Portrayal of Married and Unmarried Women in Bhojpuri Folksongs

Srijeet Mukherjee
University of Montana, srijeet.mukherjee@gmail.com
UNMARRIED WOMEN IN FOLKSONGS

- These songs show how inadequacy in young unmarried girls is socially assigned through folk songs.
- A young unmarried woman is not empowered and requires someone to take care of her.
- The recurring objectification of नातीयत्व (unmarriedness) or the boston is the reflections of male gaze prevalent in the rural Bhojpuri speaking society.

Marriage is an important milestone in a woman’s life. However, finding a groom is no easy task for the father and brother. One of the folk songs highlighting this aspect is translated as follows.

The father looks for a bridegroom in the east and west. And he looks for a bridegroom at Jhargram in Orissa.

'O Daughter, I looked for a bridegroom In all the corners of the four universes. But I do not find Sita Rama (a bidegroom) anywhere. I feel like drowning myself in a pond.'

A female child is:
- considered a burden on the family
- seen as a financial burden
- likened to a ‘sparrow’ who will leave her paternal home and fly away to her affinal home.

The ghumo (separation – when the girl leaves her parental home for her affinal home) is a difficult time for the parents as well as the girl. The girl says that she feels material possessors like her nose-ring, necklace, saree, hearth and cow, her relatives like her mother and brother; also the places that she used to frequent with her friends like her garden and the fields.

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- After the daughter’s marriage the mother becomes an active part of the daughter’s life.
- She provides moral, spiritual and economic support to the daughter.
- If the bride is unable to perform all the domestic chores in accordance to the expectations of her affinal home, then her mother is scolded by her mother-in-law and the sister-in-law.

A girl, aware of the expectations sings before her wedding:

'O Mother, how I have not learned merits and demerits and I do not even know cooking When my mother-in-law and husband’s sisters abuse you, what then shall I do?'

The relationship between the bride and her mother-in-law as well as her sister-in-law is strained. It is substantiated in the song below where the woman complains to her husband about them.

[O husband, your mother is such a hussey. She gives me only a few drops of oil.

O husband, your sister is such a hussey. She gives me limited flour to cook.]

The joint family is being patriarchal institution, the birth of a male child is celebrated while the birth of a girl child is seen as a catastrophe.

'Don’t give birth to a daughter for, if you do, you will have to give her away to someone, weep at her departure, and angrily curse Shiva for pain.'

'See, the mother-in-law and husband’s sisters who never looked at me and always sold me!

Today they speak to me because I have given birth to a son.'

Although borrowed words from English have found their way into the folk songs but the past and longings remain the same.

CONCLUSION

methods limitations:

- women in the rural Bhojpuri speaking parts are in subervience and are in need of liberation within their society.
- the male gaze shapes the unmarried women.
- after marriage, the female members of their affinal homes are often ill-treat women, giving birth to female child is frowned upon too
- migration of their husbands leaves an emotional and physical void
- at times the husbands take co-wives, sometimes they do not send money back home (see supplement).
- folk songs form a source of social perceptions are a means for the women to express themselves.

folk songs refers to the social perception and also cement the portrayal of women in these folk songs.

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REFERENCES


Q U I C K  S T A R T  ( c o n t . )