

Tiwa ethnic costumes in Rita Chowdhury's novel Deo Langkhui

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I. INTRODUCTION

Currently Rita Chowdhury is one of the most popular names among the Assamese Novelists. She has been working as an associate professor in Political Science Department in Cotton College, Guwahati since 2001. She is also known as a poet. Some of the popular novels of the writer are- Popiya Torar Xadhu (Tale of a shooting star), Jala Padma (Water Lotus), Makam (The Golden Horse), Mayabritto (The Circle of Worldly Illusion) etc. Deo Langkhui (The Divine Sword) is another famous novel of the writer which is published in the year of 2005. For this novel, the writer received the 'Kalaguru Brishnuprasad Rabha Award' in 2006 and 'Sahitya Akademy Award' in 2008.

Deo Langkhui is a historical novel. The story of the novel is based on the 'Tiwas' of Assam. In this novel, the writer describes the picture of life and struggle of the famous historical characters and rulers Pratapsingha, Jungal Bolohu, Arimotto etc. The author has given them a creative form with a mixture of imagination. The novel also reflects the Tiwa society and culture. The writer also described the ethnic wears of Tiwas. The present study contains the ethnic costume of Tiwas especially the traditional clothes and jewelries of Tiwa men and women.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The main objectives of the research are-

- To search out the Tiwa ethnic costumes reflected in the novel.
- To find out the peculiarity of Tiwa clothes and ornaments.
- To analyze how the author depict those costumes in her novel.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on primary data. Primary data includes chosen works of the author. The secondary data includes research articles, journals and internet sources.

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Ethnic costume or traditional costume is a specific clothing style of men and women which they wear as a sign of their culture. Ethnic costume represents the bond of togetherness of every ethnic group which normally living in the isolated areas. Ethnic costume helps to create a great community among the members.

Assam is full of various kinds of ethnic groups or tribes. Each of the groups plays a vital role in integrated 'Assamese Culture'. Tiwa is one of the oldest tribes in Assam. Tiwas are also known as 'Lalung'. This ethnic group divided by two parts called 'Plain Tiwa' and 'Hill Tiwa'. The Tiwas from hills simply called 'Hill Tiwa'. The hill Tiwas mainly preserve and maintain their custom and tradition. Plain Tiwas are incorporated with the united Assamese culture. Plain Tiwas are found in Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Morigaon, Hojai, Kamrup and Karbi Anglong district in Assam. Tiwas are highly rich in their culture.

The novel Deo Langkhui specially represents Tiwa society and their culture. The writer describes Tiwa men and women ethnic wears through a historical story. The traditional dress of Tiwa women is called 'Kasong Phaskai'. This dress has two different parts. The lower part is 'Kasong' and the upper part is 'Phaskai'. The aesthetic of the costumes briefly narrated in the novel.

4.1 TIWA WOMEN COSTUME

Every ethnic group or tribe have their own tribal look which are different from another group. Though someone tries to wear different ethnic costume, there is always a chance that their face may not cooperate with them. The main character of the novel is queen Chandraprabha who banished by her king Pratapsingha. In Gobha kingdom (Tiwa kingdom), she changed her identity to Konchari and accepted Tiwa custom and culture. And when she wears Tiwa dresses and ornaments, her attendant Hunjira asks her-

Amar Lalungor Banathbathu pndhile, Lalungor Throng Phaila kane-hate pindhilenu ki habo paai? Kapur-gohonai janu naak-mukh holabo pare? (Deo Langkhui, p. 7)

(Will something going to happen if you wear our Lalung Banathbathu, Lalung Throng-Phaila in your ear and hands sister? Can costumes ever have the capability of change the actual face?)

The Tiwa women traditional dress Kashong Phaskai has also its traditional color which is yellow and black. In the novel, the Lalung queen Gangawati wears yellow and black color combined Kashong Phaskai several times. The author described how beautiful she looks in their traditional dresses-

Laahi othos purath kalpasolar dore gaat ujjal kola haladhiya Kashong Phaskaijur atilkoi pindhise Gangawatiye. (Deo Langkhui, p. 130)

(Gangawati wears the shining black and yellow Kashong Phaskai very suitably in her slim but healthy body.)

Kolar uparot rong, halodhiya butabasa Mananthala, taar uparat muga riha pindhise Gangawatiye. (Deo Langkhui, p. 139)

(Gangawati wears a black Mananthala which has red and yellow fabric on it and above the Mananthala she wears a Riha.)

4.2 TIWA MEN COSTUME

Likewise women, Tiwa men also have their traditional costume. Tiwa men as well wear necklace, earring and such kind of ornaments. In the novel, when the king Arimatta is completely in their traditional costume, the writer describes him as a goddess-

Kakalar para bharir haru gathiloike para duimure phualm pari thaka dhutir dore dhutir dore mugar Thenas pindhise Aarimattai. Gaat kola rangar kopahi hutar hunmoni gotha botiyatula Taagla pindhise. Dingit edhar hunar seumoni. Kanat hunar kundal. Murat mugar pagurir dare bandha Phaga. Medhin balistha aru halprankhu harirar kesa hunar dare barane ayat aru gabhir kola sakujure, tikhna naak aru raktabh uthere Aarimattak devaputra jen lagise. (Deo Langkhui, p. 130)

(Arimatta wears a muga Thenas looks like Dhuti which reaching from the waist to his foot and it has colorful boundaries in both side. A golden necklace is on his neck. Golden earring is in his ear. A Phaga is in his head entwined like a turban. He looks like a goddess with his mighty golden body, dark black eye, turned-up nose and with his red lips.)

V. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we may found that the Tiwa culture is described very vividly in the novel by the author. In the description of the author, when the characters of the novel wear Tiwa costumes, they turn into a charming entity. Readers can easily relate with Tiwa costumes and its beauty by read this novel. These ethnic costumes of Tiwa haven't lost their charm and worth by the time, otherwise the costumes gain its popularity all in Assam day by day.

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