

## Socio-Cultural Imageries from a Farmers Field – A genre of Oral Folk lore from District Budgam, Jammu and Kashmir

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### SUMMARY

Summer season is the onset of sowing of major crops like paddy, summer vegetables and many temperate fruits in Kashmir. An important activity is cultivation of paddy which is a community affair, undertaken by a group of men and women together. It has socio-cultural implications which are evident from the way it is executed. The current article deals with content analysis the genre of oral folk lore, particularly, songs sung during paddy transplantation.

### INTRODUCTION

The valley of Kashmir is marked by two crop seasons. While the humble farmer is busy throughout the year, summer is the time when he actually makes more hay than the idiom. He begins in spring, when land is prepared for sowing for forthcoming season. Maize and rice are major summer crops of the valley along with a number of popular vegetables like tomato, chili, brinjal, bottle gourd, cucumber etc. Similarly, our valley is also home to large number of temperate fruits, whose harvesting begins from May through October. This is the fall season or autumn or Harud as it is known colloquially, which marks the harvest of summer crops – which is partly sold and partly saved for sustenance. Preparations for sowing of winter crops begin afresh in this season. Major winter crops include wheat, oats, brown sarson among other vegetables like coriander, garlic, carrot, spinach, onion, peas etc. Folklore has been defined as the traditional beliefs, customs and stories of a community, passed through generations by word of mouth. Folklore is a body of culture shared by a particular group. It encompasses the tradition common to that culture, subculture or group. This also includes oral tradition like tales, legends, proverbs and jokes. (Wikipedia). Folk songs are traditional heritage of people who give free expression to their sentiments (2). They are not an expression of sophisticated minds. It reflects joys and sorrows, problems and worries of common people (3) The current article is a narrative of some songs sung in a typical summer season in paddy fields of Budgam which is also synonymous with other districts in most cases. It is a candid attempt to read the wisdom, hidden between lines, woven into songs, sung by wise men and women of the land. While there are innumerable such folklore some have been translated below to provide a semblance of culture, tradition and practice of Kashmir.

#### *Song of Paddy Transplantation (Vernacular)*

*Boiy Amai Berri Berri Nadas  
Thaejkaadas kar Jal Jal  
Mouji Ayem Pushum Karas  
Adhi Kadas Lejim Thal  
Maeil Wonnum Dohus Raatas  
Thaejkaadas Kar Jal Jal*

*Beni Ronum Saesri Kadas  
Thaejkaadas Kar Jal Jal  
Gham Osum Thal Gaes Poshin  
Thal Tchandaan Loosum Doh  
Vesiy Wonum Pushraav Zaatas  
Thaejkaadas Kar Jal Jal*

*Poph Drayam Pannai Abas*

#### *Song of Paddy Transplantation (Translated)*

*Brother beckoned me over ridges and bunds  
So lets make haste for paddy transplantation  
Mother has arrived to make-up for the job:  
Her help sufficed for the task.  
Father calls over day and night  
So lets make haste for paddy transplantation*

*My sister cooked for the entire clan  
Make haste for paddy transplantation  
Fearful I was, that the saplings should be enough  
From dusk to dawn I ran this errand-  
A friend suggest/recommended to surrender to God  
So lets make haste for paddy transplantation*

*My aunt set off for arranging a water channel*

*Haran kis Nagas Peth  
Maam Rooshit Draamaiy Wapas  
Thaejkaadas Kar Jal Jal*

*Ote Mondnum Papan Panai  
Beri Peth Bihith Mothnak Gyav  
Tchothchi Painum Daambur Taavas (hearth)  
Thajji Kadas kar Jal Jal*

*Maas Ayem, Dopnum Koori  
Gaash Wandhai, Wondmai Zuv  
Vyes Ayam Raathai Khwabas  
Thajji Kadas kar Jal Jal*

*Thaaji Kad chum Sagar Naziras  
Ang AeshNav Amit Chim  
Sai Laezim Chim din Wazwanas*

*On the famous Spring of Haran  
And Behold, there goes the miffed Uncle of ours!  
So lets Make haste for paddy transplantation*

*There sat my father, kneading dough  
Sitting by the ridges, he smeared butter all over  
Made bread for all on a smoldering hearth  
So lets Make haste for paddy transplantation/sowing*

*My aunt arrived and sent for me  
She gave me blessings and wished me well  
A friend I dreamt of in last nights sleep  
She too warned me to make haste*

*The entire clan has gathered for sowing  
Indeed, an advance for Waazwan I shall pay!*

The above song is a popular song sung at the time of paddy transplantation. Paddy sowing marks an important event in agricultural season, both economically as well as socially. Traditionally, in Kashmir, paddy transplantation is a community affair. Usually, kith and kin gather to enable the task of paddy transplantation. There is singing of traditional folk songs as well. It is believed that singing song at the times of transplantation of paddy stimulates root hair which helps them to establish well. It also enlivens workers who are at the job.

The task of paddy transplantation is done on massive scale with various arrangements to be done, like arranging a water channel to ensure that paddy is well irrigated. The song mentions almost all the relatives, hinting towards strong socio-cultural support from relatives and friends. There is food for all those who partake in the task as insinuated in the song. There is mention of 'kneading flour' and making 'bread for all'. There is mention of Waazwan which is the traditional feast which is served when gathering is large and special. It is a time for festivity – bonhomie. This sowing has ceremonial significance. The pre-germinated seed of rice or left over after raising of paddy nurseries, are dry roasted on an iron girdle. This is then processed by milling and the resultant rice is cleaned by winnowing. This par-boiled rice is then mixed with either sugar, walnuts kernels and corn. This is called Bael Tomul in Kashmiri. It is shared with everybody during this time at home and field which also spreads the word that so and so in the village has started sowing of paddy in fields.

***Song of Paddy Transplantation  
(Vernacular)***

*Shubaan kya che thajjinaari lolo  
Thajjinari bei thajjiwari lolo*

*Thaejkadas amit saeri semit  
Rash, Bash pat pat Sarri Lolo*

*Wakht tchalina, madtas aies te gasav  
Ini Vaaji Yemi Aathwaari Lolo*

*Hokhi Yin Thaejnarri Zon Thaivo  
Sagnaawo Ais Waari Waari Lolo*

*Shubaan kya che thajjinaari lolo  
Thajjinari bei thajjiwari lolo*

***Song of Paddy Transplantation  
(Translation)***

*What a delightful sight are these paddy beds  
Paddy beds and paddy rows!*

*For sowing rice, we all have gathered  
Rashid, Bashir followed by Sarr*

*Before time fleets, lets rush to render help  
Before the Sunday following please*

*Make sure the paddy doesn't dry up  
Ensure you water each one of these!*

*What a delightful sight are these paddy beds  
Paddy beds and paddy rows!*

Similarly, song singing at time of agricultural operations, like weeding or hoeing or harvesting and storing produce, is also witnessed. Besides enlivening, it is also a means of light-hearted banter and bonhomie among the workers who put long hours into these arduous tasks on mammoth scale. Farmers and peasants hold, that singing, makes it less cumbersome.

*Song of Weeding  
(Vernacular)*

*Naeind Karni Nyaer Kashkar Lolo  
Nov Bahar Aav Watanich Yar Lolo*

*Wal Shehrav Zaminas Khon te Beirr  
Athrot Kari Parwardigar Lolo*

*Kaem Kaar Yeli Aeis Yikwatt Karaw  
Daie Dee Panain Taar Lolo*

*Naeind Karni Nyaer Kashkar Lolo  
Nov Bahar Aav Watanich Yar Lolo*

*Song of Weeding  
(Translated)*

*Come brethren lets go weeding  
New bloom has sprung the lanes of nation*

*Lets set right the ridges and water source  
God shall see us through this task*

*Together we execute this endeavor  
And God shall indeed see us through*

*Come brethren lets go weeding  
New bloom has sprung the lanes of nation*

## CONCLUSION

The sowing of paddy is undoubtedly a community affair which is done manually by farmers and peasants together. Help is rendered by kith and kin for whom food and tea is arranged as part of hospitality. There is ceremonial singing of songs and making of Bael Tomul which is shared with all. This a time of festivity and is anticipatory of good times to follow after harvest. There is reflection of strong socio-cultural support among the community members as well. Practices like these must be documented in order to preserve traditional practices that tend to wither and fade with time as they are fast being replaced by mechanization.

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