so.]

Azan Fakir and other Zikir composers absorbed the tone and spirit of other Assamese folksongs like Ojapali and Deh bicharar geets. The following zikir compares well with the deh bicharar git and sometimes sung by Hindu Boragis or wandering minstrels –

\[
\text{This world is for one or two days} \\
\text{It is a flower garden;} \\
\text{Why do you cheat others?} \\
\text{This world will have you caught in its net} \\
\text{Why have I come to this world,} \\
\text{I should have died a child;} \\
\text{When I hear of punishment in grave} \\
\text{I cann’t put another step forward.}
\]

Allthough the Zikir is widely popular in Assamese it is absolutely originated and preserved in Upper Assam specially in the areas of Sibsagar,
Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Nagaon, Kakajan, Naharani etc. While in Lower Assam the Zikir is equally popular among the Muslims of Darang and Kamrup.

Some Zikirs found in Hajo area are as follows:

(a) *(Diha – Rakha rakha dilate hai oi momin emahia roja ...)*

O faithful one keep a month long fasting (Roja) in your heart
Keep fasting and purify your soul
Allah will reward with his one hand for it.

Pad – There will be a night O faithful one is the month of Ramadan
The night of Sab kadar (Lailatul Kader) (the night of fate)
The Quran was ordained by Allah, the merciful one
Read O faithful one with your heart
Know that only name or Zikr (of Allah) is the valuable thing

*Kalima hakikat, kalima sariyat*
Read the kalima
Kalima is the prayer O faithful one
It will go with you

Pray ask for with your own hand and then have the mercy of Allah.

(b) *(Kat gale bichari pam oi Allah)*

Where will we find you O Allah!
In what shape we will find you
Where we will find you
Ram and Rahim created the world
O Allah where we will find you
In what shape we will find
Where we will find … … …
The Hindus called (you) as Ram
And the Muslims called (you) as Rahim
O Allah where we will find you
We search for Allah in mosque
And we search for God in temple
Mosque & temple both are abode of religion
Where we will find you.

(c) *(Aha momin sakaloe eke loge gao)*
Come oh faithful one we sing together
We sing together
The name (zikr) of Allah
We sing together
The Zikir of khoda (God)
Come oh faithful one.
*Alif lam* play in
Oh faithful one
Oh in the heart of Adam
Oh faithful one
Take the name of Allah in your every breath
Come oh (momin) the faithful one.

**JARI**

The *jari gits* or *marshyias* cannot be conclusively attributed to Azan pir like any other Muslim community of any other place. The Assamese Muslims also have given expression to their sad reactions to the tragedy of Karbala in these songs. They are not necessarily part of
Islamic tenets; but the tragic story of Karbala behind them, as Prof. Syed Abdul Malik says, sung in the saddest possible tone, attracts the pious to them. The Jari is a kind of elegiac verse in character and content. It is known that the marshiya or Jari songs were sung in Assam even before the advent of the renowned saint-poet Azan Fakir. This fact is corroborated by the following stanza composed by this saint-poet –

*Marshiya geetak suni banda*

*Jage chaupar rati*

(On hearing the marshiya song the man woke up the whole night.)

These songs are full of pathos, sung specially during the Muharram festival. The performance of these songs is like a lamentation, not closely related to the rituals and doctrines. These songs are performed by a group of persons with a dance which is simply rhythmic in motion. This dance is performed circulating the arena with a slow motion of the step, with clapping and beating on the chest with hand. However, the main objective of these Jari songs is to express grief commemorating the tragic demise of Immam Hassan & Hussain. They depict the life of Hazarat Ali, Bibi Fatima, Aassan, Hussain, Qusim, Saharabanu and Sakina etc. All the characters drawn from the distant Arab world have adorned the Assamese grab in the Jaris. Of course, no musical instrument is used while performing the Jari songs.

A fairly good number of *jari* songs are current in different parts of Assam. They are equally favoured by all the indigenous Muslims of
Assam. As specimen, some of them current among the Muslim of Hajo are given below:

(i)  
hasane khujila pani bibi dila johar ani  
mae dila danda pakhi bao  
hassan Hussain dui bhai cikare calia jai  
johar khailo Madinar bhitare meri Allah  
hai meri Allah Sahib Allah ato  
dukh dili niranjan meri Allah

While Kasim, being separated from newly married Sakina, started for Karbala, the following Jari is sung:

jai jai pala Kasim Karbala Maidan  
karbalar maidan dinate andhar  
tate Kasime dera tambu tane  
bismillah buli Kasim hate lala curi  
bismillah buli Kasim ghorate uthilare hai  
sat din sat rati judha karila  
tetia Kasimar piaso lagila  
... ... ... ...

(The essence of the Jari is : Kasim, after many days of journey reached the sandy Karbala which is dark and dusty even at day time. He encamped there. In the name of Allah Kasim took the sword, in the name of Allah he rode on the horse. He fought for seven days and nights. Then he felt thirsty ... ... ... ...)
Makkai ki hol madinai ki hol najano
kot ki hol o Allah
Hasan-Hussain gaisil ran karibar
Hasanar khabar pai Hussain douria jai
o Hussain shahid hol karbalai maidane
ghorai ahi aji sehni morila o Allah
O diya ghorak dana pani o Allah
Makkai ki hol madinai ki hol najano
kot ki hol o allah
ghorake diya dana pani
kande Hussainar bari (wife)
kande mor bilap kario Allah
makkai ki hol madinai ki hol najano
kot ki hol o Allah
ghorar gavari goise tir kar pani
ghorar ga hoise tejare rangali o Allah
daur mari jai Hasenar bari (wife)
Fatemar age kai bibari o Allah
makkai ki hol madinai ki hol najano
kot ki hol o allah
sowar ji nai toi kot erili
mor Hasan basak oi Allah
Fatemai kande jar jar dekhiya khali asan
nabire bole Fatemai dayar bab dekhe an mok

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Hussain betar mukh oi Allah
jadi nedekhua Hussain betar mukh narakho ei duniya
Fatemar kandon suni gos-gasani taru patar
lagsi hahakar o Allah
prithibi mor kare tolobol
makkai ki hol madinai ki hol najano
kot ki hol o allah

— (Collected from Barni)

MANASA GITS

Manasa or Padmavati goddess of snake is the popular character of Manasa Kabya or Padma Puran written by Narayan Dev. This was popular among both Hindus and Muslims equally. At one time Muslims Ojas were there in Assam and they sung the Manasa gits. In the boat race songs also the Bheulla-Lakhinder episode is included. As most of the oars men were Muslim, they somehow incorporated Hassan-Hussain episode in the Manasa git. According to Dr. Maheswar Neog Padma Puran is full of myriads of characters and ‘Hassan-Hussain’ episode included in such prose. Dr. Satyandranath Sarma also comments that at one time most of the ojas were Muslims who sung Manasa geet. Because of their popularity this episode has been incorporated. According to Dr. P. C. Das that not only are the songs of Manasa, the snake goddess but also songs about the gods and goddess of Hindu mythology are popular among the Muslim of Hajo. Many Muslim groups perform the Manasa.
Ojapali. Bap Chandra Mahanta mentions that in the Muslim reign some yogis of East Bengal accepted Islam but their previous beliefs and rites still continue in their life. Thus they used to sing Manasa lore.

**MANASA LORE**

The Manasa lore narrated in *Padma Purana* is: Chando, a very prosperous merchant, is a staunch devotee of Siva. He refuses to worship Padma (another name of Manasa), the serpent goddess and even inflicts indignities on her. The irate goddess so designs things that Chando faces one adversity after another. All his merchant ships are sunk and six of his seven sons lose their lives: The last son Lakhindar is married to Beula. But through Manasa's machinations Lakhindar also dies of snake bite on the marriage night inspite of the best precaution taken by Chando. The grief stricken Beula gits a raft made, on which she places the body of Lakhindar. She herself sits beside it and the raft floats down the Brahmaputra. After going through many painful experiences, she at last arrives at the heavenly abode of Siva and Padma. There she pleases Siva with her dancing and at his intervention gets Lakhindar and his six brothers back to life of course with the promise given to Padma that Chando would be persuaded to worship her. Beula came back with resuscitated sons of Chando who at last agrees to offer a flower in obeisance to Padma although grudgingly.

In the colophons of the Padmapurana songs, the authorship is ascribed to Narayandeva one of the three Manasa poets of Assam, who
is called Sukavi. In Kamrup and Darang the Manasa geets are known as Suknani, the word being a corruption of Sukavi-Narayani. This lore was popular among the Muslim ojas.

Manasa song found in Fakirtala of Hajo describes the beauty of Lakhindar:

Weep Kali nag looking at the beauty of Lakhai
How I bite Lakhai, my heart breaks
Weep Kali Nag looking at the beauty of Lakhai
See the elbow round like kharam (wooden footwear)
See the toe like turmeric joint
Weep Kali Nag looking at the beauty of Lakhai
See the thigh like small banana tree
See the arm like dila of keteki flower
Weep Kali nag looking at the beauty of Lakhai

BEULA-LAKHINDARAR GIT

\[ \text{kande Kalir Nag} \]
\[ \ldots \text{lakhar rapa chai} \]
\[ \text{ki sate dakuwala} \]
\[ \text{prem phati jai} \]
\[ \text{kande Kalir nag \ldots \ldots} \]
\[ \text{bharir pata dekhu bala} \]
\[ \text{kharam ghurania} \]
bharir anguli dekhu bala
galdhire gathi
kande Kalir nag ... ...
mukkhan dekhu bala
purnimar Jon
dat pari dekhu bala dalimar guti
kande Kalir nage ... ...
uth duti dekhe bala
padum phular pahi
tare majat ache bala
misikia hahi
kande Kalir nage ... ...
chaku juri dekhubala
chal chalia tara
kapalkhan dekhubala
tilakhare phata oi
kande Kalir nage ... ...

SONGS OF SMALL POX (AI-NAM)

Mother small-pox is very much feared by Assamese women and therefore flattered with all sorts of sweet names. She is called Sitala, the cool one and Ai or Mother. When a child catches measles or any other variety of the rashes classed under small-pox it is said to have ‘flowers’ on it. Ainam or prayer to propitiate ‘Ai’ is women’s affair. Muslim women
also showed reverence to Sitala, goddess of small-pox and offered gram, flowers, arai chaul, milk, sesame, dhup-dhuna etc. in her reverence. The women also sing some songs like –

(i) Nine sisters discuss under the tree

Who will go to the city of man?

‘Kahuuri’ Ai comes forward and become ready to go

To see the customs & traditions of man

Nine sister discuss under the tree

(i) We will worship with flowers

Bhomorai cats it

We will worship you with milk

But the calf eats it

All things are mutilated by which we

Worship you

We worship you by your name every

Evening & morning.

(ii) We arrange seat for you at the floor

Placed mat in the inner room

Kanuri Ai your child cries at night

Let them cry and cry

We offer flowers on the child of Man

Come and see it.

– collected from Dampur

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BARAMAHI SONGS

Baramahi is a class of songs that depict the state of mind from month to month usually of a young wife, while her husband is away on business. Most of them could be classed as songs of love—love between the husband and wife—expressed against the backdrop of nature in different seasons, while some are small pieces simply describing the
lovelorn wife’s plight in successive months quite a number have a story element in them, mostly concerning the return of the husband after a long sojourn, the test of the fidelity of the wife, and their eventual happy reunion. Such baramahis naturally approach the ballad. Hindi poet Mahammad Jaisi incorporated Baramahi songs in his work ‘Padmawat’ Kutuban’s Mrigawati and Manjhan’s Maddhumalati are full of such songs. A few lines from Baramahi git collected from Bullut area of Hajo sung by some immigrant Muslims are as follows –

(Santi Baramahi geet)

(i) Ahit Kartik mashere, hyane base pir
Santi narir jauban dekhe cite nanai sthir.

(ii) Sthir karo Sahoder Kumar, sthir karo man
Jaite Jamunar ghate, paiba darshan
O mor sadhure.

DEH BICHAR SONGS

Dr. P. Goswami opines that Deh Bichar Songs are associated with tantric songs. There are certain secret sects that thrive under the cover of the overt practices of a section of the people. The sittings are known as Purna-sewa or Bar-sewa in their extreme forms, Bhitar sakam or Bhakat sewa in their milder aspect. The Bhakats or devotees who took part in these practices are not avowed Vaisnavites. At a Purana sewa sitting they forsake caste distinction and bring into use wine, women,
boar's flesh and such things are tabus to Vaisnavites. They hold their sitting usually at night. The Bhakats have some cryptic songs and sayings in which they hide their ideas and tenets from laymen's curiosity.

These practices should be classed with those of Bauls and Sahajiyas of Bengal, of course of the Buddhist Sahajya type, primarily tantric.

The tantrics consider the body as a symbolic of the universe. The body is a boat in the world ocean, the mind the helm, the Guru the soul guide. To go against the current, to fight the current of worldly desires and rose towards a state of bliss is the objective of tantricism. The procedure is ritualistic where the body is the starting point. Further at the bottom of the spinal cord is the kumeru, the abode of sakti while at the top is the sumeru, the abode of Siva. Rouse your sakti, unite with Siva: this is the essential feature of tantricism. By an extension of application, women represents sakti while man represents Siva. Hence, let man and woman unite and realize the blissful state. All this finds expression in the songs and sayings of the Bhakats belonging to the purana seva and its allied orders. Even in the more popular songs of Boragis or Wandering mendicants as the Bhakats are frequently known, the worthlessness of the body unless it is put to a special use is a constant theme.

These songs are influenced by 'pirs', Buddhist tantricism and Vaishnavism. In Upper Assam these are known as Tokari git, some scholars say that these song rooted in the Zikirs. The mystic songs
of Chand Sai belonged to this category –

Some other Deh Bichar songs prevalent in Hajo area are as follows –

(Collected by Ajgar Ali of Fakirtola, Hajo)

Ghosa – I build the house, O my country men
To eat and live happily, there
The west wind broke the house
I build the house ……

… … … … …
The door is also prepared
Yourself is going to die
Why you weep for other

Pad (verses) – O my nephews, my brothers and my countrymen
My wealthy brothers
In time of death
Govinda (God) is valuable.
Whom I call brother, my nephews all are in vain
We are imprisoned in illusion or Maya, we lose sense
The sleeping bed is prepared with bamboo and string of jute
The brothers, the nephews will make the bed, as they your enemy.
Whom I call brothers, my nephews & relatives carry me
Leave my boat of ghat (riverside) in the ghat and flee away
The dead-bed is made of bamboo, the mat is of reed
There the vulture sit and eat my body.

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Dr. Madhuram Baro also mentioned a *dehbicharar* song popular among the Muslims of Hajo in Manikut, a souvenir published by Asom Sahitya Sabha, Hajo session, 1999, as follows –

O mind why you have wasted time in idleness
Being born as human being
O mind, you have eyes to see, but you don’t see
(For which) this sorry state of condition of men
Being born as human being.

dehbichar git

*(collected form Doloitola)*

[1]

*adamre toi deher bichar kar haire hai*

*manabre toi deher bichar kar*

*adamre toi deher bichar kar haire hai*

*manabre toi deher bichar kar*

*ei deha tor aponar maje pohar dei dui chan suruje*

*chander alo chander bazar chander alo chander bazar*

*ase tor ei deher bhitar adamre toi deher bichar kar*

*manabre toi deher bichar kar.*

*adamre tor deher maje na daraja, othara mokam ase*

*adamre tor deher maje asinai ek pakhi ase*

*ei pakhike dharibi jadi*

*ei pakhike chinli jadi diler kabai namaj par*

*adamre toi deher bichar kar haire hai*

*manabre toi deher bichar kar.*
[2]
ase manus anandar bazare nigam nigam ghare
manus ase go
ase manus anandar bazare nigam nigam ghare
manus ase go
kamare loha chine, kumare chine mati
sonarie chine sona, sona chini gohona bonai
dudhete banai chana makhan goal bine chinena
ase manus anandar bazare nigam nigam ghare
manus ase go.

[3]
rup nadite ghate goile jindai manus mare.
rup nadite ghate goile jindai manus mare.
seii nadite dub nadile behesta paibena
rup nadir ghate goile jindai manus mare
rup nadir ghate goile jindai manus mare
rup nadir ghate goile jindai manus mare.
aru ek nadir pani dia aju bonai
rup nadir ghate goile jindai manus mare.
aju banaia namaj pare
rup nadir ghate goile jindai manus mare.

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The Cheradhek is a special item of folksong current among the Muslims of Darang region, particularly in Mangaldoi and Sipajhar areas of Assam. The term ‘chera’ means a change or a motion from one point to another, and the word ‘dhek’ denotes a tune of a melody containing long accents. The accents, rhythmic style and tunes of Cheradhek moves from low to high or from high to low accents, and runs from one tune to another.

Like Azan Fakir who composed Zikirs in Upper Assam to stabilize Islam among the local Muslims, some notable artists of Darang region composed Cheradhek to bring religious awareness among the indigenous Muslims incorporating some popular elements.

It is known from Kasachal Ambia, the book containing the bayans (speech or hagiology) of Hazarat Muhammad (pbuh) regarding other prophets that many bayans were composed and preserved by some outstanding Muslim saints and scholars after Muhammad; and in the later period, a good number of Muslim singers were influenced by them. In Saniadi and Adhiarpara area of Hajo some stories related to kasachal Ambia are sung in tripadi or payar dhek. Actually these are some verses from Kasachal Ambia. The following are some of such songs –

(i) Oh faithful Muslim
Chant the name of Allah
Listen, the story of Muhammad Hanifa

Hanifa gets all these whatever was

Narrated to him

The whole story is full of pathos

Has been described in detail

He fights twelve battles

Recorded in the book.

Thirteen battle will be written

In the town of Tungi

A woman named Sonabhanu

Lives in that town

Tell me what your desire is

As given you by Allah.

The night rolls out,

The light begins to grow

The ray of light spreads

Over the whole world.

Sohrab has prepared a large army

Two generals turned up to him ...

Don’t delay, get ready and be quick

You have to bring your all armies

All the great warriors have assembled

You speak the truth which is truthful

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(ii) One day, the valiant Rustom
Goes for hunting in pleasant mind
He has determined to kill one deer
And he eats the meat roasted by fire.
The horse is released for grazing
Rustom has taken rest therin ... ...
Sohrab has decided to attack Iran
He has brought an army to make war
All great generals put on fighting dress
Plentiful skilled soldiers are assembled
Sohrab has decided in his mind
To fight against the king kaikous
You have come with this intention
To surrender yourself to my father

The above song reminds us of the famous battle of parsian heroes
Sohrab and Rustom (father and son, the son was killed by father in the battle) and Mathew Arnold, the Victorian poet dealt this story in the poem Sohrals meets Rustom.

(iii) Alla alla bola bhai nabir name sar
Nabir kalima pari haya zaba par
Hazarat Alir beta rasular nati
Apanar hate mard phere dila hati.
Konor mate Kanchan mani kanormate bali
Kono kono kari ache dil meherbani etc.
HAJ (PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA)

‘Hajji’ is an Arabic word meaning ‘to make up one’s mind’, or ‘to make a solemn vow’. According to Islamic shariat it is compulsory (Farz) for every Muslim who possesses excess wealth, besides maintaining his family and dependents, to perform Hajj. Hajj i.e pilgrimage to Mecca is the fifth pillar of Islam, the others being kalima (faith), Namaj (prayer), roja (fasting) and zakat (charity) Lakhs of Muslims perform Hajj annually. A Haji (as the pilgrim is called) has to perform certain rituals like to go around the Kaba-sharif 7 times, to sacrifice camel or cow or goat etc in the name of Allah memorizing the tragic sacrifice of Ismail by his father Ibrahim (kha), to through stones at satan and to drink sweet water of Abe Jam Jam (a historic well or stream of water associated with Ismail son of Hazera Bibi. When Hazera Bibi was in search of water for Ismail, she could not find a drop of water for Ismail, in that part of the Arabian desert she was running mad in search of water Ismail, then a baby, was crying and beating its leg on the sandy soil. Hazera prayed to Allah for water. Gabriel was sent for her help. From the beating point of Ismail’s leg and Gabriel’s wings, a stream of sweet water namely Abe Jam Jam came out. The pilgrims are to drink water from it the women sing songs in connection with Hajj as follows –

kato haji uri uri dale dale
Allahar ghar chabar niat kare
amar kapale likhena ar amar nasibe likhena
amar mon jalaise amar dil jolaise

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jaite hoilu amar Mecca madina
jaite habe amar sonar madina
kato haji uri uri dale dale
Allahar ghar satbar (7 times) towaf (rotate) karar niat kare
amar kopale likhena ar amar nasibe likhena
amar man jalaise amar dil jalaise
jaite habe amar sonar madina
kato haji uri uri dale dale
dumba niya korbani karar niat kare
amar kapate likhena ar amar nasibe likhena
jaite hobe amar sonar madina
kato haji uri uri dale dale
saitanak pathar marar niat kare
amar kapate likhena ar amar nasibe likhena
kato haji uri uri dale dale
abe jam jam kuar pani khabar niat kare

Nabigit

Allahuma salliala Muhammad
ola-ali saedina Muhammad
futila ful futila ful futila
Muhammadia namer fulo futila
gazila ful gazila ful gazila
Muhamadia namer fulo gazila

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Allahuma salliala Muhammad
tonl-ali saedina Muhammad
howai kande jiddar ghate allahu
maf karok mabud allah illahi
adam kande charandipe allahu
muskil ahsan karo allah illahi
Habil kande patharar kube illahi
kabil kande bhaer dukhe illahi
Muskil ahsan karo allah illahi
Allahama salliala Muhammad
ola0ali saedina Muhammad.
la illaha illallahu sariatar mul
mukhe arfa mukhe madina jivai jibrael
la illaha illallahu sariatar mul
mukhe arfa mukhe madina jivai jibrael
kalima sarita hol mor kabarar sabi
mukhe arfa mukhe madina jivai gibrael
halima tohid hol more kabarar sabi
gase patte likai ase muhammad rasul
la illaha illalla saritar mul
gase ... ... ... ... ... ...
kalima twmzid hal or ajmir sharif
kalima tamzid hal mor kabarar chabi
la illaha illallahu shariatar mul
THE GHAZAL

The Ghazal is a kind of devotional and spiritual song that expresses tremendous love to God. Its use of metaphorical and symbolical style is amazing. The Ghazal is one of the outstanding contribution of Muslims towards Indian music. The Ghazals deals with the life and achievements of prophet Muhammad (Pbub) and expresses vividly the greatness of Allah. In Assam the Ghazal is performed in specially on the religious and the cultural occasion, particularly in the festival of Fateha-E-Dowaz-Daham without any accompaniment of the musical instrument. It is popular in all parts of Assam. Some of the Ghazals prevalent in Hajo area are:

(i) Oh prophet! I’m your unwise slave
    I salute you thousand times to your sacred feet
    Thousands of salutation and suppli cation
    Rasul will plead on the day of resurrection ...
    Oh prophet don’t forget us
    Take us to the heaven with you,
    My youthful time is passed in enjoyment
    No prayer and appeal has been done to Allah
I'm becoming old in this world
Haven't recognized Allah and Rasul
O prophet! I'm your foolish slave
I salute you thousand times to your sacred feet
Thousands of salutation and supplication
Rasul will plead in the day of resurrection
It is thinner than hair and sharper than razor
How to cross the bridge of death?
Nobody will survive forever in this world
Everybody will depart one after another ...
Thousands of salutation and supplication
Rasul will plead on the day of resurrection.

(ii) The bright apparel of heaven

The brightness of hell is fire,
Prophet has departed to heaven
   Who can stay without crying?
Kulsum bibi is lamenting
   Watching the face of the prophet
Why Allah has not taken us?
   Our beloved father is no more.
The bright apparel of heaven
   The brightness of hell is fire
The whole world mourns
On the twelfth day of Robiul awal
   At the demise of the prophet.
LOKA GIT

A special type of composition common to both Muslims and Hindus is called loka git in the area. It is very much popular in Lower Assam. As the term suggests (Loka – Folk, Geet – Song) Lokegeet i.e. folksong is quite secular in character and generally performed with dotora, a musical instrument with strings, and Khanjuri. A vivid picture of the rural Assamese society is reflected though these folksong. Except the secular types of songs sung by the Muslims a good number of folksongs current among the non-Muslims are closely connected with various rites, customs and festivals. According to dialects of Lower Assam their folksongs are classified into two genres 17:

(i) Goalpariya Loka Geet and

(ii) Kamrupi Loka Geet.

So far as the Kamrupi loka geet is concerned, it has distinctive feature both from the point of view of language and its theme. Many songs are related to the mythological characters like Lord Krishna, Radha etc. Some deal with the feeling of love and grief of woman. As specimen a few of them are given below:

Which woman weeps in the river ghat
Lamenting alone,
Why today my dear husband
Has not returned home?
Which woman weeps
After trading my dear merchant
Often used to come home
Today why my dear husband
Has not come back again
Which woman weeps
Sitting in the river ghat
The woman is waiting
When my dear husband will come
What will be my condition?
Which woman weeps.

(ii)

O Unfortunate mother
Why you give me marriage at tender age
O mother I was all the years
The beauty of our home
Why you give me marriage at a tender age
O unfortunate mother ... ...
Bid me farewell
I will go forever
O unfortunate mother
I know neither cooking, nor serving
I don’t know to worship my husband
How shall I worship my tigress like mother-in-law
She will tear my back-skin, O mother
Why you give me marriage at tender age
   O unfortunate mother
I know neither reading, nor writing
   Nor do I know weaving
Step mother-in-law will tear my hairs
Why you give me marriage at tender age
   O my unfortunate mother.

MARSHID GIT

Mursheet gits are akin to Dehbichar gits.¹⁸ The word Murshid is derived from the Arabic word ‘Irshad’ meaning ‘to give direction’, Murshid is the guru. Murshid geets are devotional or bhakti geets sung by the disciple in reverence to his guru. These are known as Marafati song also, Nature, house, boat are used as symbols in these songs. Islamic Sufism is the main spirit behind these songs. In some places these are termed as Baul song. These songs are similar with the bhakti geets of Lalan Fakir of Bengal, zikir of Azān Fakir, Bargeets of Sankardeva and Philosophy of Kabir. The Murshid geets are generally sung at late night.

   In the Dargh Sharif of garurachal hill
   What light you have added, O Allah!
On the hill, in the jungle
There lies the majar of 70 Aulias O Allah
By the side of the Mosque covered with cloth
Lies the majar of Ghiasuddin Aulia
On the Garurachal hill ....

On the yard of the *mosque*

The bhaktas read verses from the *Quran*

In sweet tune *O Allah*

On the Garuachal hill ....

In Magh & Falgun *Urs Mobaraque* is celebrated

Pilgrims visited the *major* of god

*Oh Allah*

On the Garuachal hill...

The Fakirs thronged here in *Urs*

Prayed to *Allah* with folded hands

So that they could cross 'pulserat' safely, *O Allah*

On the Garuachal hill ..... 

(Collected from Fakirtola)

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