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Realism and the Culture Industry: An Evaluative Study of Bhojpuri Folk Songs



*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of the degree of*
Master of Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

This work aims at exploring, explicating and evaluating the elements of realism manifest in Bhojpuri folk songs vis-à-vis how the culture industry is reproducing these songs in homogenized forms along with the vast production of a new variety of songs specializing in eroticism. As singing, one of the strongest mediums to express human sentiments, is characteristically a kind of literature carving patterns in the amorphous sea of the human mind, Bhojpuri folk songs also express the real and living universe of the people who speak the Bhojpuri language. They are primarily possessed and sung by the common people without much consideration of the scholarship and the erudition that characterize formal literature. They are the spontaneous overflow of people's daily experience of their joys and sorrows. They mirror almost all the aspects of social life as they are composed in an outburst of experiential and existential realities.

The study of realism in folk songs necessitates an explication of the word 'realism' in literature and arts, and also a statement of which angle of realism is to be talked about in this study. The word 'realism' originated from Middle Latin 'realis' metamorphosed from the Old Latin 'res' referring to things, as opposed to ideas and imaginations. Different ages have created their own concepts of realism. Ironically, the first attempt at defining realism was Socrates's concept of universals, which are more real than things. Thereafter attempts at representing the real have followed through the Renaissance to the modern age. G.A. Nedoshivin defines realism as:

Realism, in art and literature, is the truthful objective reflection of various types of artistic creativity. In the history of art, realism has been specifically associated with well-defined creative methods ... Enlightenment realism, Critical realism and Socialist realism. Although these methods are interrelated by a degree of continuity, each of them possesses its characteristic properties. (1978: 523).

Cuddon defines it, instead of emphasizing on any particular age, as follows:

Fundamentally, in literature realism is the portrayal of life with fidelity. It is not thus concerned with idealization, with rendering things as beautiful when they are not, or in any way presenting them in any guise as they are not, nor, as a rule, is realism concerned with presenting the supranormal or transcendental. (1977: 543)

Again, as Cuddon further says,

[In] realist thought an artist should concern himself with the here and now, with everyday events, with his own environment and with movements (political, social, etc.), of his time. The anti-Romantic movements in Germany also concentrated attention on the lot of the common man and on the need to present life with all its warts.

(1977: 544-45).

If we think of what is real, one unanimous answer will probably emerge that the true is the real and what we perceive and see is true. That which is not true cannot be real. The truth of anything's being existent is real. Realism, in art and literature, is an objective representation of subjectivity. Human feelings are subjective and abstract. They can be given an objective representation. Thus, realism can be defined as an objective representation of subjectivity present in the uncharted human mind.

One of the best attempts at defining realism is George Lukacs's concept of "typification". It is as follows:

The central category and criterion of realist literature is the general and the particular both in characters and situations. What makes a type a type is not its average quality, not its mere individual being, however profoundly conceived; what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of the possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes, rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and epochs. (1964: 6)

It is the type in its totality and extremeness that creates realism. The type is isolated neither from its individuality nor from its collectivity. In other words, the type is at the same time both private and public, individual and collective. The artist creates a type as an embodiment of both the known and the unknown. Belinsky views the type as a 'familiar stranger' – 'familiar' because it reveals its features and traits to be found in real life, 'stranger' because it can also lead to the discovery of something new (Zis 1977: 93). Engels defines realism as follows: "Realism implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical situations" (1978: 89).

Thus, in European realism, it is the type that emerges as the true expression of realism. Propagandist realism, and natural realism – a just representation of all good and bad – are not completely different from each other. A common fact they posit is

that realism should represent society in all its exactitude. But the former type takes a political attitude in that it deliberately persuades the society for change by presenting the existing political and social reality. Conversely, the latter type aims at just putting the reality to all. That element in a piece of art, music and literature which gives a truthful impression of something actual to be perceived by the human consciousness constitutes realism. True realism should exclude nothing as proper or improper, common or uncommon, decent or indecent, good or bad. It should reflect things as they exist by holding "the mirror up to nature" (Shakespeare 525: Act III Scene II). Again in Shakespeare's words, "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you overstep not the modesty of nature" (ibid). George Lukacs's remark about great realism deserves mention as it holds man and society together as one entity inseparable from each other:

True great realism depicts man and society as complete entities, instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects. Measured by this criterion, artistic trends determined by either exclusive introspection or exclusive extraversion equally impoverish and distort reality. (1964: 6)

The present study has been pursued basically on the tenet that a truthful expression of the folk mind of what exists there in the form of text constitutes realism. And here the psychological realism fits well in that it "denotes fidelity to the truth in depicting the inner workings of the mind, the analysis of thought and feeling, the presentation of the nature of personality and character" (Cuddon 1977: 547). Folk songs are truthful and artless human expressions without any exaggeration or affectation. No element of cunningness can be traced in them; that is, they are as real and simple as the folk people. The elements of realism that have been aimed at being explored have been thus viewed here as 'a mass experience' (Lukacs 1964: 20). The Bhojpuri folk songs can be put within the category of Lukacs's 'type', but they lack the deliberate and propagandist persuasiveness he talked about. No doubt, they are 'types' as they constitute typical characteristic features regarding the themes. Each motif or theme emerges as a distinct 'type' in itself involving both the singer's individuality and the community's collective consciousness.

Bhojpuri folk songs contain a natural realism lived and expressed spontaneously by the folk. They do not contain any political propaganda of the Soviet Socialist realism or Critical realism. The most remarkable fact in the realism they

contain is that the folk do not sing in order to represent anything to others or to make others listen to them. Rather, they sing without knowing the fact that they are singing and portraying a realistic condition. This phenomenon is just like Belinsky's 'familiar stranger'. That is they are unaware of the realism they are presenting through songs, which can surely be taken as their natural unconscious product.

Here, the study of folk songs necessitates an overview of folk song as a genre. The term 'folk' is a derivation of the Anglo-Saxon word *folc* meaning a people or nation. It is thought to have connections with the Lithuanian word *pulkas* meaning multitude or crowd. In German, it is referred to as *volk*. The New Webster's Dictionary defines it as "people in general, a separate class of people, people as the preservers of culture, especially the large proportion of the members of a society which represents its composite customs, traditions, and mores." Dr. Krishnadev Upadhyay defines it as the so called uneducated and uncultured people away from modern civilization, living in their natural environment and whose living and thinking are controlled by traditional rules (1992: 11). Looking at the above discussions, we can say that 'folk' refers to a natural human society which develops a simple pattern of living and thinking. This is a group of those people who live in a more or less primitive condition untouched by the sophisticated influences of urban life. Folk songs are the very speech of these people put into music. The New Webster's Dictionary defines it as a "song originating among and transmitted orally by the common people of a nation or area, often occurring in a number of versions and usually characterized by simple melody, narrative style, and verse repetition."

Since singing is an inherent quality of man, the folk sing out in fits of passionate emotions. Folk songs can be said to be as old as the folk. From the beginning, man has been a social animal. This sociability led to their singing in groups. The primitive man found music in the flowing of rivers, the rattling of leaves, the falling of leaves from the tree, the snow capped mountains, the greenery of the earth, and the rocks and stones. This refers to the natural harmony of music. Percy remarks, "The primitive spontaneous music has been called folk music" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1969: 445). Thus, folk songs are the spontaneous outbursts of the folk. Cecil J. Sharp defines it as "The song created by the common people" distinguishing it from the "song popular or otherwise, which has been composed by the educated". (1954: 48)

Folk songs comprise a living entity which keeps on changing in pace with society. Ralph V. Williams says, "A folk song is neither new nor old, it is like a forest tree with its roots deeply buried in the past, but which continually puts forth new branches, new leaves, new fruit" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. IX, 1969: 445). It suits itself to every situation and assimilates man's thinning manners and morals. Gene Shay, co-founder and host of the Philadelphia Folk Festival, defined folk music in an April 2003 interview by saying that:

In the strictest sense, it's music that is rarely written for profit. It's music that has endured and been passed down by oral tradition [...] Also what distinguishes folk music is that it is participatory – you do not have to be a great musician to be a folk singer. [...] And finally, it brings a sense of community. It's the people's music. (Wikipedia)

Folk songs are a native ethnography of society. There is a direct relationship between society and its songs, the former being the primary determinant in this relationship and the latter the secondary. Folk songs are of the people, for the people, by the people. Talking of the naturalness of folk songs, F.B. Gummere reminds us of Grimm's opinion, "He [Grimm] maintained that the poetry of the people 'sings itself', it has no individual poet behind it and is the product of the whole folk" (1960: 49-50). Grimm, in fact, says that a folk song composes itself (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. IX, 445). This statement labels folk singing as an unconscious activity in the same way a native speaker can speak his language with an unconscious knowledge of its grammar.

All the above remarks apply to Bhojpuri folk songs orally transmitted, continually reworked and improvised by the folk. Bhojpuri folk songs are a living embodiment of the people's social life. They are replete with realism as the sentiments of the folk have got a full-blown expression. There is hardly any occasion or aspect of life about which there is not a song. It will not be an exaggeration to say that songs are a part of the folk life. There are songs for every work, such as weeding, grinding of corn with the hand-mill, etc. Some songs are concerned with specific ceremonies of various rites of passage and festivals. Besides, there are many other varieties related to age, sex, social evils, occupation, caste groups and so on.

Poverty and the condition of the Bhojpuri peasantry get reflected in a vast number of songs. The peasants basically rest on their traditional occupations such as grazing cattle, pressing oil, farming and so on. A sense of devotion to work characterizes them and they emerge as content peasants in the midst of hardships.

They lighten their burden of work by finding leisure in singing. Songs are a grand panacea for their mental and physical health after day long tedious work. They are cathartic and heal their emotional wounds.

Different caste groups have their own songs, which are related to their occupation. For instance, washermen sing their own songs while doing their work. Palanquin bearers have their own caste songs, which distract their attention from the burden of work. All the songs of drudgery have their specific social, mental and individual concern, and without them, work will probably be impossible to be done. However, there are many songs which transcend caste-barriers and are sung by all. For example, *Kajari* songs are sung by all castes. All seasons have their own songs, which cannot be sung at any other time. Singing any song out of its context or season embarrasses the singer, who is bound to become an object of ridicule. The specific time, event, season and context of the songs make them more realistic.

Many of the songs reveal the ossified, patriarchal and partilineal social structure, though women centre as the sole possessor of the songs. The relations of mother and daughter, brother and sister, mother and son, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, wives of brothers, husband's younger brother and elder brother's wife, husband's sister and brother's wife, husband's elder brother and younger brother's wife – all find vivid expressions in the songs. Most of the songs show the pathetic condition of women, particularly in the marital house that is no less than a claustrophobic world. From birth to death, a woman's life remains a puppet in the hands of the relatives and the strict social norms made by them. Surprisingly enough, most of the Bhojpuri folk songs belong to women, who, because of the dominant normative pattern of the society, cannot express their grievances directly and therefore find the songs as the only medium to express. But this expression should not be taken as an assertive protest. Rather, it should be taken as a covert and mild, but inwardly having a volcanic capacity and quality, underground expression of feelings.

The birth of a daughter plunges the whole family in sorrow while that of a son is celebrated with pomp and show by singing joyful songs identified as *Sohar*. The social system, in which a daughter has to go to her husband's house and the father has to pay a huge amount of dowry, makes a daughter's birth unfortunate. The difficulty a father faces in the marriage of his daughter is unexpressible and unfathomable. It is only after the daughter's marriage that he feels rest. But the daughter has to face many a difficulty in her marital home too, created by both males and females.

Women are always found having complex relationships of love and hate between themselves. Usually, a bride is tortured by her husband's mother and sister. But when she conceives, her place in the family gets better and all start loving her. All her wishes are fulfilled. The birth of a son excels her position and influence in the family. The relationship of the brother's wife and the husband's sister is more complex as the both are found as considerates, confidantes, and yet sharp tongued critics and rivals of each other.

But extremely unfortunate is a barren woman, who finds no place anywhere – neither in the family nor outside. Other women have a phobia of being barren if the shade of a barren woman falls on them. There are many touching songs on barrenness the most poignant of them is the one which depicts that a barren woman is rejected by all – her husband turns her out, the snakes refuse to bite her, the tigresses refuse to eat her, and even the earth does not give her any place for fear of becoming barren.

There are also songs about child marriage. A father gets his daughter married in her childhood in order to get rid of the burden of dowry and other problems whereas the wife-takers' aim is just utilization and exploitation. Child-marriage involves a psychological inclination of the wife-takers to brutal sex. This exploitative attitude of older males becomes obvious when we find that the groom is several times older than the bride, who is a child. All these sexist attitudes get reflected in the songs, some of which depict the incestuous infatuation of the husband's elder brother (*bhasur*) to the younger brother's wife (*bhavai*) whereas custom demands their strict avoidance of each other.

The modern age is ruled by electronic media and technology. With this change of means of communication, folk songs have also undergone transformations. A new culture is being disseminated by the culture industry, which has no other goal than extortion of money from the masses. The village folk who used to sing songs to enjoy themselves now buy cassettes and CDs to listen to the songs. Thus, there have been significant changes in the realm of Bhojpuri folk songs along with the emergence of a new variety of songs with eroticism as their theme. The most significant change is a shift of power – the verbal power of the folk exercised especially by woman – from the folk to the industry. This has been viewed by Adorno and Horkheimer as 'culture industry', which they distinguish from 'folk culture'. Of course, the culture disseminated by the culture industry is not the spontaneous expression of the masses, but rather, a culture produced, with mercenary motives, for the masses.

The culture industry is extremely dexterous in its working through various processes such as standardization, pseudo-individualization and fetishization. It is so pervasive that it renders all into passive consumers. Songs are pseudo-individualized and standardized in order to capture the tastes of all consumers, whereas, in reality, nothing new or individual is produced. A fetish character in music emerges along with a regression of listening. Listeners develop childish, not childlike, attitudes and reject everything that does not fit their industry-created taste. In short, the industry makes them desire what it produces. The folk songs that were earlier sung by the folk, and which are their creation, are now produced by the music industry and sold back to them. This shift of power has rendered them inarticulate. They expressed all their sentiments through songs, now they have nothing but passivity and reticence.

Another major change is the homogenization of songs and the birth of a new type of songs – erotic songs – which have deviated far away from traditional songs. Women are the object of display through words. Earlier, it were women who composed the songs and sang for themselves. Now, it is the music industry which composes songs targeting them as objects of sexual innuendos.

It is in the light of the aforesaid facts that the present study has been carried forward. The songs selected for study have no chronology, as it is impossible to fix any date of origin for a folk song. They have been studied thematically besides some essential stylistic details. A special prosodic and stylistic detail would call for a new space for study. In the studied songs, forthrightness and plainness of expression predominate, complex imageries are rare. The language is unsophisticated, although a folk song may strike the modern reader as difficult and possibly affected because of its archaic nature. The translations of the songs have been done in prose and effort has been made at keeping the meaning and essence intact. Besides, a few songs have been rendered in verse form as they have sounded more vibrant and specific for this study.

Thus, the present study aims at evaluating how folk songs have travelled from realism to non-realism, from a typically folk to a blended product of folk and popular elements, getting transformed into a predominantly erotic genre. The work is divided into five chapters, excluding the first chapter, i.e. the current 'Introduction'. The second and the third chapters study some generic types of songs. The fourth chapter studies the elements of realism in the songs. The fifth chapter discusses the culture industry, its relation to the folk songs, and the loss of the elements of realism and so on. The final chapter, the 'Conclusion', is a recapitulation of what has been studied.

CHAPTER II

TYPES OF SONGS - I

This chapter intends to provide an introductory knowledge of the types of Bhojpuri folk songs, which have been classified into different genres on the basis of their qualities such as their being based on themes, their relations to the events on which they are sung, etc. It needs to be stated here that different scholars have adopted different standpoints regarding the classification of these songs. According to Kuber Mishra, Bhojpuri folk songs can be classified in two ways – stylistic and thematic (Mishra 1981: 12). The style-based approach divides them into five types as follows:

- (1) Dance Songs
- (2) Foot Songs
- (3) Repetition Songs
- (4) Free Songs
- (5) Question Answer Songs

But the style-based approach circumscribes the scope of their contextual study. Bhale Rao has thematically divided the songs into four sections as follows:

- (1) Samskara related songs
- (2) Month related songs
- (3) Socio-historical songs
- (4) Miscellaneous songs (Parmar 1954: 64-65)

Pandit Ramnaresh Tripathi has classified them into eleven categories as follows:

- (1) Samskara related Songs
- (2) Handmill and Handloom Songs
- (3) Religion songs
- (4) Season related songs
- (5) Agriculture Songs
- (6) Songs of Begging
- (7) Fair Songs
- (8) Caste Songs
- (9) Songs of Bravery
- (10) Ballads
- (11) Statements of Experience (Tripathi 1955:45)

But all these classifications seem to convolute the scope for study and thus prove inadequate. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, the classification adopted here is based on the particular contexts of the songs:

- (1) Songs related to seasons – Chaita, Kajari, Barahamasa, Hindola, Phaaga, Chaumasa/Chhamasa.
- (2) Songs related to work – Jatsaar, Ropani, Sohani.
- (3) Songs related to the profession of the singers – Kanharawa, Dhobi Geet, Teli Geet, Birha, Pachra, Gond Geet.
- (4) Songs related to rites of passage – Sohar, Yagyopaveet ke Geet, Maado Chhawai Geet, Mundana Geet, Imali Ghotai Geet, Parichhan Geet, Gaari, Kohabar Geet, Vidai Geet.
- (5) Songs related to fasts and festivals – Naag Panchami Geet, Bahura Geet, Godhan, Pidia, Chhathi Maata Geet.
- (6) Devotional Songs – Bhajan, Nirgun, etc.
- (7) Miscellaneous songs – Poorvi, Jhoomar, Lachari, etc.

What follows is a detailed discussion of these types and forms one after the other, the first three in the current chapter and the remaining four in the next chapter.

(1) SONGS RELATED TO SEASONS

A) CHAITA :

Chaita songs are sung in the month of Chait (mid-March to mid-April). They are also known as *Ghanto*, meaning ‘to churn up’, owing to some typical lines which are sung repeatedly, and the atmosphere echoing with this ‘churning up’. The *Chaita* is of two types – *Simple* and *Jhalkutia*. *Simple Chaita* is sung by an individual person. But *Jhalkutia Chaita* is sung in groups. Singers are divided into two groups; the first group sings the first line, and the second the second in a higher pitch.

The basic theme of *Chaita* is love in both union and separation, although it has many themes to deal with. The month of Chait falls during the time of the year when the spring season charges the heart with sentiments of love. In this season, wives are always found waiting for their husbands’ return from remote cities. But the world turns to be a bed of thorns to them as they spend their days in loneliness, in their beloveds’ absence. The natural beauty surrounding them rakes up their hidden amorousness. The vernal season provides the spur and women sing in plaintive numbers. Those wives who find their husbands close to them spend this month in

ecstasy, with songs of happiness, teasing each other. A unique flowery expression is found in some songs which give vent to natural beauty – the blossoms of different flowers, calls of the cuckoo, the fragrance of *Madhuca latifolia* (*Mahua*) flowers, the bees sucking the flowers and the twittering of birds – all find poetically impassioned mention. This atmospheric beauty allures lovers to meet and love.

Apart from these, *Chaita* also deals with the theme of daily activities. More frequently than not, songs contain as their motifs the love-quarrels of husbands and wives, the waking up of husband by his wife after sunrise, a sister-in-law's request to her brother's wife to go to fetch water with her as vagabonds will tease her if she goes alone, and many other such issues (Upadhyay 1992: 86).

The *Chaita* has its own musical tune which is typically folk, although it has been found that some *Chaitas* are based on classical *thats* such as *Khamaz*, *Bilawala*, *Desa*, *Peelu*, *Gaara* and *Jayjayawanti* (Jain 1992:252). Although it is difficult for a stanger to distinguish *Chaita* from other songs, one can try to do it by knowing that every line begins with 'Aho Rama', or 'Rama, or the first two words of the second line are repeated just at the end of this line, or the first line is sung in a descending tone, the second in an ascending tone and the third in a descending tone again.

Rama khail ke nanadiya badi bairiniya ho rama,
Sutato balamua nahin jaage ho rama.

In the above lines, we find 'ho rama' at the end.

Rama goda tora lagole lahuri nanadiya ho rama,
Rachi ek bhैया tu jagawahu ho rama.
Rachi ek.

'Rachi ek' appears in the beginning of the second line and reappears as the third line.

B) KAJARI :

The name *Kajari* or *Kajali* is derived from the word *kajal*, which signifies the dark. There are different opinions regarding the origin of this name. According to Bharatendu Harischandra, *Kajari* is named after a tree called *Kajali*, which was found in the kingdom of Dadu Rai. Some say that it is named after a goddess called *Kajjali*. Another opinion is that it is named after a festival called *Kajali Teej* (Chouhan 1972: 244). But none of the above opinions have any solid ground. To be logical, it can be concluded that the *Kajari* must have derived its name from the black, dark clouds of the rainy season, particularly that of the month of Saawan (mid-July to mid-August).

As the *Kajari* of Mirzapur is famous, one can assume that it would have originated there. Like *Chaita*, the theme of *Kajari* is usually love in union and separation but it contains some ambivalent songs as well, that is to say, there are some songs which express both meeting and separation. The advice of a wife to her husband of not playing cards; of coming home early; the pangs of poverty felt by the poor; children's demand for clothes, the helplessness of a wife who cannot play *Kajari*, a game, owing to the rains, the request for love from a wife to her husband, etc. are the recurring themes of *Kajari*.

In most of the Bhojpuri songs, the relationship between the sister-in-law and the brother's wife is found to be very sour. But in *Kajari* songs, they show sympathy for each other as if they were intimate friends since childhood. In a song, a sister-in-law requests her elder brother's wife to go to a *Kadam* tree to swing. She has the fear that boys will tease her if she goes alone. But the elder brother's wife does not show interest in it as her husband is abroad. Here, separation emerges as a poignant theme. The wife's longing for her husband's return from a remote city creates pathos.

A brother's love for his sister and a sister's for her brother are also found in some *Kajari* songs. A brother is anxious about his sister's marriage in a good family where she will not get maltreatment in the hands of her in-laws. The sister is also concerned about her brother's good health, marriage with a loving girl, and prosperity. This love is maintained even after marriage. Every woman loves her father's house. She desires very desperately that her brother would come to take her to her father's house where she would play *Kajari*, a kind of game, in the rainy season. A very poignant remark regarding this is made in the following lines:-

Bazar kai chhatiya maai tohari,

Jekar bitiya Sawana sasurari (Jain 1992:95)

(Hard and loveless is the heart of the mother

whose daughter is in her father-in-law's house in the month of Sawan).

Here, the month of *Sawan* has a great significance as this is the month of swinging and playing *Kajari*.

A married woman is often tortured in her father-in-law's house. A *Kajari* song depicts how she faces hardships in her daily life. She says that she has to clean all the utensils, fetch water from the well, and cook food for nine people; dogs and cats also eat up the food and sometimes she has to remain hungry. No one asks her to eat. She

is telling all this to her brother, who has come to meet her, and prohibits him from narrating these miseries to their mother, who, she says, will burst into tears.

Ei dukha jini kahehu maai ke agwa ho na,
Mai chhatia bihari mari jaihen ho na,
Ei dukha jini kahehu baba ke agwa ho na,
Rama pagadi mahal hoi jaihen ho na,
Ei dukha jini kahehu bhauji ke agwa ho na,
Bhauji dui chari ghari kahi aihen ho na. (ibid)

Kajari songs are recognised more by tune than by theme. One of their characteristics is that they have a refrain or burden such as 'Rama re', 'hari', 'balamu', 'sanwara goriya', 'lalana' 'saanwaria', etc. They always have soft notations and are often sung in *raga Desh* or *Khamaz*. The *taal* which is played is *Dadra* or *Kaharawa*. But in melancholic songs, *Rupal taal* is played. Apart from these, there are many characteristics of *Kajari* songs and they need a bigger space for description.

C) HINDOLA :

Swinging in the garden and singing songs of meeting and separation with the rainy season as the backdrop constitutes the theme of *Hindola* songs. In Hindi *Hindola* means 'swing'. Thus, *Hindola* songs are sung at the time of swinging in the rainy season. Gardens resound with amorous songs of beloveds. But the swing creates pain for those wives whose husbands have not come back from cities, while those wives whose husbands are with them celebrate the occasion with great hilarity.

Hindola songs are basically romantic in their motifs. They celebrate love in union as their basic element. Some songs describe the swinging of Radha and Krishna while in some other songs the sister-in-law asks her brother's wife to swing, but the latter declines as her husband is away from her.

The atmosphere gets charged with natural beauty and ecstasy. Women crave for swinging with their childhood friends. Therefore, they request their parents to send someone to take them to their birth places. The fulfillment of this desire finds powerful expression in songs. If a woman cannot go to her father's house, she requests her husband to allow her to go to the nearby garden to swing. Sometimes she is allowed and sometimes denied. But deeper is the sorrow if she is away from both her husband and her parents. If any husband proposes to go out to earn livelihood, his wife stands at the gate and requests him not to go.

But unmeasurable is the sorrow when her request is not accepted. In Indian culture, a husband is often seen as the only one who can provide peace and happiness to the wife. Here is a song in which a wife requests her husband to come back home:

Gheri gheri aawai piya kaari re badaria, daiwa barsai ho bade bade boon

Badaria bairini ho.

Saba koi bheegela apani bhawnawan mera piya ho bheeje parades,

Badaria bairin ho.

Dulahin ho raani chitthi likhi bheje ghar bahurahu ho nanad ji ke bhay

Badaria bairini ho (Singh 1965: 465)

(The sky is covered with clouds and it is raining, which is like an enemy to the wife. Everyone has come home in this season, but her husband is abroad. She writes him a letter requesting him to come back soon.)

D) **BARAHAMAASA :-**

Barahamaasa songs are sung in the rainy season by both men and women. They are so called because they describe the twelve months of the year one by one. The separated wife gives vent to her broken heart with literary intensity. The husband is not back from the city; the rainy season has arrived; the roof is dripping; there is none to repair it. The wife bursts into songs of separation, describing all her pains got throughout the twelve months. Here is a typical *Barahamaasa* song:

Prathama masa asarha he sakhi, saji chaleli jaladhar he,

Sabake balamua raam ghar ghar alien, hamari balamua parades he,

Sawan he sakhi sarab sohawan, rimjhim ber lein dev he,

Baari umeri parades balam, jivanon kawana aadhar he.

Bhadon he sakhi raini bhayawan, sujhale aar na paar he,

Lawakwa je lawake raam biyate ji chamakela kadakela jiyara hamar he.

Ashin he sakhi aas lagaayal, aaso na purat hamar he,

Aaj re pure raam kubari joginiyan ke jin kant rakhe vilamaaya he.

Kaatik he sakhi punit maheena sabisab chale ganga asanaan he,

Saba sakhi penhe raam paat pitamber main dhani logari purani he.

Agahan he sakhi agar sohawana, chahudisi upajela dhaan he,

Hans chakeua raam ker karatu hai taise jaga tansaar he.

Poosa he sakhi osh paratu hai, bhejela angiya hamara he,

Eka taje bheeje raam nawarang cholia dusare bhejela lami kes he.

Maagh he sakhi paala padatu hai bina piya jaado no jaya he,
 Piya je rahatee ghare ruiya bharaiten khaptijaiton maghaba ke jada he Phagun
 rahate ghare ruiya bharatein khepijaiton maghaba ke jada he.
 Phagun sakhi sab phaaḡ khelatu hai, ghar ghar udela abir he,
 Saba sakhi khele raam apna balanu sang, hamero balamua pardesh hai.
 Chaile he sakhi chit mora chanchal jyara je bhaile udhas he,
 Kaliya mein chuni-chuni sejiya usabalon piya binu sejiya udas hai.
 Baisakh he sakhi bansaba kataile rachi rachi bangala chhawai he,
 Huni piya raam lal palangia hum dhani beniya dolai he.
 Jeth he sakhi metan bhaile purigaile barah mas mas he,
 Ram Narayan surdas gayan gai gai sakhi samujhai he.

(Upadhyay 1954: 414-15)

(It is raining heavily in the first month, Asarh, and everyone's husband has
 come home but her husband has not. In *Sawan* the rains rake up her memories.
 In *Bhado*, when the night is dark and fearful, she remembers her husband. In
Kartik, all women have worn new clothes but she is in rags. *Agahan* has
 brought an atmosphere of joy; swans and birds are playing, but she is not. In
Poos she does not remember that her hair and clothes have got wet in the dew.
Magh brings more cold. *Phagun* brings colour to the atmosphere. In *Chait*, she
 prepared a bed of roses but her husband did not come. In *Baisakh*, she got
 built a house of bamboo sticks for her husband. Then came the month of *Jaith*,
 but her husband did not come.)

Another *Barahamasa* also deals with love in separation, where an estranged wife is
 requesting her husband to come home. She was given the assurance that he will return
 in *Sawan* but twelve months have passed and he has not come yet. The *Pipal* tree
 weeps for flowers throughout its life and the *Palash* tree for fruits. Will she also be
 weeping like them? Some *Barahamasa* songs deal with the colourful amorousness of
 workers rather than their care of their fields. Peasants are shown singing songs of
 colourful imagery. Moreover, some *Nirguns* (singing related to the formless God) are
 also sung in the *Barahamasa* style. In a *Nirgun*, damsels are singing that the month of
Sawan has come and the sky is covered with clouds; they have to go to their
 husband's home (heaven), to that land where peace dwells. Great and sonorous sound
 soothes them there. It can be concluded that *Barahamasa* has its own style emanating
 melancholy, sung in low speed with the dominance of *Rupak Tal* (Jain 1992: 112).

E) PHAGUA/HOLI :-

Phagua songs are sung on the occasion of Holi, a festival celebrated in the month of *Phaagun*. They contain abusive and quasi-sexual words and are also called *Kabir*. But why they are called *Kabir* is not known to anyone. People guess that the common people, as unlettered they were, misunderstood the preachings of Kabir Das and called the abusive songs of Holi *Kabir* in anger.

In the Bhojpur region, people make a group and sing *Phagua* in full expression using all kinds of slangs. They repeatedly utter the sound “Arrr, rrr, Arrr, rr” to attain the acme of amusement. Apart from the clapping of people, drums, harmonium and cymbals are the main instruments used in this singing.

As this festival falls during the spring season, the vernal beauty enlivens people with a new vigour and freshness. The feeling of romance is at its peak. People discard their sullenness and come up with a new spirit to relish the bounties of nature. This is the most congenial season for love and romance. Feelings naturally find an outlet in the form of songs. People sprinkle coloured water on the eve of Holi and there is rapture all around.

The theme of *Phagua* songs is love. Sometimes happiness knows no bounds. Sometimes, the pangs of separation are quite unbearable. But all songs are not means for amusement alone; some express real aspects of society as well. The following song expresses the misfortune of an unmatched marriage in which the bride is in agony as she is married to a boy much younger than her in age:

Ho rasa beena saam bajawe, rasa beena,
Jaise ana binu manwa dukhit bhaile thore jala dekhi meena.
Chhote balamu dekhi goriya malin bhaili, joban jaat maleena
Jaise paawa palanga par denha uthi aader kari leenla
Jowan rasa choli bheeje peetam pochhe pasina. (Upadhyay 1960 :145)

F) CHAUMASA & CHHAMASA :-

Those songs which describe the four months of the rainy season are called *Chaumaasa*. More often they are melancholic in theme and tone. The atmospheric effect is heightened by the rains. The separated lover sings in agony. *Chhamaasa* songs are also like the *Chaumaasa*. The only difference between them is that the former mentions six months and the latter four months. In comparison to *Chaumaasa*, *Chhamaasa* songs are very few in number and are rarely sung.

(2) SONGS RELATED TO WORK

A) JATSAAR :-

Jatsaar songs are sung by women while grinding corns or spices in a millstone. These songs are directly related to social problems. Women sing these songs in the last period of the night (before dawn) when they are occupied with the work of grinding corn. Giving an atmospheric description of the humming of *jaata*, the millstone, Smita Tewari Jassal rephrases the words of Haricharan Maurya, a man in his sixties, whom she met during her field-work, as follows:

People woke up to the sound of the *jaata* as just before sunrise, one home after another seemed to come alive with the hum of this most basic of women's activities, the refrains of the *jatsaar* along with the trundle of the stones against each other, being taken up as if in relay from one household to the next. (2003:166)

Jatsaar is one of the most realistic of songs. Meetings and partings, jealousy, family struggle, child marriage, attempts at seduction, women's efforts to save their chastity, incidents of incest, a bride's hardships after marriage and other types of pathetic conditions constitute the theme of *Jatsaar*. Krishndev Upadhyaya opines that the story of women's pain in their daily life emerges as the climax of its themes (1990:136).

The following is a typical *Jatsaar* song:

Jeevan Baithen hai saar bahanoiya
Sarva ke chunvein ansuiya ho ram
Kiya more bhaiya ho tiriya sudhiya aain
Kiya samjhya maiya ke kaleuwa ho ram
Naahi mori bahini tiriya sudhiya aain
Naahi samjhon maiya ke kaleuwa ho ram
Sonwa to jare bahini sonar dukaniya
Bahini jartin sasuriya ho rama
Lohara tojare bahini lohara dukaniya bahini jartin sasurariya ho ram
Ae dukh jinni kahiya bhaiya baba ke agwa
Sabhwa baithe pachhtaihein ho ram
Ae dukh jinni kahiya bhaiya ke agwa
Chaitiya pitiye meri jaihen ho ram
Ae dukh jinni kahiya bahini ke agwan
Naahiu gavanwa na jaihen ho ram

Ae dukh jimmi kahiya bhaiya ke agwan
Ram rasoiya boliya bolehen ho ram
Ae dukh jinni kahiya gaunwa loge agwan
Jhagra karat tanva marihe ho ram
Hamri le vipati gathariya more birna
Gang jamun beeche chhoriya ho ram. (Jassal 2003:166)

An English translation of the song is as follows:

Seated for the meal a brother and brother-in-law
The wife's brother is dripping tears, O Ram!
What brothers you, brother, is it your wife you miss
Or is it about the gift mother was to send:
No, it is not my wife I miss
Nor is it the gift mother was to send.
Gold melts sister, at the goldsmiths
My sister burns in her conjugal home
Iron melts at the blacksmiths
Sister she burns away in her home
Speak not of my troubles, brother, to my father
In the midst of his people, remorseful he will be
Speak not of my sorrow to my mother
Beating her breast, give up her life will she, O Ram!
Speak not of my sorrow to my sister
To her conjugal home she will refuse to go
Speak not of these sorrows to my sister-in-law
Seated in the kitchen, taunts there will be
Speak not of these sorrows to the village folk
In conflicts, they will make barbs and jokes, O Ram!
This bundle of sorrow, my brother

Toss into the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, O Ram ! (Jassal 2003: 168-69)

In another song, a woman, being vexed with her hard life in her husband's house, tells her father that the people of the north direction are very cruel. That is why she was unwilling to marry in that direction. These people make her grind at night, spin by day and wake her up at any time for petty work. As appalling poverty and innumerable difficulties grip the family she attempts to suicide. She asks her mother-in-law where

the pond is so that she can jump into it. The mother-in-law discerning the tendency of the daughter-in-law pretends and does not tell her the address. She commands her son not to let her go near a pond or lake. She manages to make a well in the house for the daughter in law to bathe. The proposition of digging a well in the house evinces the complexity of family rules. It is symbolic of the repressive system of which women themselves are the makers. Stricter is the system for newly married brides, who have to live and work inside the house. In conditions of monotonous work without recess, happiness gives only a tantalizing touch and is never achieved.

In *Jatsaar* songs, women have always emerged as emblems of chastity. A woman's brother-in-law kills her husband to get her as his wife. Getting this news, the woman asks him to bring some fire. As he goes to fetch fire, the woman's body catches fire by itself and is burnt to ashes. The brother-in-law repents painfully over what he had done. Such incidents are enough to show how women have sacrificed their life to save their chastity. *Jatsaar* abounds in such themes. It seems that women sing these songs to purge their emotions. There is an abundance of cathartic feelings, since the havocs wreaked on them are bound to find an outlet.

B) ROPANI SONGS:-

Ropani songs are sung at the time of transplanting paddy seedlings from one place to another by women in groups. The word *ropani* is derived from this very activity of transplantation. It is usually seen that this work is done by women of the so-called lower castes, who have to work hard for their livelihood. In their families, difficulty comes in torrents and sweeps away all the prospects of happiness. Harsher is the life of women who have to bear the brunt of oppression inside and outside the family – inside by the male members of the family and outside by landlords in whose fields they work. Moreover, the pain is also caused by the separation of wife and husband under the burden of poverty. The husbands have to go to cities to earn money, while the women work at home as labourers in the fields. The fatigue of work and lack of leisure find expression in painful numbers. Facing intolerable misery, a wife complains to her husband that she has to work day and night in his house. She led an easeful life in her father's house. Now, happiness has become a dream for her. She has also lost her health because of overwork.

Like *Jatsaar*, *Ropani* songs also deal with women's attempts at saving their chastity and reserving their love for their husbands who are away from home in

pursuit of money. Standing in the grove, a woman is waiting for her husband. Finding her weeping, a passer-by asks her who she is waiting for. When he knows that she is awaiting her husband, he entices her to sex by giving her some gold, but the woman denies and rebukes him in indignation threatening him that she will get him beaten by her husband when he comes back home:

Aam mahauwa ke ghani re bagiya
Tahi biche raah lagi gaile ho ram
Tahi tar tharha bhaili ek re sohagini
Nayana se nirva dhare ho raam.
Bata ke chalat batohiya pooche kahe tuhu tharh
Kekar jo loo too batiya nayan neer dhare ho raam
Lohar niyar mor patar balamua
Unukar baat khada johe ho ram
Lehu na saanwari daal bhari sonawan
Chhoda paradesia ke aasa ho ram
Kabahite labatehen mor banajarawa
Panahee se tohi pitabaibo ho ram. (Upadhyaya 1956:293-94)

(In a grove of mango trees, a woman was weeping. A passer by asked her who she was weeping for. She replied that she was awaiting her husband. The passer by tried to allure her to sex by giving her some gold. But she scolded him saying that she will get him beaten by her husband when he comes back.)

Thus, *Ropani* songs always purport to convince that women are insecure in the absence of their husbands. The tone and the theme are pathetic.

C) SOHANI SONGS:-

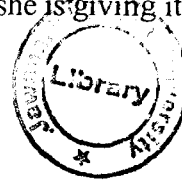
Months after the plantation of paddy seedlings, a kind of grass called *sohani* grows amongst the paddy crops. It is necessary to uproot this grass for the nourishment of the crops. Women of poor families do this work of uprooting. To divert their attention from the weariness of work, they sing songs which are called *Sohani*. The theme of *Sohani* is not much different from that of *Ropani*. Moreover, victimization of brides at the hands of their mothers-in-law, jealousy between wife and co-wife and trial of a wife in the furnace by her husband are some other themes it deals with. A song mentions a Rajput lady, Kusumi, who was combing her hair,

sitting on her verandah. Suddenly, a Turk came up and in no time was attracted to her. He called her brother and asked for the girl as his bride. Kusumi demanded wealth, elephants, horses, etc. for her father, brother and uncle, and went with him. On the way, she felt thirsty and expressed her desire to drink water from the pond owned by her father. Getting permission from the Turk, she went to the pond, drank water and finally committed suicide by jumping into it. The motif in such songs is the inability of women to get rid of the sexist attitudes of men. Women are shown as taking pride in committing suicide rather than succumbing to the victimizer's will.

(3) SONGS RELATED TO THE PROFESSION OF THE SINGERS

A) KANHARWA :-

This is one of the various caste-based songs and has been named after a caste called Kahaar (the bearers), those who carry married couples in a palanquin on their shoulders. The bearers sing songs to lighten their burden. They use pitchers as an instrument. In a song, a woman sitting in the cabin is asking the son of a Kahaar to sing a song. Since the boy is groaning under burden, he refuses to sing. He says he can sing only if she gives him the sweets she is giving her husband. But the bride says that the sweet is poisonous. Then, the boy asks why she is giving it to her husband if it is not eatable. The bride finds some other excuse.



B) DHOBI GEET:-

Like the *Kahaars*, *Dhobis* or washermen, too, have their own caste songs. To lighten the burden of their day long toil, washermen sing songs related to their work, which contain a vivid description of their life. As their life is hard and busy, they carry their food to the work place. The following song shows this very well:

Moti moti litiya lagaihe dhobiniya,

Ki bihanein chalai ka ba ghaat,

Jodi bihane chalai ka be ghaat.

Tinahi cheej jani bhoolihain dhobiniya,

Ki tikiya tambakoo thoda aagi.

Jodi tikiya tambakoo thoda aagire.

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(Tripathi 1955 :782)

A washerman craves for luxurious life. He dreams of having four wives, who can do all the work so that he can rest comfortably. The picture of women that emerges here is that of working machines. It is a very remarkable point that the Dhobi songs can be

classified into two types – one which mention washermen as docile servants; the other which the washermen sing for themselves, The first type is sung by the upper castes to tell the washermen of their assigned work. The second type is sung in fatigue and drudgery. In the former type, washermen are found to have a respectful attitude towards the upper castes. This is enough to discern their unconscious contribution to the engineering of a servant-master relationship. The following song shows that a washerman is praiseworthy if he washes his master's clothes with devotion:

Dhobia ke putawa jabai nik laagai,
 Dhobe bakulawa ke paankh.
 Achchha malikawa whai nik laagai,
 Sewak ke sukha kai dey (Mishra 1981:148)

C) TELIGEET:-

Teligeet is sung by *Telis* or oil-men. It is sung with the accompaniment of *hooda*, a kind of instrument. The oil-men, sometimes, go to their *jajaman's* house and sing songs on the occasion of marriages. With slight touches of romantic elements, the songs are plaintive in mood. The usual incident of a wife's longing for her husband's return home is dealt with touching intensity. In the following song, a wife counts days on her fingers and finds that years have passed since her husband has gone to the city. She weeps and the pain, being unbearable, drives her to the forest to look for him. On the way, she meets a shepherd whom she addresses as brother and asks where she can find her husband. The song is as follows:

Aaju re gaila bhanwara kahiya le loutabe katek dina re,
 Joho tori batiya katek dina re.
 Ganat-ganat mori anguli bhal khiyani chitwat re,
 Maure nainwaan dhure ansuwa re chitwat re.
 Ek ban gaile dosar ban gaili teesar ban re,
 Milat gauru charwaha tesare bana re.
 Goru charawaha tuhi mor bhaiya katuhun dekhe re,
 Mor bhanwarwa pardesia katahun dekhe re. (Tripathi 1955:666)

D) BIRHA:-

Birha songs are sung by Ahirs, although P.C. Roy Chaudhary says that they are sung and possessed by washermen (1976:38). It touches several themes such as

separation in love, marriage, romance, quarrels between sister-in-law and elder brother's wife, economic problems, offerings made to gods and goddesses, moral lessons, etc. For the Ahirs, *Birha* has a wider meaning. They embrace it as their life-story. It seems to be the motto of their working style. The following lines say that there is no work without the *Birha*:

Nahi Birha kara kheti bhaiya

Nahi Birha phare darh

Birha basele hiridaiya mein aie raama,

Jab umanete taba gawa. (Upadhyaya 1954:93)

(There is no agriculture without *Birha*. Keep it in your heart and sing out when it flows in your heart).

Birha is of two types – long and short. Short *Birha* contains various topics and each stanza contains four lines. Long *Birha* is in the form of a tale which tells the story of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. The short *Birha* is very common amongst the people as it sets to tune any event or subject. To some people, *Birha* may also mean separation. Here is a *Birha* expressing the pain of a woman:

Piya-piya kahat piyar bhaili dehiya,

Logawa kahela pindarog

Gauwaan ke logwa marajiya na jaanele,

Bhaile gawanawan na mor. (Ibid, 447)

(My body has turned pale calling my husband, but people say that I am suffering from jaundice. They do not know my desire to meet my husband).

Devendra Satyarthi says that the earliest *Birhas* are self-expressions of wish-fulfillment; they breathe the air of the forest. The *Birha*, to use the words of one of the earliest *Birhas*, never ripened like a fruit on the tree, was never cultivated like a crop in the field; it simply lived in the heart of the Ahir (1987:133). Now, the *Birha* has embraced the changes of the world. The Ahir's struggle in the modern world of technological developments and his inability to adjust to the new ways of life find vivid expressions in it. The hunt for bread driving peasants to cities and here again the weeping and requesting of the wife to her husband to stay at home is found. Thus, the *Birha* has its own characteristics in theme and tone.

E) PACHRA GEET:-

Pachra Geet is sung by members of an untouchable caste, *Dusadh*, who invoke gods and goddesses by praising them to the cure the disease of any person. Old people of this community sing these songs to relieve any ghost haunted person. After the song is finished, the goddess cures, as it is believed, the person and the usefulness of the songs is justified in their opinion.

F) GOND GEET:-

In the eastern part of U.P., a caste called Gond have their own songs, known as *Gond Geet*, which they sing on auspicious occasions like marriage. They dance and sing, the dance is called *Gondau Naach*. They play on a special kind of instrument called *huduk*. The theme of *Gond* songs is not certain. In the song given below, a woman is requesting her husband to stay at home. She wants that he should fill water in the tub for oxen, eat rice and pulse, and sleep in a cool bed. She wants him to stay with their children. So, she asks him to give up the idea of going to a foreign land:

Nariyar ke tikwa turela dono hikwa,

Ar tu ghar hi rahit na.

Are bahrit tui bakhari ke paniya,

Bar tu ghar hi rahit na.

Ghar hi rahit dal bhat khait,

Soit sheetal panchhia na.

Bal bacha se mili juli rahit,

Karit sukh va vilashia na:

Bharit bakhari ke paniya,

Dulha gharhi rahit na. (Upadhyaya 1956 : 349)

CHAPTER III

TYPES OF SONGS-II

(4) SONGS RELATED TO RITES OF PASSAGE

A) SOHAR :-

Songs sung on the birth of a son are called *Sohar*. Sometimes, they are also identified as *Mangal Geet*. The word 'sohar' is supposed to have been derived from the word *shobhana*, which probably underwent transformations such as *shobhilo*, *sohilo*, *sohad*, and finally *sohar*. In Bhojpuri, *sohal* means 'to feel good'. The word *sohar* is also assumed to have been derived from *sudhar* meaning 'beautiful' (Upadhyaya 1992:65). Whatever be the origin of the word, it is acknowledged that *Sohar* is a distinct genre of Bhojpuri folk song.

Sohar songs can easily be identified by their tune, which is fixed and stereotyped. "*Sohar* is actually a tune", says P.C. Roy Choudhury (1976:71). *Sohar* songs have sudden ebbs and flows and are without any prosodic rule. Not only this, they can be unrhymed as well. They are so freely composed that there is no equation of letters in the lines. In the following song, the first line consists of nineteen letters whereas the second twenty two letters (if we write in the *devnagari* script):

Magha hi maas ke chauthia, bahua mori bhukheli ho,

Ei lalana! bahua chaleli asanan, ta sasunirekheli ho. (Upadhyay 1992 :230)

Sohar songs deal with love both in union and in separation. From a woman's conception to her giving birth to a son – all events are reflected in them. In the following song, Sita, symbolic of women in general, is requesting her husband, Ram to make her a mother:

Soraho singar sita kailin atariya badhi gailin ho,

Raghunandan ki dasal sejiya sirhane thadh bhailin ho.

Palak ughari Ram chitawai abharan dekhi bharmele ho,

Sita kawan jarur tohra lagela ho? Etani rati aawlu ho

Kahe lagi kaitu singar ? kahe re laagi abharana ho,

Sita kahe laagi chadhalu atariya? Dekhat tar lagela ho.

Raure lagi kaitin singarawa, raure laagi abharana ho,

Raja raure teen lok ke thakur, bhent kare aileenu ho. (Singh 1965:23)

(Decorating herself very beautifully, Sita went to the roof where her husband Ram was sleeping in his bed. As she stood by the side of his head, Ram looked at her with surprise and asked what had befallen her that she was standing before him at midnight. He said, “Why have you decorated yourself? Why have you come to me?” Sita replied that she had beautified herself for Ram, the lord of the three *lok*.)

Again, “Raja more godiya na janamata balakawa, ahank kaise poojaihen ho” (Singh 1965:23), or “O king! If a son is not born to me, how will my wish be fulfilled!” Here, Sita’s going to Rama refers to their sexual intercourse with the purpose of having a son. It is very interesting to note that here women seem more desirous to have a son than men are. The underlying idea behind this is that women want to achieve stability in their marital life. It so happens that a woman without a son are mostly abandoned by their husband. This theme will be elaborated in the next chapter.

Much care is taken of a pregnant woman. Whatever she desires is given to her without delay. In a song, a woman desires to eat the vegetable of bitter gourd, rice, pulse, fish, meat of partridge, lemon and banana. Whatever eatables a pregnant woman desires are called *dohad* (Upadhyaya 1990:67). Every husband fulfills his pregnant wife’s *dohad* desire as it is considered to be his duty. In some forms of Indian culture, it is believed that a woman completes herself by becoming a mother. The birth of a son catapults her respect and value in the family and society. But the lack of a child turns to be extremely unfortunate as she gets no regard anywhere and her life is thought to be futile and meaningless. The following song talks of the meaninglessness of women’s life for want of issue:

Sun laage diya binu mandir, maang senur binu ho,
Lalana oisana soon tiriya god, se ek balak binu ho.
Sun laage mahala atariya abaru lek dharatiya nu ho,
Lalana nahi nik laage sukh bhog, se ek santati binu ho. (Upadhyay 1956:51)

(A temple is deserted without a lamp; the *maang* (the hair-parting of a woman) is meaningless without vermilion. In the same way, the lap of a women is deserted without an issue. Without an issue, the palace, the earth and every happiness is of no use.)

Sohar songs also deal with conjugal love. As we know the social system does not allow freedom to women, they have to live under the veil. For any love-making, she has to wait for moments when she can slip into her husband’s bed, or her husband

can come to her bed at night. A very jesting remark is made by a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law in the following *Sohar* song:

Sanjha hi chorwa samaile palang chadhi baithale ho,
Aare hai re musalani prem dharohara harakhi ke bahar bhaile ho.
Musalani khati tar ke pati, sirahana pat dehriei ho,
Aare hai re saasu musalani raur beta, harikh ke bahar bhaile ho.

(Upadhyay 1954:123)

(The thief entered the house secretly, sat on the bed, copulated with me and went away happily. He also stole my pillow, O mother-in-law!).

In this song, the daughter-in-law is complaining to her mother-in-law that the latter's son entered her room and stole her beauty and even pillow in the night. The tone of the song evinces sweet conjugal love with joking satires. The underlying essence that the copulation will result in the birth of a son makes the song fall under the category of *Sohar*, besides the tune. Thus, the recurring themes of *Sohar* are the desire of a woman to have a son, the labour-pain of a pregnant woman, the mother-in-law's care for the daughter-in-law, the husband's call to a nurse, the nurse's demand for money on the birth of a son, etc. (Upadhyaya 1992:67)

B) SONGS OF YAGNYOPAVEET :-

Yognyopaveet, also known as *Upanayana*, is one of the sixteen *samskaras* celebrated by the upper caste Hindus. When a boy grows up, it is celebrated to provide him a sacred thread to wear around the neck. It is limited only to the three *varnas* – Brahamana, Kshatriya, and Vaishya – who are collectively called *dwija*. Brahmin boys are provided the thread at the age of eight, Kshatriyas at the age of eleven and Vaishyas at the age of twelve. It is from this day that the educational life of a boy is thought to start. Women sing songs on this occasion. They describe the procedures and the feeling about the ceremony. The following song shows how the *puja* materials such as straws of *palash* (a kind of grass) and deer-skin are being arranged by the father of the boy to be consecrated:

Ei jaahi bame sikiyo na dolela baghao na garajela re,
Ei tahi bane chalane kawan rama,
katele paras dandaKhojele muriga chhala re.
Ei h amara dularwa ke janeu hawe,
Katile paras danda, khojile mirig chhala re. (Upadhyay 1954:171)

(The forest in which not even a straw stirs or a tiger roars will I go to cut *palash* and search for deer-skin. It is my beloved son's *janeu*. I will cut the *palash* and will search for deer-skin).

The song suggests the hardships of getting *palash* and deer-skin. It is hinted at by the fact that even air does not enter the forest in which the father of the boy goes to search these materials. The forest is dense and fearsome. Nevertheless the father has to arrange for the materials. It shows the importance of the ceremony in people's mind.

Some songs describe the spinning of the sacred thread and the importance of wearing it. It is believed that this thread illumines the wearer increasing the longevity of his life. Some songs describe a very ancient system of *guru-shishya parampara* in which the disciple, since the day of his consecration, starts his educational life in the company of his teacher in the forest, where he fetches wood to cook food, begs alms and leads a life of celibacy. Now, as this system is completely obsolete, songs dealing with it are also disappearing. However, songs of the sacred thread ceremony are sung in villages. In Bhojpuri speaking countries like Mauritius, people sing these songs even today in the memory of their ancestors (Mishra 1981:179). The following lines are of a *Yagnyopaveet* song from Mauritius:

Ganga Jamunawa ke beech tau barua pukarela,
Hamara Janeua ke saadh janeua ham chaheela. (Ibid)

(Barua requests his grandfather to provide him a *janeu*. He requests him to do his *Yagnyopaveet* ceremony.)

The above lines show that this ceremony is celebrated in Mauritius with interest and devotion. The boy's eagerness to be consecrated shows his belief and inquisitiveness to attain adulthood. This ceremony marks his development into a higher stage.

C) MARRIAGE SONGS :-

Marriage is common to all civilizations, although with different methods and procedures. It is celebrated with **pomp and show** as it is thought to be an occasion of meeting and enjoying. In the Bhojpur region, it is performed with a series of *rites de passage*. Women get together and sing songs related to the different stages of the marriage. Marriage songs are sung in both the families – the bride's and the bridegroom's. Their songs differ from each other in form and content. About a week before, songs are sung daily in the night and this process continues till the end of the ceremony. It is quite interesting to **note** that each phase has its own songs.

D) SONGS OF TILAK :-

The marriage starts with *Tilak*, wealth presented as gift to the groom. After the groom is found and the marriage is decided, the bride's father accompanied by a few people and relatives, go to the groom's house to present some commodities as dowry. The success of the marriage often depends on the amount of the dowry. If the dowry is little or not as much as desired by the groom's family, the marriage is often withdrawn. The groom's party always behaves arrogantly and feels superior to that of the bride. The following lines show the harsh comment of a groom's father on the meagreness of the dowry brought by the bride's father:

Aaju janakpur se tilak ayao, tilak lehu na chadhai, ei bhai,
Tarapi ke bole te baba ho kawan baba, tilak hai bada thor ei bhai.
Aaju janakpur se tilak aayo tilak lehu na chadhai, ei bhai,
Tilak hatawahu jaladi uthawahu more babau rahi hai kunwar, ei bhai.
Aaju janakpur se tilak aayo tilak lehu na chadhai, ei bhai.

(Upadhyaya quoted in Chouhan 1972:198)

(Today, the *tilak* has come from Janakpur; please accept it. The groom's father says arrogantly that the *tilak* is very little. He orders that the *tilak* should be instantly removed from his sight. He also says that his son will remain unmarried rather than accept it.)

This song shows how the bride's father is humiliated. Some songs express that the groom's father has thrown about the things in anger and the bride's father is picking them up. If the *tilak* is increased, the marriage is agreed upon. But it is not the whole dowry; it is only a substantial part of it. Much more is paid in cash.

E) MANDO CHHAWAI GEET (SONGS OF CANOPY):-

A day or two before the marriage ceremony is held, four poles of bamboo-stick are erected making a square and it is thatched with straws. This is called *mandap* or canopy. At the time of constructing it, certain songs are sung, which are called *Mando Chhawai Geet* in Bhojpuri. Here is a song of this type from Mauritius:

Giri parvat se khambha mangayo,
Pawan mado chhawayo ji.
Surahi gaay ke gobar mangayo,
Dudhan angana lipayo ji.
Kanchan kalasa gagajal paani,

Choumukh diyara basayo ji.
Tahi charhi krishna mandap tar aayo,
Chandana chauka baithayo ji,
Sab sakhiyana mili delan asees,
Krishna ji matha navayo ji. (Mishra 1981:182)

(Poles have been fetched from the Giri mountain to build the canopy. The dung of a Surahi cow has been brought, the courtyard will be smeared with the dung and milk. There is a golden jar for containing some water of the Ganges and *diyas* (lamps) have been put on the four corners of the canopy. Then comes Krishna under the canopy, takes his seat, bows his head and the women bid him their good wishes.)

The same theme has been expressed in the following text from the Bhojpur region of northern India:

Sohawana sohawana manabhawana ai janakpur lagat sohawana
Gaai ke gobar angana lipaina ei gajamoti chouka purawana
Ei janakpur lagat sohawana.
Suarana kalas purhath le dharawat manik deep barawana
Ei janakpur lagat sohawana.
Ram-Siya doono dulah dulahin le chouke baithawana,
Ei janakpur lagat sohawana.
Mithila nagar ki bhamin mili juli mangal char manawana
Ei janakpur lagat sohawana. (Upadhyaya quoted in Chouhan 1972:202)

(The courtyard has been smeared with cow-dung; the priest is establishing a golden jar under the canopy; little lamps are lighted on the four corners; Ram and Sita are sitting under the canopy in marriage costumes. Women are singing that Janakpur is looking beautiful.)

F) **IMALI GHONTAIGEET :-**

It is one of the stages in marriage. The bride sits in her mother's lap and her head is covered with the mother's *saari*. Her maternal uncle offers her some water and mango leaves to cut with her teeth. He also gives some money to her. This is known as *Imali Ghontai*. The following lines tell how the bride's mother is waiting for her brother, who has not arrived as yet:

Aaho more naihar khabari janaw,
 Naihar log aai jaihen ho
 Argan newaton mein paragan beeran bhaiya ho,
 Aaho feru se newaton aapan bhaiya
 Jinkar se main rusal ho. (Mishra 1981:183)
 (Please go and inform relatives in my natal home; they will come soon.
 Invite my brother again. I am displeased with him for his being late.)

G) GAARI GEET:-

Marriage ceremonies are always romantic and joyful in all societies. In India, the two wedding parties – the bride’s party and the bridegroom’s party – usually have joking relations. Jokes are cracked from both the sides. Bhojpuri songs abound in this theme. Using abusive words in songs from the bride’s side, as a sign of love, is very common. Such songs are popularly known as *Gaari* or *Gopalgaari*. The social significance of these songs is in favour of women who, being without any other means of expression, express their avenging attitude towards the male dominant system in which a girl is taken away by her husband after marriage. By using abusive words, women lighten their burden of the feeling of loss at the separation of a daughter. This issue will be elaborated in the next chapter. But it cannot be negated that these songs express humorous love as well. The following is the translation of a humorous *Gaari* song:

The bridegroom is without a cap; so give him a paper cap. The groom does not have a pair of spectacles; offer him tin spectacles. Give him the blouse of his wife as he does not have a shirt on his back. The groom is hungry; give him cow-dung to eat. He is thirsty give him *nallah* (drain) water to quench his thirst. (Chowdhury 1976:72)

Another common joking relationship is found between the *samdhi* (the father of the bride or the bridegroom) and the *samdhin* (the mother of the bride or the bridegroom). A quasi-sexual feeling is shared by them. The mother of the bride along with some other women of the neighbourhood is joking with the *samdhi* in this song:

Samdhi to sutelan unuke mahaliyan,
 Samdhin sutela phulewari ho, sitaram bhaju re.
 Samdhin anjaan babu mast alabela ho,
 Sejiya baithai ras lelan ho, sitaram bhaju re. (Mishra 1981:206)

(The *samdhi* sleeps in his house and the *samdhin* in the garden. The *samdhin* is simple and the *samdhi* sensuous. The *samdhi* sucked the *samdhin* in the bed.)

Here the bride's mother is joking with the groom's parents. Here the *samdhin's* sleeping in the garden covertly contains the meaning that she may be seduced by anyone and the *samdhi* is indirectly referred to as lecherous in character. Some *Gaari* songs mention the bridegroom having a sexual relationship with his sister, having worn her *saari*, sandal and even underwear. There are many other examples of such songs. Women enjoy themselves by mentioning sexual organs in these songs.

H) KOHBAR GEET:-

Kohbar is the room prepared for the bride and the bridegroom. It is decorated with various paintings on walls to add to the happiness of the couples. There are four birds and a pair of geese in the paintings in a *Kohbar*. There are also exotic depictions of the sun and the moon. But it is not a pompous decoration; it is marked with symbolism and simplicity too (Choudhury 1976: 164). Those songs which talk of *Kohbar* and are sung at this time are called *Kohbar Geet*. They usually specialize in describing the making of the *Kohbar* house, though many other themes are dealt with.

I) VIDAI GEET:-

Vidai means 'departure'. The marriage ceremony completes with the departure of the bride to the bridegroom's house. This is a very painful moment especially for the bride's parents, whose hearts fill with pathos and melancholy at the ensuing separation. Women get together and sing songs, which are very deep and heart-rending, to see off the bride. *Vidai* songs express immense love between the daughter and the parents. Not only the theme but also the tune of these songs are full of melancholy. Girls always curse their fortune for making them female. This cursing is very pathetically expressed in the following impassioned song:

Not only the daughter's heart is heavy with sorrow, the father also weeps at the time of departure. In the following lines, a father is shedding tears:

Angana ghumi ghumi baba je rowele,

Katahun na sunita ha beti ke nepurawa jhanakar. (Singh 1965:397)

(Walking in the courtyard, the father weeps. Nowhere is heard the jingling of the daughter's *nupur*).

All the members of the family are plunged into sorrow. The scene is so emotional that even the *bhauji* (the elder brother's wife) cannot stop herself from weeping whereas she always sees her *nanad* (husband's sister) as a rival. A song from Mauritius is here:

Angane bhuliya bhuli amma je rowela,
Katahun na dekhon ei beti nepurawa jhanjha ho kaal.
Angane bhuliya bhuli chachi je rowela,
Katahun na dekhon ei beti nepurawa jhanjha ho kaal.
Angane bhuliya bhuli fufa je rowela,
Katahoun na dekhon ei beti nepurawa jhanjha ho kaal.
Angane bhuliya bhuli mausi je rowela,
Katahoun na dekhon ei beti nepurawa jhanjha ho kaal
Angane bhuliya bhuli bahini je rowela,
Katahoun na dekhon ei bahini nepurawa jhanha ho kaal. (Mishra 1981:190-91)
(Walking in the courtyard, the mother, the aunt, the father's sister, the maternal aunt and the sister weep saying that her jingling will not be heard.)

In deep sorrow, the daughter has to go away from her kith and kin to a world of unknown persons, at the beck and call of whom she has to be ready to serve. Since then happiness for her seems to be "the occasional episode in a general drama of pain" (Hardy 1950:432). The "occasional episode" is the days spent in the parents' house, in the company of brothers and sisters and the "general drama of pain" is the ensuing days after marriage.

(5) SONGS OF FASTS AND FESTIVALS

A) NAAG PANCHAMI GEET:

In ancient times, snakes were found in huge numbers in India, and it seems that people, being afraid of snake-bites, took to snake worship to please their so-called snake gods and goddesses. This practice followed from generation to generation to the effect that fasts and festivals were observed for snake-worship. As lack of space precludes any dilation on opheolatory in India, it will be sufficient to say that on the occasion of *Naag Panchami*, girls make certain drawings with dung on the outside walls and put a pot full of milk and fried paddy seeds (*laava*) at the gate of the house, believing that the snake-god will come and consume the eatables. There are many songs sung on this occasion one of which is given below:

Je mora naag ke gehu bheekhi dee hai,
 Laale laale betawa biaihen ho more naag dularu
 Je mora naag ke kodo bheekhi deehain
 Kariya kariya musari biaihein ho more naag dularu.
 Je mora naag ke bhikhiya na deehain,
 Doono bekati jar jaihein ho more naag dulara. (Upadhyaya 1956:85)
 (One who will feed *naaga* wheat with devotion will have a good
 looking son and one who will feed *kodo* (a harsh food) will get an ugly
 issue. One who will not give alms to *naaga* will get misery for ever.)

It is a belief of people that snakes are godly creatures. Any harm done to them may anger the gods. The satisfaction of snakes is the satisfaction of the gods. Women who desire for a son are often found worshiping snakes, as the above song also hints at.

B) BAHURA :-

The festival *Bahura* has been named after the character, *Bahula*, of the story told on this occasion. Women observe fast during the whole day, take bath in the evening and make statues of a cow, a calf and a lion to worship them. They observe this fast with their cherished desire to get a son by the grace of God. They sing songs on this occasion. The basic theme of *Bahura* songs is love in union. Krishnadev Upadhyaya mentions that some songs contain as their theme the natural love of mother to her son, but most songs deal with the ceaseless conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law as well as conjugal love (Upadhyay 1992:88). The reason why these songs contain the conflict between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law may be that the latter requests the gods through her song to change the mindset of the former who oppresses her too much (Upadhyay 1960:203). *Bahura* songs also deal with the attraction of any man to a woman. A song expresses this as follows:

Pahiri ohari resami chalali bajariya,
 Pari gaile rajawa ke deethi goriya resami.
 Kiya gori reshami re sanchawa ke dharal,
 Kiya tora gahela sunaar goriya resami,
 Nahin mora rajawa re sanchawa ke dharal,
 Nahin hamara ke gahela sonar goriya resami,
 Janam to deta ram mai re bapawa,
 Surati urehe bhagwan goriya resami. (Upadhyay 1956:51)

(Decorating her beauty, a maid is going to the market. On the way, a king's eyes catch sight of her and he asks whether she has been shaped by a goldsmith. Resami replies that she has not been shaped by any goldsmith, her parents have begot her and God has given her beauty.)

It is quite interesting that *Bahura* songs do not discuss the greatness of any god or goddess as some fast and festival songs do. Rather, they bring to light many a social reality. In the song quoted above, we find a sexist male gaze upon a lonely girl, which is enough to show how a lonely woman is insecure in the society. Taking the themes and motifs of the *Bahura* songs into consideration, a question arises – why are these songs put into the *Bahura* category, if they are not basically related the theme of the *Bahura* fast? But no satisfactory answer can be found to this. A simple answer can be that since these songs were sung on the occasion of the Bahura fast by the ancestors, they are even now identified as *Bahura*.

C) GODHAN:-

The fast *Godhan* is observed by women in the month of *Kartik*. On this eve, women make the statue of a man and pulverize it into pieces. According to oral tradition and popular belief, it is a distorted form of *Govardhan Pooja*, performed during the Mahabharata period. People believe that the pulverizing of the statue is symbolic of the shattering down of Indra's arrogance to pieces (Upadhyaya 1992:89). A very peculiar fact about *Godhan* is that women curse their family and villagers to die. Later on, to regret that they have cursed their own people, they pierce their own tongues as a punishment. It is believed that they retrieve the curse by apologizing this way. But why they curse without any reason is not clear. It is a traditional belief and practice; so people are carrying it on. An example of *Godhan* songs is given below:

Gaanu ke gaunwan ho kawan ram, unahu ki daib har le jaay,
Gaanu ke kayatha ho kawan ram unahu ke daib har le jaay.
Gaanu ke sonara ho kawan ram unahu ke daib har le jaay,
Gaanu ke babhana ho kawan ram unahu ke daib har le jaay.

(Upadhyay 1956:83)

(May the head of the village, the kayastha (a caste), the goldsmith and the Brahmin of the village die!)

No one can say why women are praying to God for the death of these people. May be they are praying for the death of the evil elements in them. The song can be taken symbolically. In the following song, a sister is praying for the long life of her brother:

Jiyasu re mor bhaiya,
Mora bhauji ke badhe sir senur ho na.
Mohan bhaiya chalale aheriya,
Parvati bahini deti asis ho na.
Jiyasu re mor bhaiya,
Mor bhauji se badhe sir senur na. (Upadhyay 1956 :84)

(The sister, Parvati, is blessing the brother, Mohan. May the vermillion on my sister-in-law's head be for long. May my brother live long.)

The vermillion of a woman is a symbol of her husband's being alive. A woman cannot rub vermillion on her head if her husband is not alive. The longevity of the vermillion being on the *bhauji*'s head is the proof of her husband's being alive; hence the prayer for long lasting vermillion.

D) PIDIYA:-

With the end of *Godhan*, another fast called *Pidiya* starts and lasts for one month. *Pidiya* means "small rounded shape of dung". Young girls retain some of the dung used in making the statue of *Godhan* and make small shapes of hundred men on walls along with other paintings with flour and colour (Upadhyay 1992:89). There is no reference regarding the significance of this fast. The songs that are available evince that the fast is observed for the love of brother and sister. The following song expresses love between brother and sister:

Kawan phulawa phulawa haradiya aisan na, ei gulab aisan na,
Banhele kawan bhaiya pagariya ke penchawa na, ei pagariya ke penchwa na,
Chali bhaiya bahiniyan ke deswa na, ei bahiniyan ke deswa na,
Gaanuwa kera log kahela hawaldar aile na, ei subedar aile na.
Kaheti kawan bahina hamar bhaiya aile na, ei hamar bhaiya aile na.

(Upadhyay 1956:62)

(My brother's turban is looking like a rose flower. My brother is coming to meet me. The people of the village take him to be a policeman by his dress. But I come out and say that he is my brother.)

The sister is overjoyed at the arrival of his brother to her marital home. She feels proud of her brother as he is looking like a policeman. The villagers are afraid of him till the time the sister discloses that the person is her brother. The love of the sister to her brother has overflowed in ecstasy. The brother's arrival at the sister's marital home is a moment of joy as separation makes their hearts grow fonder.

E) CHHATHI MAATA GEET:

Chhath is an important festival of Bihar. It is celebrated a few days after Deepavali. Several edible varieties of wheat are prepared and put in a basket with some fruits. Women take them to the bank of a river or a pond and offer their prayer in the morning. The sun rises and they offer milk to the sun god. These activities are accompanied with songs. Some of the songs describe the procedures of worship while some others express the longing of a mother for her son's long and happy life. Women are usually found praying to the sun god to endow them with a son. In this festival, women's devotion is at its peak. The following song depicts how a woman is waiting for sunrise with great devotion:

Aare haali uga ei aditamala,
Aragha diau.
Phalawa phulawa le le malini biti thadh
Aare haali haali ugi ei aditmala,
Aragha diau.
Godawa dukhaile re, dadawa piraile,
Kaba se je ham bani thadh.
Aare haali haali uga ei aditamala,
Aragha diau. (Upadhyay 1954:88)

(O sun god! please arise; I will offer my prayer to you. The gardener's daughter is standing with fruits and flowers. My legs are getting tired; my waist is getting pain; for how long will I stand and wait? Please, come up, I will offer my prayer.)

(6) DEVOTIONAL SONGS

A) BHAJAN :-

Songs sung in praise of God visualized in different forms are called *Bhajan*. A *Bhajan* can be described as an **outburst** of people's attachment to the supreme power

of creation. Disappointments follow mankind in every walk of life. One meets with sorrow when one wants to weave a garland of joy. By singing Bhajans one expresses one's devotion to God in spite of the sufferings of the mundane world. A Bhajan does not have any specific tune. There are many *Bhajans* in Bhojpuri, like the following:

Ram ram much bolu e bhai,

Ram ram much bolu e bhai, chhodu sab jag chaturai

Jag chaturai bahut dukh pai, gadahe sareekhe jamhu aai,

Ram nam mein bahut sukh huihai guru sareekhe jamhu aai

Mala ferat tumhein lai jaihein, le patang baithai. (Upadhyay 1954:44)

(Say 'Ram', give up all cleverness. Wordly cleverness brings sorrow, even Yamaraaj comes in his animal form and takes away the dead body to hell. The name of Ram has immense happiness, even Yamaraaj comes in a kind form and takes away the dead body to heaven.)

B) NIRGUN :-

Nirgun is sung in praise of the formless God, using symbolic and broadly meaningful words. It is thought to be a developed stage of devotion and therefore superior to *Bhajan*. How folk literature adopted the Nirguns of Sant Kabir shows the adaptability of the folk. The teachings of Kabir had a considerable influence on the lettered and the unlettered alike as the language he chose to express himself was of the common people. Let us examine a Bhojpuri *Nirgun*:

Man bhaile ho deewana ka dekhi ke.

Manukh deh dekhi jani bhool, ek din maati hoi jaani.

Ei dehiya kagad kee pudiya, boon padat bhihilana.

Ehi dehiya ke mali mali dhowalin, chowa chanan lagai.

Ohi dehiya par kaga bhinake, dekhat log ghinai. (Mishra 1981:159)

(Do not be proud of this body as it has to mix with the dust one day. This body is a *pudiya* (a piece of paper clenched by the fist) of paper; it will be wet when a drop of water falls on it. You wash this body rubbing it and rub sandal on it. When you die, the same body will be eaten by crows and people will hate it).

The world is often considered as transitory. It is implied that the body will not last for ever. What is immortal is the soul. God is the destination of the soul. *Nirguns* always preach about the enrichment of the soul. The body is not paid any attention.

In *Nirgun* songs, the usual pattern of expression we come across is that of a lover longing to meet her/his beloved. God is usually addressed to as the beloved and the eternal home is one's destination. The soul is addressed to as a bird which has to fly away one day or the other. The tone of *Nirgun* songs is very melancholic.

(7) MISCELLANEOUS SONGS

A) POORVI :-

Poorvi is a tune found in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and the Chhapra district of Bihar. Songs sung in this tune are identified by the same name. It is held to be a very melodious tune. People believe that Mahendra Mishra, an inhabitant of Chhapra, was the composer of *Poorvi* songs, but mystery shrouds the origin. *Poorvi* songs are sung on eve of every fast and festival (Chouhan 1972:303). The essence of *Poorvi* songs is usually love in separation, although there are some songs dealing with love in union. Descriptions of any woman's longing to meet her separated husband are frequently found. Women's expectation from their husbands are many, but love is the most important of all. Sometimes, they are deprived of love as the husbands go abroad and are lured by some city women. The following lines explain how a husband has been trapped into the love of another woman:

Patiya banchat mor chhatiya kadakali

Ki phansi ho gaile na, ohi kubari sangawa,

Ki phansi ho gaile na. (Upadhyay 1956: 392-93)

(Reading the letter, my heart was broken. He (the husband) was entangled into the love of that crooked woman).

It is the tune and not the theme that differentiates *Poorvi* from other song genres. It is sung by women both in groups and individually. Themes vary but the tune is fixed.

B) ALCHAARI/LAACHAARI :-

Alchaari or *Laachaari*, as it is sometimes called, designates a type of songs which expresses helplessness – the helplessness of women. In poverty, husbands go to cities to earn money; wives have to bear the pangs of separation. *Alchaari* songs discuss women's helplessness in such circumstances. The following song expresses how a wife is requesting her husband, who is ready to leave for a city to earn money, not to go and warns him of the consequences of falling for the lure of other women in those alien cities:

Barahi baar tohi barajo mor saami,
 Se utari baniijiya mati jaiha mor saami.
 Utari baniijiya ke utari bangalin,
 Se rakhihe karejawa lagaai mor saami.
 Barahibaar tohi barajo mor saami,
 Se unaka sejariya mati jaiha mor saami.
 Unaka sejariya jab jaiha tu hoon saami,
 Se utari jaihe tohara mukhawa ke paani.
 Hamara sejariya jab aiba mor saami,
 Se tu hoon hoiba rajawa hamahoon pataraani. (Singh 1965:344-45)
 (O my lord! I request you again and again not to go to the northern
 city. The Bengali woman of the northern city will keep you there.
 Please do not go to her bed. If you do, your charm will vanish. If you
 come to my bed, you will be the king and I the queen.)

The wife is earnestly craving for love. She fears that her husband may fall in love with another woman and therefore, requests him not to be away from her.

C) **JHOOMAR :-**

The word *Jhoomar* seems to have originated from the Hindi word *jhumana* meaning 'to sway'. Auspicious songs sung by women swaying/tossing their heads are called *Jhoomar*. They deal with conjugal life as their themes and are charged with amorousness and hilarity. Words are set in a way to create an atmosphere of romance and beauty. Like all other song genres, they are also closely linked with society.

- Naihar mein rahaleen, bada re sukh kainee,

Bada re sukh kainee,

Khele ke milal, khele ke milal, gotiya re sanvariya.

Sasuraa mein aileen, bada re dukh painee,

Bada re dukh painee. (*Bhojpuri Sansar*)

(I got immense joy in the paternal home, playing with the neighbours.

But I get displeasure in the marital home.)

CHAPTER IV

REALISM IN BHOJPURI FOLK SONGS

This chapter aims at exploring the elements of realism in Bhojpuri folk songs. The tenet of this realism has been an observation of the things as they are rather than as they should be. The attempt has been at a just explanation and evaluation of what exists amongst the Bhojpuri folk. We will see that all the songs spring from incidents and situations of real life. There is no deliberate thinking that one has to sing. Songs come out themselves. The concept that *gaana* (to sing) means ‘gaa na’, that is, ‘sing not’ rings true in this context. And Verrier’s statement sounds authentic in this regard when he says, “If you want to know the story of my life/Then listen to my (...) songs” (Elwin and Hivale 1944:16).

A recurrent theme in many songs is that of the wife’s separation from her husband and the pain born out of it. The main factor in this separation is poverty, which drives people – young and old – to industrial cities to earn money. With the impact of industrialisation during the British rule in India, the most fatal blow was borne by peasants and workers. People moved towards big cities in huge numbers in search of work/employment. In this situation, women had to stay at home to look after the family. Their life was replete with hardships encumbered with which they had to work in fields. The hardships of life on the one hand and the pain of separation on the other converged and led to spontaneous composition of painful songs. The following song expresses the cause of separation very appropriately:

Purub se aili reliya, pachchiuon se jahajiya,

Piya ke laadi le gai ho.

Reliya ho gai mori sawatiya,

Piya ke laadi le gai ho.

Reliya na bairi, jahajiya na bairi,

Uhe paiswa bairi na,

Desawa deswa bharamawe, se paiswa bairi na. (Tripathi 1955:25)

(From the east came the train, from the west the ship and took away my husband. The train has become my co-wife as she carried away my husband. But neither the train nor the ship is my enemy. The real enemy is money, which compelled my husband to go to a foreign land.)

It is completely clear from the above lines that it is poverty which is the real enemy. It makes many married couples part with each other, while their hearts throb with sensual emotions. The desperate need for money dashes all the sweet dreams to the ground. The husband has to leave his wife at home. Some songs mention that every moment passes like a year. No one cares for the wife. In joint families, a new problem emerges. That problem is created by the in-laws, who always remind her of her dependence on the family: “Tu kekar kamaiya khaibu e raam” (Upadhyay 1992: 245). (Whose earnings will feed you?) She cannot answer, and remains taciturn bearing all the difficulties, because her husband has gone to a foreign land. A wife is completely helpless if her husband is away from her. The situation is more pathetic if the family is not a joint one. In joint families, at least she has not to arrange for her accommodation and other things. In a nuclear family, there is no one to look after her:

Piyawa je chalele purab banijiya

Se ke re chhaihein na, mora ujadal bangalwa

Se kei re chhaihein na. (Upadhyay 1954:364)

(My husband is going to a foreign land to earn money. Who will thatch my bungalow?)

The husband is not only the wife’s love, but also her safeguard against bad days and bad people. The thatching of the bungalow says something more than thatching. In northern India, or also all over India, there are certain activities which are done by men only. The thatching of the roof is one of them. Thatching the bungalow refers to all those works that the wife will not be able to do in her husband’s absence. Therefore she becomes anxious.

In the folk songs, women’s devotion to the husband is so deep and firm that nothing can substitute it. They express deep love. For instance,

Piya chalele pardesiya biharela raam chhatiya,

Jo ham janiti e lobhiya, jaibe re videswa,

Piya ke payetanwae lobhiya, chhipaiteen re ancharwa.

Muh tor hawe e labhiya suraj ke jotiya ,

Aankhi tor hawe e lobhiya aamawa ke phariya.

Naak tor hawe e lobhiya, sugawa ke thorawa,

Bhahoon tor hawe e lobhiya, chadhal kamaniya.

Oth tor hawe e lobhiya kateral panawa

Abaru tor haw e lobhiya. Kadi-kadi mocchiya .

Baanhi tor hawe e lobhiya, sobaran sotawa,
Pet tor hawe e lobhiya purain patawa,
Peeth tor hawe e lobhiya, dhobhiya ke patawa,
God tor hawe e lobhiya kerawa ke thuhawa. (Upadhyay 1954:63)

(My husband is going to a foreign land. My heart gets torn apart. If I knew that you are going to a foreign land, I would have hidden your luggage under my *aanchal* (the corner of her saari). Your face, my dear, is like the beam/ rays of the sun, your eyes like mango fruits, your nose like the lips of a parrot, your eyebrows like a bow, your lips like chewed betel, your moustache dense, your stomach like the leaves of *purain*, your back like the wide cloth-washing place of washermen, your legs like the banana tree.)

In this song, the similies have been drawn from typically rural settings, a characteristic of folk songs. In the mainstream erudite literature, the imageries are drawn from classical literatures and they present a lot of difficulties in understanding.

When the husband goes away despite the wife's attempts to stop him, she has to console her heart with reminiscences and objects of memory:

Hari mor chalale uteri banijiya ,
Duara kadam laai gaile ho raama,
Jab jab dhaniya re manawa tor udasihe,
Tab tu kadam tar tharh hoih ho raama. (Jain 1992:317)

(When my husband went to the northern land to earn money, he planted a *kadam* tree in front of the door. He said to me, "Stand beneath the tree whenever you feel sad in separation.)

The old society had lack of communication. The wife could not send messages to her husband. She had to wait for her husband for too long a time. She internalized herself and created a world of fantasy trying to talk to him. A very maudlin world flourished within her mind. She loved this internal world of feelings as the only place to gossip with her husband. But the harsh realities of the world haunt the mind and hurt her feelings. Misery and helplessness never leave her company. In her fantasy, she used to send her husband messages by means of a parrot.

Udal-udal suga gaile kalkatawa
Ki jaai baithena mor, saami ji ke pagiya.
Ki jaike baithe na.

Pagari utari saami jaangh baithawale
Ki kah suga na mor ghar ke kusalatiya,
Ki kah suga na.

Maai tohara kutani, bahini tori pisani,
Ki joiya kaili na, tori dauri dokaniyan
Ki joiya kaili na. (Upadhyaya 1992:194-195)

(Flying, the parrot went to Calcutta and sat on my husband's turban. My lord put off the turban and took the parrot in his lap and asked it about the happiness of his house. The parrot said "Your mother and sister grind; your wife does other household activities.)

This song gives us a glimpse of appalling poverty in the Bhojpur region. The wife, the mother and the sister – all have to do tiresome work even if one person of the family is earning in a city. The parrot as the messenger imbues the message with a deep melancholic sense. A sense of remoteness pervades throughout. In another song, a wife is sending message to her husband through the clouds. Here are a few lines:

Are are kaari badariya tuhain mor badari
Badari, jaai barisahu wahi desh jahaan piya chhaye. (Jain 1992:71)
(O black clouds! my dear clouds! please go and make it rain where my husband is living.)

Anyhow, a wife waits for her husband's return and does not lose her patience. Her conjugal desires wait. The month of *Chait* is sensuous one. The heart of a woman is naturally charged with amorous feelings because of the atmospheric changes:

Chait biti jayati ho raama
Tab piya ki kare kare aitay
Aare amua major gel,
Phari gel tikorawa,
Daare-paate bhel matawalwa ho raam
Chait biti jaytai ho raama
Tab piya ki kare aitaya. (Upadhyaay 1992: 86)

(What will by husband come for, if the days of *Chait* are spent? The mango tree flowered and small unripe mango fruits have come up. The boughs of the tree have become hilarious and intoxicated. What will the husband come for, if the month of *Chait* passes? She looks at the way till her eyes get tired.)

Rahiya takat mori bhaari bhaili ankhiya

Amwa monjari gaile, mahua tapaki gaile

Kat din batiya johaibe re bidesiya. (Upadhyay 1992:207)

(Looking at the way, my eyes have got tired. The mango tree has blossomed; the *mahua* fruits (*Madhuca latifolia*) have started falling to the ground. For how long will you make me look at your way?)

It is a characteristic of the Bhojpuri folk songs that they express different sentiments of the folk. Women feature majorly and their expressions range from expressions of childhood days to those of their post-marital life.

For Bhojpuri women, the parent's house is no less than a paradise even if the family is poor and encumbered with hardships, if we compare it to the marital home. They get considerable love and affection, the opposite of which is given to them in their father-in-law's house, which is for them a place no less suffocating than a prison. The callousness of the mother-in-law and the arrogance of the sister-in-law make them remember their father's house. They have no recess; they work all day along. Then, the happy experience of the parental home haunts their mind with nostalgia. A *Laachaari* song explains this as:

Naiharawa mein thandi bazaar sasurwa main na jaaun re.

Sasura mein milela bajara ke rotiya,

Naiharwa mein poodi hazaar.

Sasura mein milela saag satuiya,

Naiharwa mein badhiya ahaar.

Naiharawa mein ajabe bahaar sasurawa main na jaaun re,

Sasura mein milela phatuhi lugariya,

Naiharawa mein sorah singaar. (Mishra 1981 :206-207)

(A soft breeze blows in the parent's house. I will not go the marital house. In the marital house, I get the breads of baajra (a rough and cheap cereal), but *puri* (a delicious food) in the parental house. I get *saag and satua* (a poor man's food) in the marital house, but delicious pickles in the parental house. Therefore, I will not go to the marital house because the parental house has a pleasant environment. I wear torn clothes in the marital house whereas I get beautiful dresses in the parental house).

When days of swinging come in the rainy season, women express their desire to go to the garden and swing there but the mother-in-law prohibits them from going outside. In nostalgia, they sing songs expressing their lost happiness of swing days before marriage. No doubt, the father-in-law's house is a claustrophobic world for a bride, especially when she is newly married. The strict observance of hard rules of the family become more troublesome to her as a lot of rules are specially meant to be followed by her. The social norm has laid several ethical and moral constraints on the freedom of young brides. These constraints, if transgressed, may lead the whole family to defame, as it is considered.

A new bride is restricted from showing her face to any person except her husband and women of the family. If by chance, she happens to show her face to any outsider, she is solded by all. Therefore, she has to keep her face veiled. She cannot speak in a middle or high pitch of voice, namely, she has to speak in a loud whisper. Elders think her to be very meek and well-mannered if she speaks whisperingly. Not to speak of the father-in-law; the food should always be ready at his beck and call. More callous than him is the mother-in-law, who does not get tired of cursing the daughter-in-law for any work, good or bad. And the sister-in-law always demoralizes her by finding faults with her and with her arrogant behaviour. How a bride gets the maltreatment is well expressed in the following lines:

Sasura mein milela laat auri mooka,

Naiharwa mein suhkwa apaar.

Naiharwa mein hamesha bahaar.

Sausurawa main na jaaun re. (Mishra 1981: 207)

(I bear kicks and punches in the marital home. But there is immense pleasure and comfort in the parental home. There is always happiness in the parental home. I will not go to the marital home.)

Bhojpuri women have complex relations amongst themselves. In many cultures of the world, it is found that one woman bears no hostility to another in general. In some other cases, one woman plays no supportive role in the victimization of another. Undoubtedly, their internal relationship can be studied without too much complication. Their emotional activities are directed towards each other in one way or the other. If they love each other, their love hardly contains any complication. Even their hatred does not get complicated because it flows intensely in one way without bearing multiple levels of meanings.

But Bhojpuri women are found to have multiple levels of meanings in their emotions such as love and hate. In most cases, it is the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law who are the oppressors of the bride. The mother-in-law having a first hand experience of being oppressed by her own mother-in-law, does not cease to oppress her daughter-in-law. Not only this, the daughter-in-law, when she grows older and becomes a mother-in-law, treats her daughter-in-law in the same way. Thus, there follows a circular structure of oppression and is handed down from generation to generation. But the complexity of the relationship emerges more transparently when the same mother-in-law who always oppresses her daughter-in-law turns caring and sympathetic to the latter. The reason is the pregnancy of the daughter-in-law.

Why the mother-in-law restrains the freedom of the daughter-in-law is quite an intricate point of investigation. The fact that the mother-in-law fosters a matrix of convoluted feelings and opinions may lead us to suppose that she does all this to avoid any transgression of the family and social norms. Another assumption can be that she does not want to pamper her daughter-in-law, who, if pampered, as she thinks, would create disturbances in the family. On being asked why she oppresses her daughter-in-law, a mother-in-law would probably say that she does all this to tame her daughter-in-law to make her suit the morals and manners of the family. In every sense such answers are completely irrational. Here is an example of restrictions:

Kajari khaele gaile he tut ke gali,
 Jhumaka heraile he amarud ke gali.
 Saasu kahe maar-2 nandi kare chugali,
 Saiyaan jaalim jor teachein, maare ungali. (Jain 1992:76)

(I went to play *kajari* in the street of *tut* but I lost my ear-ring in the street of guava. The mother-in-law says, "Beat her". The sister-in-law is criticizing. The cruel husband is harassing me.)

The *nanad-bhauji* relationship is also no less intricate. The *bhauji* (the elder brother's wife) sometimes sees her *nanad* (husband's sister) as a confidante, a friend, but more often she is jealous and antagonistic. When the *bhauji* is new in her *sasural* (the marital home), it is the *nanad* who is her best friend and guide. Both confide secrets to each other, and develop a friendship. They negotiate their feelings to each other. In the following lines, a *nanad* is asking her *bhauji* to go to swing:

Hindolawa laagal hai kadamawan bhauji chalahu jhulena,
 Piyawa saawan mein videswa manadi hindolawa bhawe na. (Jain 1992:69)

(There is a swing on the *Kadam* tree, o *bhauji*! let us go to swing. O *nanadi*! my husband is abroad, the swing does not please me.)

Conversations between them from time to time reveal their varied feelings about each other. Narrating the reminiscient events of their life, they speak about their childhood friends, brothers and sisters. The *nanad* also acts as the *bhauji*'s messenger to the family members. She is conveyed all those messages which the *bhauji* cannot tell in person. In the lines that follow a *bhauji* is sending her *nanad* on an errand to call the former's husband as she is in labour pain:

Supuli khelat tuhu nandi, mor piyari nandire .
E nanadi aapan bhaiya dei na bolai,
Ham darad beyakul re.
Juwawa khelat tuhu bhaiya, abaru beeran bhaiya ho.
E bhaiya pranpyari bhauji hamaar,
Darad se beyakul ho. (Upadhyay 1992 :215)

(O my *nanadi*, playing *supuli*, my dear *nanadi*! please call your brother. I am restless with labour pain. O my brother! you are playing cards and my *bhauji* is restless with pain.)

Here, the *nanad* is very sympathetic to her *bhauji*. This cordial relationship is reciprocal. The *bhauji* also sympathises with her *nanad* whose going away from her after marriage makes her friendless. The emotional bond that they develop during a considerable period of time finds emotional outburst.

Rasoiya bhooliye bhooli bhauji ji roweti,
Katahi na dekho he nanadi rasoiya jhahhakaal. (Upadhyay 1954:74)
(The *bhauji* weeps in the kitchen. *Nanadi*, you are not seen anywhere).

But this love is not found everywhere. In some songs, we find the opposite of it when the *bhauji* acts quite mercilessly. When the *nanad* leaves her parents' house for her marital home, all the members of the family weep, but the *bhauji* does not shed even a single drop of tears, because of the latter's sharp words:

Kiya tohari bhauji noon tel chhenkali,
Kiya kothi lawaleen pehan.
Nahi tohon nanadi noon tel chhenkaloo,
Nahi kothi lawalu pehaan.
Nhi tuhoon nanadi rasoiya jhaanki ailu.
Batiye bairini bhail tohaar. (Mishra 1981: 155).

(O bhauji! did I hide the salt from you? Did I hide the grain in the granary? O nanadi! you did not hide the salt, nor the grain. Neither did you peep into the kitchen. What created the enmity are your words.)

Thus, we find that the *nanad-bhauji* relationship is a complex one. The love-hate relationship keeps on fluctuating from time to time. The birth of a son brings happiness to the family and all celebrate this auspicious occasion. How much happiness follows can be seen in these lines:

Sasu je aaweli gawait, nanadi bajawaita re,
Lalana gotini aaweli visadhala,
Gotini ke ghar mein sohar re.
Sasu lutaweli rupaiya,
Ta nanadi moharawa re. (Upadhyay 1952 :151)

(The mother-in-law is singing, the sister-in-law is beating drums; the *gotin* (the wife of husband's brother) is overjoyed as there is *sohar* (child-birth) in her house. The mother-in-law is distributing coins and the sister-in-law jewels.)

The above lines evince that the family members, particularly women, forget all the ill-will and malice characteristic of a joint family. A *gotin* is shown to be a well wisher in this song whereas she is represented as a competitor in some songs. Contrarily, the birth of a female child snatches away all their happiness. If a girl is born, every woman of the family snubs the mother of the child and turns negligent to her as if she had committed a serious mistake. Even the husband, who is equally liable to the birth of a child, curses his wife and neglects her. Therefore, no woman wants to be the mother of a female child.

Jahi din beti tohaar janam bhaile peduri mor ghaharaai e.
Maans machchariya beti man hi na bhawela peduri mor ghaharaai e.
Jahi din beti toharo janama bhaile, bahile bhadava ke raat e.
Saasu nanad ghare diyaro na baareli, uho prabhu bole kubool e.

(Upadhyay 1956:27)

(O daughter! since the day you were born, I have got pain in my stomach. Meat and fish do not please me any more. It is just like the night of *Bhado* (a month well-known for dark nights) for me. My mother-in-law and the sister-in-law did not even light a lamp. Even my lord (the husband) spoke unpleasant words to me.)

Again, how great a burden a daughter is to a mother is well reflected in these lines, when a mother prefers abortion:

Jaahu ham jaaniti ki dhiya kokhi janamihe pihiteen ham mariachi jharajhar.
Marichi ke jhaare jhure dhiya bhari laiti chhoti jaite garhua santaap e. (ibid)
(Had I known that a daughter will be born, I would have drunk bitter
pepper to kill her. I would have become free from this anxiety.)

A bundle of difficulties are faced by the parents of a marriageable daughter. Besides the parents, all other members of the family are also involved in this difficulty. Among many others, the main problems are the selection of a suitable bridegroom and the dowry to be given in the marriage. Looking for a suitable bridegroom is the most difficult task for a father. The expressions that we find in the folk songs are very emotionally charged by the use of different impressive words and their proper arrangement. One of the most characteristic features of the songs dealing with the difficulties in a daughter's marriage is that their pathos is heightened and intensified. The following song bears witness to this type of intensity of feeling:

Purub khojalo beti pachchimo khojalo,
Khojala sahar Gujrat betiya, ram ji.
Tore joge beti war nahi milale,
Kaise karabi kanyadaan beetiya, ram ji.
Purub gailo beti pacchima to gailo,
Gailo orissa jagannath betiya, ram ji.
Tore jog beti ho war ek milale,
Milela raajkumar betiya.
Ram ji ehi laagi janameli mor betiya.
Achchat karpela chanana kanpeela.
Karpela kusawa ke dadhi betiya, ram ji.
Beech madavwa baaba more kanpeete,
Jangh baithaute aapan betiya , ram ji.
Jani karpahu achchat jani karpahu chanan,
Jani karpahu kusawa ke dadhi betiya, ram ji.
Jani karpahu baaba ho janghe lete dhiawa,
Bhale karaw kanyadaan betiya ram ji. (Singh 1971:371)
(O my daughter! I searched in the east, in the west and in the city,
Gujarat, but I could not find a suitable groom for you. How will I get

you married? I went to the east, to the west and to Orissa and Jagannath, I found a groom; for this you were born. The *achchhat*, the sandal, and the *kush* are shivering. I am shivering while taking you in my lap for *kanyadaan* under the marriage canopy).

A daughter expects that her father will find a well-bred and caring husband for her.

Aare are baaba sughar var herih ham beti tohari dulari,
Teen lok mein ham bhaili sunari, hansa na karaiha hamari. (ibid, 382)
(O father! search for a well-bred groom from me as I am your beloved daughter. I am beautiful in all the three *loks*, so do not let people laugh at me, please.)

Here, the daughter has requested her father to look for a groom from a decent family. The reasons behind this desire may be many including the one that she has inhibitions and fear that she would be maltreated if she is not married to a boy from a noble family. It is generally believed that the husbands of noble families do not oppress their wife as much as those who are ill-mannered, although no one can measure the veracity of this belief. In the quoted song, the term *sughar* refers mainly to a pleasant household without evils. In the second, the self proclamation of the daughter that she is beautiful should not be taken in a literal sense. The implication is that she was furnished a beautiful inner world of her own in which she thinks she is beautiful. She seeks the same beautiful treatment in the husband's house too.

It is often found that a girl wishes to marry a fair-complexioned and handsome boy. In the following song, the father of a girl has selected a black groom for his daughter at which she is displeased:

Baaba na dekho bag bagiacha, baaba na dekho phulwari e,
Kaaha dal utarie beti bariyati tikaibi phulwari e.
Raura chukali e baaba hamari beriya, hamara kariwa var aawe ho,
Saanwar-2 jani kahu beti, sanwar krishna kanhia ho.
Badan malin dekhi poochhele baaba kaahe beti man maleen ho,
Baaraaba ke maiya badi phoohadi beti, tisiya telwa lagaawe ho.
Tohara maiya badi gihithini beti, karuwa tel abtele ho .
Ehee se bar bhaile saanwar beti tu bhailu dhapaadhap gori ho.

(Upadhyay 1954:228)

(O father! do not look at the gardens and orchards. O daughter! it is necessary because the bridegroom's party will halt in the orchard. O

father! you have committed a mistake; my groom is black. O daughter!
It is a matter of pride to have a black husband as Lord Krishna was also
black. Why are you sad? The groom's mother rubbed the oil of *teesi* on
his body. So, he is black. Your mother rubbed mustard oil on your
body. So, your complexion is fair.)

It was the helplessness of the father that he could not find a fair-complexioned husband for his daughter. Finally, he is trying to satisfy her daughter with the black husband he has chosen. The excuse that Lord Krishna was also black and so the daughter should accept her black groom, and that the groom's mother made him dark by anointing *teesi* oil on his body when he was child are just consolations to the daughter. Now, as the groom has arrived, the bride cannot refuse to marry even if she wants. Her refusal would defame the family and put her father in a more difficult situation. To bring normalcy in her father's life, she has to marry. However, there are some families in which the daughter does not express any desire to choose her groom. The groom is chosen by her father and a few elders of the family. An insight into her mind would make it obvious that she does not want to put her father in a trouble any more as she has, she thinks, already troubled him by being born as a daughter. As a result, she represses her desire to choose and creates an internalized world of her own imagination in which she thinks her husband is handsome. This internal world solaces the Bhojpuri women to accept, adapt to and tolerate hostile situations.

A father having a daughter has to bow his head before everyone even if he is a respected person. He travels from door to door with folded hands to find a suitable groom for his daughter. Any mistake can mar the prospect; therefore, he has to behave with great care. Even those who did not dare to stand before him get the courage to argue with him. The following lines show the haughtiness of the bridegroom's father:

Tadapi ke bolele samadhi kawan samadhi, sunu bachan hamaar,
Kaheeleete samadhi udhari padharwi nahi to barohi tar tharh.
Kawan dulha ke unch chhabaibi tharhehi hathiya samai. (Upadhyay 1954:214)
(The groom's father says to the bride's father in rage, "Where will we
stay? Will we stay under the tree?" The bride's father implores that he
will arrange such a big resting place where an elephant can also enter.)

The following lines touchingly express the wretched condition of a daughter's father:

Dinawa harelu e beti bhookhia re piyasiya,
Ratiya harlu aankhi niniya nu ho. (Upadhyay 1992:71)

(O daughter! You deprived me of hunger and thirst during the day and of sleep in the night.)

These lines explain the realistic conditions of the village folk. The father of the daughter is so busy looking for a groom that he does not feel hunger and thirst, nor can he sleep well. All the time the selection of a suitable groom and the arrangements for the marriage haunt his mind. The intensity of his wretched condition is aggravated when he thinks of dowry. In fact, the daughter is no less piercing than a thorn for him.

Since the very day of the birth of a daughter, the parents feel the burden. They are encumbered with the responsibility of her marriage and the dowry needed for it. Not only in the inception, but also till the end, the parents feel impatient and they get the peace of mind only when the marriage is completely finished. How great a burden a daughter is for the family can be discerned in the lines that follow:

Jahi din beti ho toharo vivah hoeihen baba ke hridayawa jurai e.

Dhan-2 beti ho toharo janam bhaile devatan lihase baserh e.

Bhaile biyah parela sir senur nav lakh maange dahej e.

Ghar mein ke maanda aangan dei patakabi, salaru ke dhia jani hoi e.

(Upadhyay 1956:20)

(O daughter! The day you will be married will your father get peace of mind. Thanks to your birth, even gods have abandoned us. When you are married, we will have to pay dowry worth nine lakhs by selling our utensils. I pray that God does not give a daughter even to my enemy).

Here, the mother is brooding over her misfortune of giving birth to a daughter. Sarcastically, she is thanking her daughter for being born. Even gods have forgot them. Her praying that even her enemy should not get a daughter reflects very rigorously a social reality – the desire of not getting a daughter. The expressiveness of the lines is so strong and convincing that it does not need any further explanation.

A very serious problems that affects Indian society is that of dowry. Although considerable efforts were made by social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy to eradicate the dowry system from India, it was so much entrenched in society that it still remains in practice. In the Bhojpur region, marriages are decided mostly on the basis of the amount of dowry. It is a direct bargaining as if something were being sold and purchased in a market. In this buy-sell “market”, it is the bride who is sold by providing the purchaser a huge amount of money. It is a completely different market in which the purchaser in given both the “good” and the money (Akhtar 1991:102).

There are many songs that express the worries of a father to get his daughter married and to pay the dowry. Dowry emerges as the key factor in deciding the marriage. Sometimes, if a boy's parents have the chance of getting a big amount of dowry, they get their son married even if he is younger than or otherwise unsuitable for the bride. Some marriages take place with the promise of the bride's father that he will pay the money later on. In such cases, if the bride's father fails to keep his promise, the bridegroom's side sends the bride back to her parental house. The groom also abandons her. There are many songs which describe that after the marriage of the daughter, the father goes to the Ganga to have a dip in it and to pray to God that no daughter be born to a poor man. Parents try to get their daughter married as soon as possible even if the daughter is in her teens. On the one hand, daughters are married earlier because their parents want to lighten their burden. On the other hand, the groom's side takes the advantage of the opportunity to fulfil their sexist desires. Some songs display the attempts of the male elders of the family at seducing the bride. Usually, the husband of the bride happens to be somewhere else in pursuit of money. Although such incidents of incest are not common to all families, the mode of male gaze and subjugation is symbolic of a pattern existing in society.

The misfortune of being born as a female reaches its height when a little girl is married to a young boy, and sent to the perturbing world of in-laws. For a child, it becomes quite difficult to adjust in a world of unknown and relentless persons, who know not more than making her work for them. Some children grow in their father-in-law's house. The experience of life they get is harsh and rude. The days of childhood and playing turn to be days of working and being a wife. The following song describes how a girl child has the fear of marriage:

Aai gaili namarudaai ki patiya
 Khelat raheen supali mouniyan
 Dinwa dharawan aile nawaa pahanawa
 Liyawan ahien namaar apan sajanawa
 Patiyare baanchat phaatale mor chhatiya
 Aai gaili namarudai ki patiya
 Chhai le le manawa beech re udasiya
 Ham na janaleen sasuraari ka rahana
 Rahab kaise yahi soch le din ratiya
 Aai gaili namarudai ki patiya.

(Faruqui 1981: 404)

(I was playing *supuli-mouniyan*. Suddenly came the letter of my marriage proposal. Hearing the words of the letter, my heart became sad. I do not know the ways of the *sasural* (marital house). I passed my days by thinking how I would live in that new world.)

Moreover, the groom usually happens to be an older man. It results in a lack of understanding between the couple. The disparity is found in the following song.

Hari hari phuslaawa jinni dai dai bunda baala re hari,

Assi baras ke bhaya boorh tu,

Jas hamaar parbaaba raama.

Hari-hari ham barahi baris ke,

Abahin baala re hari.

(Jain 1992 :75)

(My husband tries to entice me. I say – you are eighty years old as if you were my grand father’s father. O lord! I am only twelve; I am in my childhood).

Sometimes, we find that the daughter is married in childhood and kept in the father’s house until she grows a little older. When she grows up, she is sent to the marital house. The following song describes that a daughter, since she was married in childhood, does not know whether she has been married:

Maatha meense gaili rama baaba ke sagarwa,

Sakhiya sab bole e baari kunvari

Saabhava baithal tuhun baaba ho badhaita,

Katek dinawa rakhab ho baari kunwaari.

Toharo biyah beti nanhe ham kaili,

Se tor kant gaile ho jamoraraa.

Jawana hi rahiya baaba kant mor gaile

Se tawana rahiya dehu na ho batalaali,

Jawana hi batiya beti kant tor gaita,

Se tawana batiya upajela bodhamoraria.

Dehu na baaba ho dhaar taruvariya

Se hamahu kataibo hodhamoraai

Lehu na beti daal bhari sonawa,

Se aapan kanihiaya dehu na ho bisaraai,

Aagi lagaib baaba daal bhari sonawa,

Se aapan kanhaiya bisare jog naahi.

(Upadhyay 1992 :231)

(I went to wash my head in my father's pond. My friends started calling me unmarried. O father! please tell me when you will get me married. O daughter! I have got you married in childhood. Your husband has gone to Jamorai. Father! please tell me which way my husband has gone. Daughter on the way through which your husband has gone *dhamorai* (a plant) has grown up. Father! please give me a sword and a shield; I will cut the *dhamorai*. O daughter! take a basket of gold and forget your husband. Father! I cannot forget my husband.)

When the daughter goes to wash her hair in her father's pond, she is young or perhaps more than young. Therefore, her friends mock her by calling her unmarried. When she asks her father as to her marriage, she knows to her surprise that she was married in childhood and her husband has gone to a city to earn money. Years have passed and the father asks her to forget the husband. But her devotion to the husband even without knowing him shows the divinity a husband is thrust upon in the Bhojpur area.

More ridiculous than pathetic is the situation when the groom is several times younger than the bride. When the bride is at the peak of her youth teeming with intense sexual desires, the groom is like a child playing in her lap. Such being the case, two disparate emotions flow at variance with each other – the one desperately in need of love and sex, the other with childhood immaturity. The discrepancy of age affects a lot of their activities in life. The song that follows refers to a child-husband:

Chhote se mor balama anganiyaan mein gilli khelain re,
Paniyaan bharan chali saath lage balama,
Jhurrai maasum rasariya re,
Maiya maiya kare daiya daiya kare re (Faruqi 1981: 302)

(The little husband plays *gilli* in the courtyard. When I go to fetch water, he follows me. He calls me mother.)

In the above discussion, we have seen how child-marriage and unmatched marriage are common in the Bhojpur region. Although times have changed and there is considerable decline in such marriages, incidents of such marriages are still found. The major factor in such marriages is the stereotyped social system in which evils once having gained entry, find a root and are hard to be eradicated.

The difference between a daughter and a son, in the eyes of the parents, is too much and it is expressed in many songs. It can be hoped that the mother being a woman, would have sympathy for and empathy with the daughter. But the reality is

quite the opposite. A son is always pampered and a daughter always subdued, snubbed and flared up. In the following *Vidai* song, a daughter is reminding her mother of her discrimination between a son and a daughter:

Khaai lehui khai lehu dahiya se re bhatawa,
Tohari vidaiya e beti bade re bhinusaar.
Birana kaleua e amma hasi-khushi deehalu,
Hamara kaleua e amma deehalu khisiyai. (Mishra 1981: 191)

(O daughter! eat the curd and the rice; you will have to go to your marital home. O mother! you gave food to my brother happily but you gave it to me with a frown (ill-humour.)

Here, the daughter asks the mother to tell her why she held the difference between son and daughter. She raises a voice of protest against the discrimination she has undergone. When both are born of the same parents, why the difference? Is this only because of her being a girl, who has to go to her husband's house after marriage and would not be of any use to the parents? Is it her fault to have been born as a girl? All these questions along with many others are complex and different angles of looking at them would yield different conclusions. But the common factor that will emerge is the social system which is responsible for all these. Much more has been proscribed and prescribed for women as compared to men. Looking at the systems of marriage from other parts of the world, we can ask why a bride has to go to her husband's home after marriage and why not the reverse. The question may sound the system that prescribes different things for women and men. Anyway, the question may be irrational and may have the potential to turn the system upside down. The pain felt by a bride cannot be fathomed by all and expressed in words. Extremely touching are the lines that follow:

Hari birana e amma janne eke sangi,
Sange Sange khali e amma khaili ek sang
Bhaiya ke likhale amma baaba kai rajawa
Hamara likhale amma ghar badi doori (Mishra 1981: 191)

(O mother! Birana and I were born together. We played together and ate together. But he was destined to stay at the father's house whereas my home was destined to be at a distant place.)

The daughter wants to know why she has to go to her husband's house. Why cannot she stay at the father's house? She asks her mother why the difference is created. Belief in and yet questioning destiny is a characteristic of Bhojpuri women.

The marital home is often referred to as *door*, distant. The term is used in a symbolic sense as a change, a transfer of the girl's location from the parental home to the marital home, which is a different place altogether. The sense of remoteness from the *naihar* (the parental home) develops as the daughter feels a sense of dispossession. A father asks his daughter the reason for her unhappiness in the following lines:

Gor badan beti saanwar bhaili, muhawaan gail kumhalaai re,
Kee tora beti re daayaj thoraba kee bolela bhaiya khisiyaan re.
Kee tora beti re sewa se chukati, kaahe tor muhawaan udasre.
Na more baaba re daayaj thoraba, nahi bhaiya bole khisiyaan re.
Na more baaba ho sewa se raura chukati yahi gun muhawa udas re.
Tab te kahile baaba biaahabi biaahat deswa ke or re.

Naihar ke log dulabh hoihe baaba, rahab nisuri khisure. (Singh 1965: 398)
(O daughter! your fair complexion has become dark. Is it so because of the poor amount given as dowry, or has your elder brother scolded you? Is it so because I may have committed any mistake? No father, it is so neither because of the amount of dowry nor because of the brother's scoldings. Neither have you committed any mistake. It is so because you have got me married at a distant place. You had promised to get me married nearer to your house. Now, the people of the *naihar* will seldom or ever meet me.)

Thus, it clear that the unhappiness of the daughter is not because of any other thing but the fact that she has not been married nearer to her natal home.

Women love their parental house most as they get more love and care from their parents, brothers, and sisters. Whenever there is an unpleasant talk between the husband and wife, the wife threatens the husband that she would go to her parental home. The parental home is a woman's ultimate door of hope. If sometimes she is driven away/turned out by her husband. She finds shelter in this place. She always praises her parental house. Her emotional attachment is so profound that she often wishes to visit it. Therefore, all girls want to be married near their parental home. Wherever the daughter lives, she always prays for the happiness and well-being of her parents, and siblings. The mother is the dearest of all. In the lines that follow a sister is requesting her brother to live with the mother forever praying for his long life:

Jug jug jiye mora bhaiya beran bhaiya ji,
Bhaiya ! amma ke sang mat chhodiyo ki ham badi door se ji. (Akhtar :392)

(Long live my Biran Bhaiya! Brother! never leave the company of the mother as I am at a distant place.)

The sister is asking her brother to live with the mother forever. She is deeply concerned about them even when she is in her marital home. After the brother's marriage, she usually does not get proper regard from her *bhauji*. The *bhauji* makes her stay in the *naihar* miserable. The callousness of the *bhauji* is just a reversal of the role the *nanad* plays before marriage. In the initial days of the *bhauji* in her *sasural*, it is the *nanad* who acts as the sharp-tongued criticizer. But time changes and the *bhauji* tortures the *nanad* during the latter's stay at her *naihar*. Despite all these, a woman cannot bear any disrespectful remark about her parental house. Her importance in the marital house also depends on the reputation of her parental house. Moreover, the love she gets in her marital house exalts her position in the *naihar* as well, especially in the eyes of the *bhauji*. The point is that *naihar* is the loveliest place for a woman despite the disregard she receives from her *bhauji*.

The brother's arrival in the sister's *sasural* is one of the happiest moments for the sister. The brother is the person who makes frequent visits to her *sasural*. When she gets the news of her brother's arrival, she knows no bounds of joy. She makes special preparations in advance. As the following lines show:

Aare aare jogini bhatini sab koi gaawahu ho,
Mora jiyarra bhail ba hulaas beeran mor aawe ho.
Aare aare saasu barhaitin karahiya chadhawalu ho,
Aaju mora jiyaraa hilore, beeran mor aawe ho. (Upadhyay 1954:406)
(O *bhaatin!* o *jogin!* sing songs. My heart is overjoyed as my brother has come. O my mother-in-law! start cooking delicious food as my brother has come today. I am overjoyed).

A few songs describe the incidents of polygamy as well. If a man has more than one wife, quarrels are frequent between the wives. A co-wife is the greatest enemy of a wife. A wife says to her husband:

Laagati nahin niniya e raja jee,
Baayein sutal ba sawatiya e raaja jee,
Laagati naheen niniya e raja jee. (Singh 1965:219)

(O my lord ! I cannot sleep because the co-wife is sleeping beside you.)

A woman gets love only from her husband, even if it is not much as the husband is often under the pressure of the family members. Her days seem to get better when she

conceives. The importance she gets from all is due not really to her but to the coming child which is presumed to be a male one. The birth of a son catapults her position in the family and society. All hostile women of the family turn cordial to her. It is commonly believed that a woman completes herself when she becomes a mother.

But extremely wretched is the condition of that woman who is childless. In this case, only she is blamed for her so called infertility even if actually the husband is impotent or infertile. She receives wanton disregard from all. Let us examine the following *Sohar* song to explicate this point:

Saasu mori kaheli banjhiniyaan nanad brajavaasni ho,
Raama jinake main baari re biahi aho ghar se nikasalani ho.
Gharawa se je nikasi banjhiniyaan jangal beech tharh bhaili ho.
Raam banawa se nikasi baghiniyaan to dukh sukh poochhai ho.
Tiriya ! kawan vipatiya ke maaral jangal beech tharh bhaili ho,
Sasu mori kaheli banjhiniyaan nanad brajivasini ho.
Baaghini ! Jianake ham baari bihaai re uho ghar se nikaslin ho,
Baaghin ! hamarao ke jo khaai lechat vipatiya se chhotiteen ho.
Jahawaan se tu chali aalilu lawati tahawaan jaawahu ho,
Baanjhani ! tohara ke jo ham khaibi hamahun baanjh hokhabi ho
Uhawaan se chaleli banjhiniyan biari paase tharh bhaili ho,
Rama ! biari se nikale naginiyan to dukh sukh poochhai ho,
Tiwai ! kawane bipatiya ke maari biari paase tharh bhailu ho
Sasu mora kaheli banjhiniyan nanad brajavaasini ho,
Naagini ! jinkar main baari re biahi uho ghar se nikasalani ho,
Naagin ! hamara ke jo desi letiu vipatiya se chhootali ho.
Jahawaan se ail lawati tahaan jaawahu tohi nahi dasabai ho
Baajhini ! tohara ke jo ham dasabri hamabeen baanjir hokhati ho
Uhawaan se chalali banjhiniyaan maai duaara tharh bhaili ho,
Sitara se nikasi mayariya to dukh-sukh poochhahi ho,
Bitiya ! kawan vipati tore upar uhaan se chali ailu ho.
Saasu mori kaheli banjhiniyaan nanad brajavaasini ho,
Maiya jinkar main baari re biyahi uho ghar se nikasani ho.
Maiya ! hamara ke jo raakhi lihitu bipatiya se chhotaten ho,
Dhiya ! Jahawaan se ailu lawati tahawaan jaawahu tohe nahi rakhibi
Dhiya ! tohera ke jo ham raakhabi banjhiniyan bahu banjhini ho.

Uhawaan se chaleli bajhiniyaan jangal beech aaweli ho,
 Dharti ! tu hi saran ab dihitu to banjhiniyaan naam chhotati ho.
 Jawahawaan se tu ailu lauti tahawaan jaawahu tumahi naahi rakhab ho
 Baanjhini ! tohara ke rakhale hamahoonn hokhabi usar ho. (Singh 1965:46)
 (My mother-in-law calls me barren and sister-in-law brajavaasini
 My husband has turned me out of his house
 I come out to the forest
 A tigress comes and asks me about my sorrow.
 O woman! What has befallen you?
 My mother-in-law calls me barren and my sister-in-law brajavaasini.
 My husband has turned me out of his house.
 O tigress! Please eat me and I will be free from this sorrow.
 I will return where I had come from.
 O barren! If I eat you, I will also become barren.
 Then comes out a snake from its hole and asks what has happened to me.
 My mother-in-law calls me barren and my sister-in-law brajavasini.
 My husband has turned me out of his house.
 Please bite me and I will be free from this sorrow.
 O barren! I will also become barren if I bite you.
 Then I go to my mother's house.
 My mother comes out and asks what has happened to me.
 My mother-in-law calls me barren and the sister-in-law brajavashini.
 My husband has turned me out of his house.
 O mother! keep me in your house
 O daughter! if I keep you in my house, my daughter in law will become barren.
 Then I ask the earth to divide in two and let me go into it.
 But the earth also refuses to divide and says,
 "I will also become barren if I give you shelter inside me".)

The pathos of the song is at its acme. Particularly, the final line is the climax of the song when even the earth refuses to give the woman a place for fear of being barren. The song is symbolic of all barren women's traumas.

Apart from the pathos found in the songs, we also find happiness in many songs. There are many songs which deal with conjugal life. As we know young couples are restricted from meeting openly. The elders dislike their talking and

meeting in their presence. They appreciate avoidance of such meetings in daylight. A husband usually has to sleep outside the house or in a separate room. Therefore, he has to keep on looking for a chance to meet his wife. At night when everyone is asleep, he slips secretly into his wife's bed. Custom does not allow the wife to come out of the house. She can only secretly come to her husband's bed at night. The following song describes how a wife is desperately longing to come to her husband's bed, and the difficulties faced in this:

Dinawa ke bairi re sasu nanadiya,
Mai kaa karon ho raati bairi anjoriya.
Kahat sunat mein visari gail anjoriya,
Main ka karon ho balama ajabe sowaiya.
Chiuntihi kaati kaati balma jagawaleen,
Main ka karon ho god mein rowe balakawa.
Thonkihi thoki ham balakawa sutawali,
Main kaa karon ho bole laagali chuchahiya. (Upadhyay 1992: 204)

(During the day, the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law is the enemy, What to do it is a moonlit night. My husband is a unique person who always sleeps. I wake him up by piercing my nails. What to do? My baby began to weep. I make the child sleep by caressing it. But what to do when the birds started twittering.)

In the song quoted, the wife is looking for a chance to copulate. During the day, the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law are the disturbers. As the night is moonlit, she cannot go out as anyone can see her going. When she wakes her husband anyway, she finds that it is morning. All these difficulties are faced because she cannot meet him in another's presence. Thus, we find that love making is just like a thief's activity. As a thief enters the house secretly and goes out unnoticed, so does a married pair to satisfy their sexual desire. Sometimes, people are heard saying that sex is most pleasant in secrecy despite the obstacles preceding it. By driving sexuality to the home, people think that they have maintained a social order essential for a social living.

One of the harsh realities that are available to us through the songs is the reversal of roles by women. When a daughter-in-law grows old and has sons and daughters, the power of the mother-in-law shifts to her. In most cases, there are tussles between them. Then, the daughter-in-law finds herself dominant and powerful enough to retaliate. First of all, the mother-in-law is neglected and is not provided

proper love and care which she needs in old age. Secondly, she has to bear with scoldings and frowns. The following lines express how a mother-in-law feels weaker than her daughter-in-law who wreaks vengeance upon her:

Saasui patohiya mein laagal ba jhagarawa,
Kaili musarawa ke maar,
Aaj patohiya ke ham ban deehaten
Jo jiyat rahit budhau hamaar. (Upadhyay 1992 :196)

(A quarrel took place between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. They used husking pestles in the quarrel. Today, I (the mother-in-law) would have beaten the daughter-in-law if my husband were alive.)

The mother-in-law is seeking the help of her old husband. Mention of such quarrels are found in many songs.

Prayer to gods and goddesses are very popular among the folk people. They sing their prayers in the form of songs. Praying to Shashti Maata, a woman says that her life has become futile without a son. The mother-in-law scolds her, the sister-in-law pours forth a flood of abuse, and the husband also oppresses her. Her only fault is that she does not have a son (Upadhyay 1992:222). As it is the son who can bring prestige to a mother, the mother's love is immense for him. The following lines show the feelings of a mother praying to Shashthi Maata to cure her son of small pox:

Patuka pasaari bheekhi maangali balakawa ke maai,
Hamara ke balakawa ki bheekhi deen.
More dulaari ho maiya,
Hamara ke balakawa ke bheekhi deen. (Upadhyay 1992:30)

(Spreading her *aanchal* (one end of *saari*), a mother begs for the life of her son. O mother! Give me my son in charity.)

The mother knows it very well that her social respect depends entirely upon her son. Thus, the importance of a son above a daughter is an overt endorsement of masculinity in the society. In the song that follows, a woman prays to the sun god to grant her only five sons and she will be satisfied:

Khoinchha acchatawa gaduwava gud paani,
Chalali kawan dei adit manawe.
Thor nahin lebon adit bahut na maangile,
Paanch puttari adit hamara ki dihati. (Upadhyay 1954:249)

Throughout the study, we have seen that women are considered objects for utilization, who always have to sacrifice their happiness for men. They are only passive bearers of the system. They are viewed as objects of possession. They can hardly think of being the possessors. They are always to be possessed. A few lines (of a song) given below show how a woman is aggressively possessed by someone who comes from a distant place to marry her:

Purub se aile re jogi, pachhim kaile jaale,
Kwan baaba choupariya e jogi, waise aasan bhari.
Ham to biahn aili baaba,
Tohaar bitiya kunwaari. (Upadhyay 1954:120)

(Have you come from the east or the west? Why have come here and are sitting on the cot? O bababa! I have come to marry your daughter.)

Sometimes, we also find some songs which describe forced marriages. The following one is an example:

Baaba ke baljoriya senur var dalela ho,
Chacha-2 pukarella chacha na bolela ho,
Chacha ke baljoriya senur bar banhela ho,
Bhaiya bhaiya pukaareela bhaiya na bolela ho,
Bhaiya ke balajoriya senur var banhela ho,
Bhauji-bhauji pukaareela bhauji na bolela ho,
Bhauji senur ke have lobhiya ta senure lobhail ho,
Var bandhe senur ta senur var dalela ho. (Mishra 1981:188)

(I call my uncle and say that the groom is rubbing vermilion on my head. But he says nothing. I say this to my brother and *bhauji* but they are also silent.)

This represents the medieval system of marriage which was common among kings. The victor often married the daughter of the vanquished by force, and the daughter expressed her pangs to her kith and kin pleading for protection (ibid). Thus, women emerge only as passive, not as active.

Different societies have different images of women except the one which is common to all – the marginalization of their voice. For instance, the plight of Afro-American women is a moving one, and Toni Morrison's novel *Sula* (1998) tells us the story of a girl by the same name, who is raped by her own father. In my examination of the condition of Bhojpuri women as depicted in folk songs, I have not found any

incident of rape by one's own father. The trauma of Bhojpuri women is restricted to being rather submissive and accepting what has been prescribed for them. What distinguishes their spirit from that of their Afro-American counterparts is that they possess no seed of revolution against the rules laid down for them. But the traumas of the Bhojpuri women cannot be neglected, although they have moulded themselves and have shown a habitual obedience. Their problems are mostly because of poverty and the patriarchal social structure, from which they hardly think of any deviation. More often than not, their compliance is rewarded and heresy punished.

Apart from these, the condition of workers and labourers are also well expressed in the songs. Here are some lines which a rikshaw-puller is singing:

Rikshaw chala banaras mein kalkatiya chal baay,
 Gaddi bicchal ba makhmal ke takiya laal baay,
 Riksha kheenche aadmi pet bada chandaal baay. (Jain 1992:74)

This is one of the most realist songs. We find a true depiction of the life of a worker, a rikshaw-puller, here. The song mentions that it is the stomach, that is, hunger which makes one pull a rikshaw. Again, we find that the municipality has levied huge taxes on the *ikkawalas* who have stopped doing this business:

Saawan ais machaules shor,
 Badariya jhoom ke aail na,
 Par hartaal bhail ikwan ke,
 Hou dukhdayi na. (Jain 1992:74)

(The month of *Saawan* has come with ecstasy. But what to do the *ikkas* are on strike (as huge taxes have been levied). That is the problem.)

Thus, we have seen that all the songs are realistic. Most of the songs belong to women. They express their daily life which is a constant stream of service, from early rising to grinding mills and fetching water through a day filled with activities ranging from kitchen tasks, farm work, tending livestock, washing clothes, and looking after children to the late-night massaging of household elders' feet. Service, after all, is a central component of the ideology of *pativrata* that shapes married women's lives. In one song, the husband goes abroad and spends a long period of about twelve years. He does not care for his wife. But spending her painful days, the wife, despite a lot of allurements, saves her chastity. When the husband returns, he suspects her chastity and tries her in the furnace, and only then accepts her. But the wife, undeterred by all this, sustains her love and devotion to the husband and worships him as God.

Women's singing has both collective and individual significance. The songs can be viewed both as private and as public. They are public because at the level of collective consciousness the women are not different from each other, and yet they are private because each song is an individual's outburst. It is an intersection between collective symbolic forms and individual subjectivities. Women have the means to express in an outspoken way. Women's voice refers, in this context, to perspectives on social relations that frequently go against the grain of representations stemming from dominant (male) groups (Gal 1991:178). To recapitulate, the folk had the means of expressions – the songs – with themselves. They could at least express their feelings through them. But now there has been a considerable change as this means of theirs has been taken away by a new emerging culture industry, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

The term 'culture industry' was first used by Adorno and Horkheimer, both prominent philosophers of the Frankfurt School, in their path-breaking book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In this book, they mark out the role of art and culture in the presumptive progress of Enlightenment (Bernstein 1991:5). They evaluate in this book the claims of high modernist art and the positive character of popular culture. In his essay 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', Adorno distinguishes between 'mass culture' and 'culture industry'. He says that they (Adorno and Horkheimer) have "replaced that expression (mass culture) with 'culture industry' in order to exclude from the outset the interpretation agreeable to its advocates: that it is a matter of something like a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves" (1991:85). In place of 'mass culture', there is a culture industry which produces its own culture for people. It is just like a factory that produces standardized cultural goods to render the masses into passive consumers. All the forms of popular culture can be seen as a single culture industry the purpose of which is to ensure the continued obedience of the masses to market interests.

The culture industry discharges its work through many different processes. It claims that it works ceaselessly in the service of the masses. But the reality is that it makes them consumers of its products by making them desire accordingly. The result is that mass production feeds a mass market which minimizes the identity and tastes of the individual consumers. The consumers have no conscious self-will. There is nothing left for them to classify. The producers of the culture industry have done it for them (Adorno and Horkheimer 1973:125).

Films, radio, the music industry as embodied by cassettes, etc., magazines, television, etc. constitute the culture industry. Through these, the culture industry rules the mind of the masses. It has many ways of monopolising through these products. It enhances the value of exchange value. It is a common belief that the value of any object is based on its use. So, if any object has less use, it should be devalued. But it does not happen so with the products of the culture industry. In the words of Adorno and Horkheimer, "What might be called use value in reception of cultural commodities is replaced by exchange value" (1973:158). Thus, the object is deprived

of its inherent value. What decides the exchange value is a fetish in the consumers' mind. What happens in fetishization is that people unquestioningly pursue or devote themselves to anything. A blindness follows and the consumer pays not for the product but for the social value it has acquired without any utility. The key factor in acquisition of the social value is not the internal properties of the product, but the fact that it has been ranked high and hence the price is high. If a cassette is ranked among the top-ten, it is bound to undergo a huge selling, not for the musical quality of the song it contains but for the rating. Thus, it is the fetish which decides the use value. This fetish is not natural; it has been created by the culture industry.

The culture industry standardizes its products with pseudo-individualization. In standardization, parts are substituted, interchanged. Then, the product is individualized (falsely) to evade the sameness. The product, in reality, is not different from the other ones. Still, it is pseudo-individualized by creating illusory differentiations. This differentiation allures consumers to buy the product. The culture industry has a very pervasive character. It accommodates everything according to its own interests. For Adorno and Horkheimer this happens to the extent that:

The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry. The old experience of the movie-goer, who sees the world outside just as an extension of the film he has just left, is now the producer's guideline. (1973:126)

No one can escape from the hands of the culture industry. If any one deviates, his deviation is accommodated so well that he belongs to the industry. Thus, he has to fit in anyhow. The industry schematizes the consumers, robbing them of discretion.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer identified repetition as an essential characteristic of the culture industry (1973:136). The same thing comes in repetition to the customers. This repetition gives birth to a homogenized product. If we think of popular music, we find that it is a homogenized product. One part of music is substituted for another and an unidentifiable mixture is created. Even if we delete one part, nothing will be lost because the omitted part has no relevance to other parts. But serious music, by contrast, does not allow this. No part can be interchanged. Every detail derives its musical sense from the concrete totality of the piece. Indian classical music can be cited as an example of this. Since serious music is a totality, no part or detail of it can be omitted. If it is done, the totality of the piece will be lost. Thus serious music is a coherent whole with a special effect on the listeners' mind.

Talking about popular music, Adorno notes two important factors in listening – fetishism and regression. The fetish character of music produces its own camouflage through the identification of the listener with the fetish. This identification initially gives hit songs power over their victims (Adorno 1991:42). The reactions of the listeners have no relation to the music being played. If a song is sung by a star singer, it is bound to be a superhit. It is the stardom of the singer that matters, not the quality of the song. Another notable factor in the listening of music is regression. Regression does not mean that the listener has gone into an earlier phase of his own development. Neither does it mean that there is a decline in the level of listening. The purport is not that it means a going into the listening of the past. The purport is that it is contemporary listening that has regressed. In Adorno's own words:

Rather, it is contemporary listening which has regressed, arrested at the infantile stage. Not only do the listening subjects lose, along with the freedom of choice and responsibility, the capacity for conscious perception of music, which was from time immemorial confined to a narrow group, but they stubbornly reject the possibility of such perception. They fluctuate between comprehensive forgetting and sudden dives into recognition. They listen atomistically and dissociate what they hear They are not childlike ... But they are childish; their primitivism is not that of the undeveloped, but that of the forcibly retarded. (1991:41)

Everything unfamiliar is rejected in this childish listening. The mind gets so much regressed that the listeners behave like children. A child always asks for the food it has once tasted. In the same way, regressive listeners want the same songs or the songs composed in the same stream of structure. Adorno says, "In the face of regressive listening, music as a whole begins to take on a comic aspect. One need only listen to the uninhibited sonority of a choral rehearsal from outside" (1991:51).

When cultural goods such as songs are produced with characteristics of fetishization, they undergo a change. They become chaotic and irrelevant. Adorno says that irrelevant consumption destroys them. Not merely do the few things played again and again wear out, like Sistine Madonna in the bed room, but reification affects their internal structure. They are transformed into a conglomeration of irruptions which are impressed on the listeners by climax and repetition, while the organization of the whole makes no impression whatsoever (Adorno 1991:36).

Thus, the culture industry is pervasive and no one can fall beyond its territory. In the field of popular music, whatever is being produced possesses a comic effect rather than a serious one. The masses are so entangled in it that they do not want to differentiate. Therefore, the fact cannot be denied that the culture industry rules over people's mind which in turn speaks for it.

When we examine the Bhojpuri songs of today in the light of the culture industry, we find that the thoughts of Adorno and Horkheimer ring true. An examination of the production and distribution of these songs evinces that there is only one motto – to extort as much money from the public as possible. Although the industry appears to be oriented towards the fulfilment of the public desire in the name of entertainment, it has an opposite character which emerges after a closer examination. Whatever is produced pleases the public as their ears are trained by the processes I discussed above regarding the culture industry.

A glance at the cassette recordings will bring to our mind many facts. If one is asked to tell about the content of the songs, probably one will say that it is eroticism which rules them. When eroticism is the dominant product, one may aptly ask whether eroticism is a part of art and culture. Perhaps, people will not take interest in this and will try to evade the question. They have never, as it seems, any inclination to know about this. Whatever be the fact, it is acceptable that it is the psychological drive of the human mind to be inclined to sex. Sex appeals to all alike more than any other thing. It has the most attractive quality. It is the pivot of all human activities. This fact has been deciphered by the culture industry. The display of erotic elements brings it into contact with a larger audience. As the industry has no social or moral responsibility, it does whatever it likes in order to create a bigger market.

Another thing that comes to sight in this business of the culture industry is that the products are always the same. But they are presented in the market with different labellings and pseudo-differentiations. As Adorno and Horkheimer say:

Marked differentiations such as those of A and B films, or of stories in magazines in different price ranges, depend not so much on subject matter as on classifying, organizing and labelling consumers. Something is provided for all so that none may escape; the distinctions are emphasized and extended. How formalized the procedure is can be seen when the mechanically differentiated products prove to be all alike in the end. (1973:123)

In the Bhojpuri erotic numbers, we find the same type of marked differentiations. To pseudo-individualize one song to make it different from the others, one erotic word is substituted for another. The themes generally remain the same. The newness of the cassette allures many people to buy it. But the reality is that there is nothing new in it. What the listener identifies as new is just a variation in the words. Although songs are sung in different tunes, a repetitive quality characterizes them. The repetition makes them somewhat worn out. It has developed a childish attitude in the consumers, who want the same thing they have once tasted. But it is not their fault. This attitude has been given to them by the culture industry, whose workings they are unable to comprehend. A special kind of language is prepared for them. Adorno says very well, "A sort of musical children's language is prepared for them; it differs from the real thing in that its vocabulary consists exclusively of fragments and distortions of the artistic language of music" (1991:45). What dominates a song is just an interchangeability, a substitutability of parts. Sometimes, older tunes are imitated; sometimes, fragments are taken thereof. The result is that there is lack of totality, coherence. Only incoherent elements are blended together. It results in a different kind of music. But this type of production is deliciously consumed by the masses.

Now, what needs to be discussed more importantly are the changes the tradition of Bhojpuri songs has undergone. Old songs are now accompanied by new songs through a different medium – the electronic medium. The modern world is ruled by technology. Technological developments have controlled the means of communication. Folklore and folk songs have also changed in the hands of technology. Blackburn's remark on how themes and forms characteristic of folk and classical traditions are changed when the means of communication change (Blackburn and Ramanujan 1986:25) ring true. If we examine the realism of old songs vis-à-vis the songs of the culture industry in the context of Bhojpuri songs, we find that there are hidden hostile elements within the two. One element is the realism manifest in the traditional songs and the other is the erotic element created by the culture industry. This hostility is covert and is also unidentifiable to the simple eye. In the present scenario, the erotic has overshadowed the real. The emergence of the culture industry divested the masses of their means of expression. It should be noted that this transfer of means was not a direct snatching away, as singing is a quality that cannot be snatched away, but a continuous undercurrent of processes of transformation through various processes such as 'standardization' and creating 'individual tastes'.

To put it clearly, what the cassette industry has done to the common people can best be described as an insidious usurpation of their means of expression, the songs. Now, it has made them habituated to listen to the songs that it produces. Even old songs have been recorded and sold to the masses. It is just like selling their own thing to them. The substitution of cassettes for folk singers bears the greatest witness to the usurpation being talked about. Cassettes have taken the place of folk singers, who sang improvisingly on different festive occasions or whenever they wanted.

In traditional songs, which people knew how to improvise, spontaneous feelings found full blown expression and any theme could be appropriated and sung to a cathartic effect. For instance, all the genres were created and used by people with some specific purpose, and people possessed the ability and the means to express. The shift of traditional songs and song genres from the folk to the oligopolistic culture industry, which has various components such as CDs, cassettes and the Internet, has left nothing the people. Symbolically or otherwise, it can be viewed as an interplay of power that exists in utterance, not in silence. It symbolizes the speechlessness of the village folk after verbal plunder.

We can view folk songs as a discourse. Here, Michel Foucault's remark that power lies in discourse sounds relevant. The Bhojpuri folk, especially women, had the songs as discourse, as they musically conveyed their message through songs. In this context, a woman's 'letter' to her husband through a song can be cited as an example of communication through songs. The woman sang to the clouds asking them to tell her husband about her pain in separation. *Vidai* songs expressed the concern of the parents to their daughter. A woman could express her sorrows in her marital home through the songs. To state it in other words, traditionally Bhojpuri folk songs depicted the voices, the utterances of the simple people, especially women. The culture industry is exploiting the masses by usurping this means of discourse. The power is being exercised by the industry and the folk are rendered powerless.

Characteristically, the culture industry has also attempted at amalgamating the old and new elements. The result is a homogenized music, a distinguishing feature of the culture industry. The traditional musical instruments are no longer in use, with western instruments mostly played. The amalgamation of regional tunes with Bollywood instruments gives the listeners an aroma of gratification and elevation.

We can take Holi songs as an example in studying the shifting of the power that women had. In these songs, women were allowed by custom to indulge in ritual

and spontaneous verbal abuse. There was a space for gender interaction in which women got a chance to reverse roles and to experience a sense of empowerment, although momentarily. Women's verbal skills and reactions to their plight got well expressed. They themselves composed the songs and expressed their grievances with occasional improvisation wherever needed. All the songs teemed with their feelings. Pointing out the space of women provided in the festival of Holi, Flueckiger says:

If Hindu culture puts a premium on the unassertiveness of women, on Holi the reverse is entirely appropriate. Likewise, if Hindu culture ordinarily proscribes open displays of sexuality, on Holi, sexuality is one of the dominant and most obvious motifs of the day. (1996:51)

Holi is the only occasion on which women can pass on sexual innuendoes. Now, they are the objects of the innuendos. The recorded songs of these days are not at all the expressions of women participating in their very own personal rituals of festive release. They are inimical to their spontaneity. As the songs are played repeatedly, they assume an ossified structure and influence the society by depriving women of their voices. Women now stand disadvantaged, robbed of their voice in this tide of commercialization and commodification. The advocates of commercial appropriation of songs would call this shifting of means a technological development. Thus, the Holi songs have now, instead of empowering women, "shifted to reflect a male representation of women, whose sexuality must be bound; it is this representation that identifies the *dalkhai git* as *huri* (bad)" (Flueckiger 1996: 75).

Examining the authenticity of Holi songs, through which, we have just seen, women find an outlet to expression, some scholars disagree with the opinion that women were really allowed any space. They affirmingly hold the opinion that there has been only a reaffirmation of an ossified, claustrophobic world of restraints. Ranajit Guha sees the festival of Holi, for example, only as a means of reaffirming the old hierarchical system rather than liquidating them. He says:

The saturnalia, the systematic violation of structural distances ..., the defiance of rules governing interpersonal relationships between members of the family and community, the blatant undermining of private and public morality – all of which feature in this ceremony, add up not to a disruption of the political and social order in the village, but to its reinforcement. (1983:34)

The above opinion has some truth in itself, but the fact remains that women expressed their sentiments in all songs, especially in the Holi songs. The whole body of songs, many of which we have studied in the previous chapters, overtly shows that it is mainly the pain of women which forms the content of the songs. The genres such as *Jatsaar*, *Ropani*, *Sohani*, *Lachari*, *Vidai Geet*, *Videsia* and very many others seem to have come to existence only to express women's sorrows, difficulties and resentment. The more the oppression, the stronger grew the urge to express. But the expression was not assertive and revolutionary. Women were unable to throw away the net of the stereotyped social order. What they could do was just a singing of their sorrows. Therefore, by 'women's voice' in this context, it should not be meant that women raised a resistant voice against the system. Rather, 'women's voice' means here that they had at least the right, the choice to sing.

Another important point of significance in respect of their singing is that singing had a cathartic effect on them. In a fit of passion or sorrow, they sang out and felt a mental release. Gradually, times changed and they were provided the alluring products of the culture industry and they fostered up a habitual obedience to them. Their catharsis was lost in this way. Now what they have are songs made by a socially irresponsible, male dominant cassette industry.

These days, even when the songs are sung from women's point of view, they are composed by males. This can be viewed as a process of social formation. A future society is emerging through this male representation of women. Not only this, most of the songs are sung by males. Lewd, brash, carefree and licentious tones add to the heavy sexual and erotic content of these recordings. Demeaning stereotyped images of women are presented under the pretext of the *devar-bhauji* bond, in which the custom allows to engage in verbal jokes. Recently, even the *devar-bhauji* bond has been transgressed. The reference to any woman or girl as a sex object has become common.

In social functions such as marriage, women used to sing songs in chorus. It is not an exaggeration to say that women's songs formed part of the marriage rites. Each phase or phases of the ceremony had its own songs without the singing of which it could not be completed. But these days, there is no distinct song for specific phases of the ceremony. All the songs of marriage have been homogenized and labelled as marriage songs. Although there are some villages where songs are sung by women even today, the tradition of singing is on the decline. A technology mediated system of songs is getting hold over them. Stereo cassette players have replaced them. With

the change of means, songs have undergone drastic changes. The cassette songs do not allow any improvisation whereas women's singing had ample space for it. Women could fit anyone's name in the songs and rejoice in a jocund company. They were allowed in this way the possibility of interpreting difficulties, problems, and inadequacies caused by the socially produced structures.

The pervasiveness of the culture industry becomes transparent when we find that songs have been recorded for all festive occasions. There are various types of recorded songs and consumers are arrested by one or the other. The public buys them and make them a part of their festivals. In this way, a new culture is evolving. This culture is artificial, affected and derogatory as opposed to the genuine mass culture.

It is a remarkable point that the culture industry does not tear itself completely from the older songs and song genres. Sometimes, we find that the new songs keep pace with the earlier songs or forms, particularly in terms of melodies, themes and styles. If a sudden complete change is made, there are chances of negation in the reception of the products. Therefore, if a change is made, it is made covertly by slowly subverting the consumers' opinions, by forming their tastes. Something slightly differentiated is produced to allure them. Through marked differentiations, the tastes of the masses and musical trends are shaped as desired. Following some tracks of folk genres, new songs are recomposed to suit the tastes of the fetishized public.

Standardization, one of the most important characteristics of the culture industry, is the key inspirer for the customers to purchase these songs. The consumers develop a sense of high status in their surroundings. They try to behave and talk in the manner of the products. They are so simple that they take the product as a living social reality, not as an extended form of fantasy. This simplicity creates a fetish of these songs. Adorno explains this fetish character in music as follows:

The consciousness of the mass listeners is adequate to fetishized music. It listens according to formula, and indeed debasement itself would not be possible if resistance ensued, if the listeners still had the capacity to make demands beyond the limits of what was supplied. But if someone tried to 'verify' the fetish character of music by investigating the reactions of listeners with interviews and questionnaires, he might meet with unexpected puzzles. In music as elsewhere, the discrepancy between essence and appearance has grown to a point where no appearance is any longer valid, without mediation,

as verification of the essence. The unconscious reactions of the listeners are so heavily veiled and their conscious assessment is so exclusively oriented to the dominant fetish categories that every answer one receives conforms in advance to the surface of that music business which is attacked by the theory being 'verified'. (1991:40)

Surely, if anyone asks a consumer as to the songs, his answer will puzzle the interviewee. As he is attracted by and impressed with the appearance of the product, he will not be able to measure its essence. Even if he ever tries to do so, it is in vain as no appearance is real, it is only a tantalization.

Despite eroticism and vulgarity in the songs, people buy cassettes with great interest. They play it loudly and in this way the song gets transmitted even to those who have not bought the cassettes. Even those who have no interest in songs are bound to listen to them as they are played in a very loud volume. People get stuck and are curious about the frank verbalized obscenity. In this process of wide dissemination of these songs among all people, the range of popular culture is enlarged. Songs tend to become the dominant culture. We can ask why people have no objections or protest to obscenity becoming a part of culture. But the reality will take us to speak on behalf of the people. And we will say that the people are not so much guilty as we think them to be. The reality is revealed in the following lines by Adorno and Horkheimer:

The culture industry as a whole has moulded men as a type unflinchingly reproduced in every product. All the agents of this process ... take good care that the simple reproduction of this mental state is not nuanced or extended in any way. (1973:127)

In this state of mental colonization, if we ask the people to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, between what is detrimental to them and what is not, they would certainly answer in favour of the culture industry, because they think that the industry is in their service as their well wisher. Some new songs realistically express the public's situation. But such songs are hardly composed. They are composed only to show that the culture industry is concerned with people's happiness and sorrow whereas this is not the reality. Composing one such song out of hundred socially irrelevant songs is just like a drop in the ocean.

The industry has created such a web that the consumers, like spiders, recoil in it. If there is a desire from amongst the people, the industry will aptly fulfil it because the very desire has been created by the industry itself in order to enlarge its market.

“The industry submits to the vote which it has itself inspired” (Adorno and Horkheimer 1973:134). People in turn think that their desire has been fulfilled and thus the industry works for them. People expect only what the industry has taught them. Adorno and Horkheimer say that “products of the entertainment industry ... have taught them what to expect; they react automatically” (1973:127).

Sexuality was once confined to the bed-room. Now, it has come to public places and enjoyed through words. In traditional songs, we find decent depictions of romance, love and faithfulness, while current songs abound in indecent proposals. The sister of a brother’s wife, friend’s wife, wife’s sister, and other village girls are now targets of sexual remarks. During Holi, extremely abusive songs are played raucously.

Regarding this display of sexuality in the verbal form, people have different opinions. Some appreciate it and some decry it. Some enjoy it in privacy, some publicly. Some consumers of the erotic songs are so devoted that they take everything in it for granted. Some people strongly dislike the songs. Besides, there is another type of people who do not think anything about these songs at all. Divided opinions about the projection of sexuality preclude us from coming to a unanimous point. Surprisingly enough, it cannot be said that those who have objections against the erotic songs do not buy them. They are also amongst the buyers of erotic songs and listen to them privately. The unanimous point is that most of the people listen to the songs. On buses, taxies and autos, passengers are always found coaxing the driver to play some Bhojpuri hit numbers. They enjoy it. When people are in some gatherings, they assume their real self and start behaving accordingly, as it is in the crowd that the real nature of a man emerges. If any highly erotic song is being played out, they enjoy it without any hesitation or embarrassment. It is in the social and the cultural context that some people hide their self from the people. The reality is that they like it. It is just like sexual intercourse which people suggest others to abstain from whereas they themselves indulge in it. The industry has perceived this fact and acts accordingly.

To cope with occasional dissatisfaction of the consumers, especially the old men, the industry has started producing songs containing double meanings. This double meaning scheme makes the songs popular among both the sections of the consumers – those who love obscenity in any form and those who do not like frank obscenity. We find the pervasiveness of the culture industry here. The industry is so dexterous that it contrives to find a way to cope with any problem. At no cost does it let consumers, who are permanently unconscious, exercise their own consciousness.

The number of explicitly erotic songs is many times more than that of double meaning songs. This fact evinces that the industry has a greater hold over society's unconscious, as sex is more hideous in the unconscious than in the conscious part of the mind. Another reason of the success is that most of the consumers are young people, unemployed or working in factories. They feel personal attachment to the songs, which are highly standardized and individualized.

Some old songs also include erotic elements in themselves. But they were not inflicted upon women by men. Rather, they were composed and improvisingly sung by women themselves. They were not offensive. On the contrary, they were meant for strengthening social and familial ties. They emanated a pastoral and romantic sense of love. The following song expresses erotic love:

Pahile bairi sam,
Phir bhaile tikora.
Piya ji ke haath laagal,
Hoi gaile sindhora. (Upadhyay 1992:212)

(Earlier it was like a plum. Then it became like a *tikora* (very small unripe mangoes). But when my husband touched it, it became as big as a *sindhora* (a big fruit).

It is quite clear that this song is erotic. But the style in which it has been composed is decent. It is this decency in the composition that stops it from being vulgar. On the surface level, the meaning is not so clear, but a little effort to understand it would reveal to us that a woman is referring to her breasts. She says that earlier her breasts were very small, as small as plums and unripe mangoes. But when the husband touched them, they became as big as a *sindhora* (a big fruit). The covertness of the erotic element in the song has been maintained by the fact that there is no use of any explicit word such as 'breasts'. Another remarkable point is that the song is sung from women's point of view. There is no scopophilic exploitation as we find in the new songs, in which male composers compose the songs to objectify women.

In amorous folk songs, natural elements dominate. For instance, the following song paints the beautiful picture of a woman in a language characteristically folk:

Hoorwa niyar tor jorawa e goriya,
Pooawa niyar tor gaal.
Panawa niyar tu paatar baadu goriya,
Lotawa niyar tor bhaal. (Upadhyay 1992:211-212)

(O dear! your hair is like a *hoorawa* (the round ending point of a staff),
your cheeks like *puawa* (a soft eatable). You are thin like a betel leaf.

Your forehead is wide like a *lota* (a small pot for keeping water).

The realistic elements of this song are emphasized by the use of folk metaphors. The comparison of the lock of hair with the rounded end of a staff, that of cheeks with a soft eatable, that of thin body with a betel leaf, and the forehead with a utensil indicating an elevated structure are characteristic of the village folk. But a new song would never attempt to paint such a decent picture of women. If it attempts to give a description of beauty, it starts with the mention of some sex organ and will end with the same. This very display of organs accounts for their grand success in the market.

For a few decades, there has been a burgeoning market of Bhojpuri cassettes running successfully in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and many other states. This cassette industry is growing concomitantly in race with the film industry. Also in its spirit, it is not different from the film industry as far as the modes of production and consumption are concerned. In other words, both are oligopolistic with a propensity to build up a global market of consumption and distribution. With the advancement of information technology in recent years, the industry has spread its wings through the internet – the best means of global distribution. This accounts for the wide distribution of Bhojpuri songs in different Bhojpuri speaking countries of the world.

The emergence of the network society has added to the burgeoning market of songs. Through the World Wide Web, songs are available to the whole world. Listeners from different parts of the world get interconnected. The barriers of space and time have vanished. This global mode of distribution and consumption characterize the songs of today. The songs have two fundamental distinctive features: they are global, and they are structured around a network of financial flows.

The Indian diaspora has spread almost all over the world. In many countries, it is Bhojpuri which is the dominant language. If we look into the history of India, we will find that there have been migrations during different periods. Poverty compelled the Indians to migrate to other countries for livelihood. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people from northern India, mostly from Bihar and eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, made outward migration on an unprecedented scale. The liberation of slaves was a major incident. The slaves refused to work on sugar plantations. To fulfil the shortage of labourers, the British colonial government allured the Indians to work in different colonial countries such as Mauritius, British Guyana, Jamaica and

Trinidad. Niranjana says that about ninety percent of the migration to Caribbeans was from the Gangetic plain – the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Oudh, Orissa and Bihar (1998:115). Most of the labourers who went to these foreign lands settled there permanently. Thus, with them their language was also carried to these lands. Of the north Indian languages, Bhojpuri was the most common. It has been preserved and is popular even today. Mauritius, Trinidad, British Guyana, Jamaica, Surinam, Fiji are some of the countries where people speak Bhojpuri as their native language.

Bhojpuri cassettes are distributed and sold in these countries in large numbers. Through the Internet, traditional folk genres are transmitted to a world wide audience. There are many websites that are especially meant for Bhojpuri songs, like Bhojpuria.com, Bhojpuri Sansaar, Chauri Chaura.com, Bhojpuri Duniya.com, Bhojpuri Sansaar, Bhojpuri Lok-Sahitya, etc. These sites intend to disseminate Bhojpuri fashions and fads, food habits and talking styles all over the world. These sites claim that their aim is to promote integration of music world wide to facilitate better entertainment and interaction amongst the Bhojpuri speaking communities. They also claim to promote folk songs, cultural values and to carry them onto future generations. They claim to spread awareness about Bhojpuri music or songs and to make available facts and figures about the language, its people and culture. If viewed culturally, it is a matter of great delight that the Bhojpuri language be spread widely so that cultural enrichment may be possible through assimilation, exchange and adaptation. But the aim here, in the transmission, is hardly exchange and enrichment, but that of distribution and consumption with a typically consumerist purpose.

These sites claim to produce traditional music too. They show their pride by announcing that traditional music touches one's soul and creates a sense of self respect for one's culture. They try to satisfy the consumers by providing some traditional and selected superhit tracks of recently produced songs. They also claim to have satisfied the Indian diaspora world wide by reviving folk music. But the reality is that nothing is produced with the sole purpose of entertainment.

The modern world is dependent on technology. We know very well that the pre-technological world had its culture based on a concept of the unity of time and space. Earlier, people had familiarity with the everyday environment. Time was conceived as a unity of past and present. But technological developments broke this unity. The traditional concept of time was based on a series of events, calendrical events. These events constituted time. Thus, time was discontinuous. But the modern

concept of time is that it is a continuous flow. Another important change is that time has now been captured into simultaneity. One can listen to the voice of a person from the radio while the person is at the same time talking to him.

The above observations seem to be true in the context of Bhojpuri folk songs and the people. In my study of the traditional folk songs in the previous chapters, we saw that every song genre had its own period and event of singing. No song was sung out of context or without its proper period or season. Singing any song out of its context was thought to be ridiculous and embarrassing. Fasts, festivals, rituals and rites of passage had their own specific songs and every song reminded the people of a particular time. Thus, songs reminded people of time – the circular time of the year. Time had a circular and discontinuous structure. The songs reminded of time by calendrical events. It follows from this that singing songs acquired a meaningful relevance to life. It bears testimony to the elements of realism contained by the folk songs. But the new songs have no social relevance. They have no generic distinction. There is no specific time or season for their singing. They have been homogenized by blurring the generic distinctions, by coalescing different elements. The traditional folk songs that are recorded by the cassette industry, and that are also found on the Internet, however, contain their generic form, although with fluctuations.

Songs have much to do with social formation and social control. In the present scenario, the culture industry reserves the power to decide the type of the emerging culture. Measuring the influence of technology, Manuel Castells says, “Because culture is mediated and enacted through communication, cultures themselves – that is, our historically produced systems of beliefs and codes – become fundamentally transformed, and will be more so over time, by the new technological system” (1996:357). Again, he says “The emergence of a new electronic communication system characterized by its global reach, its integration of all communication media, and its potential interactivity is changing and will change for ever our culture” (Ibid). Money will be the motive of all activity, which will be deliberately shaped by the commercial interests of a few major conglomerates around the world.

The culture industry boasts of its ability to entertain people by producing things of so-called necessity. But on asking whether the masses have been really entertained, the answer will probably be in the negative. The implication is that it is the industry which is really being entertained, with the producers, distributors and other ‘members’ of the industry minting money. Adorno clarifies this as follows:

In one of his essays, Aldous Huxley has raised the question of who, in a place of amusement, is really being amused. With the same justice, it can be asked whom music for entertainment still entertains. Rather, it seems to complement the reduction of people to silence, the dying out of a speech as expression, the inability to communicate to all. It inhabits the pockets of silence that develop between people moulded by anxiety, work and undemanding docility. (1991:27)

The consumers are always in a state of intoxication, because if they are allowed to be conscious, they may exercise their will, and the industry will have fears of being demolished. Their unconsciousness is not caused by themselves though, but by the culture industry. Making them unconscious, the industry functions at its sweet will. There is no objection, no dissatisfaction, no exercise of self will from the consumers.

Earlier, songs were a deciding factor in the congregation of women. On festive occasions, they gathered, sang and felt a sense of empowerment in unity. The shifting of the songs to the culture industry has entailed a massive influence on the social structure. The family and social relations which had warmth of feelings have now changed. Joint family has been replaced by small family. In joint family and the old social system, the relations between the villagers were primary, as they felt a strong tie of kinship and neighbourhood. But now, the advancements of the new age have changed all these. People have developed secondary relations with the impact of industrialization, urbanization and technologization. The woman of today would rather shut her door and listen to a cassette than go to other women to sing in a group.

A Bhojpuri cassette release always finds quick welcome among the impatiently waiting people whose taste has been so well moulded that they will consume whatever is produced. From household to public activities, the songs are played loudly. For a shopkeeper, to play a Bhojpuri song is a fashion, and it also draws customers to his shop. Be it a common day or a festive occasion, Bhojpuri songs are always popular amongst the people. Thus, we have found that it is a journey of the songs from living realism to non-realism. The old songs adopted by the industry do not change according to the changing life of the people. The condition of the folk is continually changing. But this change is not expressed now as the means of expression – the songs – no longer belong to the people. There is no improvisation, because, the cassette industry has nothing to do with realistic representation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study purports to have shown how realistic elements in Bhojpuri songs manifests society in them. The realism that has been explored is not an outer imposition, but a living embodiment of the people's expressions. The songs are the living expressions of the folk, giving them a cathartic release from their sorrows. They reveal to us the social and familial structures much more than any written literature – the literature of the educated – can. They reveal most appropriately the uncharted regions of the folk mind, especially that of women, wherein lie traumas, sorrows and difficulties born of poverty, the ossified social structures and so on.

Bhojpuri folk songs have many types often characterized by their tunes. Sometimes, the themes vary but the tunes remain the same. Surprisingly enough, such a huge treasure of folk songs contain limited number of fixed tunes. The genre of a song can be easily identified by listening to the tune only. The rigidity of the tunes is so high that a *Chaita* song, for example, cannot be sung in the tune of a *Biraha*.

We have seen that the songs have many genres. Each genre has its distinct characteristic of tune, theme and context without any scope of interchangeability or substitutability. There is a specific time of singing for all songs. Singing of any song out of its context or out of season or occasion is thought to be foolish, ridiculous and embarrassing. For example, a *Chaita* song can be sung in the month of *Chait* only. Some songs have derived their names from the theme they deal with, some from the tune they are sung in, some from the occasion they are sung on, and some from the singers and their occupation. But the tune is the easiest and the most typical way of identifying the genre of a song. It is easier to identify because the tunes are few in Bhojpuri music and are always coloured with a regional flavour.

The different genres of the songs can be categorized on the basis of their context such as songs of seasons, of work, of rites de passage, of fasts and festivals and so on. *Chaita*, *Kajari*, *Barahamaasa*, *Chaumaasa*, *Hindola*, and *Phagua* (Holi) are song genres sung in their own particular seasons. *Chaita* is sung in the month of *Chait*, *Kajari*, *Barahamaasa*, *Chaumaasa*, *Chhamaasa* and *Hindola* in the rainy season (around *Saawan*), and *Phagua* in the month of *Phagun* when the festival of Holi is celebrated with colours.

Songs related to work are sung while the singers do some work. These are *Jatsaar*, *Ropani* and *Sohani* – all sung by women. Women sing *Jatsaar* songs while they grind grains in the millstone usually during the last period of the night, before dawn. They are mostly related to women's hardships, sorrows and other social problems. In other words, family struggle, jealousy, child marriage, attempts at seduction, women's efforts to save their chastity, incidents of incest, a bride's hardships in the marital house, and other problems usually constitute the theme of *Jatsaar* songs. *Ropani* songs are also sung by women forming a group while they transplant paddy seedlings in the field. They are not much different from the *Jatsaar* in respect of theme. Usually, women are found saving their chastity and preserving their love for the husband. A few months after paddy transplantation comes the time of weeding which is done basically by women, who lighten their tiresomeness by singing *Sohani* songs. Besides the themes the *Ropani* songs are concerned with, the *Sohani* also deals with women's resistance against men's cruelty, oppression of brides by their mother-in-law, jealousy between wife and co-wife and the trial of a wife in the furnace by her husband to test her chastity.

There is another category of songs that are sung by particular castes and are inspired by the work they do. *Kanharwa* songs are sung by a caste called *kahaar*, who have, traditionally been the bearers of palanquins in marriages. While carrying the burden, they sing particular songs. Washermen, too, have their own work songs called *Dhobi Geet*, which describes their daily life-style. Likewise, *Biraha* songs are sung by Ahirs. The *Biraha* is basically identified by its tune. It can adapt any theme and set to its tune. Many modern changes in the society have been sung in the *Biraha*. However, the main themes it usually handles are separation in love, marriage, romance, quarrels between sister-in-law and elder brother's wife, economic hardships, offerings to gods and goddesses, moral lessons, etc. *Pachra Geet* is sung by a caste called Dusadh, who invokes gods and goddesses by singing in their praise to cure an ailing person. A caste called *Gond* in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh have their own songs which they sing to the accompaniment of an instrument called *huduk*, and dance at weddings. There is no fixity of theme. Apart from these, there are many other caste songs.

No less is the number of songs related to rites of passage. On the occasion of child-birth (birth of a son), women sing *Sohar* songs to celebrate their happiness. *Sohar* has a particular tune. Songs of *Yagnyopaveet* are sung on the occasion of the sacred thread ceremony. But songs of marriage draw our attention more as they have

many types such as *Tilak Geet*, *Mado Chhawai Geet*, *Imali Ghhontai Geet*, *Gaari Geet*, *Kohbar Geet*, *Vidai Geet*, and so on. All these describe different procedures and feelings concerning marriage. *Tilak Geet* describes the presenting of wealth, gifts and money given to the groom as dowry. *Mado Chhawai Geet* describes the constructing of the canopy erected for marriage. *Gaari Geet* is sung to ridicule the wife-takers. There is a joking relationship between the bride's friends and the groom, between the *samdhi* and the *samdhin*. They all indulge in abusive jokes in the form of songs. Songs of *Kohabar* depict the paintings inside the *Kohabar*, the room prepared for the married couple. But the peak of intense feelings is achieved when women sing the very sad *Vidai* songs on the departure of the daughter to the marital house.

Fasts and festivals are characteristic of the cultural heritage of the folk people. There are different fasts such as *Naga Panchami*, *Bahura*, *Godhan*, *Pidiya* and festivals such as *Chhath*. *Naga Panchami* songs are sung on the occasion of a festival known by the same name to worship snakes. Girls make certain drawings with cow-dung on the outside walls of the house and put a pot full of milk and fried paddy seeds at the gate, believing that the snake god will come and consume the eatables. On the eve of *Bahura*, women observe a fast during the day, take bath in the evening and make statues of a cow, a calf and a lion to worship them. They sing songs with the desire of having a son. In the month of *Kartik* comes *Godhan* and women observe a fast and make the statue of a man and pulverize it. Not only this, they also curse their family members and villagers to die. Again, they pray for their long life and thus retrieve the curse. To pray for the well-being of her brother, a sister observes the fast *Pidiya* which follows *Godhan*. Brother-sister love emerges as the essence of the songs. A very famous festival of Bihar, *Chhath* is celebrated with the accompaniment of songs which specialize in women praying for being granted a son.

Poorvi, *Alchaari* and *Jhoomar* are such genres which are identified specially by their tunes. They have no particular season for being sung. *Poorvi* is called so because it is sung in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and somewhat in the Chhapra district of Bihar. *Alchaari* or *Laachari* is another genre in which women are found expressing their helplessness as the name, *Laachari*, also signifies. *Jhoomar* is perhaps the most popular of these genres. Women sing *Jhoomar* tossing their heads in ecstasy. The themes that it touches are often love, romance and conjugal life. One of the most characteristic features of the *Jhoomar* songs is that they always mention the serving of delicious food by a wife to her husband/lover.

Moreover, there are some other genres such as *Bhajan*, *Nirgun*, *Bidesia* – the last one being a recent one. Thus, we have seen that every genre has emerged out of a social necessity with some particular social significance. Songs are an integral part of folk life as no ceremony completes without a song.

In trying to find the realistic elements in these folk songs, we found that poverty and the separation of wife and husband resound as the major themes in a number of songs. People are shown going to cities to earn money leaving their wife at home. The pain following the separation finds a touching expression in the songs. The poor wife, tortured by the family members, as her husband has gone to the city, does not find any other source of expression but songs. She keeps on waiting for her husband's return and sings touching songs, sometimes addressing the clouds and parrots as her messenger to the husband. The Bhojpuri speaking area is vastly populated by peasants. Therefore, the agricultural life is reflected in a variety of songs. Many songs derive their inspiration from agricultural practices such as sowing, reaping, weeding, etc. and more often than not, similes, metaphors and imageries are drawn from agricultural activities. These elements make the songs more realistic.

The village folk are basically fatalists and accept every weal and woe as their lot. This propensity to accept rather than reject shows the artless, simple and unadulterated character of villagers. Satisfaction with whatever they have is reflected in many a song. A villager always feels comfortable in his own village and any idea of going to the city teases his mind. For example, in a song a peasant is willing to marry in a nearby village, to have his field nearby, and to live at home for ever. Thus, the life of the village folk is characterized by satisfaction, acceptance and fatalism.

Mention of child marriage occurs frequently in some songs. Often, there is a surprising disparity of age between the spouses. More often, the bride is many times younger than the bridegroom. Sometimes, the bridegroom is many times younger than the bride. A song describes that a groom, who is a child, starts weeping at the howling of a jackal at night. The mother comes complaining why the bride made the groom weep. Such a disparity of age is both ridiculous and serious. Often, child marriages happen either to get a huge dowry or to perpetuate sexist attacks on female children.

After marriage begins the harder days of a bride. In a family dominated by males and elder women, she faces a bundle of difficulties. First of all, she is suspected by all. Any mistake committed by her sister-in-law is taken to be hers. Since families hold the *pardah* system, she cannot express herself. She cannot go out. As a result, the

marital home turns to be a claustrophobic world full of in-laws. Among the family members, the mother-in-law is the cruelest person. She hurts her feelings. She makes her work for hours together and does not allow her any freedom at all. The sister-in-law is the most sharp-tongued critic. She always finds faults with the new bride, although there are some songs which express their lovely relationship. They develop a complex relationship. But the exercise of power by a mother-in-law over her daughter-in-law takes a rotating form. The same woman who was once a *bahu* and is now a *saas* and was exploited and tortured by her own *saas* does the same with her *bahu*. This is just a reversal of roles. But the same daughter-in-law who was once exploited wreaks vengeance upon the mother-in-law. However, a few songs describe their love for each other. When a daughter departs for her marital home, her mother teaches her lessons of respecting and serving the mother-in-law as her duty. This relationship also acquires complexity.

The respect of a woman is dependent upon whether she has a son. Since the day the mother-in-law and others get confirmed that the daughter-in-law is pregnant, they start taking great care of her. A pregnant woman's desire is referred to as *dohad*. All her desires related to food, clothes and enjoyment/entertainment are fulfilled.

The marriage of a daughter in India, especially in the Bhojpur region, is like a burden for the father and other members of the family. Unbearable are the difficulties of finding a matchable groom and of paying the dowry to the wife-takers. The father's anxiety is so much that he feels deprived of his hunger, thirst and sleep. A daughter is portrayed just as thorn for the father which comes out only when her marriage is done. The father, however respected, has to bow down before the groom's father.

The birth of a daughter brings unhappiness to the family and the mother is cursed by all the members of the family. Even the mother does not take care of her daughter. A high degree of discrimination is found between a daughter and a son. In a song, a daughter asks her mother at the time of her departure to the marital home why she held the difference between her and her brother. The mother gave her the food with a frown and her brother with love. Thus, there are many songs that deal with this theme. Despite the fact that the mother discriminates, she also loves the daughter. The *Vidai* songs express this love.

Sometimes, it is only the dowry which decides a marriage. If there are chances of getting a considerable amount of money as dowry, some parents do not hesitate in getting their son married even in his childhood. Sometimes, the dowry is proposed to

be paid later and the marriage is done. If the bride's father fails to pay it, the bride is left by the groom and the marriage is thought to be a failure. The difficulty of getting a daughter married is well expressed in a song in which the father is shown going to have a dip in the river Ganga and praying to God not to give anyone a daughter.

We have also seen that the husband is the only support of a wife, who always wants him to be with her. When all the members of the family are hostile to her, it is the husband whose support she finds. Her prestige depends on the status of her husband both inside the family and outside. Sometimes, the songs describe some incidents of quarrel between them. Among many other reasons the chief ones are the wife's boastings about her parental house, her negation to follow the husband's instructions about domestic work, and her extravagance.

There are incidents of polygamy as well. The co-wife is always an object of jealousy for the wife. In some songs, we also find incidents of incestuous infatuation. The elder brother entangles with the younger brother's wife or vice versa. But women always emerge as emblems of chastity by rejecting the proposal of having sexual intercourse with any other person than the husband, and if forced they even burn themselves in fire.

There is a joking relationship between the elder brother's wife (*bhauji*) and the husband's younger brother (*devar*). This joking relationship is permitted in society. Moreover, a *devar* is thought to be the real enjoyer of his *bhauji*. In the elder brother's absence, it is the *devar* who enjoys the *bhauji*. There are many erotic songs which describe the joking relationship between them. Holi songs abound in such themes.

After the marriage of a girl, it is the brother who often pays visits to her *sasural*. The brother's arrival is a moment of great joy for the sister. She serves delicious food for him and tells him all her problems.

Barren women emerge as the most unfortunate creatures of the earth. A barren woman is treated worse than animals. She cannot come in contact with anyone. There is so much fear in the people that even her shadow is avoided. It is thought that the person on whom the shadow will fall will become barren too. There is a song, which we have studied earlier, which describes that a tigress, a serpent, the mother of the woman, and even the earth do not give a barren woman a place for fear of becoming barren. However, on a rational level the song is a fantasy but it is symbolic of the traumas a barren woman usually has to undergo.

Folk songs paint a variety of pictures. Where they paint the picture of happiness and hilarity, at the same time they present appalling poverty and destitution. Where, in the *Jhoomar* songs, we find mention of delicious food served in a golden plate, at the same time we find the dripping roofs, and the tasteless *leethi* of the washerman. The songs portray all themes characteristic of the folk.

Throughout the study, we have seen that women are objects of utilization, objects of discrimination and oppression. As passive bearers, they always have to sacrifice their happiness either because of the family or for the family. Their only duty is, as the songs reveal, to fulfil obligations of being mother, sister and wife. Facing discrimination at the mother's hand, she has to go to the husband's house where she has to work as a servant, then as a nurturer by being a responsible mother. The devotion she usually has to her husband is really incomparable. She accepts whatever is given to her. The tenet of *pati parmesvar* is the essence of her life. A *pativrata* wife would rather die than accept anyone's enticement. All these show the belief of folk women guided more by religious and sentimental principles rather than reason.

Although women accept everything good or bad, they are unequivocal and vigorous in expressing their dissatisfactions. Through the songs they express their difficulties, traumas and sorrows. As we have seen, most of the songs are sung by women. In this way, songs become the sole possession of women, who have no other means of expression. The Bhojpuri women in particular do not have a strong voice of protest. The most they do is just to express themselves in songs. Hence, songs can be taken to be the best source for the study of Bhojpuri women's condition.

The songs give us an idea of the joint family system and the tensions that arise in such a system. Tussles between certain relations are so common that we may regard them as a part of daily life. Quarrels between *saas* and *bahu* can be cited as examples. When a man is in a city to earn money, the members of the joint family torture his wife by reminding her of her dependence upon the family.

We have also seen how the old songs that were the medium of women's expression have now been usurped by the culture industry. They have been adapted and modified whereas some of them have even disappeared with the tide of technological development and modernization. The culture industry has emerged as the only deciding agency in this regard. It is completely different from mass culture – the culture which originates innately from the folk. It has a pervasive and ubiquitous character. All forms of popular culture are a single culture industry whose only aim is

the extortion of money from the masses by rendering them into passive consumers. The industry works through various processes such as standardization and pseudo-individualization. In standardization, parts are substituted. In pseudo-individualization, a tantalizing aura is created by false differentiations. Fetishism and regression of listening are the main factors. In fetishization, people unquestioningly devote themselves to the music created by the industry. In regression, people get childish attitudes of getting the same kind of things.

The cassette industry has usurped the space of the folk. As the songs have got transferred to the industry, no realism is found in them any more. Erotic elements dominate the music of today. Thus, the situation of Bhojpuri folk songs today can be seen as a journey of songs from realism to non-realism, to imagined and commoditized eroticism, to a culture industry spawned consumerist usurpation of voices of the common folk and the women by the oligopolistic forces of technology and global economy.

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