

Exploring the Cultural Significance and Rituals of Kati Gaan: A Deep Dive into the Female-Centric Traditions and Informal Education

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Abstract: *Kati Gaan is full of female rituals. Usually, this puja is done in the month of Kartika. At other times if women are worshiped that time, it is known as "Namla Kati". Kati Puja is performed in the end of (Sankranti) month of Kartika. But this puja can be done at other times. Today Rajbanshis live in almost all districts of West Bengal, many districts including Rangpur, Dinajpur Nilphamari in Bangladesh, Goalpara, Kamrup Naogaon, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, parts of Meghalaya in Assam, Nepal, Bihar and Tripura. According to the census report of 1921, about 89 percent of the people of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur districts belong to the Rajbanshi community. Kati Gaan transmitted orally people to people and learn also its orally from an artist or group of artists after that its carry forward to others people. People automatically learn it in their own capacity. There are no structural content to learn it. We can find here the informal education in process to learn.*

Keywords: Kati Gaan, Kati Puja, Rajbanshi, Informal Education

Rajbanshi

"Dr. Sunitikumar Chattopadhyay" called the Rajbanshi the people of the Tibetan Brahmo language branch of the Mongolian people. According to 'Buchanan Saheb' most of the Rajbanshi are Koch and they are descended from the same root stock. H. Riverley supports this view. According to Rizli, the Koch, Rajbanshi, Palia, Desiya etc. communities belong to the same branch. On this part he also admitted that. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee says that the Kochs are proud to call themselves Rajbanshi. Even before independence, Kshatriya associations tried to assert that 'Koch' and 'Rajvanshi' were separate castes and that they belonged to the Kshatriya class. (Roy Dr. Girijashankar, 2015). This proves that the Rajbanshis are the original inhabitants of the region and equal to one-third of the Hindu race. (Adikary Dr. Madhab Chandra 2022). Chatterjee writes, "The masses of North Bengal areas are very largely of Bodo origin or mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongo- lord. They can now mainly be described as Koch i.e., Hinduised or semi-Hinduised Bodo who have abandoned their original Tibeto- Burman speech and have adopted the northern dialect of Bengali'. (Sanyal C Charuchandra). According to the Legend Padmashri Dharmnarayan Barma, 'The father of the Kamtapuri language', the Austrian people entered the Kamrup-Kamta-Cooch Behar kingdom many centuries before the birth of Christ. These people gradually settled in the Brahmaputra River valley and the newcomers used to make a living by hunting, farming, and raising livestock in the region. However, this trend was later disrupted by the Mongolian population. (Barma and Manta, 2005)

Kati Deva

According to Skanda Purana, Kati is the god of war and Mars. According to Mahabharata and Ramayana, Kati is the son of Mahadev and Parvati. It is said that this Kati Deity came into being after entering the body of Mahadev Agni. In

the Brahmavaivarta Purana it is written about the birth of Kati that Kati was born as the Shakti of Mahadeva.

According to Rajbanshi women, Kati is the deity who bestows fertility and greater productive capacity. Some of this cultural similarity can be seen in the songs prevalent in the Tamil dominated regions of South India with the Kati deity of the Rajbanshis. (Bhakat Lavanya 2014:22)

Kati Puja

It is known from the Puja Parvan of the Rajbanshi race of North Bengal by the famous researcher Dr. Girija Shankar Roy that the origin and development of Rajbanshi Kshatriya community culture started mainly in Rangpur (Bangladesh), Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal India. (Roy Dr. Girijashankar, 2015).

'Kati brata' is observed by the women of the 'Rajbanshi' society in the hope of having a son, especially a good-looking son like Kartik Deity. In the morning, puja and homa are performed by dwarfs or priests. (Bhattacharya Suchandra 2012:168).

Cooch Behar i.e., Goalpara in North Bengal and Lower Assam, the folk deity of Rajbanshi women living in this region is Kati or Katika or Kartikai. (Bhakat Lavanya 2014:22).

In the evening in an enclosed space outside (or behind) the house the 'Gidali' and ten people Mao (mothers) come and select the place of worship. They planted banana trees. Put Rangali (Alpana) with thin paddy husk, soil, Abir etc. The puja ends in the early morning after the night ends with prayers, dances, vows, pujas pots are kept to room, distribution of Prasad etc. (Bhattacharya Suchandra (2012:169)

Kati Gaan

Women fast all day and each one gives a pair of ghats and betel nut (Gua betel nut) on the occasion of this puja. Under the Samyana, four Banana Trees are buried around and the peacock vehicle Kartik Dev is placed in the middle. A pot of water-filled soil is placed at the base of each banana plant. Arrows and bows are tied to banana trees. A branch of myna tree is buried behind the idol. In front of the altar is planted a bunch of rice plants with rice stalks. After that, first the Srijan Geet is sung. The song describes Karthik's birth story, describes the Kati deity, and then prays to Karthik for a son, wishing for a son. Women sing and dance around the Karthik idol. The song describes Karthik's birth story, describes the Kati deity, and then prays to Karthik for a son, wishing for a son. Women sing and dance around the Karthik idol. Two women dance in men's clothes. The lead singer Kati Pala sings the verses of the song and the others join they're in singing. (*Barman Sukhbilas* , 2011:144)

This puja is not only in Cooch Behar, but in Dhubri Goalpara of North Bengal, Assam, as Rajbanshi women perform Kati Puja, they also perform Kati dance. In some places the women perform the dance naked. (*Dev Ranjita* 2014:104)

Complete worship is through song. In this puja, dancing and singing continues throughout the night. Gidali's group dances sometimes to the beat of the Dhaka instrument and sometimes to the beat of the song. Take turns dancing. Sometimes some rest for a while and start dancing again. Some acting goes along with the dance. The whole song is folk drama. The entire story is performed in the form of Pala-songs with dance-songs. Some parts of this song are forbidden for men to see because of the so-called obscenities performed in the context of Karthik's birth. (*Barman Subal Chandra* 2012:107)

The song describes Karthik's birth story, describes the Kati deity, and then prays to Karthik for a son, wishing for a son. Women sing and dance around the Karthik idol. Two women dance in men's clothes. The lead singer sings the verses of the Kati Pala song and the others join her in chanting:

Song : Kātirētōramuñdabānā'ichēkōnajanē
chaýamāsabhariyārētapa'isyākariyārē

Thus, the creation of nose, ear, hand etc. is described in the song.

And after singing and dancing about Shiva's marriage, Kati's birth, etc., prayers are offered to Karti for son-in-law. While the puja, dance and music are runs, at that time the entrance of men with dhak instrument (Dhak) is prohibited.

Then the participating women (regardless of age) dance and sing along with various expressions. The childbearing woman is seated in front of the altar with betel nuts and a pair of bananas (as symbols of child) placed in her lap. How did Shiva bring garland conch shell, atani (small piece), matak (crown), ayana kakoi (comb), kula, chalun, atap chaul, banana gua pan (betel nut) dudh doi etc. on the shoulders of the heavy (burden bearer) for Chandi. Through this we can know. The marriage system, wife-rites etc. of this region are revealed in this song and dance. Cohabitation with Shiva, the birth of Kartika from Chandi's conception etc. are described in the original rasikata katha songs. Dances are performed around the altar in an evocative manner. Dancer's posture loosened as she danced. These early Rasikata songs are called 'Kati ghama' songs or 'Baduli Hana' songs. Example:

Song: Dūrah yātēāsilarēbādura
kalākhābārāāsē.
Aināgachērakalāgachēra'ila
bādurate'īlamōradyyāsērē

After that, the dhakuar enters again and the dance song goes along with the dhaka playing.

Song: Marriage of Bura Shiva (Shiva's Biya)

Chā'ōyākālagē'ilaśibērakhēlānākhēlitē
ki pāgalaburāśibarē..(Barman Sukhbilas 2011:146)

Song: Kātīraannaprāśāna
yakhanagaurāṅgadhanamōraannaprāśanahaḥ yā ḥ
bā'ijebājanēgaurāṅgēannaprāśanahaḥ yā'obē
dhanamōragaurāṅganidhi..

How Karthik's various organs were created is described through songs. And it is said that everything is the result of some good karma in a previous birth. Paradigms of Karma in People's Life.

Song: Kātirētōramāthābānā' ilēkakōnjanē.
Ānujanamērēbēlabilā' icirē, māthābānā' ilēkabāsudēbē..
Kātiretōramukhabānā' ilēkakōnjanē
ānujanamērēbēlabilā' icirē, mukhabānā' ilēkabāsudēbē

Song: Kārtikaābhāṇa:
Ā'isōā'isōkātimaiyōrēcariyārēā'isōā'isōkātimaiyōrēcariyā

baisabaisakātiāsōnabhariyā..
Ājikātinākhēlākarēbharadupōrabēlāhē

Song:

Ārēkākāndēkātikākāndēhātēniyāguyā (ki)
surākātiē'ōcāndēnāha'ilatōrabiyā ..

Song: Kārtikakathā:

Dhupa dilāmadhunā'ōdilāmamārēyāsari sāri ki
kātidhēyānēba'isērē.

Dhupa dilāmadhunā'ōnilāmagaṭabasā'ilāma sari sāri ki
kātidhēyānēba'isērē.

(Barman Sukhabilas , 2011:155)

Informal Education on Kati Gaan

The image of the art form and the god of Kati are assumed imaginatively among the common people of the folk society. A description of the body part of this deity and the description of his form and the elaborate description of the adornment of his body are available through the Kati song, which is spread orally. Informal education is the process which is available anywhere any time. Likewise through the song of Kati or through worship process the description of Kati deity and his form the common people has learned, knew enrich them by seeing or hearing, so here we can find the education. Although it is described in some mythological texts, there is no specific constructive interpretation of Kati deity or any specific constructive analogies that can be included in the curriculum. To include it in formal education, we have to collect information from different sources and bring it into the same frame. The form of the Kati deity also changes depending on the region. When it takes shape, it comes out in front of everyone through a portrait or clay idol. Then we see that the form of Kati deity has also changed in different regions. Although the description of the form of Kati deity is expressed in Kati song music as a whole, we can see his different forms in different areas. So, we can call this education as traditional education or learning by watching. There is no fixed rule that the form of Kati deity will be the same all over the world. So, the form changes with the change of time. Informal education is hidden in the practice of making idols of Kati deity in various cases and teaching this method. In Kati song, starting from the birth of Kati deity, how each part of his body is added one after the other can be learned through the song. This education is not directed from any particular institution. People adopt it from their own. When KatiGang is performed in folk society, sometimes unconsciously, artists are created from the audience sitting opposite. But no one dictates who will be made an artist or how many will be made. The crews who are singing Kati songs do not direct either. Kati artistes also do not know that some people from the audience will become Kati artists in the future. On the other hand, we see a different picture in any educational institution. The number of those who are training is fixed. On the other hand, the number of those who are learning is also fixed. Both the one teaching and the one learning are aware of their position. The one who is teaching determines what the curriculum will be. Those who are learning are also aware of what they have to learn. It has a periodic examination system and is evaluated. When KatiGaan is performed in folk society, some students are

naturally formed from among the audience, but the medium is oral. It has no test system. There is no specification as to how much one will learn, in how much time. Many times, a group of artistes are seen performing Kati songs and the audience gets up and leaves after a while. After a while, maybe the new audience is afraid again. But learning their Kati Gaan remained elusive. But the next opportunity comes when they hear Kati songs in another place and collect the remaining part from another group and from another place. In this way learning is also sporadically in a mixed form, But not in the constructive way. Here we find informal education.

Conclusion

Lastly, we can conclude that, this practice is the totally defend by used of informal education in traditional way and with these women are involved. In past days the form used to do, and in present it also. Because here we get to know that, this practice is implicated with socio-economic factors, belief, so, we need to preserve this practice. An art form is the mirror of the society. Otherwise, we will one day suffer from non-existence. We need to preserve our tradition.

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