



## **A Study of Nagpuri Folklore**

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### **Abstract:**

Folklore is the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth. Since time immemorial folklore has been a vital part of tribal and indigenous communities all over the world. The Chik Baraik tribe of Jharkhand have a rich collection of folk literature. They speak a language known as Nagpuri and their folklore is a rich collection of myths, riddles, proverbs, folk songs, and legends. Nagpuri folk songs are an important part of occasions like marriage, name giving ceremony and other rituals. The current paper has been framed with the following objectives (i) to study the folklore of the Chik Baraik tribe; (ii) to study the culture, folk songs and traditions of the Chik Baraik tribe of Jharkhand. The investigator conducted interviews through a socio linguistic questionnaire, aimed at collecting information on the diversity in the dress code, diet, festivals, language etc. among the tribe. The investigator observed the daily activities of tribal people. The primary data has been gathered through a field investigation in the Simdega district of Jharkhand.

### **Introduction**

According to Dr. Goswami, there are a total of 27,63,841 speakers of Nagpuri language in India, (Anuj, B 2019). Every society has its own set of religious beliefs, norms and moral values. Many of these traditions are not written but are deeply embedded in the form of beliefs and rituals passed down from previous generations. Since many of these traditions are mutually accepted by present generations, they continue to be followed for a long period of time.

Folklore is a general term for the verbal, spiritual, and material aspects of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation. People sharing a culture may have in common an occupation, language, ethnicity, age, or geographical location. This body of traditional material is preserved and passed on from generation to generation, with constant variations shaped by memory, immediate need or purpose, and degree of individual talent. The word folklore was coined in 1846 by the English antiquary William John Thomson to replace the term popular antiquities. Other writers attest that folklore is the body of expressive culture, including tales, music, dance, legends, oral history, proverbs, riddles, popular beliefs, customs, and so forth within a particular population comprising the traditions (including oral traditions) of that culture, subculture, or group. It is also the set of practices through which those expressive genres are shared. The academic and usually ethnographic study of folklore is sometimes called folkloristics. (Eslit, 2020) Folk tales are a general term for several varieties of traditional narratives. The telling of stories appears to be a universal culture, common to basic and complex societies alike. Even the forms folktales take are certainly similar from culture to culture, and comparative studies of themes and narrative ways have been successful in showing these relationships. Also it is considered to be an oral tale to be told for everybody. (Eslit, 2020)

### **Nagpuri Folk Literature**

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, there's no way of knowing about the origins of folk literature, as of the origins of human language. None of the literature available today is primitive in any sense, and only the present-day results are often observed of practices



extending over many thousands of years. Speculations therefore can only concern such human needs as may produce oral literature, to not its ultimate origin.(Oza, 2020)

It can be undoubtedly said that modern literature of any language has evolved from its folk literature. Every community's folk literature throws immense light on the practice of traditions, rituals, beliefs, and religious practices followed by the members of the community. The birth of folk literature can be traced to ancient India. Several historians believe that folk literature was first translated to Arabic and then to other European languages. An illustration of this can be found in the translation of Aesop's Fables which has strong traces of ancient Indian beliefs and traditions. Folktales provide a wealth of information regarding the origin of a group of people.

A lot of information about a tribal community's way of life, line of thinking, festivals, beliefs can be gathered by a study of its folk literature. Most of the folk tales have been passed down orally to the next generation. This is one reason why the gross form of the folk literature has been subject to several changes over a period. Influenced by his own beliefs, the narrator of the folk tale makes several changes to the original narrative. According to eminent psychologists, folk tales are a self-expression of the narrator's language, culture, and beliefs. Mankind's joys and sorrows, dress code, way of life, attitudes, etc have together given rise to folk literature. Since time immemorial, narration of folk tales has been considered a way of entertainment.

According to Dr. Vidya Chauhan, folk tales are a description of alternative beliefs, faiths, traditions written in the lingua franca of a particular region. These stories are written for the sole purpose of entertainment of mankind and can be classified as folk literature of a particular region.(Chauhan, n.d.) Dr.Satya Gupt, while expressing his views on folk literature has stated that folk literature of any society contains a description of all types of emotions, attitudes, beliefs and faiths of its members. Information about the past, sources of information of important incidents can all be obtained from folk literature.(Gupt, 1965)

### **Classification of Nagpuri folk literature**

Several historians have classified folk literature in their own way. According to Dr.Stith Thopson, folk literature can be classified under two broad categories

- (i) Simple folk tales and
- (ii) Complex folk tales.

Simple folk tales can be classified as those folk tales which contain narratives in simple language and a simple plot. The stories have a smooth narrative from beginning to end. Thieves, fools, wicked wives, stepmothers, lazy husbands etc form the characters in these folk tales. Allegorical stories and stories on religious beliefs also form the plots of these stories. (Bhuvaneshwar, A,2019).

In the complex folk tales, the plot has many ups and downs, and the complexity of the plot increases as the story progresses. The complex folk tales contain themes on fairies, magic, and demons. Dr. Girishankar, Dr. Satyendra and Dr. Krishnadev have given various classifications of folk stories in their essays. Dr Satyendra, in his essay has made the following classification of folk stories. (Upadhyay, 1960).

1. A long story or saga
2. Allegorical tales like the Panchatantra
3. Fairly tales
4. Tales of Vikram and Betal
5. Riddles
6. Tales related to monks and saints



Renowned Sanskrit scholar Acharya Anandvardhan has classified folk stories into three types (Upadhyay, Krishnadev; Dheerendra, 1979).

1. Fairy tales
2. Success stories
3. Stories which have different sections

Harichandra and other historians have classified folk stories into 4 types namely

1. Stories with wide concepts
2. Stories related to work
3. Stories related to religion
4. Stories with narrow concepts

The folk tales in Nagpuri can be classified under the following themes (Bhuvaneshwar, A 2019).

- (i) Ceremonies and rituals
- (ii) Folk beliefs
- (iii) love and romance
- (iv) morality and ethics
- (v) entertainment
- (vi) Society and social issues
- (vii) Children's stories

**1. Folk tales based on ceremonies and rituals:**

These folk tales contain stories narrated during religious festivals. These stories are suffused with religious connotations and are narrated when women are fasting while performing rituals and worshipping their deities. These stories are narrated during the celebration of festivals like Karma, Jitiya, Teej, Sarhul and Sohrai. The women are made aware that listening to these stories will lead to fulfilment of their desires while not listening to them might have dire consequences. This is one reason why these religious folk tales are passed down from one generation to another.

**2. Folktales based on folk beliefs:**

The narrator of these folk tales has complete faith in the folk beliefs and through the narratives, these folk beliefs become deeply embedded in the tribal community as well. These stories are also called etymological stories.

**3. Folktales based on love and romance:**

These folktales are narratives of stories which are based on ever lasting relationships. Stories based on sibling relationships, love between princes and princesses, affection between a mother and her children, are some of the stories found in this genre of Nagpuri folk literature. (Bhuvaneshwar,A,2019).

**4. Folktales based on morality and ethics:**

These stories are based on a moral theme and render a message to society. They teach a lesson about what is right and what is wrong, and they allow the reader to reflect on the sense of moral behaviour. They are a great way of teaching life lessons to its readers especially the younger generation. The main objective of these folk tales is to impart lessons on morality and ethics. Unlike Aesop's Fables or Pali's "Jataka tales", animals and birds do not form the main characters. The 'Karma concept' is considered as the central point of Buddhist philosophy. However, the discussion of this concept is found in the tradition of Indian folk tales as well.(Hewawitanagamage, 2014).

**5. Folktales based on entertainment:**

Along with imparting spiritual enlightenment, these folk tales also provide entertainment. Usually, these stories are narrated by grandmothers to their



grandchildren. These folk tales are based on myths, legends and miracles and are based on fiction and imagination with a view to arouse curiosity in the minds of its readers.

**6. Folktales based on society and social issues:**

These stories are based on various societal issues. Various ills which are plaguing the society are considered in these folk tales. An attempt is made to remove these ills through the medium of these folk tales. According to Goodenough, "Folklife represents the aspect of cultural anthropology which concentrates on the study of one's own national cultural heritage. There is no known human society which does not possess folklore". In the words of Bringéus (1968), "the focus of the study of folk life is to obtain and understand the present way of life itself. In the future we must not simply be content with reminiscences instead testimonies. We must also study what is alive. (Ramya, 2013). Tribal people are the custodians of a culture, rooted in integrated values of a perspective that women and nature are one. The wisdom of tribal people tells that the earth meets the needs of not only humans but also the whole creation. Unlike non-tribals, a distinct characteristic of tribes is that they have an ethic of enough. Nothing is taken from nature, other than what is essential. The bare-foot folk dance is a life celebration of their oneness with nature. The Divine is perceived in the trees, mountains, streams, animals and in all creation. Earth is Mother God and God is not to be bought or sold. They approached the land with great respect. For tribes, joining with nature is a celebration which all of them celebrate together. Tribal culture has several elements that mainstream people must emulate. The noble values and attitudes can be contributed to the present-day world at large. (Ramya, 2013)

**7. Children's folk tales**

"Classic literature, whether for the adult or for little children merely seeks to place life in its many aspects before the reader to observe, to interpret to take that which they need. Primitive man gave expression to all he knew, to his interpretation of the facts about him, to his honest feelings which were aroused. This made-up science fairy-story is written by a man, I think, who possesses the modern scientific knowledge, and is in form only, not in spirit, a storywriter.

The story must find the quiet way that leads to the heart. It must make the child aglow with a warmth which unfolds the desire for the good and beautiful as imperceptibly as the buds are unfolded in the spring. It must come quietly, discreetly, so that something is set vibrating in the child's soul, which will lead to action. Literature may inspire and awaken noble impulses when it is artistically presented, but will become worse than useless unless the child finds all around him chances to act upon these impulses. (Thomson, 1903). These folk tales are written with the aim of instilling moral values in the minds of the reader. These folktales are written with the objective of entertaining children. These stories are written with the objective of improving the analytical skill and mental development of its readers.

There are several similarities and differences between folk stories and folk sagas. The word "gatha" originates from Sanskrit which means "to speak, sing, recite or extol". A "lok gatha" is essentially a saga which has a long narrative divided into several sections. Each section contains folk stories where the narrative is written in poetical style. It can be considered as a long poem. As the narrative of the saga progresses several characters and incidents become entwined into the narrative. The saga can also be considered as a collection several short stories. The same saga can also be found in different forms and interpretations in the folk tales of other languages as well. (Dubey, 1982).



### **Some unique features of Nagpuri Folk Literature**

There are several unique features which can be observed in the study Nagpuri Literature. Some of them are highlighted below

1. Unknown narrator
2. Lack of authentic or original literature
3. Folk songs as a major component in the folk literature.
4. Essence of local culture
5. Presence of oral traditions in the literature
6. Lack of any extravagant style of writing.
7. Absence of the author's personal attributes in the writings.
8. Existence of long plots in the narratives.
9. Use of reduplicatives in the folk literature
10. Lack of accurate historical information.

Apart from the above-mentioned characteristics, several types of stories like allegorical tales, fairy tales, mythological tales based on the Ramayana can also be found.

The above characteristics are discussed in detail below (Bhuvaneshvar,A,2019, p 69)

#### **1. Unknown narrator:**

Just like other the folk literature of other languages spoken in Jharkhand like Mundari, Santhali, Bhojpuri etc, Nagpuri also has its own rich collection of folk literature. However no trace of the author of these folk tales can be found. It is very difficult to trace the author. According to Dr. Robert Graves,"It can be discerned from the absence of the author's name that the author considered his work as disdainful. That is the reason why the author is very hesitant to let his credentials known. Unfortunately, it is due to this indifference, that the author's name has faded into oblivion".(Graves,D,1980).

#### **2. Lack of original and authentic literature**

Nagpuri folk tales have been passed down from previous generations orally. No written records are present. The location and geographical setting of the folktale is not specified in the folk tale. Most of the stories are imaginative in nature. Folk tales are the inclusive tales of a particular community, and this is the reason why the origin of the folktale cannot be traced and the authenticity cannot be established. A number of cultural changes are observed from one generation to the next. Sometimes, such extensive research is carried out that the authenticity of the folk literature is lost in the process. Thus, absence of original and authentic literature is a major drawback found in Nagpuri folk literature.(Bhuvaneshwar,A,2019).

#### **3. Folk songs as a major component in the folk literature**

The popularity of folk literature lies in the folk songs. The folk songs add soulfulness and sweetness to the folk literature. The folk songs are sung by the folk singers to the accompaniment of drums, tambourines, various stringed instruments, and bamboo flutes. Folk dancers dance in tandem to the songs and musical instruments.

#### **4. Essence of local culture**

The folk tales contain the essence of local culture, time, and place. Irrespective of the incidents that take place in the folk tales, the local culture of the community becomes an integral part of the folk tale. According to Dr. Kitrej, folk tales originate while describing a particular local incident. The local culture and environment become an integral part of this description.(Uprethi, 1980, p 81)

#### **5. Oral tradition in folk literature**





Folk tales have been passed down orally from the previous generation since ancient times. It can be said without any argument that oral and not written traditions were an integral part of ancient culture. Historians believe that even the Vedas were taught orally in the Gurukulas of ancient times. The authenticity of the folk tales is preserved and protected till they are transmitted orally. These oral traditions are not the creation of any one individual. They are created out of economic and social needs of a society. According to Gumar, oral traditions are the first available literature of any language. (Uprethi, 1980, p 99)

Even though several written records of Nagpuri folk tales are present today, the custom of oral traditions are is prevalent even today. The folk songs are sung by the singers in their own signature style. Certain folk songs and folk tales lose their ease and naturalness in their narrative when they are written. It is because of this reason that certain folk tales are present in the form of oral traditions even today.

**6. Lack of any extravagant style of writing.**

Folk tales are not the asset of any one individual, but they are the asset of the tribal community. Folk tales are free from the shackles of customs and traditions. From the creative and literary perspective, it is absolutely underdeveloped.

Hudson has divided poetry into two types

1.Ornate literature with elaborate rhetoric

2.Augmented literature

Ornate literature is that literature which is created by a single author. Descriptive imagery, sound, tone, elaborate and decorative language, figurative language are the qualities of ornate poetry. This can be exemplified by Kalidasa's "Raghuvamsha".

Augmented literature is that literature which has been interpreted and translated by different writers and historians across different time spans. Vyasa's "Mahabharata" is an example of augmented literature.(Uprethi, 1980,p 31)

**7. Absence of the author's personal attributes in the writings.**

The author of the folk tales is usually unknown, which is also one of the special features of Nagpuri folk tales. The authors have not thought about highlighting their personal attributes but compose the folk tales with the point of view of serving their tribal community. Thus, it can be observed that the author of these folk tales did not write with the sole aim of name and recognition. But it should not be concluded that due to the existence of oral traditions in the folk tales, the author is without any personal attributes. It can be thus be concluded that the folk tales were created by an unknown author. According to Sijvik, the unknown nature of the author is the first and most important and characteristic feature of folk literature in any language. Personal differences may exist between the opinions of different historians, bit it should not be concluded that there was no author at all in these writings. The writings being without any author can be attributed to the existence of oral traditions.(Uprethi, 1980, p 101)

**8. Existence of long plots in the narratives.**

Folk tales are characterized by having long plots. The folk tales are not Indian epic poetry characterised by ornate and elaborate descriptions of scenery, love, battles etc, but nevertheless have long and elaborate plots which describe the life of the characters, society, etc and are divided into several sections and chapters.

Some folk songs are written in descriptive detail with a proper rhyme scheme. Some of them describe the history of Valmiki's life.

**9. Use of reduplicatives in the folk literature**

There are several advantages of using reduplicatives and other repetitive words in folk songs. The songs are not restricted to any classical raga, since classical music cannot be



understood by all. Since the tune of the folk songs are simple in nature, they are easily picked up by the tribal community and their popularity increases as and when they are repeatedly sung and performed. The singers get enthused by the appreciation that they receive from the audience. They get motivated to perform once again and can reach a wider audience with his next performance. The use of these reduplicatives is considered as an integral part of folk literature. This is a very ancient form of narrative. Professor Kitrej has accepted this as a prime feature of folk literature. (Uprethi, 1980, p 103)

#### **10.Lack of accurate historical information.**

There is no accurate record of any historical events in folk literature. The writer of the folk tale is neither a historian nor does he keep in mind historical events at the time of writing the folk tale. The most remarkable thing about folk tales is that it is not written by one specific individual. Every author according to his creative ability continues to add something new to the folk tale. This is the reason why the historical facts recorded in the original version of the folk tale become completely distorted and untrue by the folk tale becomes a written record.

This is the reason why even though the history of the Naga rulers has been recorded in the folk tales, these written recorded is far from the truth.

#### **Allegorical tales in Nagpuri Folk literature**

The word “ allegory” comes from the Ancient Greek word “allegoreo”, meaning to speak of the other in the market place.(Brown et al., 2022)

There are several allegorical tales in Nagpuri Literature. Similar to Panchatantra tales, not all the tales are moralistic in nature. Some of them are written with the sole purpose of entertaining the reader. Similar to Aesop’s Fables and other allegorical tales, monkeys, foxes, birds and other animals are the main characters of these tales. Animals speak like humans in these tales. As the plot of the story progresses, some of the animal characters become princes and princesses. In several Nagpuri folk tales, birds talk like humans where they warn travellers resting under the trees about the dangers ahead in their journey and even advise them about how to avoid these dangers. The characters in these stories have attributes like courage, tolerance, morality, ethics, and intellect.

#### **Fairy tales in Nagpuri Literature**

Stories related to fairies are known as fairy tales. Fairy tales are powerful stories, and as tools and productive technologies of control, they can shape the discourses of childhoods .(Tesar et al., 2016). Storytelling as a method of sharing fairy tales is an art where the presentation and performance of the story are as important as the content (Ali, 2009)(Tesar et al., 2016).The word fairy originated from the Latin word “faitum”, which means magic. (Bhuvaneshwar, 2019)

In the Western tradition, the Brothers Grimm are perhaps the best known and most important collectors of such stories. They were not the first to transform original folk tales into fairy tales, but they used a different approach to collecting, adjusting, editing and transforming folk tales into this form.(Tesar et al., 2016).

In western tradition, dwarfs and elves indulge in stealing children, putting fire to houses and fields, but are always ready to help the poor and the helpless.( Bhuvaneshwar, 2019)

In Indian tradition, fairy are called by names like “pari”, “Gandharva Stri”, or “Apsara”. They like in “Apsara lok”, Gandharva lok” or “pari lok “. They attract the human



characters in the story with their beauty . Some of the plots revolve around the fairies helping the protagonists financially and sometimes provide food through their magical powers. In some folk tales they play the role of love interest of the protagonist.

According to Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyay, fairly tales can be classified into six categories namely

1. Folk tales where fairies help the human characters.
2. Folk tales where fairies which harm the human characters in the story.
3. Folk tales where fairies which kidnap children.
4. Folk tales where fairies which marry the human characters.
5. Folk tales where fairies take the human characters to their realm.
6. Folk tales where fairies which are the love interest of the protagonist.(Upadhyay, Krishnadev; Dheerendra, 1979)

Apart from the above mentioned features some general features can also be observed in Nagpuri Folk Literature

### **1.Description of intimacy in relationships as an integral part of literature.**

Love and intimacy in relationships is an integral part of Nagpuri folk tales. These aspects of relationships is depicted in the folk tales. These relationships may be in the form of mother daughter, brother – sister etc. In some stories, the sister would be depicted as sacrificing food and water and would run helter skelter in order to bring food for her brother. The pure love between husband and wife is also depicted in the folk tales. In some tales, the sister is depicted to die an untimely death, but she takes rebirth and looks after her brother in her next birth, by guiding him and giving him suggestions. Thus, love and intimacy spans several births and generations in the Nagpuri folk tales.

#### **1. Lack of obscenity in the writings**

The folk tales are written by simple rural folk who live in the mountains and forests and not in the cities. But these stories lack obscenity in their narratives. There is no description of tales where the characters suffer from depression, suppressed emotions and love towards materialistic objects. On the other hand, these stories are filled with narratives of divine, pure, ideal wonderful, utopian and supernatural love between the characters.

#### **2. A description of the natural and inborn attitudes and thoughts of mankind**

The ideal nature of mankind is a continuous and constant theme in Nagpuri folk tales. Themes related to the natural human emotions of happiness and sorrow, hope and despair, anger, lust and greed form the plot of the folk tales.

#### **3. Theme of community well being at the end of the narrative.**

All the folk narratives end with the theme of happiness and well being. The folk narratives are written with the objective of spreading peace and happiness for all. The problems and troubles faced by the characters are all resolved in the end. There is no tragic ending in the Nagpuri folk narratives. Striving for everlasting peace and satisfaction for all community members the main theme of the folk narrative.

#### **4. Thrill, mystery, and supernatural elements in Nagpuri Folk tales**

The creators of the folk tales have tried to create elements of mystery and thrill in their narratives. These folk tales have stories which revolve around ghosts, fairies, demons, wizards, witches, magicians, princes, princesses. The supernatural elements of these characters make the stories thrilling and interesting. The creativity and imagination of the authors are very entertaining to the listeners.





### **5. Curiosity among the listeners**

The plot of the folk narratives are so interesting that the listener is always curious to know what happens in the end. Though folk tales have an interest of their own as a kind of fiction, they lead us to the world which is not that of those who tell the tales. A maiden's hand is won by the hero who performs extraordinary tasks. Giants and monsters carry off girls, marry them against their will. Men and women practise shape shifting, make themselves invisible, arm themselves with all sorts of magic powers and or hide their souls in a distant place. (Macculloch, J. A., 1949). These elements of the folk tales make the listeners sit on edge and listen with rapt attention.

### **6. Elaborate description as a natural element in the folk tales**

The plot of the narrative progresses in a simple and natural manner. There are no exaggerated elements in the folk tales.

### **Proverbs in Nagpuri Folk Literature**

Proverbs are a powerhouse of knowledge and information about the culture, thought and the way of folk life. Proverbs are an integral part of the folk literature of all languages and showcases the wisdom and intellect of a given community. By studying a community's proverbs in folk literature it is possible for researchers to get an in-depth analysis of a society's customs, culture traditions, knowledge, intellect, thought and way of life. Several thinkers and sociologists have answered a number of research questions through the study of proverbs. (Bhuvaneshwar, A 2019, p 156) Folk proverbs and sayings are an integral part of the spiritual treasures of the culture and language of the people, the age-old wisdom and skills used by them - an important part of the culture of human language. (Syzydykov, 2014)

### **Origin of proverbs**

There is no concrete research about the origin of proverbs, but it proverbs are present in the literature of all languages of the world. In tribal societies they play a major role in providing the framework for the moral and ethical way of life for the indigenous people. Several renowned Sanskrit poets have made liberal use of proverbs in their epic poems. Poets like Kalidas, Bharavi, Magh, Sriharsha have made their body of work highly effective using proverbs in their writings. Proverbs are multifunctional and flexible instruments of everyday reasoning, although they may maintain solidified attitudes or traditional modes of thought of a certain culture. (Lauhakangas, 2007) They are wise sayings or adages which lay down the framework for the moral code of conduct in tribal societies. Ancient languages like Pali and Prakrith have a rich collection of popular and cognizant proverbs in their literature. (Bhuvneshwar, A, 2019, p 158)

### **Definition of proverbs**

Proverbs traditionally occupied a very large space in folk literature. Instead of the term "proverbs", the use of the word is more prevalent now. This has narrowed down the scope of proverbs in folk literature.

In the beginning all proverbs are part of oral traditions and conversations. Later, due to their popularity, they occupy a permanent place in folk literature, but the transition from oral tradition to a place in the written records in the folk literature takes a long time. (Sahal, 1965)

### **Classification of Nagpuri proverbs**

**Dr. Satyendra has classified Nagpuri proverbs into the following types**

1. General proverbs on serious issues
2. People specific proverbs on serious issues



### 3. Proverbs based on the style of writing (Satyendra, 1962)

Dr. Krishnadev Puadhyay has classified proverbs into the following categories

1. Proverbs relate to the place or a particular geographical area
2. Proverbs related to a particular caste
3. Nature and agriculture related proverbs
4. Proverbs related to animals and birds.
5. Proverbs which are widely used in everyday life. (Upadhyay, Krishnadev; Dheerendra, 1979, p 191)

### Classification of Nagpuri proverbs

Dr. Anuj Bhuvaneshwar, (Bhuvaneshwar, A 2019, p 162) The collection of proverbs in Nagpuri literature have been classified into the following categories

1. **Social proverbs**
  - a) Proverbs related to caste
  - b) Proverbs related to women
  - c) Historical proverbs
  - d) Proverbs related to social behaviour
2. **Proverbs related to destiny and providence**
3. **Proverbs related to food habits and health**
4. **Proverbs related to animals and birds**
5. **Proverbs related to language**
6. **Miscellaneous proverbs**

These proverbs are discussed in detail below

#### Social proverbs

Those proverbs which are accepted by the society and become popular among the people are known as social proverbs.

In order to understand a tribal society it is very important to study a community's proverbs. Proverbs help researchers to understand the principles which govern people's way of life and helps them to identify those principles which are accepted or unaccepted by society.

#### a. Proverbs related to caste

Caste distinction are an integral part of all societies. Each caste has its own unique characteristics. It is possible to study these characteristics through the medium of these proverbs.

#### b. Proverbs related to women

It is possible to study the status of women in tribal societies through proverbs.

In ancient texts and scriptures, women have been accorded a high position. But in present day society the scenario is very different for women. Gender equality in tribal societies is still a distant dream. The picture of women enjoying a higher status however is an illusion created by many. Even though the discriminatory social practices seem to be absent, yet in reality there is strong discrimination against women mainly in the light of tradition and customary practices. (Buongpui Lalsiemsing, 2013) Though the status of women across centuries has been constantly changing across centuries, the respect accorded to a mother occupies the highest position in tribal societies. Yet tribal societies being in nature, women are often neglected in tribal societies. Polygamy is practised among many castes in the Nagpuri speaking community. Thus several individual differences crop up between the cowives. The proverbs related to women in Nagpuri literature throw light on the status women.

#### c. Historical proverbs

These proverbs refer to historical characters like kings of ancient times. There are very few historical proverbs found in Nagpuri folk literature.



d. Proverbs related to social behaviour

There are several proverbs related to intellect and social behaviour in Nagpuri folklore. The view of society, beliefs traditions and customs find an expression through proverbs. The Nagpuri speaking community has self-made rules ethics, moral and social behaviour. These rules find self-expression in the proverbs.

**2. Proverbs related to destiny and providence**

Nagpuri speaking community believe in destiny and providence. Thus, they believe their fate and prosperity is linked to their hard work. They are a religious and god fearing community. They derive their thought and philosophy of life from the Hindu texts of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Nagpuri community are primarily farmers. Illiteracy is common. Due to lack of formal education, many community members suffer from an inferiority complex. This psychology of the people is depicted in several proverbs.

**3. Proverbs related to food habits and health**

Even though the Nagpuri community did not have access to ancient texts on health and nutrition, a knowledge related to health sciences can be obtained from proverbs. Being economically and educationally backward, the tribal people did not have access to books on philosophy and religion, but the proverbs occupy a place as important as books on philosophy and religion. In the tribal community, prime importance is given to proverbs. (Sahal, 1965)

**4. Proverbs related to animals and birds**

There are several proverbs which are related to animals and birds. Some of them are as follows

**5. Proverbs related to language**

Researchers can understand the linguistics of a language through proverbs. Proverbs become an important certification to study the linguistics of a language.

**6. Miscellaneous**

There is no doubt that the creators of proverbs observe their environment closely. The creators of the proverbs have a comprehensive perspective. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 165) After a comprehensive study of these proverbs, it can be concluded that proverbs occupy a sovereign place in tribal societies since they offer moral and ethical guidance to people constantly on the move in the journey of life.

## **Idioms in Nagpuri Literature**

Idiomatic expressions express complex ideas in a simple way. Often, idioms can help express a large or abstract idea in a way that is succinct and easy to understand. The minds of the creative writers are constantly trying to express their complete and incomplete thoughts in order to make their writing interesting and influential. Idioms are phrases that make sense only when they are used in a complete sentence. Changing the words of the idioms will not convey the correct meaning. From the perspective of figurative literature, idioms occupy an important place. From a comprehensive and worldly wise perspective, idioms are written and created by observing everyday situations and profound experiences. Idioms are an important constituent of prose and consist of short sentences. (Gupt, 1965)

## **Classification of idioms**

Idioms occupy a prominent place in Nagpuri Literature. The idioms can be classified as follows

**1. Idioms based on rituals and religious practices.**

Many idioms depict societal rituals and religious practices in Nagpuri literature. There are idioms which have been created based on the entire life cycle of man, from birth to death. As an illustration, "Thali bajavek", is an idiom which is emblematic of the birth of a boy in the household. During marriage in the Nagpuri community, there is a ritual



where the clothes of the bride and the groom are tied in a knot in a piece of cloth. “Ganth jodan” has thus become an idiom symbolic of this tradition in marriages. Similarly the idioms “ Churi phorek” symbolise widowhood. The idiom “ Tura hovek” symbolises the death of parents.

Examples of similar idioms are

1. “ Nachek ni jaane, anganve tedh”

Translated to English, it means “When one does not know the work and gives a thousand reason for not doing it”.

2. Khuri ragdek
3. Gura phutek
4. Godh laagek
5. Ardha nein haath galek

## 2. **Idioms based on historical events.**

Several idioms are based on past historical events. One such illustration is the idiom “Uzbek hovek”, which means to become. Certain past historical events have led people in the Nagpuri community to believe that the earliest settlers of Uzbekistan were fools. This belief has found expression in the idiom “Uzbek hovek” in Nagpuri literature. Similarly the idiom “Irba” has originated from a village among the Nagpuri speaking community where people were considered to be fools several centuries ago. “Vibhishan hovek” is an idiom which means a traitor who has betrayed his country. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 169) This has originated from an event in the Hindu epic Ramayana where Prince Vibhishan betrays his brothers Ravana and Kumbhakarna to take the side of Lord Sri Ram.

## 3. **Idioms based on caste and community.**

Some idioms deal with issues regarding the prevalent caste system. The idiomatic expression “Nira Bail” denotes foolishness. “Guru” indicates a person who is very innocent and naïve.

## 4. **Idioms based on mythological contexts.**

The principles of sin and virtue, salvation, heaven and hell is deeply rooted among the Nagpuri people. Several events related to fate and providence have been inspired by mythological events. “Paap dhavak” is an idiomatic expression which refers to a person who unexpectedly performs good deeds. “Maya jaal rachek” is an idiom which means to upset someone. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 170). This idiom originates from an event in the Hindu epic Ramayana. Ravana conceives a plot to kidnap Sita. Ravana hears that Sita loves deer, so he commands his demon Mareech to change himself into a golden deer, to which Sita will be attracted. Rama’s brother Lakshman goes in search of his brother. Finding Sita alone Ravana kidnaps her.

## 5. **Idioms based on moral values.**

Several idioms based on moral values are found in Nagpuri literature. “Hardi kar rang videshi kar sang” is an idiom which means to be cheated by a loved or trusted friend.

## 6. **Idioms based on good and bad omens.**

There are several idioms which are based on superstitions and the concepts of good and bad omens prevalent among the Nagpuri speaking community. “Tarhathi khujwayek” is an idiom which is an indicator of a good omen which means that a person may get wealth in future.

Literal translation of the idiom “aayenkhar farkek” is twitching of the eye which is an indicator of a good omen. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 170)



### **7. Idioms which give a picture on the financial status.**

An illustration of the financial and economic condition of the people can be obtained from some idioms. “Pet katek” is an idiom which means to give others from one’s own means to eke out a living. “Ankar dhan Vikram raja” is an idiom which means flamboyant and wasteful expenditure in a show of wealth. “Sumak dhan shaitan khayan” is an idiom which means there is nothing wrong in being wealthy, but one should not be miserly. What is the use of wealth if it cannot help someone in need? When a person incurs excessive profit, then the idiom “Agahan kar marad – bhado kar barad”, is used. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 170)

### **Riddles in Nagpuri Literature**

Dr. Satyendra has done of riddles in Nagpuri literature. Like proverbs, riddles occupy an important place in Nagpuri literature. From an Indian perspective, riddles were known as “Brahmodaya”. (Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2019, p 172) The origin of riddles can be attributed to vedic times. The Ashvamedha Yagna was a horse sacrifice ritual followed by the Śrauta tradition of Vedic religion. It was used by ancient Indian kings to prove their imperial sovereignty: a horse accompanied by the king's warriors would be released to wander for a year. In the territory traversed by the horse, any rival could dispute the king's authority by challenging the warriors accompanying it. After one year, if no enemy had managed to kill or capture the horse, the animal would be guided back to the king's capital. It would be then sacrificed, and the king would be declared as an undisputed sovereign.

During the Ashvamedha Yagna, before sacrificing the horse, as part of the ceremonial ritual, a debate would be conducted between the Kshatriya and the Brahmins who conducted the ritual. Only the Kshatriyas and Brahmanas could participate in this debate. (Satyendra, 1962) With the passage of time, the word “paheli” or riddle became a part of the local parlance. Thus, the custom of asking riddles became a local tradition from a cosmic or Vedic tradition.

Instances of riddles can be found in the epic tale Mahabharata as well. As per the story,

Yudhishtira’s father Yama had disguised himself as a Yaksha near a lake. The Yaksha was invisible but his voice could be heard. When Yudhishtira’s brothers came to drink water, he said that he would let them drink water from his lake only if they answered his questions. Unheeding to the Yaksha’s advice the brothers drank the water from the lake and dropped dead one by one. When Yudhishtira’s turn came, he looked at his dead brothers lying next to each other. The Yaksha said that he would let him drink water only after he answered his question or else he would have the same fate as his brothers. Yudhishtira asked the Yaksha to fire away his questions. These questions were riddles which were highly complex and esoteric and profound in nature. After Yudhishtira successfully answered all the riddles, pleased with his answers, the Yaksha restored the lives of his four brothers and revealed himself as Lord Yama, the God of death to Yudhishtira. Such riddles can be found in Nagpuri Folklore as well. Throwing light on the characteristic feature of riddles, Dr. Satyendra says that riddles are description of an object. The riddle starts with unnatural or unapproved theme but ends with a natural theme. Riddles describe the analogy of an object. It is but natural that the analogy of objects in the riddles written in Nagpuri folklore have been drawn from their natural rustic surroundings. (Satyendra, 1962, p 463). He has classified riddles into the following categories:

1. Riddles related to agriculture
2. Riddles related to food habits
3. Riddles related to use of household items.
4. Riddles related to nature.
5. Riddles related to animals
6. Riddles related to any other objects.





Dr. Anuj Bhuvaneshwar has classified riddles written in Nagpuri folklore under the following categories :

### **1.Riddles related to domestic life**

Several riddles related to objects used in the daily life can be found in Nagpuri literature. Some examples of such riddles and their answers are illustrated below

1.Hariyar bilayi charkha poich  
Ni jaanve hale moke poonch  
Answer : Muli (raddish)

2.Taar gache laal gamcha  
Dekh to budha mor tamasa  
Answer : Mirchi (chillies)

### **1. Riddles related to agriculture**

Along with riddles related to agriculture, several riddles on business and industry can also be found in Nagpuri folklore

Examples :

1. Saal bhayer main kubad hathi  
Answer : Hansua ( sickle)
2. Tang ting tang pasare  
Bhokta se kaam kare  
Answer : Chakki (Mill)

### **3. Riddles related to the human body**

These riddles are related to the human body parts, the five senses, daily activities of human beings.

Examples :

1.Battis beech ek patayi  
Answer : Daath aur jeeb ( teeth and tongue)

2.Ek aawat hai aadhe jaat hai  
Answer : Aankh (eye)

3.ek dhola main saat toka  
Answer : Sir ( Head)

### **4.Riddles related to animals**

Riddles on birds, animals and other living beings can be found Nagpuri folklore. Some of them are illustrated below

1.Biyay toh piyaya nahin  
Answer : Saap (snake)

2.Natri jani – patri chadhi  
Answer : Deemak ( termite)

### **5.Riddles related to nature**

Several riddles on nature are found in Nagpuri folklore



Some of them are listed below

1. Dayir kasamkas paat ghora

Phule kadam phare kera

Answer : Semal Vruksh (Bombax tree)

2. Sarge nagin khota dase,

Bhuyi main anda

Answer : mahua (Honey tree) Bhuvaneshwar, A, 2013, p 177)

### Myths in Nagpuri Literature

Folk myths are the traditional beliefs, myths, tales, and practices of a people, transmitted orally. Folktales are stories with people as main characters that sometimes include feats of strength. Myths are stories told to explain the world around us, from the origin of the world, to why there are seasons. Finally, legends are grounded, but aren't necessarily true. According to the myths recorded from Nagpuri folk literature, "Singhbonga" also known as the Sun God was created on its own. He created mountains, stones rivers, trees, and similar non-living aspects of nature. Then he created the animals and finally humans. According to this myth, the Sun God first created a man and a woman. They were made to stay together and learn the art of making toddy from rice bran. As per the wishes of the sun God, twelve men and twelve women were created. From these twelve men and women, other indigenous tribes came into existence. As far as creation of the earth is concerned, the tribals believe that at the beginning of the creation there was only water all around. From this water a male and female bird belonging to the "Singhmali" was created. The birds made their nest on the water and laid eggs inside the nest. From this egg, man and woman was born and that was how creation started. There are several similarities on the myths which describe the origin of mankind in several folk literatures written in Santhali, Mundari and Nagpuri languages. (Bhuvaneshwar, A 2013 p 203)

### Conclusion

Nagpuri folk literature is a vast ocean of stories, fairy tales, legends, myths, riddles idioms and proverbs. If the Jharkhand Government wants to understand the problems faced by the Chik Baraik tribes, attempts must first be made to understand and read their folk literature. Large scale migration from the villages to towns is occurring among the Chik Baraik tribe. With Nagpuri not being taught in schools in the districts of Simdega, Gumla and Khunti, Nagpuri folk literature faces the threat of extinction. The Government must take concrete steps to make Nagpuri language and folk literature an integral part of the syllabus in schools at the primary level. Even though Nagpuri is taught at the undergraduate and post graduate level, most students from Chik Baraik tribal community don't opt to study Nagpuri since the employment prospects are low. If Nagpuri is not introduced at the primary level, then there are chances that the Nagpuri folk literature may disappear forever.

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