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SACRIFICE, AND SONG: RECONSTRUCTING GENDER, EMOTION, AND REGIONAL MEMORY IN DOGRI BALLADS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role that oral traditions, also known as baar or kaark, which are Dogri ballads, play in the formation of people's perceptions of regional heroes and leaders who have made significant contributions to the formation of regional history. Since the beginning of time, Jammu and the districts that surround it have been at the center of the Dogra area, with its influence extending to some regions in Pakistan, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab. To this day, the majority of Dogri ballads that have been published have taken on a social and socio-religious aspect. The purpose of these Dogri ballads was to draw attention to a societal problem, to stir public attention, to deify the victim, and to promote oneself as a hero or superhero. Vladimir Prop, a well-known folklorist, is of the opinion that the role of oral traditions as a carrier of culture and self-expression helps to preserve the identity of the community, as well as its beliefs and history. When it comes to the composition of heroic ballads that are full of sadness, the role of composers is still quite significant. This is because they are responsible for generating the sense that the protagonist of the ballad possesses supernatural power. Therefore, in order to accomplish such a goal, the composer skillfully weaves the story and chooses his theme, which is rich in emotional content and incorporates elements of fiction. The singers of baar or kaark are referred to as jogi or dres, and they are known to go around from one location to another singing songs of this genre.

Ballads that commemorate the heroes who have contributed to the socio-historic identity of the region are the subject of this study, which makes an attempt to chronicle them.

KEYWORDS: Dogri Songs, Dogra Heroes, Folklore, Jammu, Regional Culture, And Oral Traditions.

INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in the study of regional literature and folklore, also known as oral traditions, have resulted in a significant surge of interest in the study of Dogri ballads, also known as bars and karks. This phenomenon appears to be prompted by the fact that these ballads are regarded as being significant in the construction of social conditions and in the comprehension of historical and semi-historical events. quotations from Chand and Narain "Unlike the heroic ballads of English, the characteristic of Dogri *baraan* (ballads) in not fabled but men of historic repute" (36)

A socially accepted recorded statement or a hearsay account of a testimony of an event or events that occurred in the past is what Jan Vansina defines as an oral tradition. Oral traditions in India not only serve as a reflection of the past, but they also serve as a witness to the life that is happening today.

Now, the custom of singing Dogri ballads on every occasion by Jogi and Dres has either completely vanished or been relegated to radio or regional Doordarshan programs of Jammu and Kashmir. In the past, Jogi and Dres would sing these ballads on every occasion. As a consequence of this, a significant number of Dogri ballads have been lost because they were passed down from one generation to the next. However, only a small number of academics have recorded these ballads from composers and singers, which serves as the foundation for this study.

In accordance with the definition provided by the Encyclopedia Britannica, ballads are typically characterized as the form of a tale or a regional folk song. Its origins can be traced back to the Middle Ages in Europe. Although such songs are significantly different depending on the location, society, and the period. The ballads were the folk songs that were performed by common people in well-known tunes. These songs were passed down verbally from one generation to the next without being written down or distributed in printed form. Dr. Satyendra expresses his opinion in Lok Sahitya Vigyan that ballads, which are musical compositions that tell the story of historical events or that, over the course of time, have gained historical status, are considered to be historical. Bars and karks are the two types of ballads that are composed in the Jammu-Dogra area. Bar is the corrupt version of bir, which signifies bold and gallant in Dogri. The etymological origin of these words is unknown; nonetheless, bar is the corrupt form of bir. According to Narain and Chand, these songs deal with and place an emphasis

on the themes of bravery and adventures; as a result, they are referred to as *baraan*, which literally translates to "ballads of heroism." This is due to the fact that bars induce the emotion of chivalry and romanticism, which surpasses all other sentiments that a guy can experience. As a result, bars are frequently more stimulating and therapeutic than Karaks.

Ballads that have been handed down from one generation to the next need to be categorized in order to fulfill the requirements of literary study. Both the authorship and the origin of the work are lost. In Dogri, traditional ballads are extremely popular, although literary songs do not exist in the traditional language. Songs that are based on social and semi-religious songs are referred to as socio-religious ballads. This category of ballads is one of the most common types of ballads. The primary purpose of these ballads is to catharize and arouse the emotions of society in order to generate a societal reaction to the cruel occurrences that had impacted the protagonist, whether they were male or female, of the bar. A significant amount of musical and physical effort is made by the composer of the bars in order to deify the victim. By weaving the story in a masterful manner and selecting a theme that is emotionally rich and contains a variety of aspects of fiction, these bards attempt to win over the audience and win their favor. Composers have complete freedom to combine connected events with their literary and musical brilliance in order to emphasize the impact of the story. The events that the story is woven around may be straightforward and relatively frequent, but the composers take full advantage of this freedom. There is a distinct group of individuals known as Bhats, Charans, Mirasi, bards, dres, and Jogis who are responsible for the composition and transmission of the oral heritage. It was the responsibility of these classes to act as agencies that gathered information, produced ballads, and circulated them throughout society.

Within the social history of the Dogra groups in Jammu, the Rajputs, also known as the Kshatriyas, have been known to engage in one of the most pitiful yet heroic forms of Sati practice. Both Professor S.D.S. Charak and Professor Anita Billawaria have recorded in their respective lectures and interviews that

"Such a heinous practice was practiced with honor by the ladies, as the Dogra men, particularly the Rajputs, would sacrifice themselves while fighting against the Islamic invasions to protect their land and its people. Frequently, there are no men left in the family to protect the honor of their widows and to ensure that they will continue to live. Sati was

committed voluntarily by the women of the community in order to protect themselves from being subjected to physical and sexual abuse at the hands of the invading armies of Turks, Ghoris, Ghaznis, Sultans, and Mughals, as well as their generals.”

Formation of *Satotis* or *Dahris*

Sati was performed by the spouses of heroic soldiers, chiefs, warriors, and rulers, and shrines to these individuals were erected. These memorials are known as Sati-samdhis or Dahris. In addition to the Rajputs of Jammu, women from other communities also participated in the Sati ritual. According to the songs, the grounds for committing Sati in this region range from the torturous treatment of one's mother-in-law to the voluntary departure for a celestial place after having fulfilled all of one's obligations to one's family. As a result, the presence of Sati in the Jammu region is not necessarily caused by the death of the spouse. There were also instances in which ballads were written in order to attract more attention to the women who practiced Sati. There are a few of these songs that have been gathered together in order to identify the individuals who gave their lives in order to create a magnificent history of a great region that was known for producing warriors. There is evidence in the shape of numerous ballads that Sati was typically performed by a quick outburst of abrupt emotions. Not only did women perform Sati for their husbands, but they also did so for their brothers and themselves.

Dogri Ballads

The story of Sati of Bua Sajawanti, whose husband, Datta Biddoo, was a member of the Jheer community and belonged to a lower caste, is told in one of the ballads. Their spouse was murdered by Khajuria Brahmans from the village of Jansba. It is not the caste system that was responsible for the massacre; rather, it was the thirst for the wealth that Biddoo has gained in distant cities that led to the crime. During the time that he was traveling back to his hometown, Biddoo stayed at the residence of a Khajuria Brahman. However, the Khajuria Brahman was unable to resist the temptation of possessing Biddoo and ended up killing him in a remote location. Sajawanti was taken aback by the violent episode, and she proceeded to execute Sati. However, the lyric is full of emotionally charged decisions that are full of tragedy, and it does not validate Sati as a societal habit that was prevalent during that time period.

Additionally, the ballad of Shilawanti from Sitharaaley village tells the account of a woman who

underwent Sati for the sake of her fiancée. This story is filled with heartfelt feelings. Shilawanti was attacked by a snake while she was along with her companions enjoying a swim in the river. She shouted out for assistance, and a young man named Patola, who was from the village of Arrads, stepped forward to assist her. As the youngster struggled to save Shilawanti, he was bitten by a snake and ultimately succumbed to the venom it contained. Her kulguru informed her that she had been engaged to Patola when she was a youngster. This information was revealed to her when she came home. Upon hearing this, she made the decision to go ahead and commit Sati on the Patola pyre. According to Surender Gadgal's account in *Marh Block de Shaheed*, the scene was emotionally tense since a little girl named Shilawanti had committed suicide by committing herself to the flames of a stranger's pyre. Additionally, the lyric portrays a sense of loyalty and fidelity towards the marriage ceremony of betrothal, which serves as a solid basis for the institution of marriage. The kulguru was the one who wrote the emotionally charged melody that detailed the entire scenario that took place during Sati of Bua Shilawanti. Similar emotionally intense circumstances are depicted in yet another ballad. Some enemies of Lado's family assassinated the bridegroom outside of the village on the day of Dati Lado's wedding to Balla, a brahmin boy from Prabha village. This caused Dati Lado to be severely shaken, and in a surge of human emotions, she did Sati on the pyre of Balla. Dati Lado was engaged to Balla. The individuals who erected the memorial for both of them were overcome with emotion as a result of the occurrence. After that, this tale spread like wildfire until a group of jogis wove it into a wonderful bar that was brimming with sorrow.

In light of this, it has been determined that ballads that contain elements of Sati are not only rich in their emotional depth and appeal to both the common masses and the elite, but they also do not casually contain nobler sentiments of devotion and commitment. These bars, which contain aspects of Sati and are used on a regular basis, are charged with emotions that are elevated above what is considered normal.

In addition, the ballad of Dati Tripta, who was the wife of a Brahmin minister of Raja Rai Puar of the Ambaran principality in Akhnoor, Jammu, is replete with powerful human feelings. During the minister's visit to his in-laws, several courtiers positioned Raja's ears against him while he was away. This is the event that is described in the narrative. Upon his return, he discovered that Raja do not have a favorable opinion

on him. During the moment that he was going to leave for the court to settle the dispute that had arisen between him and the raja, he begged his wife to Sati if Raja were to murder him. On the other hand, the minister was able to dispel Raja's suspicions successfully. However, at that very moment, a few horses began to move, and the commotion that ensued caused chaos and confusion. The minister's wife saw this state of affairs as a sign that her husband had been murdered in the Darbar. As a consequence, she set fire to the home and threw herself into the flames. This resulted in the royal house and the common people developing feelings of reverence and pity for her, and they began to worship her as Dati Tripta. Similar to the previous example, the song of Dati Naagro also tells the account of her own life, in which she is worshipped in order to appease and protect the royal family from the curse that she has placed upon them. During the time that Raja Prithbi Pal Bhadwal was responsible for the murder of Naagro's husband, she made the decision to conduct Sati on his funeral pyre. However, no one came forward to carry out the ritual because the Raja had prohibited Sati Pradha in his kingdom. In her rage, she uttered a curse upon Raja Prithbi Pal Bhadwal of Bhaddu, and with the assistance of a family purohit belonging to the Gaud caste, she carried out Sati. The Raja then proceeded to raise her samadhi, which is revered by both the royal family and the common people.

The song of Dati Naagro provides evidence that women people followed Sati pradha against the societal norms in the surge of emotions, despite the fact that the Raja and society had banned it. This was done in spite of the fact that it was prohibited. As a result, the practice of Sati was not a religious tradition but rather a choice made by independent will. The performance of Sati by Data Ranpat's wife after a period of twelve years subsequent to his passing, while his mother performed Sati on his funeral pyre. After a period of time that exceeds ten years, there is no possibility of an emotional situation occurring. Ranpat was a revered pandit and a renowned scholar who had fallen for the cause of justice during the course of his life. During the process of resolving the conflict between two Charak families, she shown a brave fervor for justice and a noble character by avoiding all of the temptations and threats that were made by anti-social elements. However, in the end, a tyrant by the name of Bangi was responsible for his death. Ranpat's mother's heart was profoundly moved to conduct Sati with her son because of the sacrifice of Ranpat's life for the cause of social service, peace, and justice. Bua

Bachnu, who is married to the Raja of Kathua and hails from the Chamial Rajput family of Jammu, is the subject of this poem. The body of her second son, who had been murdered by the boy's maternal uncle out of material greed, was buried alongside her after she had committed suicide. The carelessness of her sister-in-law resulted in the death of her older son, who was also held captive in the stable. The passing of both of her sons was a devastating experience for her, and as a result, she made the decision to take her own life. Additionally, there are a few bars that tell the story of moms performing Sati for their sons. For example, there is a ballad that tells the story of a mother telling the story of a boy named Pohto practicing Sati. An individual by the name of Lekho was injured in a fight regarding cattle grazing on the fields of neighbors, and he was found lying on the street. The only person who stepped forward to offer assistance was a winnower who was a Dum by caste. He offered water to the man who was struggling to breathe.

*Punn Kamaaye.beyant dumey
Muhain-ch paani pai.*

Despite the fact that she had made the decision to execute Sati on the pyre of her son, Lekha's mother had first made a plea to the general public to permit the lower caste lad to carry out all of her final rites and rituals, and she had also designated him as her successor.

*Eh gall sunayo beriyon
Es dumay di maanta diyoy kraye
Pind paani mera eh kraye
Megee eh sanmukh laig kraye*

Muthi, which is located in Jammu, is the place where the samadhis of Data Lekho, his mother, and the Dum boy were brought up. All three of them are venerated there.

There is another lyric that emphasizes the act of Sati by the mother for her son, Rangu, who was a Jatt by caste. The farmers were sick and weary of pleading with Rangu to stop his cattle from destroying their crops in their fields, and so, in order to provide the final solution to the situation, a group of farmers decided to kill him. In a similar manner, another ballad written by Dati Charago tells the narrative of Sati from the perspective of a mother for her son. Once upon a time, a snake bit a little lad named Radhey when he was in the jungle grazing his cattle. As they made their way to the shrine of Naag Devta in Tokal village, his mother brought him there. The boy, however, could not be saved, and her mother performed Sati with his dead body instead of attempting to save him. The people who lived in that region elevated her to the status of a deity and built a

temple dedicated to Dati Charago. Both the worship of Naag Devta and the celebration of Naag Panchmi were discontinued. This ballad is quite well-known in the Hiranagar tehsil, which is located in the Kathua region of Jammu. Similarly, the narrative of her Sati with her son is told in the ballad of Bua Ratno, which is located in the Kathua area.

In addition, the sweet feeling of brotherly love has been brought up in the design of ballads in which the sister who performs Sati is the protagonist. This particular occurrence in the society is recounted in the song of Datta Balla. On the day of his wedding, Balla was killed when he was on his way to marry his sister's sister-in-law, who was known as Nanand after his sister. In the event that Balla's sister was subjected to teasing by her mother-in-law over her parents. The heartbroken woman decided to end her life by jumping into the pond. Pathos is enhanced in the recounting of this tragic incident and this act of suicide by the song, which chronicles both of these events.

The story of Bawa Jitto recounts the performance of Sati by his daughter, who was only eight years old at the time, on her father's funeral pyre. Despite the best attempts of her guardians to discourage her, she jumped in flames since she was motherless and so emotionally devoted to her father. Additionally, it is mentioned in the tradition of Bawa Jitto that his cows

and dog, whom he had nurtured with love and compassion, also jump into fire while executing the act of Sati.

There is a collection of Sati ballads in which some women go to the fire with their husbands, while others go to the pyre with their kids, daughters, and brothers.

In his essay titled "Duggar ke Kul Devta," which was published in *Hamara Sahitya*, Goswami describes a ballad in which a misra lady performs Sati with the body of her daughter, who was a minor at the time of her death and drowned in the river as a result of the carelessness of a faqir who was praying on the banks of a river.

CONCLUSION

It has been agreed upon by a significant number of social historians and social scientists that the elements of Sati have been handled deftly with an appeal in order to make them popular and to bring forth the story of what is unsaid. Sati elements were responsible for the violent fatalities that occurred under unknown circumstances. These deaths assumed the form of suicide. One approach to portray Sati as an act of bravery and valor is through the telling of such ballads, which can be accomplished through the combination of powerful words and melody.

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