

Jhumur Song: A Geo – Environmental Analysis

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Abstract – Folk songs originate from the growth and evolution of the people, their every day struggle for life and the various geo- environment as well as socio-environment they belong to. The various lifestyle of the people in various sets of geo-environmental conditions gives birth to various forms of folk songs. Jhumur folk songs are a type of primitive musicals practiced by the people of western part of the states of Bengal as well as the parts of Orissa and Jharkhand. Jhumur is a typical form of folk art includes both songs and dance. Geography as a branch of social science can study the music and interpret the social and cultural life pattern of the people. Every form of folk songs are basically songs conveying something about the way of life. They are the result of the human environment relationship. So, if we want to interpret the folk music in the light of geographical thought we should accept the concept of environmental determinism.

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INTRODUCTION

“Songs are considered to be faithful cultural representatives of the prehistoric civilizations” (Chattopadhyay N, 1999). “If geographic study in respect of music are to be pursued, our interest as researchers of geography would be to study music as an issue which is the manifestation of human life (i.e. a combination that includes family, love, conflict and work) and is derived from the perception of life events along with the assimilation of natural environment” (Dutta S, 2013). The Jhumur is a typical folk song and dance performed by the tribal people. The word ‘Jhumur’ is associated with shifting cultivation. This is mainly work song have specific geographical, environmental, anthropological and historical aspects. In the evening time farmers used to sing a song for their own recreation. No doubt Jhumur originated in a tribal society but due to migrations it took several forms. Jhumur is performed with songs and dance and with typical musical instrument *Damsa* and *Madal*. The song and dance performed in an open place like fields or under a tree. Young girls perform the dance, holding each others waist and moving their hands and legs with the rhythm generated by the male members with *Damsa* and *madol*. Both man and female performers wear traditional dress. Jhumur is mainly performed during the occasion of Karma Puja and Tusu Puja.

Jhumur songs and dances are most popular among the Oraons, Kurmis, Mundas. Linguistically Jhumurs are of different types, such as Oriya, Bengali, Maithili and are of local tribal dialect. Themes are love, episodes from Ramayana, story related to Radha Krishna and contemporary issues are performed.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the paper are-

- (i) To identify the geographical region of the Jhumur musicals.
- (ii) To classify Jhumur musicals into different groups depending upon different parameters.
- (iii) To analyse the development of Jhumur in the light of Geo- environmental context.
- (iv) To analyse the effect of globalization on Jhumur musicals.

METHODOLOGY:

Methodology applied for this study is interdisciplinary in nature. Not only typical geographical methods, but also the methodologies of other social sciences have been applied. Collection of the folk lyrics and tunes, listening of the folk songs, searching of the geo-environmental factors, social, political, economic factors affecting folk sons are taken into consideration.

Geographical extension of Jhumur:

The eastern part of Chottonagpur plateau comprises the whole Purulia district, major parts of Bankura district, western part of Paschim Bardhaman, West Birbhum and West Medinipur districts of West Bengal forms the eastern boundary of Jhumur region. Jharkhand forms the western margin, Orissa forms the southern margin and Bihar forms the northern margin of the region.

The eroded undulating terrain of Chhotonagpur plateau is the birth place of Jhumur. It associated with the ancient lifestyle of the tribes. With time the tribal communities migrated in different parts of the country and so now a days Jhumur can be found in different pockets viz. in the tea gardens of Assam and in different parts in northern India. The main flavour of Jhumur remain unchanged but local geo-environmental impact can be found in these areas.

Classification of Jhumur

Different scholars depending upon different parameters classify Jhumur into different groups. Chittaranjan Dev in 1966 classified Jhumur into three groups (Dev C, 1966). These are 1) Bhadariya 2) Sinduriya and 3) Religious.

Subodh Gangopadhyay classified Jhumur into different categories (Gangopadhyay S, 1998), like as:

- 1) Dabri
- 2) Pala
- 3) Nachni
- 4) Darsaliya
- 5) Adivasi
- 6) Chaitali
- 7) Bagaliya
- 8) Kurmali and so on.

Falguni Dey, on the basis of the theme classified Jhumur into different groups, such as:

- 1) Laukik Prem
- 2) Radha Krishna
- 3) Pouranik
- 4) Samajik and
- 5) Prahelika (Dey F, 2008).

In general, Jhumur can be divided into two broad groups, 1) Traditional Jhumur and 2) Modified Jhumur. The two broad groups again sub divided into different sub categories; traditional Jhumur can be again subdivided into Adivasi Jhumur, Kathi Jhumur, Nachni Jhumur etc. on the other hand modified Jhumur can also be subdivided into different sub categories and Darbari Jhumur is most popular among them. "The Jhumur region i.e the Chhotonagpur plateau region, dominated by the tribal people can be divided into different language groups" (Dutta S, 2013) namely-

- (i) Dravidian Language-Oraon Language

- (ii) Austro- Asiatic Language- Santal, Munda, Lodha, Sabar and Khariya Language
- (iii) New Indo-Aryan Language- Bengali, Hindi and Oriya Language.

The themes of Jhumur songs have undergone change with the changing socio-economic condition of the tribal people. From Radha Krishna love song to natural disaster, from purana to every day life struggle all can be the focal themes of Jhumur.

Evolution of Jhumur in the light of geo-environmental context:

Geography of music as the sub-field of Cultural geography tries to explain how culture, language, economy, and other cultural phenomena remain constant or may change in different geo-environmental conditions. Geography being a science of synthesis tries to explain the multi-dimensional man environmental relationship from different dimensions. Music plays a significant role in structuring human culture.

Jhumur is most popular among the people of the Jhumur region. It is the folk song of common working-class people. It is originated in the primitive agricultural society. Shifting cultivation is called 'Jhum' in this region. But once Jhumur originated in the tribal society it undergoes lots of changes according to space and time. "It faced a number of diversions but at the end Jhumur is nothing but work-related musical performance of agricultural based society" (Dutta S, 2013). If we study the evolution of Jhumur songs there are three specific stages of development viz. 1. Primitive stage of development 2. Middle stage of development 3. Modern stage of development.

1. **Primitive stage of development:** Jhumur songs originated in tribal agricultural primitive societies. This is the initial stage of development. Tribal women at the time of agricultural work express their emotions in local languages called *hawka* means shouting in local language. Singing and shouting is not same, there are many differences. But the main purpose is to express the emotions. "This type of Jhumur is called Hawka Jhumur" (Chattopadhyay N, ibid).
2. **Middle stage of development:** This is the stage of mixing of religious belief in the flavour of Jhumur. The rituals practiced by the rural tribal communities was became the main theme of Jhumur in this period. "Influence of the story of Radha and Krishna became the main focal point in this period" (Chattopadhyay N, ibid).
3. **Modern stage of development:** In this period Jhumur was influenced by *Kirtana* style. The use of rhythm of *Madol* was

introduced in this stage. Local *Zamindars* attracted to Jhumur and Jhumur got sophisticated rhythmic pattern. Jhumur has shifted its flavour to inclusion of social problems, political affairs and so on.

EFFECT OF GLOBALISATION:

Jhumur song originated in the tribal traditional society. It has the flavour of originality. But now a days with the use of modern techno sound effect it losses its original colour. To attract the modern society subject matter of Jhumur started to extend. Globalisation works with its own sets of paradoxes. Special attractive features have been added in traditional mode. Their songs undergone noticeable changes in tunes and lyrics; now a day song mixed with politics, social picture and other things happening around the society can be found. Modern musical instruments like synthesizers are used. Mixing of popular tunes with original structure i.e. "fusion" is common. But it is mentionable that it is not at all compulsion to enjoy the folk musical in its original form; it is a matter of personal choice but the originality of Jhumur must be respected.

CONCLUSION:

Jhumur originated among the working-class people, to whom Jhumur is the way to recharge their moods after day long rigorous physical work. Their simple every day life, the nature surround them influenced them to express their joy, their sorrow in terms of rhythm and so Jhumur was originated. Jhumur, its song and dance part together represent the complex man-nature relation ship in a very simple way. Mixing with different socio-environmental conditions makes the pattern of Jhumur more complex; the new environmental set up influenced the singing pattern, musical text even the cultural text of Jhumur. But the focal theme remains unchanged i.e. the man nature relationship.

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