

## ‘Mohoho’ Festival as a Performing Art

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Folk culture is the culture of common people. it is completely differ from the aristocratic culture. Compare to the other culture it has no firmness in its rules and regulation. It is the culture of unfamous and unknown village people. Among the four chief parts of the folk culture, performing art form is the best. Performing is the main thing of the performing art form. The act of performing show us the real picture of the oral culture. On the other way one can able to see the scene of the folk culture through the act of the common artist. Genetical dance, song and drama is the internal elements of the performing art. With the purpose of make it being visible and hearable state, the artist do his best. It is only possible because of the a ct of performing. After all, the performing art is that which is perform infront of audience. Acting is also related with the performing art. The act of performing is a very vast one. It includes songs a line of poetry, an aphorism (actors speech), a legend, dramatical song and drama. In the help of such elements folk culture becoming manifest and clear. These variety of art form are beautifully applied in the performing art form. In the board sense acting is an appellation of performing art. In lower Assam, at Kamrup district, ‘Mohoho’ is a very famous as a local festival. People in general joyfully celebrate this social mirth. This festival is celebrate at the full moon night of the Assamese month ‘Aaghon’. According to some scholar, the word ‘Mohoho’ is the mixing of the three word ‘Mah’ and ‘ho’ ‘ho’. Accordingly, Promod Chandra Bhattacharjja said that ‘The word ‘mohoho’ is consisting with the two word ‘Moh’ and ‘ho’, the first is belonging two Assamese word ‘Moh’ and the second is belonging to the tribe Boro-Kasari. (The conference of Assam Sahitya Sava, Barpeta Road.)

It is controversial, whether, the word ‘Moh’ is mean the word ‘Buffalo’ or the mosquito. Actually it is not clear, either it may mean mosquito, the ‘common biting gent or the wild buffalo. Yet some lines of ‘Mohoho’ song means buffalo, for example –

“Mohor sing hekar kekar

Tate pare masroka”

[Moh-Buffalo, heker keker – not straight, masroka – a bird]

It means clearly the four footed wild animal. Another some line of the ‘Mohoho’ song also indicate same meaning – ‘O hari mohoho, mah khadiba token low” It also clear the picture, because it is not necessary to pick fighting stick to stay away the mosquito, such an insect. In Boro language the word ‘ho’ ‘ho’ means to chase away. So it is confirm that, the word means the wild ‘Buffalo’. ‘Mohoho’ festival known as different name in a different place. In Barpeta district, it names ‘Bhaoldia’ (wish to happiness). It is probable that, the word mangal susak – (wish to happiness) “val haok’ (to make happy) are related to the word ‘Bhaoldia’.

Popular belief is the basic of the folk culture. From primitive age, men are try to defeat the invisible power through incantation, songs and some festivals. They belief that it is possible to cure illness through incantations. In this way they have also the incantacious books which help them to capture the wild animal like – tiger, lion, elephant or Buffalo. Background of the ‘Mohoho’ festival also based with the popular belief. The Assamese month ‘Aaghon’ is the very important time for this festival. In the meantime our crops are going to ripen and it is the time when wild animals are comedown to our agricultural land to eat the crops. The youth of our society united themselves to chase away the wild animal from our ripen crops and they also take some stricken stick for that causes. The song of ‘mohoho’ also relief them from their weariness and fatigue. To some extent we may say that song ‘mohoho’ occur at that weariness of time to make relief them. Following another time, the two type of songs are going to mix and becoming one,( the song of the chase away Buffalo and the chase away mosquito). Rustic poet help it to spread away in the midst of human society. It is remarkable that, after the month of ‘Aaghon’ the tyranny of mosquito going to be very little in our village and according to common belief it is the result of ‘mohoho’ song. In this way, in the ‘mohoho’ festival the rustic poet mix up the two type of song, one is chase away of four footed buffalo or other is the blood drinking mosquito.

Song and dance is the two main part of the ‘mohoho festival’. The act of performing song and dance established it as a performing art. In this article we used some ‘mohoho’ song which are represent the Nalbari district. It is quoted from the reference book namely ‘Assamese Lokagit Sansyan’ by Hemanta Kumar Sharma.

## 1.02 The Mohoho Song :

'Mohoho festival represents people in general. The performing of the 'mohoho' festivals has five succession. At **first** the 'mohoho' performing artist enter a householder courtyard and address god in this way – "Oo hari, 'oo Ram', 'Jay ram bola' 'Joy hari bola'

At the very first of the act of perform Mohoho song, they address and pray god in this way. They also give Haridhani (Haridhani – vehement and simultaneous utterance of the name of hari or Vishnu). They begins the song through the addressing of God, like 'Oo Hari'. 'oaa hari, for example–

1. Oo hari 'mahoho' mah khadiba/khadba token loau.

2. Oao hari Mohoho, mah mariba token loau.

[Hari-God, Khadiba – Stay away, toka – stricken stick, Loau – take, mariba – strike]

**Secondly**, the 'mohoho' songs sung successively and through songs, they wanted coins from householder. For example –

1. "Bahar pat paka | Amak lage taka

Bahar pat cikimiki | Amak lage siki siki||

[Bah – bamboo, pat-leaf, pake – ripe, Amak – we, Lage-wanted, taka-money, siki-coins]

2. Loar pat chaka chaka | Amak lage baga taka.

[Laor-pumpkin, chaka-round, boga-white, taka –money]

3. Ghaga ghaga aai masmara ghaga

Aaoli sik nedhah mane

Satal karim baga

[Ghaga-a kind of bamboo fish trap, mas- fish, aai- householder, aaoli- a row, sik-coins, nedhah-don't give, satal-courtyard, karim-do]

Through the 'mohoho' songs the singers also declare that they use that bagging coins to make party. The folk party also mean the unity of society. Including physically unfit person, all class of people take part of that ceremony.

Through the 'mohoho' festival they summon of all in this way-

'Thupuri hoare, thupuri hao'

Kana kuja akfal haou..'

[Thupuri-collected together, kana-blind, kuja- humpbacked, akfal hauo-go one side]

The purpose of 'mohoho' festival is chasing away buffalo, and this is the theme of mohoho song.

The purpose of chasing away mosquito also take part of that mohoho songs. For example –

Moh gel patale, hal gel sirale

Sakal mohok par kaillo bura diar ghate"

[moh-mosquito, gel- go, patale- underworld, hale-plough, siral-digging, sakal-everyone, par- to pick, kaillo-do, Buradia ghat- bank of the river Buradia.]

### **Thirdly:**

The third part of the 'mohoho' song is the Bhaluki dance (bear dance). Actually the word Bhaluki symbolize the stupendous power. In the midst of the mohoho party they decorate an artist as like as Bhaluk (bear). The body of Bhaluki is completely covered with black cloth, and he also wear a bear mask and dry leaf of bananas. But it is not compulsory to put on the bear masks, without it bhaluki can take part of the dance. Bhal-Bhaluka or bhaluki don't take stricken stick, but he put on some natural ornaments like –bangle of dry bamboos, (bowkhar), some dry parts of Banana's tree or betel leaf. After all they adorned him very amazingly. All other artist of the 'mohoho' party moving around him and singing song.

The song of the Bhal valuka singing in this way –

"Bhalvaluka nasore higher hai

Tamigila nasore higher hai

Khantigila nasore hairehai

Pitagila nosore haire hai

Nasore bhal bhaluka nas"

[Bhalvaluka-adorned artist, nasore-dance, higher-a loud call, pitagila- tamigila- khantigila –the all artist of Mohoho]

The common people belief that the things wear by the Bhaluki are prohibited to touch the other people, for because they think that it will be the cause of misfortune for one. That's why after the end of mohoho festival they burnish all ornaments wear by bhaluki.

At the **fourth**, mohoho artist make joking with our grand parents through the mohoho song. They ridicule them very amazingly and creat very enjoyable situation. They tease them in this way-

“Aaither gharor tuhor baha, Sali kande oha oha.

Aaither gharor siga kasi, buri hage ako pasi

Aaither gharor siga daou, buri hage ako naou”

(Aaither – grand mother, gharor-home, tuhar-the husk of paddy, baha- a den, an abode, Sali-child, kande-crying, oha-crying baby, siga-broken, kaci-a sickle, buri-grand mother, hage-act of latrine, ako pasi-one basket]

With the participate of householder, the program of mohoho song becoming very charming. The participate of householder helps the artist to make this festival very relevant.

At the **fifth**, the very peculiar qualities of mohoho song is that the householders are blessing by the artist, with complete devotion

For example- bhal-hauk-hauk

Kusal hauk – hauk

[bhal-prosperity, hauk-become, kusal-well being]

To invoke divine fever upon all householder they sung in this way-

Gohalir garu barok-Barok

bhakherir dhan barak-barak

Grihastha ata paisa dibor saktimanta karak.

(gohali-a cow shed, garu-cow, barok-growing, bhakheri-store, dhan-paddy, grihostha-householder, ata-one coins, dibor sakti-given power.)

Traditionally, Baishnavi worshipper are obtaining great honour from general people. As like as the Mohoho artist also gaining some type of honour from all householder. So their blessing is very valuable to the common people. Their gratification is very adornable. The householder also give them some money or husked rice. All artist of the mohoho party give them heartiest blessing and hold that honourable thing. The similarity between mohoho song and Bihu ‘Husaree’ are also very remarkable thing. According to common view, the presence of ‘Bihu Husaree’ in one’s courtyard is very fortunate. Same fortune come with the presence of mohoho party also. If they are not come in anyone’s courtyard then the householder thinking that they are very unfortunate.

One remarkable feature of the mohoho song is that, to make it rhythmical, the rustic poet content some useless thing. That’s why all lines of mohoho song is not meaningful, it is going to irrelevant.

For example - “Oja mati halo laj,

Tini bamunar tini kaj

Laur pat chaka chaka

Amak lage boga taka”

[Oja-a head artisan, mati-cal in, halo laj- become a shamed, tini-three, bamun-Brahmin, kaj-work]

In order to make it rhythmical the rustic poet arrange it such irrelevantly.

This structure of the mohoho festival is very easygoing. It is free from any rituals and classics. Grammatically the structure of the mohoho song is not correct, but for common poet, grammatical problem is not important. It is only the natural thing. It is mixed with emotion, feelings and belief. One artist begin the song with special tone and the rest of other sung them like chorus. Nearly, twenty five members are represent the mohoho party. Not only youth but also young can take part of that group.

### **1.03 The Mohoho Dance :**

Dance is the another important feature of the mohoho song. It is mixing with another two dance – the dance of the Bhalvaluki or the youth who is chasing away buffalo. The stricken stick is the main instrument of this dance. Sometimes they broken the front part of the stick into small slices to make it musical instrument. The head of the artisan don’t take the stick. Accordingly, the rest of other singing the same tone with digging the courtyard of the householder. In order to drive away the wild animal, heroically they perform this song in very high and deep tone and dance rapidly. The mohoho song has no dependency of time and measure. Of course some place of Kamrup locality has celebrate it differently. Sometimes the head artisan also take the stick and dig the courtyard. Although they digging the courtyard heroically, in order to chase away the mosquito or buffalo, in reality both of these are not gone for that cause. Realistically it is not appear, it use only as a symbolic dance. The dance represent the main theme.

The role of the dance of bhal bhaluka is very remarkable in the ‘mohoho dance’. It is very particular because the bhaluka going to the midst of youth party through dancing and he is able to show himself as the centre of the party. It is the particular cause of the entertainment of the audience. The bhaluki dance has no bindings, self moving way he do anything to amuse audience. The common people of different place enjoy it differently, sometimes boy and aged person also take part of that occasion. They make a cap as like as the nail of the box and put it on the head of the bhaluki. According to the view of some scholar, in ancient time, mohoho artist dances the domestic bear also.

#### **1.04 Conclusion**

Doing practices is very necessary to take part of the mohoho dance, but it is not like as other some dance which is completely depended with hard practices. It has some rules but it is not theoretical. The way of performing is very easy. One who has spirited and vigorous can take part of that party. The presence of mind of the artist can make audience happy and increases their pleasure very much. The art of the spirited youth encourage the audience to take part of the performance. According to common belief childless pairs are get child and ill people also cure for the blessing of mohoho group. It also indicate the united power of the artist and in the people in general. It has similarity between the supervising of the residence of unmarried young men of some hill tribes or the united power of youth. With a view to guiding their crops the rustic people or creat this festival in primitive age. So this way, it also mean the ceremony of the welcome of the Lakhimi (Goddesses of Wealth).

As a performing art mohoho festival is an unique, of all characteristics of the mohoho festival it established itself in the heart of human society, which is never before

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