Meji And Bhelaghar: A Visual Study On Transmutative Concern Of Assamese Folk Beliefs

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Abstract: Culture is a way of living in a society, it shows mirror to human being how they have to behave in a particular society. In a particular society culture reflects their customs, beliefs, performance, rituals and festivals of that particular society. In Assam Bihu serves as an integral part of cultural assimilation. There are thousands of folk beliefs and rituals of Assamese cultural society are entwined with Bihu. These Bihu festivals are a clear reflection as an essence of Assamese cultural society. Like every folk culture of the world, Assamese folk culture is also intimate part of the state festival Bihu. There are three types of Bihu celebrated in Assam, they are like - Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu celebrated in spring season, Kati Bihu or Kongali Bihu celebrated in autumn season and the last one Magh Bihu or Bhugali Bihu celebrated in winter season after the harvesting. This research paper attempts to study the vermacular art of the festival 'Meji' and 'Bhelaghar' which is celebrated in the night before Magh Bihu which called 'Uruka Night' in Assamese society. On the day of Uruka all people comes together to prepare their big fest, they construct a temporary temple like structure which known as Meji and makeshift a hut like structure which called Bhelaghar. This Meji and Bhelaghar are profoundly related with the folk culture of Assamese society. However, as a things change with time, so the culture also changes its original forms to maintain the decorum of changing time. One of main reason of transformation of these traditional cultures is globalization. With globalization, the traditional beliefs of those folk cultures are adapting new technologies and transmutation into a visual culture. This study attempts to shed light on the importance features of the food feast of Magh bihu which is celebrate by following the traditional culture Meji and Bhelaghar.

Key words: Meji, Bhelaghar, Uruka, Magh, Bohag, Bihu, Bhugal,

INTRODUCTION:

As the mirror of cultural reflects the state festival Bihu is an integral part of Assamese society since the ancient time. In Assamese society the value of Bihu is very significant. Bihu celebrates Among the Assam, Bohag Bihu, Magh Bihu and Kati Bihu which have their own specific significance in society. All the three bihu has its own significant role and social norms. The essence of Magh Bihu has its different intoxication. There is a inseparable parts of Magh Bihu Are 'Meji' and 'Bhelaghar'. This inseparable part 'Meji' has come from Sanskrit word 'Medhya'. Like that 'Bhelaghar' word has come from 'Megh-Griha'. Although the word 'Meji' and 'Bhelaghar' are originated as Sanskrit but it cannot be deny that it's full of Aryan-Mongolian ritual. Which means 'Meji' and 'Bhelaghar' are full with various folk cultures from our ancestors or tribal people of Assam. It was notice that Magh Bihu's 'Meji' and 'Bhelaghar' have similarities with the house of primitive or tribal people which called 'Dekasang'. The young boy used to stay whole 'Uruka' night at Bhelaghar to guarded the Meji and enjoy the feast by eating dinner in that place which known as bhoj. In this case Birinchi Kumar Barua's statement is very significant because he state that there is little memory of Dekasang was left in Bhelaghar which was celebrated by the people of plane area in Assam. Like the tradition of spend the whole night to enjoy the feast at bhelaghar, is an important part for the people of Mira or Dekasang Tibetan tribe. Making of 'Meji' or 'bhelaghar' is associated with the various different tribes of Assam. According to different tribes of people 'Meji' and 'bhelaghar' holds different types of naming word.

THE AIMS AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY:

The main focus of this research paper is to explore the changing effects of the ritual of which was celebrated by the people of Assamese society in to making Meji or Bhelaghar and to introduce the effectiveness of these ritualistic believe to the public through this esteemed writing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY:

Cultural is an identity of a community. Culture reflects the individual identity of a community in front of a society. The different types of rule and regulations of a culture are very significant for the upbringing of community. A cultural rules and regulations of a community remains in a good condition if all the objects followed by everyone in a regulation at society. Meji and Bhelaghar are made by relating with Magh Bihu has very significant role in Assamese society. Because of changes of time or with the effect of globalization there are lots of changes were noticed in the process of celebration of this ritual. It seem as it going to lose its own self-values. Therefore it is become very important to create awareness of this significant ritual of Assamese culture through research or study on its historical factors. But there are not seems any sufficient discussions on the topic of the festival of Meji or Bhelaghar. Therefore it is important to evaluate or research the significant role of the making Meji or Bhelaghar to regenerate for the new generation.

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METHODOLOGY:
The present study is based on secondary data gathered from different sources like research book, articles etc. To fulfill the study a field study also done to collect various different information. The help of internet has been used to collect information when needed.

ANALYSIS OF THE TOPIC:
‘Meji’ and ‘Bhelaghar’ are important aspects of Magh Bihu. The gathering in of the harvesting food at the end of Aahghun-Puh Month indicates Magh Bihu is near and people start to become for prepare themselves for the celebrations of this food feast. They prepare for the bihu from the beginning of Pooh Month. From the beginning of the Pooh month all the young boys start to prepare the makeshift of Bhelaghar by using bamboo sticks, haystack, dry leaves of banana and thatch. The structure of meji is build as a temple like figure by wood and dry leaves. Though some Meji are building by hay, thatch, bamboo sticks and dry leaves but some Meji are seen as build by using only wood. These types of Meji are called ‘Wooden Meji’. Like the same way by using hay, dry banana leaves, thatch and bamboo sticks are used to made Bhelaghar in a paddy field or in an open area is a folk culture of the Assamese society since ancient time. All the villagers enjoying the food feast and used to stay whole inside the Bhelaghar. Next day in an early morning people take bath and come to worship Fire God by light the Bhelaghar down for sending away the winter season for entire year and take the hit of fire for a better and healthy life. There is also a folk belief of that day that fire goes to her mother’s home and the weather start to become hotter day by day. Moreover people collect the ashes and half burn wood sticks and bamboos to spread over in their field’s area and tie into the Betel Nut and Coconut tree to bring more fruit and for better production in future. From this we came to know that it cannot be denied that ‘Agni-Pooja’ also has its relation with ritual of making Meji and Bhelaghar. All the discussions mention in the above are the main common factors of Meji and Bhelaghar which is related with Magh Bihu or its tradition. But as culture is dynamic or multicultural domain it has no longer one-dimensional characters as result Meji and Bhelaghar are becoming transmitting features with the changing time. From the last four-five years it seems to have many changes in the process of making Meji and Bhelaghar. It has been noticed that from the past years people from various part of Assam used to make Bhelaghar by using various historical elements and scientific technology. They have adopted various themes to make decorative and significant Bhelaghar of their particular place. And it cannot be deny that this tendency of adapting various technologies effected from Durga Puja Mondop, as from earlier times the pendants of Durga Puja are created by using various historical, traditional or scientific technologies. And the Electronic Media are strongly activated in telecasting this programmed and it affects the public to develop their thinking processes. For the example, in 2017 there is a competition declared by the local satellite channel among the public about constructing Meji and Bhelaghar in a creative manner to increase the interest among the young generation too. Although now a days the television channels telecast live programs of music and songs performed by popular artists on the spot of Meji and Bhelaghar. Because of these reasons it can be noticed that there are many changes which took place with time in the celebration of Magh Bihu’s Meji and Bhelaghar and it can be said that media has important role in this changing trends. In the year 2017 there are different types of Bhelaghar can be seen in different parts of Assam, some sample those Bhelaghrs are as follows - Hauraghat from Karbi-Anglong district constructed Bhelaghar as a sample of Surgical Strike, Titanic structure was made at Jorhat, Eiffel Tower was made in Sirang district, Aeroplane structure was created by Goalpara district, At Raha they made the structure of Bhelaghar as a example of saving Rhino, Kumoi from Marigaon district created the Taj Mahal structure which became very popular at that time. Generally through this artistic creation the creativity of the people starts to reveal an artistic genius from a simple person and creates awareness among them and also gets attention of public. Though this became very significant for the people but it should also be noticed that is there any importance of these thematic performance in the construction of Meji or Bhelaghar in Assamese society to fulfill their traditional need. Because people should be aware about their own traditions there are not much necessary elements of using new technologies which will make people lost their own culture. So in this way there is a need of further studies to carry out the traditional value related to Magh Bihu’s Meji and Bhelaghar.

CONCLUSION:
Culture has it dynamic role which is like a river, and folk culture of Assam is closely related with agriculture and productivity. Magh Bihu also known as Bhugali bihu also closely related to agriculture because at the end of Aghun-Puh moth people used to gatherer their harvest and at the day of ‘domahi’ or ‘sankranti’ people of Assam celebrated the food festival in the makeshift huts called as Bhalgarh. But with the changing of generation this cultural feast seems lost their traditional values and updating themselves to compete with the modernization. Therefore we can relate culture with a floating river because like the floating river culture also changes it form as a result it can be noticed many traditional believes has been missing with time. Which means culture is fluid which used to change it is form with trends. But overflow of any changes which throw a culture in a dispensable manner may also affects on a ritualistic value of a tradition. And these changing trends can be noticed in structure of Meji and Bhelaghar made in Magh bihu at Assam. There is no need of any publicity or popularity among public because it has its own thematic values of folk customs which can be seen as entwined with the life of folk Assam. The original structure of Meji and Bhelaghar itself a thematic presentation. In a true sense the uses of themes like surgical strike, Aeroplane, Titanic are cannot be called as Bhalgarh. Because in no means Bhalgarh should look like these kind of creation. In the Assamese society Bhalgarh has its own significant role which cannot be removed for modernism. Bhalgarh is an integral part of Magh Bihu which cannot be removed. Bhalgarh are specifically made for celebrating the Magh bihu which also known as Bhugali bihu because by enjoying the food that was harvesting in that particular time and used to stay whole night inside it. Through this the social integration becomes stronger and it brings all the people together. But changing trends of this cultural festivals may cause harm for the future generation or it could lost its true value and cultural demands in society if people does not take it seriously. Media and private Satellite channels are also responsible to
decrease its true meaning in society by creating some less meaning competition among the people of different places. Only because of these media channels people start to construct Bhelaghar by using technology to make that popular among everyone. Because of these there can be seen ill-competition in villagers and they are in a hurry to prepare these Bhelaghar better than others. Therefore this Satellite channel should not interfere in this traditional culture and as a concern leave these rituals to celebrate as it is like to protect our national identity. Like that every gentleman with young generation should be concerned in this matter. Everyone should be alert to keep this traditional customs from going down to drain of modernization. Though it is natural to adopt the changes norms with time but there is no meaning to change so much which leads u to forget your own roots. Hence we should try to protect our root before time left.

REFERENCE: