



# The People of Santal and Bodo: Folksongs and Festivals, Part of Their Agricultural Life

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## ABSTRACT:

Bodo and Santal both are Tribal people in India. Bodo's are one of the largest Tribes in Assam. They use Sino-Tibetan language and using Devanagari script for writing. The people of Bodo's in Assam are very rich in their own culture and language, traditions and customs, unique lifestyle, festivals, rites and ritual, song and dances.

Santal or Santhal are very much the same as Bodo people. They are also rich in their oral cultures, rituals, traditions and customs and their unique kind of dances and songs. But they do not live in one area, they are in various regions. History says that they live in Chhota Nagpur Parganas. Santhal are the largest tribe in the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal in terms of population. Beside they are also live in the states of Odisha, Bihar, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Bangladesh and few in Nepal. They mainly speak in Santali and the script is written by OlChiki.

Agriculture is an integrated part of our society. Earlier in any country it was a backbone of the economy. But still it was a backbone of Indian economy. Seventy percent of Indian population doing Agriculture and most of them are tribal people, or who are live in village areas. The people of Santhal and Bodo's are cultivated especially in paddy crop, and they are doing it for their own consumption without hankering after profit.

This paper helps to understand how the life of Bodo and Santhals triangulate to their rustic life through loco Geeti or folksongs, festivals and to analysis some aspect of loco Geeti and festivals, how it inspired their live hood.

**Key Words:** Folk songs, Festivals, Santhal, Bodo, Culture, Dance.

## I. INTRODUCTION:

In the census of 2011, Santals are 7million in India, and the tribe of Bodo's are 1.45million.

Santhals are Austroasiatic speaking Munda ethnic group in South Asia. They are the largest tribe in terms of population in Jharkhand and West Bengal. They also lived in a Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Northan Bangladesh and Nepal. The language they use is Santali and the script for writing is OlChiki. The script was invented by Pandith Raghunath Murmu.

In the religious point of view Santal was mostly followed by Serna Dharam, Sari Dharam, Hinduism and Christianity. As per the available data Serna Dharam, Hinduism and Sari Dharam in West Bengal are most followed by Santal. The word Bonga came from Santali people, which means spirit or deity, who are placated with prayers and offering. These Bonga operate the villages, household, ancestors and along with evil spirits that cause disease, water, mountain and forest. Bonga are intermediaries between NoaPuri (visible world) and HanaPuri (invisible world). The creator of whole world is Marang Buru (supreme god of Santal), and his wife are JaherAayu (supreme goddess), the other are Mareko, Teruko, Bosmata and Dharam. The ancestors of Santal who are the first human beings in the world are Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi. Santals are very rich in their oral culture, tradition, unique kind of dance and songs, the traditional dress code language and script.

On the other hand, the Bodo's are also the largest tribe of Assam. They also found in Meghalaya, West Bengal and Bangladesh. They have their own unique culture and society. Bodo group of peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman language and using Devanagari script for writing. They are an important ethnic, and linguist aboriginal group resided in the Brahmaputra valley. For religious point of view, they are popularly followed by Hinduism, Bathouism and Christianity. The available data said that many Bodo peoples followed Hinduism. Bodo practiced Bathouism, which is



form of forefather's worship called Dobonglaoru (supreme god). Shijou plant is taken as the symbol of Bathou and worship as the supreme god.

**Bodo Folksongs:** Hero-Worship, Song of Soil and Rustic Life, Love songs, Festival songs, Marriage songs, Religious songs, Bihu or Bwisaga songs, Ritual Prayers and Philosophy.

**Santali Folksongs:** Baha songs, Langde songs, Dong songs, Dahar songs, Rinjha songs, Danta songs, Paata songs and Sohorai songs.

Both Bodo and Santali folksongs or Loco Geeti sung on various occasions, festivals or some season. Both tribes use different instruments for performing songs and dances.

**Folksong and Festivals are related to Agriculture:** Bodo and Santal Folksong and Festivals are part of their life. Agriculture also represents their folk life. There are many folksongs and festivals, which are directly related to agriculture. Song and Festivals represent their life story, happiness, mournfulness and fear. People of Bodo and Santal are mostly farmers, they spend whole day in their field, doing cultivation and animal husbandry. Most of the tribbles doing paddy cultivation. In the work of field, they narrated a song to please each other, sometime satirize each other, criticize cloud for not any single drop of water or too much water. Song like Santali

“Nes do Juri Aadi Laha Khoi a Da Keda  
Duri AaforMa BangJhuto, Achre Gachi Galang  
tu-Rohoi a

See Me Juri Losod Ma,  
Huru Rohoi Do JuriGoro Yang Ma”  
“Nes Do Chando Sawai Ing Ma  
Jhomor Jhomor Dak Ma  
Huru Do Pale Rohoi Aachu Yang Ma”

The first agricultural festival of Santal is ErokSim. It was celebrated in the month of Asar (June-July). The priest of village called Neake sacrifices the fowls to the Jaher Era, Maran Buru, to invoking them to make the field fertile. The Neake chanting the JaherThan (Religious place)

“We salute you, creator (BapuThakur), Jaher Era, Maran Buru and others. In the name of the sowing festival, we are offering sacrifice unto you, so that we may sow in our quarter and in twelve quarters these may flourish in a crop. Let the wind bring rain. Let rains shower in profusion. Let no diseases visit the village such as Colic pain, headache and bowel-complaints. Convey these diseases away in golden water-carrying apparatus, bound with golden chains, elsewhere, from the direct harm of the tribe. Let our cattle increase in number. Protect them from the attacks of wild

animals, whenthey frequent the jungles. Protect our hunting dogs.”

Next agricultural festival is HariarSimko in the month of Bhadra (August-September). This festival offers and prays to Gods, while paddy is green and indicate to good crops. The village priests doing the same thing just like first one. Next one is called Janthar also called it ‘BaiharHoroNanwani.’ This agricultural festival is celebrated in the month of Agrahayan (November-December). This was celebrated when paddy was shining with the brown seeds of ripened paddy. The Neake offers the God of Janthar with the following chanting:

“We salute the father creator Pargana,  
We offer you all this in the name of Jantbar;  
We pray that whatever we may eat, we may digest.

Let there be no diseases like headache, diarrhea and bowel complaints.

And bless our crop in the field and grain in the barn.

Protect them from rats and other pestilence.”  
The last agricultural festival was Sohorai. It was the harvest festival and among of the famous festivals of Santal people. This was celebrated in the month of New Years. It was a very auspicious occasion among Santal people. All villagers wear traditional dress, eating and drinking rice beer. All are enjoying, performing traditional dance and sing a song:

“Huru Rega Hara Manab, Hara  
RegaChowledo,  
Mannmi Mona Rega Biti Hingsa Manado,  
Bang do Biting Pratibad Bang do Biting  
Tapama Bang do Biting Sarang Rahai  
Allu Baba pratibad, Allu Baba Tapama,  
Nowa Butumtedo Baba Sarang Rahaima.”

The Bodo's family while cleaning the paddy fields or to plain the field, removing the obstacle or the time of ploughing they pray the God of ‘Air or Ether’ to help them for cultivation, they sing a song

“Riu Riu Riu  
Aao he batha rajaya derhabai  
Barma rajaya Jennangbai  
Zfedouhe baobuli maharaja  
Sahai Houfedou gaja goumja”

In Bodo language there are many folk lore which tell about many interesting things related to farming. There are many songs related to agriculture. Bihu is one of the great festivals in Assamese. And this Bihu festival and songs are totally based on the agriculture of paddy. This festival are categories in three parts and is celebrated at three different times. The three festivals are Rongali or BohagBihu, which happened in April. The second one is Kongali or



Kati Bihu, celebrated in October. And the last one is Bhogali or MaghBihu in January. These three are Agri-festival under the name of Bihu. BohagBihu happens in Spring, while the field is ploughing. This BohagBihu is devoted to domestic cattle, because they are the main properties of the farmers communities. The plowman never ever forgets to respect and love their animal. The animals are the main resources for paddy cultivation. They sing a song about their animal

“Dighalate laeethi mousouni meeli  
Dudali yayouna gai khukhile  
Dighalati laithe khringkhing ganthi  
Jongni mousowa jagouna blood jathi”

Kati Bihu is celebrated in the month of October. It is based on care of paddy. This time paddy was shining, brown and the time of pre-ripe. Bhogali or MaghBihu is a harvest festival. It's full of enjoyment, love, eating, dance, songs and festivity. The word Bhogali came from the word Bhog, which means eating and enjoyment. And this festival is the end of agricultural festivals.

Both tribe sing a song in a time of field work, to encourage each other, male or female, husband-wife or may be group of people. Sometimes they are fed up, petulant, and lost with excitement and enthusiasm. And this is the region that they sing songs to encourage, to motivate them to work the whole day. There are various kinds of songs like ploughing songs, reaping songs, songs relating to washing of cloths and cutting of firewood etc.

## II. CONCLUSION:

Both the people of Bodo and Santals are part of agricultural life. Their main production is paddy. Through their cultivation, they are taking a song for enjoyment, love, sorrow etc. Tribes people live with agriculture, they are called Bhumiputra, mainland people. Tribes are hardworking, live with agriculture, Loco Geeti, folklore, unique kind of dances, dresses, instrument, rites, ritual, customs and culture. People love peace and quiet, and in their life, cattle are an integrated part of life hood and major sources of cultivation. But now modernization came, Machin was easiest part to cultivation and many people shifted traditional to modernization. Tribes people also shifted but still cattle are part of their life, they pray for their life physically and mentally for doing good in agricultural activities.

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