Mukha Shilpa (Mask Making) is the Artefact form of Assam

Manjit Kumar Shah
Research Scholar
Glocal University, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract:
The north-eastern state of Assam is very rich in terms of diverse arts. Revolutionary great men in Assamese literature, culture, society and spiritual life The contribution of Shrimant Shankardev is unforgettable. His great works made this Strengthened the feeling of social and cultural unity in the area. He wrote Ramayana and translated Shrimad Bhagwat into Brajvali language. Vaishnavism in the North-East for propagation, Shankardev started Bargeet, Kirtan, Ankiya Naat (Bhaona) etc. Composed. There are two main forms of dance here – Bihu dance and Satriya dance. Bihu dance The identity of Assam has become. All children and elders participate in this. Bihu dance is performed on the occasion of the festival. Bihu song also on this occasion are sung. The central theme of Bihu songs is love. Apart from this, in Assam many folk dances are prevalent. There are many art forms here in the form of songs, dance, drama etc. are present. Shankardev gave birth to many art forms, including dramatic art and mask art was prominent. Folk plays played an important role in the background of the Neovaishnav movement and its propagation. Folk theaters performed by women are also popular in Assam. Women express their feelings through these folk dramas. Assam also has a rich tradition of folk songs. Bihu is the representative folklore in this region. Through which the common people's passion, hope, Aspirations, joys and troubles take shape. The folk song 'Haidang' of Sonowal Kachari tribe is sung only by men. Various body movements and dance along with songs are the specialty of Haidang. Rabha community of Assam is very rich in terms of folk songs. The folk songs of Miri or Mising tribe are called 'Oi Neetom'. The life and culture of the people of this community has developed in the valley of Brahmaputra and Subansiri rivers. The communities here have a rich heritage of folklore. The folk tales here are full of supernatural incidents. Assam has been considered the center of Tantra-Mantra, witchcraft and spirituality. Therefore, Tantra-Mantras are included in folk tales. Apart from this, idioms and proverbs are also available in abundance.

Keywords: Sattra, mukha, tradition, heritage, culture, Mask, Majuli, Samuguri

Introduction:
The north-eastern state of Assam is very rich in terms of diverse arts. It is also known for its rich cultural heritage. The contribution of the revolutionary great man Shrimant Sankardev in Assamese literature, culture, society and spiritual life is noteworthy. He strengthened the feeling of social and cultural unity in the province of Assam. He gave birth to many art forms in the background of the Neovaishnav movement in Assam and for its propagation. Among all these art forms, theater was prominent. Along with plays, he invented many
musical instruments. He also composed bargeets and kirtans to propagate Vaishnav religion. Srimanta Sankardev promoted Sattra culture for the creation of many folk arts. These Satras are still found at different places in Assam. The great man himself established the first Satra in his birthplace Bardova. After him, his disciple tradition flourished the Satra tradition. Satras are not only centers of religious activities, they are also centers of various folk arts. The disciples who study in the Satras are not only proficient in religious activities, they are also proficient in various arts. During the Satras, plays are performed, songs and kirtans are sung. The famous Satriya dance is also practiced. In each Satra a special kind of handicrafts like training in handloom, mask and boat making is also given. Thus, the festival seasons are the core of the folk arts of Assam. Mask art has a unique tradition among the folk arts of Assam. The tradition of masks has been going on since the time of Srimanta Sankardev. In Assam, masks are an essential part of Akia Natya (Bhaona), Raas Utsav and other cultural extravaganzas. Samaguri Satra here is the center of rich heritage of masks. The mask is a beautiful example of human imagination and creativity. The communicability of folk theaters increases through masks.

Satra tradition and mask art', the 'Satra' tradition of Assam has been described in detail. How did the Satras originate? How did they develop? All these points have been considered in detail. In this sequence, a research analysis has been presented regarding some major Satras. While talking about Brahma, Purusha, Kala and Nika texts, the Satra administration and its structure has been highlighted. The tradition of singing Bargeet has been discussed in Namghar and its importance. In Assamese society, Naamghars have played an important role as carriers of religious and spiritual consciousness. Socio-cultural festivals are also organized in these Naamghars. Many performing arts are staged in Naamghars. Bargeets played an important role in giving Assamese music a special and dignified place.

Analyzing the tradition of singing Bargeet, the ragas used in it have been described in detail. The Satras for the origin of mask art have been explored. Why did the use of masks start? What is the role of this art in society? An attempt has been made to answer all these questions in detail. The importance of this art, invented by the great man Shrimant Shankardev, has been analyzed and its importance has been underlined by analyzing the impact it has had on Assamese folk life. Various Dimensions of Mask Art', the various dimensions of the mask art of Assam have been highlighted. Mask art is an excellent form of artistic specialty of Assam. Like the various folk art forms of Assam, the history of mask art is also linked to the Neovaishnava movement of the great man Srimanta Sankardev. These contexts have been discussed in here. The interconnectedness of masks with Akia, the folk religious theater form of Assam, has been inaugurated. Throwing light on the subject matter of all the plays written by Srimanta Shankardev, the writing has been done on the use of masks in them. The relationship between mask art and Bhaona is outlined. The performance method of Kiya plays is called Bhaona. Masks and Bhaona have a close relationship. The answers to the questions why and how the artiste uses these masks during the performance of Bhaona have been given in detail in this Satra. The manufacturing method of masks is discussed. In Assam, masks are mainly made in Samaguri Satra (Majuli). This gives information about how old is the tradition of mask making within Samaguri Satra and who are the main artists of this Satra. The types of masks made within the Samaguri Satras and the materials used in their making have
been discussed here. Mask Art and Bharat Bodh', the relationship between mask art and folk art in the all-India context has been analyzed. The interrelationships of Indian handicraft art and mask art are underlined. Man has been using masks since long. While researching it, its presence in Indian culture has been evaluated. In ancient times, people of primitive society have been using masks during festive occasions or in customs. The interconnectedness of masks with human artistic skills or creativity is also considered. In the all-India context, the maximum use of masks is seen in the theatrical tradition. The popularity of theater or performing arts is linked to the use of masks. Masks are used for all non-human characters. The character's tendencies can be easily predicted through masks. Thus, by discussing all these aspects here, the importance of the presence of masks in Indian culture has been made clear.

Methods and Materials:
1. Historical Research and Survey Research Design will be considered for the study.
2. Target area of study are major mask making industries established in Majuli and artisans/ craftsmen specialized in the art of mask making working in majuli and secondary data collection from museums for gathering information about masks.
3. Sampling design of this study follows a combination of convenience sampling and stratified sampling.
4. Target population for the study will be people engaged in the occupation of mask making and dealing its business in Majuli.
5. Instruments used for data collection method will be questionnaire, interview and field survey.
   a) Analytical method: Analytical method means a technique used qualitatively or quantitatively to determine the composition of a sample or a microbial contamination of a sample. Use of the Analytical Method is critical to solving the sustainability problem because it appears that current processes are inadequate. They are intuitive, simple, and based on how activists approach everyday problems. It's paper's all topics will be analysis with analytical method.
   b) Questionnaire Method: A Questionnaire will be made consisting of the series of question arrange in some definite order related with the topic which will be presented to the mask mekar of Majuli district to gather the data. For this research, a questionnaire will be made with both open questions and questionnaire in the field.
   c) Field Study Method: Field research is defined as a qualitative method of data collection that aims to observe, interact and understand people while they are in a natural environment.
   In the same way, social scientists conducting field research may conduct observe people or interviews from a distance to understand how they behave in a social environment and how they react to situations around them. The method of original analysis of this paper is Field Study.

Results and discussion:
Mask making are traditional art that have an innovative connection with our culture. Masks have been an integral part of people's lives since time immemorial that we observe people in different forms in their lives. Indian culture has a rich tradition of folk art. Assam province of India is very rich in terms of folk art. The contribution of great saint Shrimanta Sankardev in the literary, social, cultural and religious life of Assam
is worth remembering. Shankardev is one of those personalities of Indian cultural thinking tradition who made the whole of India culturally rich. He influenced Assamese society at every level. In the context of Nawa Vaishnav movement, he invented many folk art and culture. He is not only united the Assamese society through various arts but also the nawa Vaishnava religion was introduced within him. Under his leadership, Assamese society made great progress in all the fields of religion, culture, spirituality and devotion. Along with being a social reformer, Shrimant Shankar Dev was a high-class philosopher, actor, musician, dancer, moral worker, painter, sculpture and mask maker. Among the many forms applied by them, the masks are the best. Mask making has its own unique introduction into the folk art tradition of Assam. These masks are used in the performance of his plays.

To fulfill his purpose, he used masks in plays keeping in mind the common people and public behavior. He wanted to connect more and more people with the spiritual movement through audio-visual medium, in which he was successful. He first used the mask in his Chinha Yatra bhaona. Majuli island in Assam is the center of rich cultural tradition of masks. It is also called the capital of Assam. Majuli was the center religion of Srimant Mahapurush Shankar Dev. He established most of satra and naamghar in Majuli. This is the reason why we get a wonderful introduction of mask making culture in Majuli. Samuguri satra is famous for masks. The masks made in Majuli have their own significance. These masks, associated with Vaishnav tradition, attract a lot of foreign tourists besides Indians due to the use of local indigenous materials and the influence of local culture. In Bhaona or raas, masks are used to play the role of creatures like animals etc. These masks play a vital role in the folk cultures of Assam. People of Assam even today display their devotional feelings through Bhaona, Raas etc. These folk culture have an important role in keeping the people connected with the feeling of national unity and integrity. In Bhaona and Raas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta and other religious themes are displayed through dance and routine style. The emotional link between the common disciple among the people of Assam is the folk art and culture here.

Review of Literature:

The north-eastern state of Assam is very rich in terms of various art. It is also known for its rich cultural heritage. The provision of the great man Shrimant Sankat Dev who was a change in the spiritual life of Assamese literature and culture society. He strengthened the feeling of socio-cultural unity in the province of Assam. In Assam, he gave birth to many art forms for the background of Nawa Vaishnav movement and its propagation. Among all these art forms, drama and mask making were prominent. Along with drama, bhaona and raas, he invented many musical instruments. Shrimad Shankardev introduced Satras for the creation of many folk art and culture. These satras are still found at different places in Assam. He himself established the first satra in his birthplace Bordwa. Bhaona are performed among the satras. In each satras training is given in a particular type of craft like handicraft, mask making art etc. Thus, the folk art of Assam has been presented at festival season. Thus, Satras has been the basic medium of folk arts of Assam to spread the spirituality and devotion. Mask making is a distinctive tradition in the folk arts of Assam. The tradition of mask making had started since the time of Srimanta Sankardev. In Assam, the presence of mask is essentially seen in Ankiya
Naat, Bhaona, Raas and other cultural folk festivals. The Satra named Samuguri is the center of a rich heritage of masks. The mask is a beautiful example of man's imagination and creativity. The overall beauty of folk plays increases through masks. To convey the central idea of the play effectively, the actors and actress have to wear masks of different mythological characters. In this way masks presents beyond human nature and create their own dramatic meaning. Here in the thesis of “Mukha Shilpa (mask making) is the Artefact form of Assam” the Satra tradition of Assam will be described in detail. How did the satras came into existence and what were the Satras for their origin? How they developed, all these points will be discussed in detail. In this sequence, a complete analysis of research on some important areas will be presented. The Satra for the origin of the mask will be analyzed. What is the role of these masks in understanding why the use of masks started? An attempt will be made to answer all these questions in detail.

The importance of this art, invented by the great man Srimanta Sankardev, will be underlined by analyzing its impact on the life of the Assamese people. The mask is an excellent form of artistic typical of art in Assam. Like various folk arts of Assam, the history of mask art too is linked with the Vaishnav movement of the great man Shrimant Shankar Dev. Throwing light on the subject matter of all the plays written by Shankardev, writing work will be done on the use of masks in them. The relationship between mask art and emotion will be highlighted. There is a close relationship between mask and bhaona and raas. Why and how do artists use these masks while displaying bhaona and raas? These questions will be answered in detail. The manufacturing of masks in Assam is mainly based in Majuli. How old is the tradition of mask making in Samuguri and who are the major artists in these processes I will try to give information on all these subjects. In this Samaguri Satra, which types of masks made and the materials used in their making will be discussed. Here the relationship between Indian handicraft art and the mask will be highlighted. By researching how long humans have been using masks, its presence in Assamese culture has been evaluated. From ancient times, people of primitive society use masks during festivals or in customs. The interrelationship of masks with human artistic skills and creativity will also be discussed. In the all-India context, the maximum use of masks is seen in Bhaona and Raas. The popularity of Bhaona and Raas or performing arts is linked to the use of principals. Through the using of mask that the character's tendencies can be easily predicted. Similarly, by discussing all the aspects here, the importance of the presence of mask in Indian culture will be made clear.

Limitation of the study:
1. To study the influence of Mask making.
2. To know whether the designing style used in Majuli are still decorated on Samuguri Satra.
3. To survey about the demand of Samuguri Satra Mask in global and domestic markets
4. To evaluate the level of employment provided by mask industries in Majuli.
5. To study the environmental impacts caused by masks industries in Majuli.

Conclusion:
Folk arts are traditional arts whose roots are integrally associated with our culture. Its various forms keep appearing before us from time to time through our ethos. Folk art has been an integral part of folk life since
time immemorial. We can see its various forms in folk life. Indian culture has a rich tradition of folk arts. Assam state of India is very rich in terms of folk arts. The contribution of great man Shrimant Sankardev in the literary, social, cultural and religious life of Assam is unforgettable. Shankardev is one of those personalities of Indian cultural thinking tradition who made the whole of India culturally rich. He influenced Assamese society at every level. In the context of Neovaishnav movement, he invented many folk arts. He described art as a medium to attain God. He not only united the Assamese society through various arts but also propagated the seeds of Neovaishnavism within them. For the propagation of Neovaishnava religion and longevity of folk arts, he laid emphasis on the establishment of Satras and Namghars. Sattra and Namghar became the carriers of Neovaishnav Bhakti movement and many folk arts. He not only connected various sections of the Assam province with the Vaishnav Bhakti tradition but also spread the Vaishnav spirit made it a part of his practical life. He refined and refined the society of his time. Under his leadership, the Assamese society made excellent progress in all these fields: religion, language, culture, literature. Along with being a social reformer, Shrimant Shankardev was a high-class philosopher, actor, musician, Nritya Visharad (dancer), playwright, painter, skilled in sculpture, architecture, Mukha Shilpa (art of mask making) etc. He knew that art is a very effective medium for preserving and propagating Indian culture. Therefore, Shankardev created a unique style of propagating religion through art. He composed Akiya plays based on various incidents of epic and mythological texts like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapuran etc. As a result of the Neovaishnav movement originated by him, the Satriya dance system and various folk art forms developed. Among the many forms of art invented by him, mask art is the best. Mask art has its own special meaning in the folk art tradition of Assam. These masks are used in the performances of his plays. To fulfill his objective, he used masks in his plays keeping in mind the common people and public behaviour. He wanted to connect more and more people with the Navvaishnav Bhakti movement through audio-visual medium, in which he was successful. He first used masks in his play Chinchayatra. Majuli Island of Assam is the center of rich cultural heritage of masks. It is also called the cultural capital of Assam. Majuli was the center of Srimanta Sankardev’s Navavaishnavism religion. He established most of his satras and namgharas in Majuli itself. This is the reason why we see a wonderful coordination of art and culture in Majuli. The Samaguri region here is famous for the making of masks. The masks made in Majuli have their own significance. These masks related to Vaishnav tradition attract not only Indians but also foreign tourists due to the use of local indigenous material and the influence of local culture. In Aukya Natya (Bhaona), masks are used to play the roles of non-human beings like animals, birds etc. These masks play a vital role in the folk dramas of Assam. People of Assam even today display their devotional spirit through Ankiya theater style (Bhaona), Raas etc., and live in those feelings. These folk plays play an important role in keeping the people connected with the feeling of national unity and integrity. Akia plays (Bhaona) and Raas depict Ramayana, Mahabharata, Srimad Bhagwat and other religious themes through dance and drama style. The emotional link of mutual harmony among the people of Assam is its folk art and culture.
References:
Kakati, B. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. Gauhati University.
Kakati, B. The Mother Goddess Kamakhya. Publication Board Assam.