

The Role of Women in the Bráhui Society of Balochistan

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the origin of Bráhui Tribe in Balochistan and to examine the role and status of women in Bráhui Society. When we take a look towards contributions of preservation of literature and poetry we see great contribution of women in it. The Bráhui society has given great importance to women and symbolized her as honor. The role of women in every society has great importance and could not be denied because they have given the developed base to every society. As compared to other the Bráhui women played pivotal role for strengthening of literature. They have transferred literary knowledge to a nation to another nation. Every part of literature i.e folk tales, poetry, culture and customs got progressed due to contribution of women.

Key words: Brahui Society, Brahui Women, Culture, Customs, Literature, Preservation,

Introduction

Ethnically, Balochistan is a plural society. The pluralist character of society in Balochistan draws upon the existence of different ethno-linguistic communities mainly, Baloch, the Brahui-Baloch, Pashtun and partly sindhi, Persian and siraiki communities. All these have their different distinct

linguistic historic, culture identities. Within the larger ethno-regional communities, the sub-regional groups have protected and projected their separate identities. The ancient inhabitant of the Central Balochistan known as Bráhuís belonging ancient pseudo-dravidian stock have their separate language, culture and identity. Other groups have their own separate identity. (Sabir.2010.Pp18)

The fanciful derivation from ba-roh-i, 'hill-man', may be dismissed at once, despite the fact that the people about the Helmand are sometimes called,

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by distinction it might seemed, na-rohi or 'men of the plain'; the explanation that they are the old inhabitants of biroea is only valuable as embodying their own cherished tradition that they come from Aleppo, while the more plausible suggestion that they are the descendants of an eponymous hero Braho or Ibrahim, though ingenious, is not wholly convincing. (Bray. 2014:2)

In the very ancient times or during the stone-age people lived in caves and used tools and weapons of stones. They had no sense of wearing dress, ate, raw-food by killing wild animal and had no care and binding for human relationship and dignity. During the wars and conflict they plundered and looked others and their property. When men took forward steps in consciousness and developed, then the formation of society. Customs and manners which are evolved with time. The product of society and customs in fact mirror image of human life. In society people started living together and started sharing things and realized that living alone is not the solutions to problems. The differentiation between men and women was recognized and women was considered an important part of the society. The parameters of customs and rites were set in society but we do not know exactly when they started. However, these customs still exist and embellish our society.

The English culture is concerned with social-heritage of the people refers to either mental and deep thought or material and non-material feelings. We can include with it religion and beliefs, knowledge and skills, morality society's customs and ways and other pattern of life. Here, we can include literature, poverty and music as the things of art. If we take a glance around us will find that culture is affected by high rise buildings and stone carvings, literature and poetry and music, paintings and other conscious thoughts and practices. (Gichki.2016:47)

Culture is the name of whole which includes region and belief, knowledge and morality, dealing in society, art and skills, customs and its usage conduct, low and pass time. All these acquired habits make a man as a member of society. These learned tatters bind the contradictory person and group in a large unity is created in them, due to which the man can distinguish between savage and humanistic behavior. In culture the things ingrained are: life's different kinds of entertainment, refinement of skills, knowledge and art improving shapeless things, removing narrow mindedness and prejudices, coverage and self-respect, sacrifice, taste for beauty, civilized behavior, good habits, mild in conversation, respect for its tradition and history and developing it further (Jalibi-2008 p/42).

For promoting the development of literature of any language it is necessary to know the mental strict true and general natural surroundings of

the people. In this connection tradition custom and manners are of prime important. In these absence of these condition, the real facts cannot be analyzed and discussed. We can have ascertained the fact about the language or a literature on the basis of customs and tradition.

As the language and treasure of literature of any region, tribe and nationality could be researched, in a similar vein we can trace out how the literature cooped up in a particular area and what ate its dimension. For researching and knowing about the Brahui literature, the following areas of society about Brahui tribes need to be looked into:

1. How is their condition of living and in what type of place their brought up has been?
2. What kind of social life are they leading and how was their society in the past?
3. After the religion of Islam, what were the customs and ways of Brahui tribes and how they led their life? How are their aesthetic feelings and how they express their emotions? All these have to be deciphered.

Whatever type may be the society; the women play an important role in it. Whether it is a developed society or developing, women's role is authentic. In Brahui society, women are the embodiment of customs and ways since ancient times and without women, we cannot go ahead with the folk-literature. Although in old times written literature was not prevalent in this part of the world, but women had a part who converted the customs, folktales and poetry through the word of mouth. For example,

Chanting an elegy (Mudah) on contentious betrothal and marriage indicates that in war women has completed her role for poetry. (Baranzai.2001. P.27)

Women is that section of the society whose role is pivotal for the development and advancement of the society. A child's early school is home where a boy or girl gets his/her upbringing. Women are also the custodians of customs and civilization of society. For example, Fortune- telling has been practiced for centuries and women have preserved it. (ibid.P.28)

In Brahui society, children and women are granted high status and respect to women is the part of Brahui values system. Women can play the role of sister, mother or daughter and her respect in the society is certain. In a tribal society where many conflicts cannot be resolved by male numbers, women are sent to appease and control the situation. Such women are decorated with a stole (shal) as a token to honor her (shahwani, 1997, P, 47-48)

Status of women in pre-Islamic history

The condition of women was not better as it seems now it was the dark age for women when Arab were treating their women as animal. According to syed Amer ali the pre-islamic arabs carried their aversion to women so far as to destroy, by burying alive, many of their female children. This fearful custom, which was most prevalent among the tribes of koreish and kindah, was denounced in burning terms by Mohammad and was prohibited under sever penalties, along with the inhuman practices which they, in common with other nations of antiquity, observed of sacrificing children to their gods. (Ali.1987 Pp.186)

Thus, the women have got their status when prophet peace be upon him came and realized them that women is also part of society and we should give them their rights and adopt them as a social human being.

The period from 1900 to 2000 century can be called as the golden period of Brahui literature as during this period it evolved through an evolutionary process. Today, Brahui literature is recognized at international level. Besides men, female writers have also come forward and have contributed a great deal in literature. But female was disfavored and were looked upon with disdain. Therefor they are why conduct keep pace with male writers. That is why, the Brahui literature seems empty with women literature to a great extent (Bangulzai 2014/111).

Status of women in Balochistan

Jan Muhammad has elaborated his views about status of women in Baloch Society in his book The Baloch Culture Heritage, he says,

The Baloch considered a woman a full partner in all social endeavors and accorded her a position of trust and favor. She was not only to do the household work but also took part in manly occupations of grooming horses, grazing flocks and assisting in cultivation. Apart from the routine work she made a very different variety of embroidery. Her shirts were embroidered with a hand-work of very beautiful and artistic nature. Embroidery was also done on man's shirts and other articles. Cotton yarn was also spun by the women for use by men in clothes. (Mahmad.1982/74)

The status of women in Brahui or Baloch society has been important and has given fully support to take a part in every walk of life. Now they have been emerged in political, economic and social system of the society. They have given new trends to the society for betterment and flourish it with her own will thus they could not be denied.

The role of women in folk poetry

Folk poetry

The public orientated and unpublished old poetry of a language is called as folk song (or rural poetry).

Folk poetry passes from month to month for generation, however, many of them have been new written. Every literature since its inception begins with poetry and with the evolutionary process literature in prose is born. When these folk poems emerged, no specific time and era can be established. Who wrote these poems is also without any close? We can see the colour and ambience of old times very much in these poems and the environment of modern times is also depicted (Bangulzai- 2014 P/76).

Like the poetry of other language there is a treasure of Bráhui folk poetry for happy occasions. The excepting and delightful poetry of Bráhui language could be divided into four parts:

Firstly, on the sixth day after the birth of a child, festivities are arranged where girls and children sing songs. Secondly, on the rite of circumcision of the boy, women and girls of the village get together and sing on the beats of duffs. Thirdly, when there is betrothal those songs are sung in chorus in praise of the family and relatives of the bride and groom. Fourthly, before the wedding, ceremonies of secret Hannah” and “open Hannah” are held with the recital of poetry (Shahwan 199- P/34-35).

“*Hálo* is another form of Bráhui folk poetry which is sung at wedding ceremonies mostly by women in praise of couples. Afzal Mengal in his book “Chamkali” has reflected on it very well:

The songs of ‘Halo’ are sung at the time of betrothal with Duff. The names of the relatives of bride and bride groom are recited and eulogized. Besides jewelry are mentioned and bridegroom gets up, height, bravery, courage and wisdom are also praised. Young also dance and old are recalled and remembered ‘Halo’ songs are exciting and increase the warmth and inerriment of girls and women guests. ‘Halo’ is an enchanting medium of poetry and the words ‘Halo’, Hula, halo, is sung at beginning of the couplet and not at the end of it. When the second line of the verse is complete, after that, Halo, Halo can be repeated again.

Noor Ahmed Pirkani have defined folk literature in his book *Brahui Adab*,

بلی جان داسا میل تے نادیر ماروئے
بلی ہیوس گڑک ء نادیر پکاروئے

In this stanza the poet states with grief that who will take care of the sheep of the grandmother and remember her bag (a Traditional bag of the old women who will roll the woolen theds.

Further he states another folk poetry,

بہشتی آ بلی جان بندہ لاچارے
ہو غیبو نو اسہ خاک خدا زوراک ارے

In this stanza the poet states the helplessness of the human beings and says that oh! Heavenly grandmother, man is helpless. Therefore, people may non-moun the death of her, due to reason that God is Omnipotent. (pirkani.2011.Pp.328)

Conclusion

Women's every activity and role has a distinct charm and beauty. In the role of a mother she sacrifices for her children, as a sister she is caring, as a wife she shares with her husband, all kinds of troubles and tribulations. Her role is universe ally accepted and all religions and societies have respect for her role. The matriarchal system provides us ample practical proof regarding the importance of women. Protection of customs and manners and passing them to the coming generations is because of women and she still invokes these customs and ways during marriages and betrothals. Women are also the protector of the folk-poetry which is passed through the word of mouth for centuries. When nomads travel from place to place, they still sing fold-songs like: lullaby (loli for children), Zeheri in remembrance when you are for away from relations and friends, mouda (a type of lamentation) is sung by women on the death of a close relative, Halo is sung by women in praise of married couple and their relations. Women have truly kept alive the treasure of folk

songs, customs and traditions for centuries and this will go ahead for another century to come.

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