

ICH PROJECT 1st REPORT

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Introduction of the project :- Palagayan of Sunderban BONOIBIR PALA is a myth.

Two performative practices here are Kathokata and Mongol kavya narration. Bonobibi is the savior goddess of the forest and has been seen as defending woman, compassionate mother and protector of the forest and its inhabitants. It is a Story about a woman, descendent of a Muslim family, the core of the narrative is about the little boy Duikhe who comes to the forest with a group of people for collecting wood and honey, but gets distracted by Dakshin Ray where eventually Bonobibi with her brother Shajangali saves them.

This oral tradition of musical heritage of PALAGAYAN, however, is vanishing fast as new modes of entertainment take over, and there has been hardly any attempt to preserve what was once sacred to its people. The idea is not only to document and record these songs and performance, It is about the life of Sunderban people. The main big part of Sunderban area exists in Bangladesh and little part in West Bengal, INDIA. Palagayan of Sunderban BONOIBIR exists in Bangladesh also. Also two styles are practicing some of groups.

The life of Sunderban Delta people mostly they went to fishing in the river or sea. Also collecting woods and Honey from the forest. And harvesting. Delta people know about maa bonobibi. So the community celebrates as puja and palagaan presentation.

Some of group does performance on the particular festival time as ritual. Bhai bhai natya gosthi are continuing there shows. Mainly remember one name of the person. And everyone knows him as master.

Individually group member carry forward there presentation of bonobibir pala.They does not have script they remember and develop themselves. So time to time so many thing s songs style and acting style are getting change.

There is no any government funding to these groups, those are completely self funded.

1. Objectives of the research, data creation or documentation of the project:-

Step 1) Palagayan of Sunderban BONOIBIR PALA is a regional art form. Language – Bengali. Extreme southern part of Bengal. The practitioners there second generations are not interested about to carry forward the particular form BONOIBIR PALA. Popular culture as Cinema, TV, Jatra all are heavy to the country side people. They do not have good road, hospital or School. So big amount of the people go to outside of this state for earning money. Some of people continuing presentation of BONOIBIR PALA. There is no data no list and not any information about these artists therefore in my project. I will focus on data collection of the artists, interviews and documentation of the performance as well. In Sunderban area Particularly Gosaba and Basanti Block . 24 parganas south, West Bengal. Sunderban. INDIA.

2. Implementation of the project:-

Step 2) Visit with the local people to collect basic information about different groups those who are working in Bonobibir pala. Will have to take basic permission for photography or Videography, Interviews etc.

Step 3) The main ritual of Bonobibi puja happened mid January to mid February of the year. Local people celebrate puja, prosad as sinni and performance of bonobibir pala. In this visit I will travel with my camera team. Will document there play. I will cover their interviews data and information about the artist collection.

Step 4) A small documentary film on the project of palagayan of sunderban. BONOIBIR PALA.

3. Time frame of the project: - The time frame for the project is almost two years. The community involves with some rituals and it is important to document as data. This form is performed in particular time of end January. Also mannat puja happened any time. I need to study at least and documenting those mater.

4. Specific areas of the respective state in which the art form is practiced-geographical, typographical and other related aspects that the project may cover:-



WEST BENGAL



Sundarban in Bangladesh



Mainly I-land people belief and make worship to maa bonobibi. SUNDERBAN area is part of West Bengal, India. District- South 24 parganas. Deltas are surrounded by dense Mangroves forests and many rivers and canals. Unprotected open international border between Bangladesh and India. And the tradition of bonobibi practicing both of those areas in Sunderbans are still alive. The people of this area, they survive there life as fishing in the river or see or honey collecting from the forest or harvesting. Also collecting wood from the forest. Sunderbans area now world heritage. Land of Royal Bengal Tiger.

Gosaba is located at 22.16°N 88.80°E it has an average elevation of 4 metres (13 feet). Gosaba is one of the main deltaic islands in the Sundarban region, bounded by the Matala and Zilli rivers/creeks. It is the last inhabited area before the deep forests start. Unfortunately 11 i-land still disconnected, surrounded by rivers.

Gosaba is an intermediate panchayat (local self-government) under South 24 Parganas district. Village panchayats under it are – Amtali, Bali I and II, Bipradaspur, Chhota Mollakhali, Gosaba, Kachukhali, Kumirmari, Lahiripur, Pathankhali, Radhanagar-Taranagar, Rangabelia, Satjelia and Sambhunagar.

Mainly this area of Gosaba, people are still continuing the tradition of bonobibir pala gaan. Sometime tiger come out from the forest and move to the village. Many fisher man's get killed by Tiger. I will get many information about their life and the pala gayan tradition of bonobibir pala.



Photos related to the project/art form

Photograph from PALAGAYAN OF SUNDERBAN, BONOIBIR PALA.















Conclusion of the project:- This project will give the information about the art form palagayan of Sunderban, BONOBIKIR PALA. It is very much popular in remote area of particular Sunderbans area, in west Bengal. And the artist who are working last more than 50 years. The palagayan style is very old tradition, time to time its get changes. But in bonobir palagayan still same style. So during this project I will try to document this work and make some data bank about artist and their organizational working process. Particular Basanti and Gosaba block.

I am very much thankful to Sangeet Natak Academy. It is my pleasure that give me this chance to work on this project by helping financially but budget had been given is comparatively very less for the work. But I will try my best to cover up all points and if possible committee should think about enhance the little time frame as end of April 2016.

Subject: Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Tradition of India.

Name of the State- WEST BENGAL. Sunderban deltas.

Introduction about Palagayan of Sunderban

Bengali Folk Literature includes different types of epic, poetry and drama, folktales, ballads, etc. and till now it exists in community, whether literate or not, in different form. The folklore of Sunderban is heavily influenced by different races which were present from centuries ago.

The main two performative practices in Sunderban are Kathakata and Mangle Kavya narration. The musical tradition of Sunderban in Bengal is lyric-based, with minimal instrumental accompaniment. The narratives of love, ritual, philosophy, present life etc gets mingled with folk music such as Boul, Bhatiyali, Kavigaan, Ghatugaan, Jhumur, Sarigaan, Monosha gaan , Gajir gaan and Manikpeer gaan, Jatragaan. All these traditions come from Palagayan style, which started form 15th centuries. Acting-dance-music all together makes the body of this form. Jatragan is the modern expression of palagayan which has spreaded it a long market. Palagayan in its original form still exists in deltas of Sunderbans. Bonobibi palagan is one of the most important forms. This form is also related to cast, class, gender, ethnicity, religion and inclusive incorporation of their various exprations

BONOBIBI

Sunderban is the largest mangrove delta of the world which has long history of exploitation and rebellion. The nature and civilization are at loggerheads in this pristine land. The main two performative practices here are Kathokata and Mangal kavya narration. Bonobibi is the savior goddess of the forest and been seen as Fighting woman, compassionate mother and protector of the forest and its inhabitants. Story about a woman descendent from a Muslim family, but she along with Dakshin Rai which is a representation of secular savior of the forest resources are praised by one and all. The core of the narrative is about the little boy Duikhe who comes to forest and along with his parents to collect honey but gets distracted by Dakshin Ray where eventually Bonobibi with her brother Shajangali saves them.

The woodcutters, "*Moule*" or the people who depend upon collecting and selling honey and wax from the forest, "*Boule/Bauliya*" or the people who are known as the disciples of Bonobibi and the fisherman community are directly or indirectly attached to this folk culture.

Every year, towards the end of the cold month of "Poush" or on the full moon night of the winter month "Magh", between mid January and mid February, the devotees of Bonobibi get together and offer their vows or "*Manat Puja*".

This oral tradition of musical heritage of PALAGAYAN, however, is vanishing fast as new modes of entertainment take over, and there has been hardly any attempt to preserve what was once sacred to its people. The idea is not only to document and record these songs and performance, It is about life of Sunderban people. Their ritual, faith and belief. And to make young actors understand, or rather feel the musical current that flows— unheard-- in our veins.

Documentation of the Project BONOBIBIR PALA

The Palagayan style of Sunderbans needs support. The new generation is not interested about palagaan. So it would be a great opportunity to visit the form along with the local people and take interviews, photographs, collecting information about their personal life, How they are surviving, . It is also important to inform them about how to apply for government support, group registration and do workshop on modern theatre techniques, arranging the show for local community etc. Geographically this area is surrounded by many rivers and the main mode of communication is to travel by boat. Maximum numbers of interior villages don't have electricity. So the community is more closely knit together. We don't have proper information about palagayan, so it would be a great work for documentation about these unrepresented people, forms and support them to continue the palagayan style.

Implementation of the Project

In the First section I did a research about geographical location and a general overview about the people who are associated with these particular forms. How to carry forward those oral traditions and performance styles. To get definitive data about how and where they perform. Individual interviews, photographs, Video documentation and their personal life of the performers to understanding, how they are surviving in their life. It will take about 6 months. I would love to make focus on Gosaba and Basanti block in 24 parganas (south), Sunderban area, West Bengal. Gosaba block has 9 islands, surrounded by many rivers, and Basanti has two islands, and many more adjoining land spaces.

So for the project I buy a professional DSLR Camera, A Sony voice recorder, an external hard drive for store all documents.

In the second face I make plan to visit the groups and see their performance. Continue to collect data as interviews from local people, there rituals, everyday life, education, habits. Also give them information about how to apply Government Grants. How to register a group. Information about modern theatre technique. Exchange theatre workshop and it will take 5 months.

At the third or final face I would like to work on all documents and write about the project, Make a presentation. To give it to Sangeet Natak Academy.

Time frame of the project

This project started from 10st Feb, 2015. To 10st Feb, 2016.

Specific areas where the art form is practice of the respective state

Brief History of Sunderban Delta Area

The history of the Sunderban area can be traced back to 200-300 AD. A ruin of a city build by Chand Sadagar has been found in the Baghmara Forest Block. During the Mughal period, the Mughal Kings leased the forests of the Sunderbans to nearby residents. Many criminals took refuge in the Sunderbans from the advancing armies of Emperor Akbar. Many have been known to be attacked by Tigers. Many of the buildings which wear built by them later fell to hands of Portuguese pirates, salt smugglers and dacoits in the 17th century. Evidence of the fact can be traced from the ruins at Netidhopani and other places scattered all over Sunderban. The legal status of the forests underwent a series of changes, including the distinction of being the first mangrove forest in the world to be brought under scientific management. The area was mapped first in Persian, by the Surveyor General as early as 1764 following soon after proprietary rights were confiscated from the Mughal Emperor Alamgir II by the British East India Company in 1757. As the British had no expertise or adaptation experience in mangrove forests the area remained ignored. Systematic management of this forest tract started in the 1860s after the establishment of a Forest Department in the Province of Bengal, in British India. The management was entirely designed to extract whatever treasures were available, but labor and lower management mostly were staffed by local.

The first Forest Management Division to have jurisdiction over the Sunderban was established in 1869. In 1875 a large portion of the mangrove forests was declared as reserved forests in 1875-76 under the Forest Act, 1865 (Act VIII of 1865). The first management plan was written of the period 1893-98.

In 1911, it had been described as a tract of waste country which had never been surveyed, nor had the census been extended to it. It then stretched for about 165 miles (266 km) from the mouth of the Hugli to the mouth of the Meghna River and was bordered inland by the three settled districts of the 24 parganas, Khulna and Bakergang. The total area (including water) was estimated at 6,526 square miles. It was a water-logged jungle, where tigers and other wild beasts abounded. For my project I am working in Basanti and Gosaba block. Dist- 24 parganas (South), West Bengal. INDIA.

Basanti block

Basanti is an administrative division in Canning subdivision of South 24 Parganas district in the Indian state of West Bengal. Basanti police station serves this block. Headquarters of this block is at Sonakhali. Basanti is located at [22°11'21"N 88°40'14"E](#). One of the main deltaic islands in the Sunderbans region, bounded by the Matla and Vidyadhari rivers/creeks. Sonakhali, opposite Basanti, is a popular starting point for Sundarbans steamer/launch trips. Sonakhali is 100 km from Kolkata. Basanti Road is linked to Eastern Metropolitan Bypass near Science City in Kolkata. Sundarbans bypass project since 2002. It will reduce the distance between Kolkata and Basanti by 25 km. The 12-km bypass will connect Dhuri and Jibantala. Sundarbans, being full of creeks and rivers, needs more bridges, especially on the Matla.

Area: 286 km²

Gram panchayat of Basanti block/panchayat samiti are: Amjhara, Basanti, Bharatgarh, Charavidya, Chunakhali, Jharkhali, Jyotishpur, Kanthalberia, Masjidbati, Nafarganj, Phulmalancha, Ramchandrakhali and Uttar Mokam Baria.

Gosaba Block

Sir Daniel Mackinnon Hamilton, a Scotsman had travelled to Kolkata to work for MacKinnon & McKenzie, a company with which he had family connections. The company sold tickets for the P&O shipping line, then one of the largest in the world. Hamilton became head of the company and master of an immense fortune, one of the richest men in British India. Another man may have taken his money and gone away but Hamilton set his eyes on the deltaic islands in south Bengal. In 1903, he bought 40 square kilometers (10,000 acres) of the tide country from the government – it included such islands as Gosaba, Rangabelia, and Satjelia. His efforts at developing these places brought in other people into these islands. They were people who dared not only to struggle against nature but also the predators that lived there – tigers, crocodiles, sharks and lizards. They killed so many people that Hamilton gave rewards to people who killed them.

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Gosaba is located at [22.16°N 88.80°E](#) it has an average elevation of 4 metres (13 feet). Gosaba is one of the main deltaic islands in the Sundarban region, bounded by the Matala and Zilli rivers/ creeks. It is the last inhabited area before the deep forests start. Kolkata to Sonakhali (opposite Basanti) is 100 kilometers (62 mi); it takes about three hours by road. Sonakhali to Gosaba is about 1½ hours by powered boat. Sundarbans are home to some 270 man-eating tigers. Sixteen of them have entered the villages of Gosaba between 2001 and 2004.

Conclusion

Through this project I able to come closer with my won cultural tradition. This modern time effected very much in Sunderban area people. They are so much far from education, most of them getting associated with harm full practis, early marriage, Child lebour, the main focus to earn money to get everything. They can come closure with their art form, they can aware or change themselves. And few people are still continuing there folk or traditional practis. They need support. I want to give then information about group registration, Fund applies, modern theatre techniques. Also researchers can find the person or the groups. Also Support from ministry of Culture as training and attend the festival for performance. So BONOIBIR PALA will be more open for everyone.

My main focus that the Palagayan style of Sunderban, BONOIBIR, is not that much well known as form. It has to get the priority and the way to safe guarding the art form and artist. So it would be great opportunity for everyone to get to know about Palagayan of Sunderban BONOIBIR Pala.

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