

Role of Young Women in the Promotion of Borgeet: A Devotional Song of Assam

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Abstract:

The multicultural development and the trend of fusion songs have had a great impact on diminishing the popularity of classical music - the devotional songs. It has been criticized that the new young generation of ethnic groups has adored the culture of the Western world and developed a feeling of hatred towards the ethnic traditions and culture. The globalized world has created a new form of imperialism which is often called cultural imperialism. Since Borgeets are called the spiritual ambrosia- a path to purification of mind and the means of devotion to God of Assamese people of India an attempt has been made to study the responses of young generation women towards preservation and promotion of the heritage song of Assam. For this, a case study method followed by an interview schedule with some structured questions have been adopted.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, fusion, classical music, devotional song, Borgeet, young generation, women, preservation, promotion, heritage song, Assam, Assamese.

1. Introduction:

Borgeets are the incredible contribution of Mahapurusa Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhabdeva to the life of the Assamese people. Borgeets are the devotional songs composed during the late 15th and 16th centuries by these two Mahapurusa. Originally these songs were named "Geets" by Sankardeva and Madhabdeva but the disciples of these two avatary purusa renamed these Geets as Borgeets means the songs that cannot be compared with the other songs of the state. The greatness and the purity that flow to the mind after listening and singing these songs is incomparable and considering this point too these songs are termed as Borgeet. Borgeets are very rich in both lyrics and music. It includes all the Pancha dhatus and 36 ragas. The Borgeets are written in Brojawali language which again played the role of the bridge between Assamese language and the language of the other parts of great Bharata. There is no bar on performing borgeets. People irrespective of caste and gender, ethnicity, economic status, socio-political status, religion, etc can perform Borgeets with the specified Rules, Taal, and Raag for which the great saint Sri Sankardeva and Madhavdeva were successful enough to unite the ethnic groups of Assam and create the civilized- sanskritized Assam. Namgharas and the Satras are the main social and religious institutions through which the Borgeets are practiced and taught to sing. Of late scholars have been trying to get recognition of Borgeet as the classical Song of India considering its period of origin, meaning, Taal, Raaga, etc.

1:2: Objective of the study:

The study is based on the following objectives:

1. To study the awareness of young generation women on Borgeet.

2. To study the role of young generation women in promoting Borgeets of Assam.

1:3: Significance of the Study:

Although the Borgeets, Satriya Dance, Bhaona, and various forms of Naam form the religious and cultural identity of Assam most of the new generation Assamese people are not conscious of it. Without a distinctive cultural identity, no community can demand the right to self-determination or nationality. There is a doubt that if the present state of order is to persist one day our new generation will lose their cultural identity in this globalized world. In this context study on the Role of Young Women in the Promotion of Borgeet- a Devotional Song of Assam assumes importance.

1:4: Methodology:

The present study is mainly based on the primary data collected from the field with the help of an interview schedule and questionnaire. The questions are both structured and dichotomous. Structured questions are asked mainly to know the general status of the young generation women. To know the level of awareness, and role they play, the dichotomous questions are prepared based on the theoretical analysis of the relevant objectives.

For the study, a purposive sampling method has been followed. For the interview women of a definite age group have been selected and the respondents have been interviewed personally. For the analysis of the degree of awareness as well as the role they played tables have been prepared with the first-hand information collected through the interview schedule and questionnaire.

1:5: Sources of Data:

The present study data from both primary and secondary sources have been collected. Primary data have been collected through interviews and the articles, and research papers published in books, journals, newspapers, and relevant websites have been used as the secondary sources of data.

1:6: Location of the Study:

The study entitled Role of Young Women in the Promotion of Borgeet- a Devotional Song of Assam has been conducted at Devi Charan Barua Girls' College, Jorhat, Assam. For the interview, 150 students from the 18 to 21 years age group have been selected randomly.

1:7: Research Questions:

To study the above-stated objectives the following questions have been considered:

1. What is the level of awareness of young generation women on Borgeet?
2. What is the role of young generation women in promoting Borgeet?

1:8: Review of Existing Literature:

Baruah, S. in a study on **A Comparative Study of Borgeet of Assam with Indian Classical Music** (Baruah S, 2024) observes that Borgeets contain the features of classical music of India. The ancient Guru Sishya tradition is also found in Borgeets. Without the help of Guru, a student of Borgeet cannot learn the taal, raag, laya and maana of the Borgeets. Borgeets are the valuable treasure of North East India. The Sangeet Natak Academy has been initiating the steps for preserving and promoting Borgeets of Assam.

In **Genesis and Historical Influence of Borgeet in Medieval Assam**, Borah, H. (2024), observes that Borgeets reflect the rich musical heritage of Assam. Through Borgeets Sankardeva and Madhavdeva not only brought a new era of Bhakti movement. "The splendor of themes, the lyrical wordings, rhythmic cycles, melodies, and intricate ornaments raise these compositions above other poetic works by the saints. Derived from specific ragas, these songs beautifully encapsulate the very kernel of Neo-Vaishnavite and Vedantic philosophy." (Borah, H. (2024).

Tamuli, P. (2022), in his dissertation on Borgeet and Hindustani Classical Music: An Analytical Study observes that though Borgeets possess all the features of classical music of India get little attention from the national and global stakeholders. For this, the efforts to make Borgeet approachable to common people by incorporating more flexible norms for singing is the need of the hour. Organization seminars, and workshops on singing of Borgeets to build awareness are essential.

2: Discussion and Conclusion:

2.1: Awareness of Young Women on Borgeet:

In this study an attempt has been made to study the awareness of young women on the great devotional song of Assam i.e Borgeet. To know the level of awareness of the respondents on it a few basic questions have been asked. The following table shows the level of awareness of the respondents:

Table: 1 Awareness of Young Women on Borgeet

S.L.No	Questions on	Aware %	Unaware %	No Comment
1	About the writer of Borgeet	51	49	
2	Language of Borgeet	59	41	
3	Whether gets national recognition as classical music	28	31	41

Source: Field Study, 2022

2.2: Role of Young Women in Promoting Borgeet:

According to the Mahapurusa Sankardeva Sravana (listening) and the Kirtana(singing) are the two ways through which a devotee of God can attain salvation. So, Sravana and Kirtana have been taken as the two important roles that can be played by a person to promote and preserve the Mahapurusia Sanskriti(culture). With this simple definition a few questions have been asked to know the role played by the young generation in this regard. Table 2 shows the role of the young generation women in promotion of Borgeet.

Table 2 Role of Young Women on Promotion of Borgeet

S.No	Questions	Yes			No
1	Have you ever listened to Borgeet?	62%			38%
2	How often you listen to Borgeet?	Regularly 0 %	Sometimes 43%	Occasionally 18%	39%
3	Do you sing Borgeet?	18%			82%
4	Will you encourage your future generation to promote Borgeet?	100%			

Source: Field Study, 2022

2.3: Findings:

From the study it has been observed that

1. The study shows that only 51 percent of respondents know about the writer of Borgeet.
2. Among the 150 respondents, 59 percent of young women know the language of the Borgeet on which the Mahapurusa Sankardeva and Madhabdeva wrote the Borgeets.
3. Only 31 percent of the respondents have current knowledge of the situation of the Borgeet.

4. The study reveals that 43 percent of Young Women seldom listen to Borgeet whereas 18 percent reported that they hear Borgeet only on the day of religious festivals or occasions. On the other hand, 39 percent of young women reported that they are not used to hearing Borgeet by no means.
5. Among the hundred and fifty (150) respondents' thirty-eight percent of them (38%) reported that they have not ever listened to Borgeet.
6. None of the respondents hear Borgeet regularly at home.
7. Shockingly 82 percent of young generation women reported that they never tried to sing Borgeet and have not gone through any workshop on Borgeet.
8. After the interview and discussions almost all the respondents showed their willingness to preserve this cultural heritage and efflux it through the generations.

Conclusion: During the study, it was observed that the students from the Assamese medium schools had studied lessons on Borgeet for which they have a basic knowledge of Borgeet. The young women who have studied outside Assam reported that they have not ever listened to Borgeet even though their parents are the indigenous Axomiya. Since Borgeets are considered the spirit of Assamese people and an integral part of the rich Assamese heritage, every Assamese should be dedicated to the preservation and promotion of them. The tendency to keep the Borgeets in the Bhakti Marg with certain rigid rules prescribed to follow at the time of singing the song may be the cause of the declining popularity. Religious institutions, educational institutions, NGOs, and civil societies may organize frequent hands-on training to encourage the young generation to sing Borgeet. Competitions on National and regional levels may be fruitful to attract the masses to sing, hear, and feel the spiritual and therapeutic power of the Borgeets which may help anyone to heal their sufferings. Apart from the lessons on cultural studies and performing arts, lessons on Borgeet should be included in the NCERT and SCERT courses so that the students can be familiarised with the rich cultural heritage of India in general and the Northeast in particular.

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