CHAPTER VIII

PERFORMING ART FORM IN RAJANIKANTA

BORDOLOI'S LITERARY WORKS.

Performing art-form is an indispensable sector of study of folklore and folklife. The ingredients of performing art-form co-exist, more or less, with those of others included in the other three divisions of folklore material. But, however its discussion in a separate-head cannot be wholly overruled as the art of rendition or performance, what should we say it, needs a very micro analytical discussion. When we speak of the performance of an item of a particular type, we cannot ignore other factors viz. text customs and rituals etc. for apparent reasons. These all are closely associated with performances of that item.

Another most vital question may perturb us in determining the real items of performing art form as controversy is sure to arise for the entry and emergence of newer conception to the hithertho familiar items. R.M. Dorson, while ramifying, the sectors of folklore items observes it well thus -
"A fourth sector of folklore and folklife may be designated the performing folk-arts. Here we think primarily of traditional music, dance and drama. While the renditions of a folktale or a folk-song are now usually referred to as performances, they are more casual in nature than the conscious presentation of these arts by individuals or groups with folk-instruments, dance-costumes, and scenario props. The performing arts intersect each with the other and often appear in conjunction".\(^1\)

The logicality of Dorson's observation can best be analyzed taking the example of any item of a particular performing folklore. Any artificial rendition of a performing folk art may lose its original nature and shape. The traditions of the performing folk-art develop within the framework of its original form and then tend to interconnect and interact. Remarks R.M. Dorson, "The performing folk-arts also interact with the formal performing arts".\(^2\) Now-a-days, the regional peasant and tribal songs and music etc. are found to be attractive for urban people, and consequently the performers adopt sophisticated techniques and mannerisms.\(^3\) Dorson's observation is true in

\(^1\) Dorson, R.M. : *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* p. 4.
\(^2\) Ibid. p. 5
\(^3\) Ibid. p. 5
context of the Assam's performing folk and tribal art also. For example _putala nac_ and other tribal items of the like are found to become popular among the urban folk.\(^4\)

The arts developed in the framework of local or regional distinctiveness, thus, in turn make up elite factors which hold together different levels of society. Therefore, in understanding, performing folk-arts we cannot ignore also other factors viz. folk-gesture, folk-speech and folk-mannerism etc.

The word performance is hard to be defined. Outwardly meaning, performance is the medium of communicating and demonstrating any thoughts, ideas or contents. In this context, it means the manner of rendition of a folklore item. Normally, every folkloric action may be said to have involvement with performance. But we are strict in the use of the term when it is considered as an art-form only. There is no gainsaying the fact that most

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4. Our second enlightenment comes from Hoeburger's subdivision of folk dance (and folk music) in which he calls a first and a second existence. By this he means that in the first existence 'folk dance is an integral part of the life of the community' whereas in the second existence it is no longer a functionally integral part of the community but has become the property of 'only a few interested people'. R.M.

of the works of folklore before the sixties had concentrated upon the text only and little was done to study the context. After sixties only a new group of folklorists came up to study what Dorson termed it as 'contextual folklore'. Their deal was to study the communication process of folklore. This young group of folklorists comprises the celebrities like R. Abrahmans, Don Ben Amos, Delt-Hymes, Alan Lomax, Alan Dundes, K.S. Goldstein. B. Malinowski earlier propounded his concept: the 'context of culture and context of situation'. His declaration regarding the text and context and latter Dundes's advocating the concept of text, texture and context, persuaded the folklorists to study it mainly on the communicative processes and its performing qualities.

Thus it is seen that the contextual analysis of folklore material is more productive than the text oriented study of the same. But while propounding this theory we cannot summarily reject the importance of textual discussion as the principles of communicative processes and performing attributes alway underlie and co-exist with it.

7. Dundes, A.: Essays in Folkloristics, p. 25
The contextual study of folklore requires various elements and method. Performance is one of the most important among these. In this discussion the meaning of the word is taken in the perspective to mean the manner of action demonstrated in items of folklore viz. song, dance, drama, playfulness, instrument playing etc.

Assam is regarded as the repository of folklore materials that depends upon performance. The list is elongated one as it includes all the principal items viz. folk-dance, folk-drama and instruentent playing etc. Folk dances include bihu nac & hucari, deodhani, devadasi, ainitam, bagrumba, kheral etc. The classification of folk-drama has bhaona, putala nac or putala bhauriya, dhuliya, khuliya, oja-pali, kusan gan, bharigan etc. in its own territory of dramatic and quasi-dramatic art form. The musical instruments played in the form of performances also come under this sector of study. Some songs like biyanam, aïnam, holi song etc. depend primarily on performance. Folk-arts are combination of song, drama and dancing performances. All the items which come under this subgrouping exhibits a trend of communicative process. In many cases the traditional songs and dances are designated as the related forms of performing art-forms. Again in the cases of performing folk-arts of religious contexts
The elements of myth, legend etc. are found to be associated with these.

The literary works of Rajanikanta Bordoloi contain the mentions of some items of performing art form that are considered to be very popular in Assam. Bordoloi had the privilege to witness the performance of various folk-arts in his round the corner tours of Assam and he has mentioned some of these in his creative works in a befitting manner. The deep study he exercised in delving the cultural aspects of his people and land, reacted within his writer-self a sincere urge to expose these before his readers. Given under the most useful situations the mention of such items enlivened the description in one hand and revitalised the folklore material in the other.

A discussion on the performing folk-art mentioned in Bordoloi's work is done in the following few pages.

Bihu dance:

Special mention of bihu-nac sequences is a salient feature of Rajanikanta's novels. His Miri Jityari is adorned with the performing sequence of bihu-nac in two chapters of the book. In Bordoloi's novels the description of bihu-nac of different levels of society is rather
a common phenomenon. He described bihu performance of royal patronage in Rangili of the tribal and urban mass in Miri Jiyari and of commoners in Rangili, Miri Jiyari and Ralhai Ligiri.

Miri bihu:

In the second chapter of the novel there lies the description of bihu dancing by a group of Mishing youths and virgins who came to Lakhimpur from nearby Mishing village. This dance sequence is prescribed in the novel to meet the requirement of developing the plot. The hero and heroine of this novel Junki and Panei hailed from this Mishing community. Their childhood association turned to love in the youth. With the time rolling on and their love becoming deeper, the two lovers wanted to the more and more close by both body and mind. The unresistable yearning of simple-minded tribal youths and virgin can best be expressed in the context of bihu making and the bihu songs are the vehicle of emotional outburst of juvenile tenderness. So the author had chosen this perspective in his novel to create the necessary environment for the development of theme.

The entire contents of the chapter in question is the description of day-long activities that took place in a festive day of bihu observance at Lakhimpur. The small
sequence of Mishing bihu dance is then tagged into it, thereby enlivening the treatment of the theme of the novel with panoramic dimensions.

It is a common practice in upper Assam that on the day of the bar-bihu, the bihu-making groups visit the families of noble and riches and collect remuneration for their bihu-making. The novelist had described the same in Miri-Jiyari. On the day of the main bihu day a group of Miri (Mishing) young boys and girls came to the nearby areas of Lakhimpur township to perform bihu-dancing. Janki and Panei also joined the trip. According to a sequence of the novel the bihu-dancing was performed as follows:

Out of these groups a group of Miris attracts all. The youths of that group have four or five drums, four pairs of cymbals and two horn pipes. Their female dancers are also of maximum numbers. This group makes bihu in the premises of a gentleman. At first the drummers have danced and with them the female dancers also have accompanied. After this the dhuliyas and the kaliyas also begin dancing in a whirling fashion. The girls dance in rows. The drummers begin beating their drums from right to left and left to right and make aerobatic dances. After some time the

drum-beating is over. Then there comes an order from the gentlemen to the girls to sing with the clapping of hands and dance. The drummers at once get themselves aside. The girls make rows. A girl starts singing with her clapping of hands ..........9

The scene depicted in the novel is an usual phenomenon noticed all over Assam. Asserts P. Goswami - "Some or all the features of the Bihu festival are found amongst most of the people of Assam, whether plains or tribal. Tribals have even absorbed rites meant for cattle welfare. Among all these people the festival is primarily agricultural, coinciding with the seed-time... The Bihu dance in its most intensive form is seen among Miris, who dwell along the subansiri river in the Lakhimpur district and hire up. Miris worship the earth as a source of fertility".10

In the above description, quoted from the novel one may not find the features of a Miri (Mishing) bihu-dancing. But the description, however, is itself an item of performing art and has within it the elements of song, dance and music. The Mishings have their own

10. Goswami, P. : *Folk-Literature of Assam*, p. 11
bihu-songs and bihu dances. Elucidating on the description of this novel P. Goswami writes - "The Miri tribals of the Lakhimpur district are well known for their dances, and a novelist describing them as early as 1895, writes that in one form only the women dance while their male companion simply accompany them on drums, and in another form both man and women dance".\textsuperscript{11}

Dhol, taka, pepa, gagana, bahi, lao-pepa etc. are some instruments accompanied in Miri bihu dances. The shape and size of the dhols vary in some respects with Assamese dhols. The Mishings demonstrate in their dance some features of their own culture and as such the Mishing folk-dances are very natural. It is noteworthy that the Mishing bihu dancing performance does not contain figures gesticulation like the Assamese bihu dances in general. T.C. Pamegam observes with a more substantial view that the practice of breaking the waist in Mishing dance does not occur therefore, the dance does not refer to any sexual gesture, the youths play on the instruments and the virgins make dances.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Goswami, P. : \textit{Folk Literature of Assam}, p. 10
\textsuperscript{12} Kagyung, B.(ed): \textit{Mishing Sanskritir Alekhya}, p. 80
Bihu dance proper:

In *Dandua-Droh* (3rd Chapter) we find mention of bihu-dancing activities. The chapter *Guwahati nagarat* (in the town of Guwahati) by name covers a description of celebration of bihu at Guwahati. According to the description of the novel the Barphukan of Guwahati organised a bihu festival in the town in full conformity to the bihu observance of Upper Assam proper. The bihu-dance was performed by the dancers brought from that region. There is no elaborate description of the performance whatsoever, but the reference is significant from another viewpoint. The author has remarked in the novel thus:

> At first the bihu dance is performed before the Barphukan. The dancers are Ahom girls and one or two pairs of nadiyal virgins. The Barphukan and the Assamese menfolk are delighted to witness the dance, but the Kamrupi people get their heads down in shame.

It is interesting to note in the above reference the use of Asamiya and Kamrupi to mean the people of a same state. The novelist has used the word Asamiya to mean the people of Upper Assam where bihu was performed with its original fervour and gaiety.

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14. Ibid. p. 5
The people of lower Assam, perhaps, could not witness the likes of bihu dance of Upper Assam before the Barphukan organised this bihu observance. Therefore the kamrupi people thought it to be the vulgarised exhibition of physical gestures expressing erotic feeling.

Bordoloi had to describe such incidents to obliterate the reverse idea that pre-occupied the general people due to some condemnatory remarks by some Assamese gentlemen on bihu dance. The remark of Hali Ram Dhekiyal Phukan in Assam Buranj (1829) was more effective in this respect which cast aspersions on the purity of this festival. He remarked on bihu dance thus "Another festival is this that there is the Bihu music instead of the charak festival (of Bengal) for seven days in Baisakh. There womenfolk of the common people and dissolute men get together and perform dance and music of a very objectionable type. This festival is most prominent in the country side, but this bad custom is not found in Kamrup, it is found to larger extent in Saumar (Upper Assam)".  

Moreover bihu lost its glory and originality due to some political and social reasons. Remarks P. Goswami.

15. As translated by P. Goswami in The Spring Time Bihu of Assam, p. 34
"In later years, when royal or governmental patronage became scarce (Assam’s glory departed with the Burmese invasions of the second decade of the last century), and perhaps under the influence of Hindu orthodoxy, the dance and music associated with this spring festival seemed to acquire some obloquy”. 16

The description of bihu dancing as a performing art form has specially featured in Rangili. In Rangili we come across the bihu performance in two specific sequences of the novel, firstly in the description of nisa-bihu 17 and secondly in the discussion of sat bihu 18 festival at Rangpur.

The nisa bihu is described in the thirteenth chapter of the novel. According to the description of the novel Rangili, the heroine of the novel and other girls namely Padumi, Bichitri, Keteki assembled in the field and made bihu-dancing with the singing of songs and accompaniment of instruments. In a nearby place there were Satram, Joyram, Santiram and others. They also danced and sung like the girls did. For some moments thus, the dancing activities went on. Later on, the boys in course of their

16. Goswami, P.: The Spring Time of Assam, p. 34
merry-making and dancing went nearer to the woman group of dancers. Having seen this the group of woman-dancers comprising of Rangili and other girls opposed it and at once left that place. They assembled there for nisa-bihu dancing; which had to be held in a place not visited by menfolk.

The second bihu dance sequence is a small description of bihu dancing by Rangili in the premise of Rang ghar on the day of sat bihu festival organised by the Ahom king. Rangili, being an adept dancer was specially invited to make bihu dancing in front of the king. Rangili, and other sixteen girls, attired with bihu costume performed bihu dancing. The novelist has referred to it as gabharu bihu. First of all Rangili sang a quatrain of a song and danced. Then her fellow dancers repeated the refrain and all of them took part in the dancing. After the bihu by the girls the youths danced with the accompaniment of musical instrument. This has been referred by the novelist as deka bihu.

19. Though the novelist has used the term to mean the dancing performance of womenfolk, according to scholars gabharu bihu connotes nisa bihu, where only women take part. The practice is still current in Upper Assam. In the month proceeding the bohag the girls in Upper Assam assemble in a solitary place at night and does bihu-making. Entrance of males is a taboo.
(the bihu of the youths). After the deka bihu was over a miri bihu dance was performed in which miri dancers comprising of both male and female took part.

These are in short a few occasions where the reference of bihu dance in its performing occurrence are found in Rangili. The novelist has not given any choreographic interpretation of this folkdance but whatever he has furnished about it, is sufficient for a common reader to elucidate the fundamentals. Bordoloi was not committed to incorporate bihu elements in his novels with the scientific and technical integrities intact. Rather he wanted to place it in that particular form and context with what he once became acquainted and experienced.

Besides these reasons, the reference of bihu dance and other primary factors helped Bordoloi to enliven the description. In Rangili the entire sensuousness of the yearning lovers are well placed in the perspective of bihu description. It has been already mentioned that the sixth chapter of this novel revolves round a description of the bihu festival of Assam. With a careful observation Bordoloi could have avoided the descriptive nature of it. P. Sarma remarks that in Bordoloi's novels it is not the rarity to find exaggeration in some places. An essay called 'what the bihu of Assamese people is' has been
inserted in *Rangili*. Without this essay the grace of the novel would not have also lost. Of course Bordoloi has his mind in this thing. He says - 'if the readers can not have patience, then they may rather leave this chapter without reading. We are to lose nothing for it'.  

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It is apparent from the above remarks that Bordoloi was pre-determined to arrange such elements for his sincere love for Assam and its people. P.C. Bhattacharyya rightly does observe.

Bordoloi has furnished adequate description of *bihu* festival, Assamese marriage and trials in his novels. While furnishing these he has not resorted to exaggeration in portrayal, rather he has exhibited sincerity and extreme love of Assam. For his love for his mother land, sometimes it appears as if the novelist has turned to be an admonitor. Hemchandra Barua in his *Kaniyar Kirtan*, *Bahire rang cang bhitare kowa bhaturi*, and Lakshminath Bezbaroa in *Kripabar Barbaruar kakatar topola* and *obhatani* etc. established the high ideals of social reform and love for Assam. Bordoloi's novels are also representatives of same ideals.  

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Bordoloi, in his life time perhaps witnessed *bihu* in its disintegrated form and style. The disintegration took place for obvious reasons. Political instability of the time, socio-economic condition and other related factors like fast changing cultural scenario of the state tended to transform the original context of this festival sharply. Bordoloi had to fight against these transformations. His regrets are very clear in what he expressed in *Miri Jiyari* -

> My poor *Miri Jiyari* has not learnt to sing *bangala* songs in the ways of now-a-days.
> When she is hurt, she can *sing* in distorted *Assamese*.  

Therefore the novelist has advocated himself for the intrusion of elements thus -

The descriptions that we have furnished here belong to this present time. But before one hundred years the *bihu* festival and its songs and dances occured throughout the whole of Assam. Love blossomed in the heart of young boys and girls in the merriment of this festival! and for the love boys made girls, whom they courted, their life partners. We can stand firmly in our view that there was no any bestial

feeling in the songs, dances and love. There was nothing vulgar in the song and dance in bihu of that time. The ability to sing and dance was rather treated as a quality.

Bihu dance is regarded as one of the most important folk-dances of Assam. Bihu is basically a complex of folk rituals and therefore its songs, dances and all other elements have functional characters. Bihu is more closely associated with the fertility cult and as such its songs, dances etc. are all expressive of fertility rites. It has been said that the bihu dances are such as to excite erotic feelings. The kinds of such dance are performed to excite the cultivating land for better yielding. Agriculture was the innovation of women and hence the relation of women's fertility with that of soil was noticed by men. Therefore being evoked with the conceit of like produces like people believed the idea of increasing harvest with the increasement of women fertility. As such sexuality is perceived in agrarian rituals. In fact expressing a reverent attitude towards the forces of regeneration and fertility in man and nature is a common existence of every society. Observes G.J. Frazer

23. Bordoloi, R. : Rangili, p. 16
thus, "...... the profligacy which notoriously attended these ceremonies was at time not an accidental access, but an essential part of the rites, and in the opinion of those who performed them, the marriage of trees and plants, could not be fertile without the real union of the human sexes; ....... cruder races in other parts of the world consciously employed intercourse of the sexes as a means to ensure fruitfulness of the earth".  

Love is the central theme of the bihu songs, therefore with the songs of this juvenile exuberance the magical rites are performed. That is why the bihu dances are erotic in character. The eroticism is best expressed in the bodily expression of the dancers. Considering the time when the bihu dance is done in Assam and observing the movement of bodily parts of dancers and also the relation that takes place during the dance, it is to be decided that the impulse of bihu dance is sexuality. In fact, sexual figures are not at all absent in bihu dance.  

26. Goswami, P.: Asamiya Jana Sahitya, p. 20
The distinct reference of hucari dance is not found in Bordoloi's novels. But in Miri Jiyari the novelist has mentioned the bihu-making group who came to the town and collected money. The hucari institution is a prototype of many rites and rituals current in connection with social reforms. P. Goswarmi writes about hucari thus -

"With Bihu is to be associated the Huchari institution, the latter forming a complement of the former. From the second day of the Bihu week proper, for several days, the male-folk of the village form into bands and visit the different house holds singing and dancing. They dance a bit, sing carols wishing the welfare of the household visited, and receive presents of money, clothes or eatables. If the Bihu dance proper is objected to by orthodox Hindus or sophisticated persons Huchari is universally accepted." 27

He further remarks that huchari song and dance in one consideration is the preface of bihu song and dance. If the huchari confines itself in household, then the bihu dance and song belongs to field. 28

27. Goswami, P. : Folk Literature of Assam, p. 8
28. Goswami, P. : Asamiya Jana Sahitya, p. 23
Some or all of the features of the hucari institution are found among most of the people outside Assam. The holi festival is a similar institution observed during the phakua. A similar institution is current among the Shyan people of north Burma. A group of people goes on the road playing instruments like drum, piper and brasstray. The owner of the family receives the group in the gate and offers rice, egg and presents money with honour.  

Ojapali:

Ojapali is a primary form of performing folk-art, which can be more precisely placed in the sub-division of quasi-dramatic art form. 

Mention of ojapali occurs in Dandua-Droh in two different occasions. Firstly, it is mentioned in the third chapter of the novel in the description of arranging bihu - observance by the Barphukan of Guwahati. It is very interesting to notice the appearance of ojapali performance in the observance of bihu of Upper Assam import. This art form is very popular with the people of lower Assam. In Bordoloi's time a divisive sentiment

29. Gogoi, L. : Bihu Eti Jumiksha, p. 6
of upper and lower Assam was roused in the minds of common people by those who were there in the administration high-up. They even used to call the people of Kamrup as dhekeri, which sounds somewhat derogatory. Therefore, Bordoloi, had incorporated this art form keeping in mind the sentiment of the Kamrupi people and the regards for the cultural element of their own. However we find no vivid description of the performance there. Secondly, the performance is shown to occur in the fourteenth chapter of the novel in the description of Durga puja observance by Hardatta Choudhary at Jikeri. According to the description of the novel a famous group of ojapali chorus singers of Kamrup arrived there and presented before the audience the verses of Har Cauri's marriage from Kalika Puran. The chief of the group, popularly called oja, charmed the audience with his lucid recitation of the verses and also with his gestures and dances. The daina-pali who always made exaggeration of all things, made the, audience to laugh by his performance.  

Again in Rahdai Ligiri also we find the reference of ojapali institution organised by Chandra Kanta Singha during his recreational stay at Hajuli.  

32. Bordoloi, R. : Rahdai Ligiri, p. 35
The ojapali institution of Assam has a long history. It has passed through different phases of transformations and changes. Primarily an institution of tradition and folklore, the ojapali later became associated with religion. History gives us many information regarding the patronage of kings of ancient Kamarupa, towards this traditional performing forms current at that time in Pragjyotish and Kamrup. Even in Ahom rule, ojapali entered the royal arena as a means of amusement in festivals and observances. We have already mentioned the reference of Rahdai Ligiri, where, it is said, King Chandra Kant Singha invited the ojapali chorus group to perform for his merriment in the off-day camp of the King at Majuli. The type witnessed by the king was Satriya Ojapali which was patronised by the Ahom Kings.

Ojapali Performers and Structure:

The ojapali group comprises of five to six numbers. The chief of them is called oja and others are his assistants. They are called palis. The oja is the master of the group, hence is called so. The palis are his disciples. The oja or the chief of the group should be well versed in singing and dancing. The oja leads the chorus by singing the refrain and the palis repeat it. In this act they strike cymbals. The chief of the palis is known as diana pali.
Occasion of performance and presentation of Ojapali:

The ojapali is associated with different rituals and as such it has different occasions of performance. The most noteworthy of the occasions is the religious one. In religious occasions mostly in the worship of different gods and goddesses ojapali performance is held. In social functions also this institution is performed as a means of recreation. There are many forms of ojapalis found in Assam and these are performed in different occasional times. One type of ojapali is performed in the Satras also.

As already mentioned ojapali is a choral singing performance by a limited group of people. The participants take their positions in a specific place facing the east direction. The palis and the daina pali take their positions behind the oja. The musical instruments they use are the cymbals for each of them. Before starting the performance proper, the palis and the daina pali stand during the vanalana recital. The style of singing, dancing and body movement varies in different types, current in the state of Assam. The oja shows hand gesture (mudra) in describing the events of verses. The palis move from back to front sometimes to turn again to their original places. The daina pali, positions himself in between the oja and the palis.
The ojapali institution is a quasi-dramatic art form in which elements of folk-drama have intruded in different stages of presentation. K. Vatsyayan observes interesting features thus — "in the course of the oja-pali dances, the men performers present many short numbers which depict the gaits of animals, elephants, horses and lions, and the movement of mongoose and strokes. One again we see that there is a close resemblance between the tribal and the folk forms. Movements and gaits of animals are captured by the dances on both levels, but very differently. In the tribal dances there is imitation, here there is nothing".33

The ojapali institution is an open air performance and no stage etc. are required for it.

Different Forms of Ojapali in Assam:

Broadly the ojapali institution of Assam may be placed under two or three divisions:

1) Vyasar or Biyahar ojapali
2) Ramayani or Rang Gowa ojapali and
3) Sukanani Ojapali

33. Vatsyayan, K. : Tradition of Indian Folk Dance. p. 120.
However these divisions are more conventional than observatory. Looking into different forms of ojapali institution everywhere in the lower part of Assam and the manner of performance, there can be more classifications of it. Classification can also be made depending on the context form and these of the songs recited by them.

It has been said earlier that this ojapali institution has found mention in Bordoloi’s creative works in suitable places. Bordoloi nurtured deep sense of regards for each and every item of folklore of his motherland and he incorporated these into his novels where he found the contexts suitable. Detailed discussion on such each and every item cannot be expected in the pages of novels. But the mere mentioning of these has done a great service for the traditional heritage of such kind.

Dhaona: A major performing art form:

The ankiya-bhaona or bhaona, as popularly called is a kind of major traditional dramatic performance of Assam. It is needless to mention that the ankiya-bhaona performance was introduced in Assam by the great Assamese saint Sankardeva in the mid fiftees. The ankiya-bhaona introduced as a mean to propagate Vaisnavism in Assam was heavily influenced by the sanskrit drama and other traditional performance in form and contents.
This major dramatic art-form has intruded into the pages of Bordoloi's novels on many occasions. Bordoloi had regards for the creative genius of Sankardeva and his religion as well. With a view to highlighting this major art-form introduced by this great son of Assam he brought in the mention of this institution in the interest of the novels.

The context of bhaona in Bordoloi's novels:

In *Nirmal Dhakat* (fifth chapter) arrangement of holding Kamsabaddh bhaona is shown to create the environmental for Nirmal and Rupahi's elopement. This has done a great service in portraying the incident in a naturalistic way. Nirmal and Rupahi were in love but they could not meet regularly. On the bhaona day, Nirmal had to talk with Rupahi for an urgent business. His parents was negotiating for his marriage with another girl, which he could not allow to happen. Therefore, on this night when everyone of the village would be busy in the namghar, enjoying the performance, they would be able to elope.34

34. Bordoloi, R. : *Nirmal Dhakat*, pp. 5 - 7
Again in *Rangili* the entire 29th chapter covers the description of holding *Rukmini haran bhaona*. Santiram, a supporting hero of the novel took part in a female role of the performance and as per previous arrangement eloped with his beloved Padumi in the climax of performance in the cover of darkness. In the first reference, i.e. in *Nirmal Bhakat* there occurs no description of presentation of the performance, but in *Rangili* the chapter coming under the name *Rukmini haran bhaona* itself, delineates the process of a *bhaona* performance proper: from purbaranga (dhemali) to its yabanika (end). Significantly the artform in both the novels is intruded to stand as a perspective for one particular unit action - the elopement of lovers. Bordoloi selected this performance to portray such incidence and created the required scene in the context of Assamese society in which such incidence was a common occurrence.

*Anikiya nat, bhaona and bhabang*:

To connote the meanings proper of these three words require extensive discussion as scholars have differences of opinions regarding this. But in the present study we have attempted only a brief note for

understanding the terms. In reality, the meaning which the world bhaona carries, if used singularly can be attributed in terms like ankiya bhaona also. The use of the word ankiya as a prefix preceding nat and bhaona is modern. The contributor of this dramatic art form, Sankardeva never used this prefix to mean the same. Rather he used only jatra, nat and nataka etc. to signify his own creation. In the post-sankarite period ankiya-nat if we use it to call, suffered a decayance both in form and content. For this, perhaps in later years the new word bhaona was used to differentiate the dramas of others with the kinds of Sankardeva. Ankiya bhaona means a special form of abhinaya. The abhinaya of other drama excepting the ankiya nat is also regarded as bhaona. In this context one is to keep in mind different expressions like bhaon lowa (taking part), bhaodhaa (portraying a role) bhaon dhara (pretending) etc. The word bhaona used in common parlance to mean abhinaya. But dissimilarities of views are bound to occur. According to H. Bhattacharyya the real meaning of the word bhaona is an imitation of action of others. In prosody also the word bhabana conveys the meaning of expression

36. Sarma, S.N. : Asamiya Natya Sahitya, p. 11
37. Deva Goswami, K: Ankiya bhaona, p. 6
of sentiment. To speak the truth bhaona signifies the abinaya of ankiya nat only.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus it is seen there is endless discussion as to the real meaning of such terms. Bordoloi never went into the troubles of differenting; rather he used both the words to denote a uniform meaning. He was a novelist of rare calibre and as such wanted to represent the people from elite to folk level. The idea of the word being twisted from bhaona to bhabana cannot be set aside at all. At least the word is used unhesitatingly in common parlance while telling about dhuliya bhaona (dhuliya bhabana) and khuliya bhaona (khuliya bhabana) by the commoners.

Representative mention of Rukmini haran bhaona in Rangili is a clear manifestation of the performance in folk-cultural level. It is needless to mention widely that while planning the ankiya nat, Sankardeva borrowed some elements from the indigenous performances viz. ojapali, dhuliya-bhaona and putala nac to enrich his dramatic creations. Therefore a rare variety of folk-elements are distinctly seen in bhaona performance which inherited more traditional elements into it. Rightly

\textsuperscript{33} Bhattacharyya, H. • Asamiya Natya Sahityar Jilingani, p. 74
opines S. Bharali - Some activities of purbaranga are done by sutradhara. Sutradhara does not appear in dhemali, gayan and bayan only act here. The same institution like dhemali is seen in putala nac, kusan gan etc. In fact such propitious institutions are held in many folk-drama before the beginning of abhinaya. Bordoloi's portrayal of this bhaona performance which is a folk-deviated form is the representation of a rich Assamese dramatic art-form.

Formation of a dramatic group; preparation and presentation:

Formation of a bhaona group and its preparation in an Assamese village takes almost a month long time. Generally bhaonas are held on some great occasions and preparation starts long before the day of occasion falls. A script is selected for the said purpose from any printed version and if not found otherwise, a new drama is composed locally on any popular mythological theme. After the preliminaries are over and final selection of the script is done, roles are allotted to respective performers. All these are done under the able guidance of someone, whose long association with such performance is

treated as a respected quality. Then the rehearsal (akhara) starts and continues regularly in a place suitable for the purpose. Womenfolk are not directly incorporated into the performance, even the roles of female characters are enacted by the selected band of actors. This whole process is called nat mela (the starting of drama). purna-akhara is held on any opportune day just before the actual day of performance.

Generally the performance takes place in nam-ghar and other such village community premises. The group of performers vary according to the requirement of the roles of the script to be enacted. The premise of namghar is suitably arranged to hold the performance. A co-ghar (green room) is built to accommodate the actors during the performance for attiring. The performance is a night-long affair and local arrangements of lighting are done in the form of ariya etc. Of course now-a-days modern electricity is used to make the lighting. In bhaona performance no elevated stage is required. It is performed in the plinth surface of the hall with a temporary barricade in between the area of performance and the audience. Sometimes no physical barricade is also arranged. Only a line of imagination keeps the audience in orderly rows. The area selected for the
purpose covers almost the entire area of the namghar and like.

With all the arrangements neatly done the performance begins with the dhemali institution (the preliminaries). Before it, the groups attire themselves according to the requirements. Precisely thinking a group of bhaona performance can be divided into three sub-groups – i.e. the sutradhar, the gayans and bayans and the bhaoriyas. The sutradhar is the most important person in this dramatic art-form and he conducts the performance from the preliminaries to the end (yabanika). The gayans and bayans are the most integral part of the group. They sing choral songs, plays on music and help the sutradhar in all aspects. They sit in a special site for easy profession of the on-going proceedings of the performance.

Dhuliya bhaona in Bordoloi’s novel:

Dhuliya bhaona, is another important folk performing artform described by Rajani Bordoloi in his novel. In the fourteenth chapter named Jikerit (in Jikeri) of

40. "The formation of the Word dhuliya may be shown as dhol, i.e., drum + iya < OIA ika + akai+aai+a<i<iya. One who plays a drum is called a dhuliya" – D. Kalita in Traditional Performances of South Kamrup", p. 44.
the historical novel Dandua Droh, dhuliya performance has found a significant weight, which reflects the folkloristic approach of the author. The performance is shown to have occurred in the premises of Hardatta Choudhary in his Durga puja celebration. The description covers an extensive picture of the performance by three different troupes namely Madhapuria dhuliya troupe, Salmaria dhuliya troupe and Barnibaria dhuliya troupe. All these groups are said to have been of Kamrupia dhuliya which bears a rich tradition in Assamese traditional performing artform. The description of the performance, which took place at the night on the day of Saptami puja, revolves round all forms and units of action Viz. drumming, doing acrobatics, singing and mimicry etc. The description also gives an account of the musical instruments associated with the performance (dhol and tal), the attires of the performers (ghurlajama) and other equipments like mukha (mask) etc. The groups performing the bhaona consisted of forty to a hundred performers. The numbers of dhol they used were fifty and so were other musical instruments. According to the account of the novel the performance took place in the following stages:
Firstly the drummers arrived in the place and started beating the dhols. This is popularly called ceon. Secondly, after performing different ceons the acrobatics (khar) were demonstrated. At the third stage the mockery of a folk-drama was enacted. All these stages are representatives of a dhuliya performance proper. The most significant thing is that Rajanikanta Bordoloi has placed this particular art form in the pages of this novel for his high esteem to it. Moreover the reference of the art-form has given the description in particular and the novel as a whole a social contextual perspective. It is shown to be performed in a social function for the merriment of common people; the function organised by none other than Har-datta Chaudhary, the antagonist of the Barphukan. Hardatta had to mobilise his people for the ensuing revolt against the mighty Ahoms and prove his right, might and wealth. Holding of such a performance under the aeiges of private enterprenureship is no mean a task and Hardatta proved his lordship by arranging it in his private premises. The tradition of holding such institutions on private observance is seen from fairly past.

41. Bordoloi, R. : Dandua-irbh, pp. 41-44
Dordoloi, it appears, drew the inheritance of such instance from his long association with the social milieu of Assam.

**Classification of dhuliya troupe:**

D. Kalita suggests three divisions for south Kamrup area of Assam but his classification seems to be applicable for the whole of the district. His classification is as follows:

(a) **sabha gowa dhuliya**
(b) **biya gowa dhuliya**, and
(c) **puja gowa dhuliya**.\(^2\)

However, he expresses his reservation as to the classification he made and does not like to delimit the forms in these three classes.\(^3\) The classification is made on contextual occurrences of the same therefore more forms on more contextual settings may be found.

The **sabha gowa dhuliya** performs in **sabha**, a kind of socio-religious fair traditionally current in Kamrup. The **biya gowa dhuliya** is confined to the contexts of marriage functions. The **puja gowa dhuliya** is so called

\(^2\) Kalita, D. : Traditional performances of south Kamrup, p. 35.

\(^3\) Ibid. p. 36.
because it performs in connection with puja. The dhuliya troupes referred to in Dandua Droh belong to this classification.

**Different stages of performance:**

The different classes of dhuliya almost have identical performances but a little variation as to the group-members and units of action is sure to exist in conformity to the social contexts and area concepts. Our discussion is made confined to the performances of puja gowa troupes, since the novelist has referred to this particular class only.

**Vandana, malita, jurani git:**

The group of performers being attired with their dresses (ghuria jama as has been mentioned in the novel) enters the sabha-thali (skt. sthala), the place of performance. Like all major performing art-forms, prevalent in Assam, the dhuliyas also do not require any elevated stage. Neither they require any dress-house, rather they choose a house nearing the place of performance for their dress-making. After entering the thali the group divide themselves into two groups - the drummers and the singers. The drummers beat the dhols with typical beating patterns. The chief of the singing group sings a refrain
and the others follow in the choral form. The singing takes place along with dance movement of the performers. This is called the singing of Vandana. After Vandana the singing of malita takes place. The chief of the drummers, called bain comes forward with two or other fellow drummers and begins it with the accompaniment of beating drums and playing on cymbals. Malita is the etiological narratives of drums and cymbals, specimens of which are furnished in course of our discussion on musical instruments.

Thereafter the jurani git is sung, the kind of which is hard to be find in definite form. These are neither transmitted by tradition or locally and instan-
teously composed thereby being an integral part of the rich oral heritage. Jurani git is the initial song of the performance.

Khar, khat, kusti — the acrobatics:

It is the next phase of the dhuliyā performance. In this the performers exhibit a series of physical feats. The performing of this unit is a notable feature of this art-form. Rightly does remark H. Bhattacharyya - "it is a unique thing in Assam that the professional parties of drummers, particularly of the district of Kamrupa and
Darrang not only beat drums and cymbals, but also exhibits varieties of feats like the modern circus parties.\textsuperscript{44}

But the acrobatics, demonstrated by the dhuliyas require more observations, Remarks R. Sarma "The act of kusti may be equated with circus ... It appears to be a combination of some traditional sports and games. Of course, these games and sports are directly associated with physical feats. The traditions of acrobatics showing is not confined only to Kamrup or Assam, but current in other parts of the country.\textsuperscript{45}

There are different kind of khars such as thiya khar, ulta khar, algatediya khar, tangal mocora khar, pon khar, candeni saraka khar, lara khar, cari bagara khar etc.\textsuperscript{46} Bordoloi has mentioned almost all the khars in his description. An outline of each of the khars, mentioned by the author is given hereunder -

\textsuperscript{44} Bhattacharyya, H. : \textit{Origin and Development of Assamese Stage and Drama}, p. 34


\textsuperscript{46} Das, P.C. : \textit{Kamrupar Dhuliya Anusthan, Assam Rani, Rangali Pihu Issue, 1985.}
(a) **Pon khar** - (straight khar): In this khar the performer jumps in his standing position and performs straight.

(b) **Olata khar** or **Ulta khar** (Opposite khar): At this stage the dhuliya performs the acrobatics by jumping and then standing on both the hands with his feet pointing upward.

(c) **Algatediya khar** (khar performed in air): The word *alagite* means without touching hence this variety denotes a jump performed without touching the earth.

(d) **Tangal mocora khar**: Tangal means a strip of bamboo prepared for tying something. Hence it is a khar of twisting the body of the performer like a tangal.

(e) **Chandani saraka khar**: Chandani is a device made of paddy straws climb a tree. In this khar the performers cross circle made by the chandani.

Besides these, some other khars are also mentioned by the novelist. One of these is **algakhar**, which is performed on the drums. In this khar a drum is placed on another one and the performers stand on it with another
two drums beneath his arm and jumps straightforwardly. This is accomplished with the rapid beating of drums. This is also known as dholar khar and on many occasions numbers of drums are placed atop the others.

Then the novelist has described the performance of kusti on a piece of bamboo, shouldered by two members of the group. He becomes highly vocal in praise for the circus-like feats of the performers of the group.47

Besides this feat exhibited by the performers in the context in question many other gymnastic activities are exhibited by the dhuliyas. To name some of these we can mention of rope dancing, crossing of rings with fire, breaking of hard things like coconut, lifting of glass full of water being bow-shaped etc.

Dramatic Performance:

This particular item, performed by the dhuliya group is known as cang in popular parlance. In Bordoloi's novel Dandua-Droh also the enactment of a humorous drama is found in the form of a pair of rustic villagers.48 The drama, they enact is not based on any well-knit story.

In reality they present some hilarious comic scene full with crude elements. As such the mimicry can attract the audience most. Writes D. Kalita - "The additional attraction of dhuliya performance is its mimicry. By this they can arouse humour overtoned with social criticism. Their dresses are unnatural, the sticks they use are also peculiar and even the equipments are of lower category...

.... Most of the dhuliya troupes perform this even in their local dialect in a very uncouth manner. The other comic scenes are of family and social satires, such as, disunity among members of a family, particularly separation of two brothers after marriage, property division of a family, lack of education in village areas etc. It is true that they may borrow thematic contents from the religious scriptures like the epics and the puranas but they remodel the themes according to the suitability of the non-educated village folk". 49 Besides this many troupes draw themes from contemporary social context. It is seen, sometimes they narrate the story of social tyrannies enforced by landlords and zamindars. In this context such narration can be treated as a social demonstration of the oppressed class. Oppression and tyrannies etc. are easy

49. Kalita, D. : Traditional performances of South Kamrup. pp. 41-42
to be manifested in folk media and in this consideration folklore perceives the struggle of the down trodden.

That the mimicry is enacted in an uncouth manner is clearly evident in the description of Bhela bhai's performance.\textsuperscript{50} Even the use of mask, known as mukha in Assamese which is another attractive feature of dhuliya performance has found in Bordoloi's writing.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{Biya nam :}

In course of our earlier discussion in chapter five of this study it has been mentioned that Bordoloi has incorporated the marriage elements into his novels in three occasions. In all the references, specimens of marriage songs are mentioned and demonstrated to as sung forms.\textsuperscript{52} Hence a discussion of biya nam as a performing art-form cannot be overruled.

The marriage song or biya nam of Assam exclusively refers to the choral songs sung by womenfolk in a marriage ceremony. It is a very popular audio art-form current in Assam from days immemorial. The songs bear a rich cultural heritage of the state and its performance is an added asset in the vast granary of performing folk-art of Assam.

\textsuperscript{50} Bordoloi, R. : \textit{Dandua-Droh}, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 42 (also foot-note)
\textsuperscript{52} Bordoloi, R. : \textit{Rangili}, p. 103; Nirmal Phakat, p. 12 Hanomati, p. (conclusion)
Marriage songs are many in numbers and performed throughout the entire day from morning till dawn of the next morning to enliven the most rejoicing proceedings of a man's auspicious day. These songs are sung to suit the different stages of the day's activity and even before that. In earlier days when the activities of a marriage were commonly shared by co-villagers preparatory works were accomplished particularly by the women-folk by singing dhan bana git, khandah khunda git etc. But gone are those days and the scope of performance is delimited to one or two days ahead. The classification of marriage song, it seems, would be difficult task as most of these function in ritualistic contexts. Still some of these can be cited as follows — joronar git, (songs of joron offering), sraddhar git (songs sung during sraddha rituals) panitola git (songs sung in water fetching), kaina uillowar git (songs sung at the time of bringing the bride for offering), sampradananar git, suwaguri tola git (songs of suwaguri lifting), nowowar git (songs of bathing of bride and the groom) etc. The list is a long one and perhaps would be endless if all the contextual formalities are taken into account.
Teasing Songs:

The most noteworthy group of songs is the teasing variety which in native nomenclature is called jora nam (khisa git in Kamrupi). "These songs are sometimes almost non-sensical, in the sense that hardly any coherence of thought is found in them. In the process of extemporization fancy becomes wild and all kinds of things tend to get mixed up. The veteran Namatis usually possesses a repertory of good and often poetic songs. Extemporization is best observed in certain humorous situations which do not quite form part of the regular stages of all. It so happens that the bridegroom's party make slighting remarks upon the bride in order to extol the excellences of the groom. The bride's companions do not take the insult lying down and make proper retorts. The context usually ends in good humour but not in every case." 53

The group of performers vary in biya nam. The participants may be either young girls or women or the both. The performance is accomplished in both sitting arrangements, usually done on mats and dhiris and standing to suit the contexts of singing. The chief of the namatis are encircled by fellow namatis. The namatis

53. Goswami, P.: Folk-Literature of Assam, p. 60
sings the *diha* (refrain) which her fellow mates repeat. As P. Goswami has said, extemporization on the *narmati* - in-chief's part in memorising and making of *nams* is an interesting feature of this art-form. Mention of mythical and puranic characters viz. Ram, Sita, Sabitri, Damayanti etc. is its common feature. This is done to compare the bride and the groom with those mystic phenomenon. The performance does not associate itself with any accompaniment of instrument - neither the performers exhibit any bodily gestures. It is an art-form of aural representation only and lucidity and melody of the performers are its main attributes. Last but not the least, marriage itself is a function of happiness and pathos and all the sentiments are roused by the songs.

**Dheodhani nac:**

Mention of this art-form has occurred in *Radha Rukminir Ran*. This traditional art form is associated with many features of folklore. A girl, designated as *deodhani* is made to dance till she attains a position of evil-spirit. For this purpose she is attired typically and made to dance with frenzied gestures. While dancing

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the hairs of the dancer is kept open and with her twisting
movement of the head she dances to the climax with the beat­
ing of drums. Omans, and shaminism are also associated
with this dance as the dancing girl reveals some taboos
in her trance. The deodhani dance is associated with the
Manasa worshipping and has parallels in different tribal
cultures also. Remarks K. Vatsyayan - "As part, the Manasa
worship is a dance performed by women which is included in
the sequences of the oja-palis. This is performed by
women called Deodhanis; they fall into a trance like the
Maibis of Manipur and forecast the future". The long
sequence of deodhani dance where Radha fell into trance
and forecast the future of the rebellion of the Mayamariyas
against the Ahoms is befitting to create the perspective
of the novel.

Madal Performance :

In Dandua-Droh again we find a minor performing
art-form called madal drumming performance. The perform­
ance is described to take place in the same context where
ojapali and dhuliya performance took place in Hardatta
Choudhary's residence. The primary musical instrument

55. Vatsyayan, K. : Traditions of Indian Folk Dance,
p. 120.

56. Bordoloi, R. : Dandua Droh, p. 40
used in this performance is the madal (tribal variety of dhol). The other instruments which accompany are flute and cymbals. This performance mainly takes place among the tribal communities viz. the Dados and the Ravas. The performance takes place with the beating the madal and playing the flute. Songs are also sung. Generally the performers of instruments remain standing by playing on their instruments and the others sing and dance moving in a circle. Normally the madal troupes visit the household of rich persons where they perform and receive rewards.

The songs they sing contain various matters. Sometimes songs of lighter contexts and erotic nature are also heard. Being a traditional art form of the aboriginal tribes, the madal songs are sung in their own languages. But sometimes they sing in the local Assamese dialects also. This is a remarkable feature of acculturation of the Bodo and non-Bodo and also of tribal and non-tribal culture.

The madal and its beating provides us with many glimpses of folklore of Bodo people. "The Bodos treated the madal as a sacred one. There are some taboos regarding the madal. They never beat the madal during the year except at Bahag Bihu time. The belief is that the
whole paddy field will be burnt into ashes if the paddies hear the sound of the madal at odd times. The hatching eggs are also similarly spoiled by the untimely beating of the madal, they say. Such beliefs are rather a country-wide phenomenon. B. Chaitanya Deva observes it in the cases of drums and drum-beating in our country thus - "Drums, as many other objects have close associations with rituals connected with procreation. Drums are usually taken to be feminine symbols, the sticks used for beating them being masculine. In some societies women are not allowed to play drums; if at all they do play them, figures are employed but not sticks."......

It is said that till recent times, orthodox Brahmins would not play the drum as it was made of the hide of the animals.".

This is in short about the performing art-forms in Bordoloi's creative works. But besides these he has mentioned many other performing art-forms in several occasions. For example we can cite the mention of dancing festival performed before the Thangjing deity of the Manipuris. The description included in khamba-thoibir sadhu-katha is a traditional dance-form of Manipur. Thangjing

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57. Kalita, D. : Traditional Performance of South Kamrup. p. 69
58. Deva, B.C. : Musical Instruments of India, p. 71
is one of the celebrated deities of the manipuris. In worshipping the god the dancing activities take place along with the enactment of Khamba and Thoibi's story. Writes K. Vatsyayan — "The famous story of Khamba and Thoibi is enacted, danced as part of the Lai Haroooba festival and sometimes independently. Khamba is the poor lad of Khuman class and Thoibi is the beautiful, high spirited princes of Moirang, King of Manipur. The dances usually present Khamba and Thoibi (now considered also incarnations of Shiva and Parvati) dancing before the shrine of Lord Thanggjing which stands on the bank of Loktak lake near Moirang. The singer sings the story of this love in deep, moving melodies; the dancers (in couples) perform abstract movements. Although words are introduced through the song, there is a near total absence of mime here; it is only through the musical like that the narrative is communicated to the audience. The dance ends in a note of ecstasy and devotion". 60

It is seen that the dance-form of Manipur has been described in the real context of it. Bordoloi had deep regards for the traditions of Manipur and for this only he incorporated the famous story of Khamba and Thoibi in his literary works.

60. Vatsyayan, K. : A Study of some Traditions of Performing Arts in Eastern India: Tarji and Jogiolarities. p. 52
The description of holi-festival in *Manomati* is another specimen where we can trace the elements of performing art form. It is connected with religious and ritualistic activities. Where both music and dance are associated. "The Dol jatra which is celebrated in Phalgun provides another important occasion for music and dance. It also coincides with the birthday of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It naturally coincides with Holi of North India".  

Like all other folk art-form holi also does not possess any sophisticated piece of choreography. The performers, having no definite numbers dance and sing holi songs and throw colours at each other. The songs are demonstrated with physical gestures and hence all elements of drama-form viz. *nritya*, *natya* and *abhinaya* are easily noticed in holi. As regards to the dance elements in holi observance K. Vatsyayan remarks — "The done festival provides the occasion for many dances which do not strictly belong to either ritual or art dances. Nevertheless it is these community dances and the setting of the festival which has given rise to the

dances and dance drama forms which are to-day classified as art dances or traditional dances of Assam.\textsuperscript{63}

We can point toward to other elements which can be discussed as minor performing art-form. The first one of is bah-bandha activities performed during the holi festival, as found in nanomati.\textsuperscript{64} In this activity Kalia thakur is forbidden to enter the house of goddess Lakshmi by a barricade of bamboo. The devotees took part in an artificial war being divided into two parties one having the side of the thakur and the other belonging to mother Lakshmi. A good deal of activity takes place in the form of arguments and cross-arguments which involves dramatic elements. An another activity of placing bamboo barriced takes place in hengar bandha as found in Dandua-Droh.\textsuperscript{65}

In Assamese marriage system, the groom's party is forbidden to enter the bride's house by means of a barricade or sometimes by the assemblage of people. At this stage the groom is required to meet the opposing party. Then he is subjected to some absurd questions by the group leader, he himself being a repersatory of witty questions. Sometimes riddles etc. are also put before the groom to be solved. Finally the drama ends with the receipt of some

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{63} Vatsyayan, K. : \textit{Traditions of Indian Folk Dance}. p.118
\item \textsuperscript{64} Bordoloi, R. : \textit{Nanomati}, pp. 4-5.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Bordoloi, R. : \textit{Dandua-Droh}, p. 32
\end{itemize}
rewards offered from the groom's side. The entire activities involve extensive merriment though sometimes untowards do happen. In the novel in question the activity is shown to take place between the people of Dhanara and Jikeri at Padmakumari's marriage. In consideration of these two events one should not forget the socio-cultural milieu of the occasion when these occur.

Besides these, mention of khuliya troupe and gayan-bayan in Dandua-Droh in the context of Durga-puja observance at Jikeri brings to light another two forms of performance. The khuliya institution is an important art form of Assam and bears resemblance with dhuliya performances in structure. Khols are used as musical instruments in stead of dhols of the dhuliyas but the popular activities of acrobatics and mimicry are not performed here. Gayan and bayans are most important performers in a bhaona performance. But besides this, they have their own identity in separate and individual contexts. This can be treated as an important audio-visual art-form as choral singing is attached with the performance of gayans. The bayans, which literally connote the drummers plays on khols, which constitute the primary

musical instruments with the accompaniment of tals. This traditional performance has been inherited from the Vaisnavite culture of Assam and still regarded as a requirement for auspicious occasions. The performance of gayan-bayan as a front-line troupe in social and religious processions is still current in Assam.