

Hudum : A women's Dance & Music of North Bengal

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Abstract : 'Hudum dance and music' is the indigenous art form of Rajbangsi people. The word "Rajbangsi" literally means "Royal Community". They have a rich cultural heritage and their own language. The homelands of this ancient group of people include North Bengal and various North Eastern parts of India. The Rajbangsi of North Bengal has been practicing the indigenous art form 'Hudum dance and music' from long time. The extinction and presence of rituals also hint how the people practicing them have changed according to demands and necessities in their social lifestyles and their job. North Bengal is the part of West Bengal and there are several types of women dance forms like Mechini dance, Kati Nritya, Shaitol Nritya, Muslim biyer gaan with dance and the Hudum dance . 'Hudum' is one of the indigenous dance form which also known as a ritual in the context of social welfare.

Keywords: North Bengal, Hudum , Women's Dance & Music, Rajbangsi

Introduction:

Hudum Deo / Deva - The God of rain, in the folklore of the largest Kshatriya Rajbangsis are derived from Historical Kamatapuri Royal Society of Kamatapur Kingdom . In order to bring down the rain, the women of the house worship Hudum - Deo or Hudum Deva / Deity in the secluded desert away from the locality. There is an attempt to please the deity by dancing and singing along with worship. The inhabitants of this region are taught "Hudum Deo" puja system and this puja, dance and song education in the Gaan dynasty, which can be called non-formal or oral education. It's belief that after performing Hudum Puja along with the dance and music rain will come down in the locality. It is not difficult to understand that their prayer and dance is not only for simple enjoyment but for a greater good for the society. Indirectly, the female dancers of Hudum Gaan do the social welfare work by performing this puja or folklore. Hudum is an important folk worship and folk culture in the society of North Bengal which is worshiped only by women and in which dance and song are presented according to the traditional rituals. But in this ritual there is only one man present among the women who is the hero and who resides as the god of rain.

North Bengal:

The use of the words 'North Bengal' and 'South Bengal' has been noticed in the practice of the people since the British rule. At present there is no separate territory called "North Bengal" on the map of West Bengal or in India, but the combination of the eight newly formed districts of West Bengal is still called as 'North Bengal'. From the sociological, political and commercial point of view, it was formed in the early nineteenth century. The British government created an unbroken politically controlled geographical boundary which called as "North Bengal". In the time of undivided India these boundaries included the area called Rajshahi, Bagura, Rangpur, Dinajpur (which presently is in Bangladesh) along with eight districts of West Bengal in India, some parts of Sikkim, Bhutan and Goalpara region of Lower Assam.

'Hudum'

According to some people, the word 'Hudum' originated by adding the sound 'Ha' to the word 'Udam' or 'Uhum' in the nude sense. Now a day the indigenous people of this region accepted the word 'Hudum' as a Deity or Deo or Deva. Originally, the word 'Dev' took the form of 'Deo' in the phonetic evolution. In other point of view the word 'Hu' means fire and the word 'Dum' means to suppress. This hudum puja is a method of suppressing the fire that blows from the land as there is no rain in the period of cultivation. So we can say that Hudum deo is the god of rain. In reference of other, the word 'Hudum' originated with the addition of the sound "H" to the word nude or Hum.



Pic 1: Pray of God Hudum by the group of women

About Hudum H. H. Risley said that – “When a drought has lasted long. The Rajbangsi woman makes two images of Hudum deo from mud or cow dung, and carries them away into fields. There they strip themselves, naked and dance round the image, singing obscene songs, in the belief that this will cause rain to fall.” (The trives and caste of Bengal, 1891 No. 1.8.)

Hudum deo also mentions the participation of Muslims in the worship of water. Dr. K.P. He wrote in Biswas's "Folk life and Culture of Rangpur (pp. 146). " These rites and also observed by a class of Muslim woman, these are taken by some to be a worship of the Rain God 'Barun Daota' The dolls are images of the rain God and his consort ". The vows of Hudum Deo are a symbol of harmony here. 'Water 'and'water 'have become one here as a symbol of fertility.

Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal says in his book named 'Rajbangsi of North Bengal' about Hudum Deo “It is a special puja. When there is protracted draft ... they make a small image of the rain god with plantain leaf stuck and install him on the field. In some places. a plantain tree is planted. Then the women step off their clothes, untie the hair of the head allowing the hair to hang freely on the back. Thus completely under they dance and sing (mostly obscene songs) abusing the rain god ..It is general belief that rain invariably falls shortly after the puja is done. "

In the context of Hudum Deo W.W. Hunter mentions in his Statistical Account of Bengal (1875 Vol x P-378) A Singular relic of old superstition is the worship of the god called Hudum Deo, the women of a village assemble together in some distant and solitary place, no male being allowed to be present at the night, a plantain or a young bamboo is tuck in the ground, and the woman, throwing off their garments, dance round the mystic tree, singing old songs and charms. This rite is more especially performed when there is no rain and the crops are suffering from drought. "

In his famous Golden 'Bao', George Fraser mentions Bathonga women dancing naked at night to wish for rain. The Bathongas believe that the god of rain is satisfied and sends rain. A beautiful resemblance can be noticed with the Huduma dance of North Bengal. Similarly, the Rajbangsi women of North Bengal try to please the deity by displaying various sexually provocative words and gestures by playing broken tin in the rhythm of Huduma dance & Music.



Pic 2: Dhaki or Drummer playing the percussion instrument 'Dhak' in Hudum dance & Music

Dhaki or Drummer is a character: Drummer is a dumb and blind character in this art form, but he is not blind. The women perform hudum songs and dances to the sound of drums. It is known that there is a need for male drummers even though women dance naked. The male drummer stays a short distance from the hudum puja site in the dark of night and concludes the puja by playing the Dhak to the beat of the hudum artists. Nampo or Kupi or Hurricane lights placed at the venue so that site became dim and the light does not reach out more than a few feet from the puja site. There is no opportunity for anyone to entre from outside to watch the hudum dance. The drummer's eyes are also blindfolded before the naked dance period. And the presence of any man other than the male drummer at the place of Hudum Puja is considered as anti-social act.

Some folk songs of Hudum

Song: 1

(Pray to God with **Sexual influences**. Appeal of women's)

Are o re nidayar¹ myagha² dyakh re najar ghuriya

ore tui abine³ naarir⁴ buk⁵ chiril⁶ phatiya

are o re ni⁷hur⁷ myagha re

are ore kutur⁸ myagha re.

Translation: Oh heartless god, please look at me. O cruel cloud, without you, my soul is not in a peace. I bared everything for you so that my heart and soul get your love.

(Meaning of words: 1. Sleepy 2. Cloud 3. Without you 4. Of Woman 5. Breast (heart) 6.Has Torne 7. Cruel 8. Tortuous)

Song : 2

Deoya¹ Jhori² Aay re Dakiya Dakiya

Ek Chilki Jhori Deo Jang Gao³ Dhuiya

Translation: God showers on us with a thunder. Splash little water of yours on us and return after taking a bath.

(Meaning of words: 1. Sky 2.Rain 3. Body)

Song: 3

*Hudum dyao Hudum dyao , ek Chhalka pani¹ dyao
Chhuyar achhuchi aachhi naai pani
Chhiyachhutir bara bani .*

Translation: Lord Hudum! O Lord Hudum! Please give water. I am not permitted to touch, I don't care. but you Don't worry ! Please give some water.

(Meaning of words: 1. one drop water 2. Cloud 3. Without you 4. Of Woman 5. chest (heart) 6. Has Torne 7. Cruel 8. Tortuous)

Song: 4

*Kala Myagh¹ , Utala Myagh² , Myagh sodar³ bhai
Ek jhak pani⁴ dyao gao dhuibar jai.*

Translation: Black cloud, restless cloud both are my relatives. Then give me the sufficient water, we are going to bath.

(Meaning of word:1. Black cloud, 2. Unstable cloud, 3. Relative, 4. A Flock of water)

Song : 5

*Hudum Deo re Hudum Deo
Hagi¹ Acchi Paani deo
Hamar Dyashot² nai Paani
Haga tikaay³ Bara Baani.*

Translation: Lord Hudum! O Lord Hudum! I have defecated, please give water. In our country there is no water. So we farm without cleaning after defecation.

(Meaning of word:1. Toilet 2. In our country , 3. Buttocks)

Song : 6

*Aaye re Deoya Giji¹
Dhan Chal Jauk Bhiji².
Aaye re Deoya Shosheya³
'Maang'⁴ Niya Thhak Bhyashreya.
Aaye re Deoya Dakiya
Dhaan Chaul jauk Bhashia.
Aaye re Deoya dakiya
Doi chira dyang makiya.*

Translation: O God! Come with thunder. Let the paddy and rice get wet. Come God, with the sound of storm. The womb is widened for you. Come God, with roar. Let the paddy and rice float away. Come God, with a call. Will mix curd and flaked rice and serve it.

(Meaning of word:1. Roaring 2. Get wet 3. The show makes noise 4. Vagina)



Pic 3: Women are singing and dancing in the dark field in Hudum

Song : 7

*Huda Hudumir Biyao Hoy
Sitar Sendur¹ Daane Paay.
Joy Joy Aaji Hudumir Biyao² Hoy
Kaaner Sona³ Daane Paay.
Joy Joy Aaji Hudumir Biyao Hoy
Huda Hudumir Biyao Hoy
Poroner Shari Daane Paay.*

Translation: Huda and Hudumi get married, and they get sindur (vermillion powder) as gift. Today Hudum's marriage and gets gold for ears as a gift. Huda and Hudumi get married and they get Sari as gift.

(Meaning of word:1.Sidhir of Sinthi 2. Marriage 3. Ornaments of Ear)

Song : 8

Aami Kochur Lotar¹ Maton Helibo Na²
Olpo Boyosher Hudum Deo.
Aaye aaye re Kaala Megh³
Aaye Parbot Dhaya.

Translation: I'll not wave like creeping plants, O my young Hudum Deo. Come O dark clouds, chasing the mountains.
 (Meaning of word:1. Cactus creeper2. I will not shake my head 3. Block color cloud)

Song : 9

Hudumer ghar saat bhai,
Karo khetor¹ pani nai
Ache pani gangete
Dhhali dim² jominete³.

Translation: Hudum , there are seven brothers. They don't have water (They are not able to do sex). The water have in the river.
 Will bring and use for cultivation.

(Meaning of word:1. Farmland2. I'll pour it3. In the land)

Song : 10

Aaiso¹ Hudum Thakur boiso²
Aaiso seba³ nyao
shuddha nika pariya betichaoyar hate.

Translation: Dear God Hudum, come and sit down please. Come and take the hospitality from a pure women.

(Meaning of word: 1.Come come 2. Seat down please 3. Hospitality)

Song : 11

Hilhilachhe komorta¹ mor²
Shishirachhe³ gao⁴
KontheKona gele ela Hudum dekhya pao?

Translation: Oh god, my waist is swaying, the body is shivering. Wherever I go, I will meet Hudum.

(Meaning of word: 1. The waist is swaying 2. Me 3. Shivering 4. Body)

Conclusion:

Today in the age of globalization everything is in the palm of one's hand, sitting at home one can see the whole world today, new discoveries are happening, as if people are controlled by remote today, new vision is moving us forward and pushing our culture back from life. Shraddha, bhakti, rituals, puja-parvan etc. are going to be almost extinguished. Just as blood is flowing in the human body, so culture is intimately involved with human life. We have a huge responsibility to keep the culture alive. It is our duty and the only aim to introduce the culture to the new generation. Today there are many benefits of growing crops on land. With the help of government or private sector, the farmer can artificially collect the water required to make his land cultivable. There may be no need to bring 'Hudum puja' or rain by performing songs or dances or to practice that ancient folk ritual. However, it is not difficult for the well-informed and prudent people of today to realize that the simple women of the North Bengal, who unknowingly surrendered themselves to the gods at that time, were doing social welfare work through dance and song in an effort to grow crops in all the fields of the village. So our only effort should be to pass on this ancient indigenous folklore to the younger generation and preserve it through skillful writing or research as well as preserving the dignity of these ancient folk artists.

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