ABSTRACT

Kabiwala and Kabisangeet of Rarh Bengal :
Fieldwork and Evaluation
( Post-Independent Period )

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Date of Registration – 13/05/2013

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An Abstract Thesis Submitted to the Bengali Department of Visva-Bharati for Ph.D. Degree

Department of Bengali, Bhasha-Bhavana
Visva-Bharati
2018
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Introduction

‘Kabigaan’ or ‘Kabi Sangeet’ is a competition between two groups of poets. It is more popular as ‘kobir lorai’ than ‘Kabigaan’ in the rural Bengal. It will be more relevant to call it a musically composed Battle of words. Rabindranath has called it ‘Kabi sangeet.’ The main singer of ‘Kabigaan’ is called ‘Kabiwala’ or ‘Kabial.’ Besides they are also called ‘Palladar,’ ‘Charadar,’ etc. At present the ‘Kabials’ are basically known as ‘Charan Kavi.’ The group of a ‘Kabiyal’ consists of the principal ‘Kabial,’ two ‘Dohars’ and a ‘dhuli’ or drum beater. Kabigaan is a controversial literary phenomenon in the Bengali literature. There are critical speculations regarding the genesis, development, evolution and even the alleged extinction of ‘Kabigaan.’ Some critics think that ‘Kabigaan’ was originated in Calcutta and it became extinct by the end of the 19th century on the other hand there are critics who believe just the contrary. However, it has been proved by researchers that ‘Kabigaan’ neither originated in Kolkata nor it became extinct by the end of the 19th century. The origin of ‘Kabigaan’ is Rarh Bengal and it became popular in urban Calcutta and its evolution took place in the East and West Bengal, although it is too early to think of its extinction. The history of ‘Kabigaan’ is almost 300 years old. Its development continued unhindered though its style has changed from time to time. The subject of ‘Kabigaan’ that was adapted into literature and cinema sticks to the old generation of ‘Kabigaan.’ The modern ‘Kabigaan’ has remained relegated.
Chapter Division of the Research Thesis

The first Chapter - Chapter -Kabigaan of Bengal

1 ‘Kabigaan’ and ‘Kabial’

2 The annals of archiving ‘‘Kabigaan’

3 ‘Kabigaan’ and Tagore

The Second Chapter - The Genesis and evolution of ‘Kabigaan’

1. The context of the emergence of ‘Kabigaan’

2. The time frame of the emergence of ‘Kabigaan.’

3. The sources of ‘Kabigaan’ and other folkloric songs

4. The style of ‘Kabigaan’

5. The type and style of ‘Kabigaan’

6. The evolution of ‘Kabigaan’ in Rarh Bengal

The Third Chapter - The Kabials of Rarh Bengal in the Post-Independence period

1. The Kabial of Murshidabad dist.

2. The Kabial of Birbhum dist.

3. The Kabial of Bardhaman dist.

4. The Kabial of Bankura dist.

5. The Kabial of Nadia dist.

The Fourth Chapter - The lifestyle of the Kabial of the Rarh Bengal

1. The remuneration of a Kabial

2. The financial condition of the ‘Kabial’ of the Rarh Bengal

3. The emergence of the new Kabial
4. The Guru-Sishya tradition of the Kabial of Rarh Bengal
5. The Family Centrism in the kabigaan of the Rarh Bengal
6. Education of Kabials of Rarh Bengal

The Fifth Chapter - The Subject Matter and Literary Significance of the Kabigaan of the Rarh Bengal

1. The Context of the Ramayana
2. The context of the Mahabharata
3. The context of Vaishnava
4. The context of the Folklore
5. The Context of the Shaka
6. The Context of the Folkloric tradition in Kabigaan
7. The context of the ‘Boler Pala.’

Conclusion

Appendix - I. A full volume ‘Kabigaan’ Pala

Appendix - II. A Select Interview

Appendix - III. List of picture of Kabigaan
Chapter- 1 ‘Kabigaan of Bengal’

Kabigaan is basically a competition between two Kabials. ‘Kabir Larai’ promotes victory and defeat; therefore it is often atrocious. However, at present Kabigaan is modest and moderated. The head Kabial starts singing after invoking different local goddesses. The plot of Kobi gaan is often selected from the Ramayana Mahabharata, Quran, Gita and Bible and even from the modern literature. A Kabial sings impromptu. Sometimes any sites folklore and sometimes sings and ask questions II kobial the question is known as ‘Chapan’ the opponent kobial gives answer that is called Uttur’.

Ishwar Chandra Gupta is the pioneer in collecting and collating ‘kabiggan.’ He collected 270 (some of them are incomplete) songs and the biographical details of 10 kabials. The first collection of ‘kabigaan’ in print was Jaynarayan Ghosal’s ‘Karunanidhanbilas’ that came out almost three decades before Gupta’s collection.

Chapter 2 - The Genesis and evolution of ‘Kabigaan’

During the abolition of the Moghul Dynasty the Annadamangal, the Bidyasundar and the Kalikamangal of Bharatchandra and the Ramprosadi Songs offered melodious solace to the agony of the common people. Besides Kabigaan, Jhumur, Kirtan, Panchali, Tappa, Akhrai, Half-Akhrai, Jatra, etc regional songs were written beyond the Western influence.

It is essential to discuss the socio-cultural, political milieu of the 17th-18th centuries in order to discuss the origin of ‘Kabigaan.’ Many critics assume that ‘Kabigaan’ emerged centering Calcutta and its surrounding places. Even Tagore believed
It should be noted that the pre-colonial rural Bengali culture influenced the emergence and the development of ‘Kabigaan.’

Whenever folkloric culture enters urban Calcutta, its nature changes quite naturally and a new culture emerges. Ishwar Gupta and Brajalal Sanyal, the editor of ‘Sahitya Samhita’ have always claimed that ‘Kabigaan’ and Kabiwala’ both were present even in the 17th century. We may divide the history of ‘Kabigaan’ into five phases-

**First Phase** - The ‘Kabigaan’ before the 18th century.

**Second Phase** - The development of ‘Kabigaan’ beginning with Bharatchandra at the beginning of the 18th century

**Third Phase** - From the end of the 18th century till the third decade of the 19th century ‘some of the best kabials were born in West Bengal, namely, Haruthakur, Nitai Bairagi, Ram Basu and others.

**Forth Phase** - From the third decade to the last decade of the 19th century ‘kabigaan’ suffered a major setback. Nevertheless, some eminent ‘kabials’ such as Bhola Moyra, Antony Firingi, Thakurdas Singha among others belonged to that particular phase.

**Fifth Phase** - From the first decade of the 20th century ‘kabigaan’ stared to become extinct.

Chapter 3 - Post-independence Rarh Bengal
Kabial

The basic nature ‘Kabigaan has undergone significant transformation over the years. Due to the geographical nuances, the ‘kabigaan’ of the east and west Bengal flowed in two different streams. Besides, research has been done on both the ancient and the modern ‘kabigaan.’ ‘Kabigaan’ addresses different socio-political and gender issues. I must name Gumani Dewan of Jindighi in Murshidabad who was famous for his well-moderated poetic content free from indecency. Besides, Gumani Dewan, the name of Lambodar Chakraborty of Birbhum shoud be mentioned. I have also researched on the kabials of Burdwan, Bankura and Nadia.

Chapter 4 - The lifestyle of the Kabial of the Rarh Bengal

In this chapter, I have dealt with the lifestyle of the kabials of the Rarh Bengal through data collection during fieldwork. The primary focus of this chapet is the different aspects of ‘kabigaan’ such as the remuneration, the socio-economic condition of the kabials, their family relations and the guru-sishya relation etc.

Chapter 5 - The Subject Matter of Kabigaan and Its Literary Significance

In this chapter, I have dealt with the subject matter and literary significance of ‘Kabigaan.’ This chapter is divided into several sub-chapters.
The Context of the Ramayana

In this sub-chapter, I have discussed the use of episodes from the *Ramayana* in ‘kabigaan.’

The context of the Mahabharata

In this sub-chapter, I have discussed the use of episodes from the *Mahabharata* in ‘kabigaan.’

The context of Vaishnava

In this sub-chapter, I have discussed the influence of the Vaishnava cult on ‘kabigaan.’

The Context of the Shakta

In this sub-chapter, I have discussed the influence of the Shakta cult on ‘kabigaan.’

The context of the Folklore

In this sub-chapter, I have discussed the influence of the Bengali folkloric tradition on ‘kabigaan.’

The context of the ‘Boler Pala.’

‘Boler Pala’ is the conclusive part of ‘kabigaan.’ In this chapter, I have cited some select ‘Boler Pala.’
**Conclusion**

In conclusion, of my research thesis, I have dealt with the future, the patronage of the government, the Rarh Bengal ‘Kabigaan,’ the research projects on the ‘kabigaan,’ and sundry issues.

**Appendix- I. :- A full volume ’Kabigaan’ Pala**

Here I have presented a full length ‘kabigaan pala’ in order to show how the modern ‘kabigaan’ is presented.

**Appendix- II. :- A full volume ’Kabigaan’ Pala**

Here I have presented a select interview. He is one of the most famous ‘kabials’ Kanchan Mandal of Taranagar, Murshidabad.

**Appendix- III. :- List of some picture about kabigaan**