

VOICES OF ASSAMESE WOMEN IN MARRIAGE SONGS

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is one of the universal social institutions. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man and woman. It is closely connected with the institution of family. Thus, marriage or wedlock is a social union or legal contract between people called spouses or life partners that establish rights and obligations between the spouses, between the spouses and their children, and between the spouses and their in-laws. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships. People marry for many reasons, including: legal, social, emotional, financial, spiritual, and religious. Marriages can be performed in a secular civil society or in a religious setting. The Hindus have been giving great importance for marriage since time immemorial. Marriage is almost obligatory and unavoidable for an average Indian. Life without marriage is almost unthinkable in this country and there is a sharp social stigma attached to those who remain unmarried for long. There is a deep-rooted, long-standing and widespread tradition here in favor of marriage as a basic ritual. Among the Hindus, marriage is not a social contract. It is sacrament. Marriage to a Hindu is of great individual and social significance. It is a socially approved union of man and woman aiming at procreation, pleasure and observance of certain social obligation.

KEY WORDS: Assam, Assamese society, Biyanaam(Marriage Songs)

INTRODUCTION

Assamese marriage is one of the best marriages held in India. There are many reasons which have made Assamese marriage to get the pride of being one of the best marriage ceremonies of India. Music plays a very important part in Assamese marriages. The marriage songs are known as Biyanam. *Biyānām* means marriage songs. An Assamese marriage is a musical marriage. At every stage of celebration, from early negotiation to the end, women sing appropriate songs. The delicacy and refinement of woman's heart come out in caressing tunes when the *Namati* or leader of the chorus has to describe the beauty and grace of the bride, when the later is bathed in the sacred water, when she sits among her companions, when the bridegroom is to be greeted, when the "Sāmprdāna" is consummated. The *Namati* genius is revealed most when she has to give expression to the atmosphere of sadness that prevail when the dear girl is to be taken away. *Aideo* is a term of endearment for a young girl. Marriage is that auspicious ceremony which has been started to maintain the rules of nature in a civilized way.

The traditional rules and regulations have been taken care of when the Assamese people opted for marriage. The most attractive part of the marriage songs. The feeling of the agricultural society, sometimes extreme happiness or melancholy has been nourished spontaneously in the voices of Assamese women. From the very starting till end- the whole prow here has been coupled with the melodious "Biyanam" or the marriage songs.

OBJECTIVES:

1.The Assamese marriage songs have always tried to make the society understand the status of women in concerned Assamese Society along with their roles to be played as a wife, daughter-in-law and mother; hence, through the study of marriage songs the roles and responsibilities assigned by Assamese Society will be tried to find out.

2.The Assamese marriage songs have tried to teach women moral and ethical values; , through the study of marriage songs the moral and ethical values, the Assamese Society has asked women to maintain will be encountered.

3.The voices of resistance in Assamese marriage songs will be tried to find out.

METHODOLOGY:

For this paper work, this investigator has adopted both the primary and secondary sources of data. For collection of data, the emphasis is given on contextual studies, while full advantage of the relevant textual materials has been made. Data are collected mainly in the form of field note and written documents. For the intended study both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected depending on the methods like observation method, interview method, case study method etc. since adequate research materials are not available in printed forms, so the investigator has collected most of the data by applying observation method and interview method. The study has documented the relevant folksongs which are still of oral tradition. For this purpose, field study has been conducted and expert singers and tradition bearers have been interviewed in the natural context. Observation and interview method has also been applied. Visual equipment for recording have been used and help of books, thesis, journals, papers, magazines and internet has also been taken. After that the documents have been systematically indexed, classified, arranged and analyzed.

ASSAMESE MARRIAGE SONGS (BIYANAAM):

The Assamese marriage is a musical ceremony as from the very beginning till last, each and every ceremony is coupled with music. The first custom, after organizing a marriage is called “Joron” or “sending cloths-ornaments” to the bride. Before the final marriage the bride and groom parties calculate an auspicious day and on that very day, the family of the groom sends cloths, ornaments and other necessary commodities to the bride. Generally, the commodities like vermilion container, two mirrors, two combs, and bottles of mustard oil, two knives, fish, ornaments and cloths are given to the bride. The married women, whose husbands are alive, they use to bring the ‘Joron’ when the “Joron” reaches at the gate of the bride, they are welcomed with betel-nuts by the mother of the bride. Then in a particular place, the bride is made to sit and she wears vermilion on her forehead by the mother of the groom.

When “Joron” comes and the bride is to be made to come out she sings like this is sung by the women folk:
NAM:-

*Dēūtāār Alōngkāār Thōwāā Kāāti Kōri, Oi Rāām
!Māārāār Alōngkāār Thōwāāhē*

*Rāāme Ōi Pothāāise Tomāālōi Alōngkāār, Oi
Rāām!Tāakei Hāāte Pāāti Lowāāhe*

*Dīngit pēndhilāā Sōnāār Galepāātāā, Oi Rāām, Hāātole
Pēndhilāā Angūthi,*

*Angūlit Pīndhilāā Hēērāāre Aānguthi, Oi Rāām ! Kāānot
Bāākhorīwa Kerūhe*

*Gūnāār Fulebosēē Sāāje Pīndhi Tatē, Oi Rāām Sirōte
Pīndhilāā Sendūrhe*

*Rāāijōk Sewāā Kōri Ashirbāād Lowāā, Oi Rāām, Ayōti
Uruli Diyāē He!*

(SOURCE: “URULI” BY: RENU DUTTA BARUAH,
PAGE NO:26)

This song says that :-

Keep Aside The Jewelries Given By Father, Oh Ram! Keep
Aside Mother’s Jewelleries Too!

Ram Has Sent You Gold Ornaments, Open Up Your Hands
And Accept These!

Gold Necklace Has Been Worn By You! Oh Rama! Gold
Bangles Have Been Worn By You!

You Have Worn Diamond Rings In Your Fingers, You
Have Worn Cloths Made Of Silk,

Oi Rama! Wear Vermilion In Forehead...Bow Down And
Ask For Blessings.

Oh Rama , Let The Married Folk Make Auspicious Sound.

Thus the first phase of the long marriage ritual ends up.

Just before the final day of marriage, another ritual is conducted which is called “Gāthiyān”. There is a small tree, the root of which looks like ginger. It is believed that, this is a medicinal tree and works as a medicine on skin diseases. So, when “Joran” arrives, two packets of “Gathiyān” comes from the house hold of the bride- groom. This is pasted either by seven or five married women. The song which is associated with this ceremony may be sung like this :-

*Sāato Aāyotiye Khōndē Gāthiyān, Sēlēng Aārber
Kōrihē, Pōtūtē Khōndise Gōndhē Gāthiyān,*

*Urōoli Jōkāār Diyāāhe, Gōndhā Gāāthiyānōr Gāāthi
Xōru Xōru, Gōndhē Amōlmōl Kōrēhē,*

*Gāāt Ghōhi Ghōhi Diyāā Gondhō Gāāthiyān, Subhō
Hōūk Aāidēūr Biyāāhe*

*Gāthiyān Gāāthi Pōtāt Pelāāi Bhāānge, Mōklōō Aāidēūr
Jengāāhe,*

*Gāthiyān Gōndhe Xūlhō Kōri Tulōk, Aāideur Dhōrāmōr
Biyāāhe*

Sāātō Aāyōtiye Sāato Bāār Kōri, Mōngōl Uruli Diyāāhe,

*Urōoli Jōkāāre Gōndhē Gāthiyane, Subhō Hōūk Aāidēūr
Biyāāhe”.*

(SOURCE: KAMALA KALITA, KALPANA KALITA, BIJU
KALITA, BASANTI KALITA, NALBARI, ASSAM)

This song says that, seven married women are pasting *gathiyān* and they have made themselves invisible behind the curtain. They are pasting the *gathiyān* in stone grinder and the fragrance of *gathiyān* has over-powered the whole atmosphere. Let the bride be applied with the *gathiyān* paste which will make her marriage ceremony tremendously auspicious.

Then the “*Adhibas*” ceremony starts. On this ceremony oil is applied on the head of the bride. This is also a very musical ceremony and many songs are associated with this ceremony. One of the examples of the ceremony is given below:-

*Aāhisū Aāmi Bāidēūr Biyāāloi.....Ō....Bāidēūr
Biyāāloi,*

*Gāāthisōō Ōi Bōkulōr Māālāā Bāāidēūk Dibōlē.....
Bāāidēūk Dibōlē,*

*Aāgōte Kōisilāā Bāāidēū Nōbōhū Mōi Biyāāt.....
Nōbōhū Mōi Biyāāt,*

*Asināāki Vindēūk Pāāi Pōmī Gōl Jē Hiyāā, Pōmī Gōl Jē
Hiyāā*

*Mōrōm Neribāā Bāāidēū Bhōnēē Aārū Bhāi..... Bhōnēē
Aārū Bhāi*

Pāāhōri Neajāābāā Vinīdēūk Pāāi.....

(SOURCE: SHRIMATI BIJU DEKA KALITA,
ANGANBARI SCHOOL, NALBARI AND SRIMATI
RAMBHA DAS, HOMEGUARD, POLICE RESERVE,
NALBARI, ASSAM)

This song may be explained in this way:

We Have Arrived At The Marriage Ceremony Of Our
Elder Sister,

We Have Made A Necklace Of “Bokul” Petals To Gift
Our Sister,

Oh Sister! You Said That You Won’t Get Married,

But When You Met Our Unknown Brother-In-Law.....

You Developed A Self Corner For Him, Do Not Forget
Your Brothers And Sisters

After Getting Dear Brother-In-Law.

The next ceremony is brining sacred water which is called “*Pani-Tula*”. They pick up water from a clean holy place and made the would be bride bathed with that sacred water. When she is bathed another kind of *Naam* is sung which may be indicated as follows:-

*Rāāstāāidi Jāāō Aāmi Nā Sowāāli.....Amāār Gēētōr
Sūr Mōn Jūrāāli...*

*Amāār Gēētōr Sūr Hōrshitō Mōn.....Xunāāhe Dekāā
Gāābhōrur Gāān*

*Sowāāli Gāānōt Lōrāāi Nidibāā Kāān.....Sowāāli
Kāārone Tejilā Jibōn.*

(SOURCE: “BIYARGEET” BY: ANJALI DEVI, PAGE
NO:08)

This means:

We Are The Young Girls Who Are Traveling Via Road,
The Melody Of Our Songs Make Calm Down The Soul,
Our Melodious Songs Enlighten The Souls’.

Oh Young Boys! Do Not Pay Attention On The Women
Songs

As You Already Have Sacrificed Your Lives For The Sake
Of The Women Folk.

As each and every ritual is associated with marriage songs, for these reasons the marriage in Assam is regarded as one of the best marriage ceremonies which use to

solemnize in India. Women are taught how to deal with the in laws and how to embrace the unknown as their own. For example,

NAM: *Õ' Áideu Kāndilè Kî Hôbô. Sānsārore Niyām Õ' Áideo Mānibôî Lāgibô.*

PAD: *Sôwālr Jibônti, Õ' Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô. Xôdāi Jirôniyā, Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô. Xôdāei Poror Adhèen Õ' Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô, Õ' Áideo Sānsārore Niyām Mānibôî Lāgibô. Jānmôr Ghôre Āri.....Jābôî Je Lāgibô Õ' Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô.*

Xodai Jironiya, Õ' Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô, Õ' Áideô Kāndilè Kî Hôbô..

Sānsārore Niyām Õ' Áideô Mānibôî Lāgibô. Marak Ariba, Deuta Ariba,

Āribā Kôkâî Bhāî Bhôni, Õ' Áideô, Sānsārore Niyām Mānibôî lāgibô.

Lokore ghorote Thakibo lagibo Pôrôke apôn kori Õ' Áideô kāndilè kî hôbô.

Õ' Áideô kāndilè kî hôbô.

Sansarore niyam Õ' Áideô maniboi lagibo

NAM: *O' Jôymôti, Jèrèngā Pôthārôt Tèjèrè Rāngôli,*

Kāitè Futilè, Surāte Dākile, Tèô Jôymôti Sôî Nākārile. Bhābīsābā Āièu Nārîr Jibônôt

Swāmîrè Bāhire Kônô Nāi Sānsārôt.

PAD:

Swārthor Karône O Jôymôti, Laluk Sola Phukane, O Jôymôti, Marile Sasti Di

O' Jôymôti, Jèrèngā Pôthārôt Tèjèrè Rāngôli, Kāitè Futilè, Surāte Dākile

Tèô Jôymôti Sôî Nākārile, Bhābīsābā Āièu Nārîr Jibônôt Swāmîrè Bāhire Kônô Nāi Sānsārôt !!!

(SOURCE: "URULI" BY: RENU DUTTA BARPHUKAN, PAGE NO:45)

This song may be analysed as follows:

Oh My Beloved Daughter! Nothing Will You Get Through Tears.....

You Have To Obey The Rules Of Nature! Life Of A Woman.....

Oh Beloved Daughter! Nothing Will You Get Through Tears.....

Always Temporary.....She Is Always A Prisoner Of Others.....

You Have To Oh My Beloved Daughter!

You Have To Leave The Sweet Home Where You Have Taken Birth;

And You Have To Go Away; The Life Of A Woman Is Always Temporary;

Nothing Will You Get Through Tears.....Obey The Rules Of Nature!

Oh My Beloved Daughter! You Will Leave Your Father, You Will Leave Your Mother;

You Will Leave Your Siblings; You Have To Obey The Rules Of This World.

You Have To Stay At The Residence Of Others,

Unknowns Have To Be Embraced As Own Of Yours....

Nothing Will You Get Through Tears.....You Have To Obey The Rules Of Nature!

Oh My Dear Daughter!

NAM:- Oh! Jayamati, You Were Coloured In Blood At Broom.....

Thorns Of Devil Nettle! Pierced Her Body Which Gave Her Numerous Irritation....

Still She Did Not Open Her Mouth....So Keep It Mind Dear Daughter.....

Woman Have No One Except Her Dear Husband.....

PAD: For Selfish Reasons, Oh Jayamati, Laluk Sola Phukan Killed You Brutally.....

Oh Jayamati! Still She Did Not Open Her Mouth....So Keep It Mind Dear Daughter.....

Woman Have No One Except Her Dear Husband.....

This is *Biyānām* indicating the condition of the lives of the daughters of Assamese household. The situation of this song is the bride is crying and the singers are making

her understand through *Biyānām* that, life of a daughter is always dominated by the society, in her father's place she is just taking rest. She has to leave the household of her father and has to go to a stranger's place. She has to leave her mother, her father, elder and younger brother, younger sister and other relatives. She has to go to a stranger's place and make that family of her own, she has to embrace each and every member of that family as her own family. So the *namatis* are prohibiting her to cry, there is no any value of tears because this is the rule of the social system and nature. The singers are teaching the bride about the role and sacrifices of wives after marriage by taking the example of Jaymati. The *namatis* sang that, Jaymati loved her husband so much that, she did not utter a single word about her fugitive husband when she was brutally tortured by Laluk Sola Phukon because in the life of a woman other than her husband, there is no one in her life. Another example of Marriage songs is as follows:

Māār Ghôrôt Jetiyāā Ulisāārèè Tètiyāā, Sāāhur Ghôrôt Jetiyāā Xūtār Kāāpor Ātiyāā.

Uli Sāārèè Xāādhibāā Gāāli Khāābô Pāāribāā, Sômōniyāā Bāāideūr Kôthāāo Xunibāā

Bāāideū Tumi Jāānibāā Bāāideū Bujibāā, Sômōniyāā Bāāideūr Lôgôt Xāābôdhāāne Solibāā

Sāāhu Hole Nôsūwai Kôsū Khāāle Khôjuwāāi, Sômōniyāā Nānād Hôle Kôthaipôti Kônduwāāi.

(SOURCE: "BIYARGEET" BY: ANJALI DEVI, PAGE NO:34)

This song may be analyzed as follows:

When You Were At Your Father's Place, You Had Woolen Cloths To Wear,
You Have Cotton Cloths Now At Your In-Laws Place,
If You Will Ask For Woolen Cloths You Will Be Awarded With Scoldings,
Listen To Your Contemporary Elder Sister....
Accept Her As Your Own Elder Sister And Understand The Fact,
Be Careful While Dealing With Contemporary Elder Sister,

Mother-In-Law Will Make You Dance At Your Own Tune Just Like....

Arum Will Make Your Throat Scratch.....

If Your Sister-In -Law Will Be Of Your Age.....

She Will Make You Cry At Every Conversation!!!

This is another example of *Biyānām* where *namatis* are describing the would be situations at the household of the in-laws. In the house of the bride's father's house, the bride could wear woolen cloths but at her in-laws place she will have to wear cotton cloths only, and if she demands woolen cloths there, the in-laws will scold her. The *namatis* have instructed her to listen to the orders of same aged sister -in -law and to deal with her carefully. She has been instructed that the way eating of arum plant and its roots makes the throat scratching, the same way, the mother-in -law makes the daughter in law dance on her own tunes and if she will have a sister-in-law of her age, she will make her cry in every step of her life. Another example of such teaching may be given as follows:

Tāāmûl Kāāti Bāāideo Bāākoli Neribāā, Khôwāāt Kôstô Pāāle Bāāideo Deutāāloi Likhibāā,

Deutāāi Porhi Sāābo Sôkulô Tukibô, Bhārāālor Johāādhan Tomāāloi Pothāābô,

Sotāāl Xāāri Bāāideū Jāābor Neribāā, Kāāporôr Kôstô Pāāle Māāloi Likhibāā

Māāi Pôrhi Sāābo Sokulô Tukibô, Bāākôs Bhôrāā Kāāpor Tômāāloi Pothāābo.....

(SOURCE: "BIYARGEET" BY: ANJALI DEVI, PAGE NO:22)

This song may be analyzed as follows

Oh Dear Elder Sister!
Don't Leave The Bulks After Cutting Down The Betel Nut,
In The Scarcity Of Food, Oh Dear Elder Sister..... Write To Your Father,
He Will Read The Letter..... Will Cry A Lot..... But He Will Send You Brown Rice.
Oh Dear Elder Sister !Don't Leave The Garbage After Sweeping Up The Courtyard.

In The Scarcity Of Cloths....Write To Your Mother...She Will Read And Cry A Lot.....

But She Will Send You A Box Full Of Cloths.....

In this *Biyānām*, the namatis have instructed the bride not to leave the barks on the betel nut after cutting it down and not to leave garbage on the courtyard after sweeping the same. She has been told to write letters to her father if she has scarcity of rice. The father will read the letter, will weep but he will send rice of his go down for his dear daughter. If she feels that she does not have enough cloths to wear, she has been told to write to her mother, who will read the letter, will cry, but at the same time, will send her a box full of cloths.

In Barak valley, there are 24 Assamese villages among which 10 villages are occupied by Koch-Rajbangsi's. Though these Koch-Rajbangsi's use Assamese language in educational and social atmosphere, but they use "Dehan" language in households. There are many songs sung in "Dehan" language. One of the examples of Biyanam in "Dehan" language is:

Ö' Māāi Bāāndôr Khāourèè, Dûrôte Nidibi Biyāā, Āhûte Jāābo Lāāhili Kokāāl,

Jāāwote Jāābo Hiyāā-Ö' Māāi Bāāndôr Khāourèè, Dûrôte Nidibi Biyāā!

(SOURCE: "BORAK UPOTYAKARAXOMIYAR ITIHAS" BY: ISMAILHUSSAIN, PAGE NO: 110)

This song may be analysed as follows:

Oh My Mother..... The Monkey Eater!

Do Not You Give Me Away In Marriage So Far.....

Arrival At Your Place Will Destroy My Slim Waist.....

Departure From Your Place Will Destroy My Heart.....

Oh My Mother.....The Monkey Eater....Don't Give Me Away In Marriage So Far!

In this song, the daughter has requested her mother not to give her marriage at a far place. She has addressed her mother as "*Bandor khauri*" which means "people who eats monkey" and tried to make the mother understand that, if she conducts her marriage at a far place, her slim waist will be destroyed in the journey from her in-law's place to her parent's place and when she will go back, her heart will be broken. Thus through this song, the daughter

has tried to make her mother understand to organize her marriage nearby so that she can frequently meet the members of her parent's family.

In some marriage songs, the pain of the daughter's heart clearly comes out through the lyrics of the marriage songs when she is about to leave the house of her father and gets ready for her in-laws house.

Porbot Pāāhāār Bhāāngi Aāhē Jûrîr Pāāni, Māā Kāāndî Kāāndî Aāhē Osôr Sāāpi,

Māā Mōi Aāsîlu Bhāāt Bonāāi Disilu, Aājir Pora Māā Mōi Jāābole Olālō,

Aājir Pōrāā Māā Oî Nijē Bōnāāi Khāābaā, Mōlōi Mōnōt Kōrî Kāāndî Nethāākibāā.

(SOURCE: CHANMAAI RAJBONGSHI, MILANPUR, NALBARI, ASSAM)

This song may be discussed as follows:

The Water Of The Fountain Reaches After Crossing Hills And Mountains,

Mother Reaches Nearby With Full Of Tears, Mother! I Was Here And Made Food For You,

Now I Am Going Out Of This Household,

From Today Onwards Make Your Food Of Your Own, Don't Keep On Crying Recalling Me.....

In this song the graceful presence of the daughter in an Assamese household is clearly indicated. When she was at her father's place she used to make food for her family and specially for her mother. On the day of her marriage, her mother remembers how gracefully her daughter managed her household. The mother starts to weep. Then the daughter told her mother that, she was in this house and hence she used to make food for all but as she is leaving the household now, her mother needs to make her food of her own. She knows, when her mother will start making food, the memory of her daughter will disturb her. So she has prohibited her mother to cry. Another example of such heart-breaking feeling is:

Hāātē Pāānē Bōtāā Lōi Māārāāk Māātgōi, Māā Mōi Olālō.....

Jōwāārē Sōmōyōt Sēwāāhē Jāāsîlū..... Dēūtāā Mōi Olālō.....

*Jōwāārē Sōmōyōt Sēwāāhē Jāāsīlū, Rāātīpūwāārē Kāām
Mōī Kōrīsīlū,*

*Teō...Bōūr Mōnōt Jolāā Jūī Aāsīlū....Bhakhōrīr
Jōhāādihāān Mōīe Khāāī Hērāālō....*

Bōūre Jōlāā Jūī Jāābōlē Olāālō.....

(SOURCE: GOLAPI DEVI AND GITADAS, MILAMPUR,
NALBARI)

This song may be analysed as follows:

Hold The Tray Of Betel Leaf And Address Your
Mother.....

Oh Mother! I Am Going OutAt The Time Of
Departure I Am Offering My Regards.

Oh Father! I Am Going OutAt The Time Of Departure
I Am Offering My Regards.

I Used To Accomplish All The Household Works Of
Morning Hour.....

Still..... I Was The Burning Fire Of My Sister-In-
Law's Chest..... As If.....

Brown Rice Of The Store I Consumed Alone, The Burning
Fire Of Sister-In-Law's Chest Is Going Out.....

This song is a beautiful example of an Assamese
house-hold and sweet-sore relationship between the sister-
in-laws. Here the bride is to be taken away. So, she has
said that she is going away and at this moment, nothing is
more precious than the blessings of her parents. She
remembers, how she used to accomplish all the household
works in the morning, still she was hated by her own
sister-in-law. Her sister-in-law behaved as if the now bride
is consuming all the deposits. So at the time of departure
she is saying that, from today onwards, her sister-in-law
will find peace and happiness as the enemy of hers is
leaving this household. Through the marriage songs are
women is also given ethical and moral education one of
such examples may be given as follows :-

*“Aāmār Bāāidēū Mōrōmi !Tumi Henō Lākhimi
!Sāāhōōr Ghōrōt Gōīye Bāāideu*

*,Nōhōwāā Jēn Bilāākhi!Sāāhōōk Sānmāān
Kōribāā, Bhāāīti-Bhōntīr Mōrōmkhīni....*

Nānanda Hetōk Bilāāba, Hāāhi-Māāti Furibāā,

*Khōngōk Ashrōy Nidibāā, Satyō Aāru
Ahingshāāre, Nōbōjibōn Gōrhibāā”.*

(SOURCE: "BIYARGEET" BY: ANJALI DEVI, PAGE
NO:07)

This song may be explained as follows :-

Oh Our Lovable Sister !You Are The Goddess Laxmi !

Don't Be A Comfort – Seeker, After Reaching To In-Laws
Palace,

The Love You Had For Your Siblings,

Distribute These To The Siblings Of Your Dear Husband,

Smile Should Not Fade Away From Your Mouth,

Anger Should Not Be Entertained By You.....

You Should Restart Your Life With Truth And Non-
Violence.

THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN ASSAMESE MARRIAGE SONGS

Thus the marriage ceremony of Assam holds a
higher position in all India scenario. Marriage is a very
touching ceremony where the dear daughter of the family
is taken away by the family of the bridegroom and thus,
the *biyanams* automatically flows out of the mouth of the
women folk who are by nature sensitive. They can feel the
pain of the bride who will be departed of her own family
who on the contrary felt the same pain when their marriage
was solemnized. In the *Biyanams*, pain of the women heart
is reflected, various instructions are given to the bride to
lead a problem free life as lives are not at all satisfactory at
the houses of the in-laws. Some *biyanams* indicate the
condition of the lives of the daughters of Assamese
household. The bride use to cry in the pain of leaving her
parent's place, and the singers make her understand
through *biyanam* that, life of a daughter is always
dominated by the society, in her father's place she is just
taking rest. She has to leave the household of her father
and has to go to a stranger's place. She has to leave her
mother, her father, elder and younger brother, younger
sister and other relatives. She has to go to a stranger's
place and make that family her own, she has to embrace
each and every member of that family as her own family.
So the *namatis* are prohibits her to cry because there is no
any value of tears because this is the rule of the social

system and nature. The singers teach the bride about the role and sacrifices of wives after marriage by taking the example of Jaymati. The namatis use to sing that, Jaymati loved her husband so much that, she did not utter a single word about her fugitive husband when she was brutally tortured by Laluk Sola Phukon because in the life of a woman other than her husband, there is no one in her life. In some *biyanams*, the namatis have instructs the bride not to leave the barks on the betel nut after cutting it down and not to leave garbage on the courtyard after sweeping the same. She has been told to write letters to her father if she has scarcity of rice. The father will read the letter, will weep but he will send rice of his store for his dear daughter. If she feels that she does not have enough cloths to wear, she has been told to write to her mother, who will read the letter, will cry, but at the same time, will send her a box full of cloths. In some *Biyansams*, she is asked to accept her brother-in-law and sister –in –law as her own brother and sisters because if the brother-in-law gets a cup of cold tea he may throw the cup of tea at her. The sister-in-law may make her cry at every step of her life. The mother-in –law will try to embarrass her at every step. Her life will be dominated in her in-laws place so much that she will not even be able to demand her most cherished commodities. Through *Biyansams* a daughter tries her best to convince her parents to not to give away in marriage because she knows that, her life will not remain comfortable anymore and her identity will be lost in performing the household and social responsibilities as a daughter-in-law, wife and mother.

CONCLUSION

Folksongs always express the inherent tradition of a particular ethnic community. Different emotional fluctuations are reflected through folksongs. Women have always played an important role in formation of the society through their intellectual capability, mental strength, charisma and beauty. Women give birth to children, nurture them, give them primary education and the basic knowledge of the world. Women run the household and also contribute to the economic condition of the family through helping their husbands in paddy fields and other professional works. In a sense, they have to carry all the responsibilities of the family and in broader sense, the society. But in a patriarchal society like Assam, women do not get chance like men to express their emotions and hence, they have utilized the folksongs as a tool of

releasing their all emotions. Thus, folksong is not only the tool of expressing different emotions but also a great source of enjoyment and relaxation for the womenfolk. As the folksongs are sung by the rural people of Assam, it is an important tool of amusement for village women. In Assamese culture there are many songs which are sung exclusively for women and by women. *Biyānāām* (marriage songs) is one of the classical example of the folksongs sung by women folk in Assam. These songs represent the different emotions, feelings and status of mind of women. Women are often unnoticed by popular media and academic literature. Sometimes their hopes and expectations are dominated by the respective societies. The study of the marriage songs sung by women generates new knowledge about the marginalized section of the society, who are often straitjacketed or in worse cases go unnoticed by the popular media and academic literature. In some of the marriage songs women are describing the rituals associated with the marriage ceremony and in some other marriage songs women are teaching the future bride to handle life according to the social norms. She has been asked to remain polite with the family members of her husband as they believe that the women have no one in their lives except their beloved husbands. The would be bride has been, through marriage songs, have been instructed to perform the household duties without any complaint and if necessary, they have been asked to write letters to her parents to fulfill her needs but she has been prohibited to ask anything from in-laws as that may disturb her marital life by annoying her husband and other family members.

But thankfully the concept has changed now. Decades back, when one marriage was fixed, people asked what the bridegroom does. But now that phase is achieved when after fixing up of a marriage, people do ask what does the bride do like that of the bridegroom. Thus the concept has changed a lot. Women are educated now a days. It is blamed that, now a days, people are ashamed of singing marriage songs. But the thing is, apart from those songs, which describes the rituals, the other songs may seem to be objectionable for the educated and self-dependant women folk. If a modern self-dependant lady will be told that, her life is nothing but something which should be protected by her father in childhood, by husband in youth and by son in the old age, that may prove to be highly objectionable on her part. Definitely, she has

DAS : VOICES OF ASSAMESE WOMEN IN MARRIAGE SONGS

responsibilities as a daughter-in-law and an wife, but that does not mean that she has to sacrifice her logical, rational, moral and ethical values. She has right to live her life on her own terms. . One woman can wear anything, but she is a kind of animal who wears her heart on her sleeves, sometimes, she is a bread earner and sometimes she is a home-maker, but she does not hesitate to labour hard throughout the day, thus she gets all her works done anyhow. She knows and understands that good thoughts provide actual nourishment to the body and brain, her complexion may be fair or dark, but her ethics are much beyond the skin deep. She is a daughter, a sister, a well-wisher, a friend, a wife and a mother. She is in charge of the maintenance of all the delicate relationships along with winning bread for her beloved family.

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LIST OF THE INFORMANTS

SL NO	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	ADDRESS
1	Archana Das	55	Teacher	Ashoknagar, Ward No 1. Goalpara, Assam
2	Deepamoni Chutiya	40	Woman Police Constable	22 nd AP(IR)Battalion, Likabali, Dhemaji
3.	Dr. Rashmi Rekha Sharma	36	Deputy Superintendent Of Police	Lakhimpur
4	Beula Bewa	60	House Wife	Krishnai, Goalpara
5	Rambha Das	33	Woman Home Guard	Police Reserve, Nalbari
6.	Kamala Kalita	60	Housewife	Alokpur, Nalbari
7.	Kalpana Kalita	55	Housewife	Udaypur, Nalbari
8.	Biju Deka Kalita	35	Anganbari Teacher	Pushpakpur, Nalbari
9.	Gitima Das Kalita	25	Housewife	Rangiya

DAS : VOICES OF ASSAMESE WOMEN IN MARRIAGE SONGS

10	Jonmani Bodo Kalita	25	Housewife	Mukalmuwa, Nalbari
11	Basanti Kalita	50	Housewife	Chamata, Nalbari
12	Golapi Devi	55	Housewife	Bhuyarkuchi, Nalbari
13	Rupali Kalita	45	Housewife	Alokpur, Nalbari
14	Mayuri Das Kalita	30	Housewife	Sonpur, Nalbari
15	Rita Kalita	40	Housewife	Alokpur, Nalbari
16	Dipika Devi	40	Housewife	Sariyahtoli, Nalbari
17	Nilima Das	45	Housewife	Barsarkuchi, Nalbari
18	Milan Das	50	Housewife	Udaypur, Nalbari
19	Sarala Devi	55	Housewife	Udaypur, Nalbari
20	Premada Das	40	Housewife	Alokpur, Nalbari
21	Gita Das	55	Housewife	Milanpur, Nalbari
22	Chanmai Rajbongshi	60	Housewife	Barsarkuchi, Nalbari
23	Ashtami Tamuli	55	Govt. Employee	Kar Bhawan, Ganeshguri, Guwahati
24	Usha Gogoi	48	JengBihu Dancer	Six Mile, Guwahati
25	Rekha Bargohain	52	JengBihu Dancer	Six Mile, Guwahati