

What is Literature? The Brahui Folktales (legends), proverbs and Riddles have also a literary merit.

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ABSTRACT:-

The research article studies the key concepts of literature and folktales. Literature gives us insights and wisdom and is passed from one generation to the next. Brahui Language is an ancient language and is comprise of different folktales, proverbs and riddles. The articles narrates some key Brahui folktales, riddles, proverbs and poetry. The secondary sources have been used for the conduct of the study.

Keywords: Folktales, Literature, , Puzzles, Riddles,

It is very difficult to give a precise definition of literature as the greatest critics of the world have discussed this matter and their conclusions have been contradictory (Haq, P-3). However, it is said that literature is the reflection of life or it is the communication of the writer's experience of life. But the relations between literature and life is not simple as the reality and literature both play their role in literature (Haq, p 38-5). Broadly speaking, literature discusses society (life) and its values (beliefs and moral principles) and things of spirit (such as beauty, love, meaning – non material things). Faulkner in his Noble Prize acceptance speech in 1950 (Man will Prevail) emphasized on our fundamental values like courage, honor, hope, pride, compassion and sacrifice. He stressed that these values should not change and it is the duty of a poet and writer to write about such things (Carlsen et al, p-65) T.S Eliot in his poem 'The Hollow Man' depicts the man of mid-twenties devoid of spiritual values and they can circumvent their hollowness if they revive their spiritual vision with imagination or spirit as does a poet or a saint.

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We are hollow men

We are stuffed men

Leaning together

Head-piece filled with straw. Alas! (Carlsen, p 614)

The Russian writer Solzhnitsy has commented on literature many times and here is an excerpt from his Noble Prize Speech in 1970:

Literature is the memory of people, it transmits from one generation to the next the irrefutable experiences of men... (Payne, P-339)

Rewards of Literature:-

Besides discussing society, culture, history, etc a few rewards of literature are pleasure, wisdom and insight. Therefore one of the main rewards of literature is that it provides us entertainment and gives us pleasure. It also stimulates our thought and we can look at things more wisely. According to Marjori Boulton, fiction strengthens our imaginative insights and makes us wiser and better (Boulton, p-9).

Brahui Folktales, Proverbs and Riddles:-

Literature has a chain of connections from the past to the present. The folktales have reached to us through the words of mouth from generation to generation i.e folktales have an oral tradition. Many researchers are of the opinion that the Greek myths were the beginning of folktales and legends. However, the Sumerian Epic of 'Gilgamesh' was composed about 1400 B.S. (P-9). It is said that Sumerian legends influenced the literature of every area in one way or the other and Brahui legends were influenced by it, too.

Folktales are about the values and beliefs and leaving the things to fate and nature is the characteristic of Brahui literature. 'God is the sustainer' is such a story where the beliefs and values of Brahui people are implied. It is the story of a poor man who decides that he will not go to the next job the next day and informs his children about it, as the God is the provider. In the morning when he doesn't go to work, his children are enervated with hunger and cry. There is nothing to eat at home. He goes out of home and on the way something sticks to his foot. He digs the place and finds gold. He leaves that treasure, reaches home and tells the whole story about treasure to his wife. The wife insists that the husband should go and bring that gold – while the

husband says that the ‘Sustainer is God’. During this altercation, the thieves the clue, run and take the treasure. When they open the container they find wasps. The thieves in anger put them in the home of the man and run for their life. When the family sees the container full of gold, they really become happy and say, “Sustainer is God”.

The quintessential of Brahui folktales is that there are many details in it such as customs, fight between good and evil, supernatural and superhuman beings, powerful Kings with his splendor, Viziers, cunning councilors, etc. The story teller keeps in mind the basic idea but adds changes and exaggerates the details and achievements. The digression makes the story more interesting and entertaining and also makes us wise against the manipulators, cheaters, greedy people, etc.

‘Gul Khandan’ is a Brahui folktale where a just, honest and veteran king (who has two wives) on his death bed, advises his three sons that after his death a ‘Dev’ will com from the sky and the sons have to protect his grave for three nights. When the king dies, the youngest son acts upon his word of advice and defends the grave from ‘Dev’ and occupies the fast moving horse of the ‘Dev’.

Here the story changes and another Kingdom is narrated where the King had three daughters. The two were the real daughters of the king and the other was a fairy of fairy-land. There were certain conditions for their marriage and the youngest prince with the help of ‘Dev’s’ horse and change of dress wins the fairy ‘Gul Khandan’ for marriage and his other two brothers are married to Kings two daughters.

The youngest Prince thought that ‘Gul Khandan’ might be nostalgic for her home and parents and she should go to parental home for sometimes. His brothers had nefarious intentions and with the pretension of hunting take the Youngest Prince with them and throw him in a well. Actually the brothers wanted to have ‘Gul Khandan’. She knew about it and flew to fairy-land.

When the youngest prince came back safe at home, he didn’t find Gul-Khandan. He left for ‘Koh-i-Qaf’ and with the help of ‘Dev’s’ horse he again brought ‘Gul Khandan’ back home. His brothers were ashamed and the youngest prince forgave them (Mengal, P-287).

This is a long story and the youngest prince is successful because he has no bad intentions and he acts upon his father’s advice. He fights the Dev and saves his father’s grave and also gets a horse which has no equal in the entire world.

Proverbs in Brahui:

Proverbs are the brief folk-sayings which are the wisdom of the people of an area. They are part of our culture and literature and have passed to us from generation to generation. Most of the proverbs are thousands of years old and carry a message in a condensed form. Here are a few of Brahui proverbs selected by me with an attempt to English translations:

- 1 A work is finished by doing, a path end with walking.
- 2 The foolish went and brought a glutton
- 3 Had the stones been soft, foxes would have eaten it.
- 4 With the blessings of wheat barley also gets water.
- 5 Don't stir up the hornet's nest.

These proverbs have great implied meaning and wisdom.

Riddles and Puzzles:

Riddle in Brahui language are called 'Cha Cha' and it is very good way of testing intelligence and a good past-time. The people in small hamlets or nomads when they camp somewhere, simply-talk or guess-riddles at night. A few of the riddles in Brahui language (translated into English) are as follows:

- 1 Beta it with stone, it will not break. Drop it in water, it will not moist. Ans: Shadow
- 2 Two things are never on good terms. Ans : dog and beggar
- 3 If it is eaten then it is a sin, if not eaten then there is hunger.
Ans: Fasting
- 4 There is a pit which is full of bones Ans: Mouth and teeth

A person who can solve most of the riddles is considered clever and wise.

Thann Nal:

The story teller says : It is said that a King was ruling a country and was extremely fond of keeping animals and birds. In the royal palace, a special area was reserved for them and a good share of treasury was spent on preservation of animals. One of the servants of King was 'Thann Nal' who shirked work. Once the king gave a puppy and a cow to every servant so that the pups could be fed with cow's

milk. The king also declared that whosoever takes good care of pups, he will be rewarded.

‘Thaan Nal’ was also given a cow and a pup. When he saw the cow, his mouth watered and he danced with joy. Quickly he went to his home and told his wife the news that God had listened to them and now they could have more milk and enjoy the life. ‘Thaan Nal’ continued drinking milk and gave some milk to his wife too but the pup was not given a drop of it. Therefore, the pup became weaker everyday.

One day the King ordered all the servants to bring the pups. ‘Thaan Nal’s’ wife boiled some milk and put it before the pup. The pup had not taken milk for many days and at once dipped his mouth in the milk. As soon as he touched the milk, he squealed with pain and ran everywhere till the intensity of pain decreased. ‘Thaan Nal’ took the pup to the King. Seeing the bad condition of the pup, the King said, “You are unfaithful and have not given any milk to the pup”. Instead you have consumed the milk yourself. The King said to him that he was telling a lie. How come the pup didn’t take milk? The king ordered for the milk to test the veracity of the matter and also called for the executioner so that the liar’s head should be severed from the neck. As the pup had a bitter experience of milk and his tongue had scalded from it, therefore the pup jumped in frenzy. In this confusion when the pup was about to run, he scratched the face of the king and the King’s crown fell down. The King said in rage ! Thaan Nal! You have been dishonest and a rogue. Thaan Nal mumbled !my lord! I am your old servant and could never dare to tell a lie. In fact, the pup hates milk. The story continues.....(Brahui, p 172)

God is the Sustainer:-

In the story, the beliefs and values of Brahui people are implied. It is the story of a poor man who decides that he will not go to the job the next day and informs his children about it, as the God is the provider. In the morning when he doesn’t go to work, his children are enervated because of hunger and cry. There is nothing to eat at home. The poor man goes out of his home and on the way something sticks to his foot. He digs the place and finds gold. But he leaves the treasure, reaches home and tells the whole story about treasure to his wife. The wife insists that the husband should go and bring the gold – while the husband says that the life sustainer is God. During this altercation, the thieves get the clue, run and take the treasure. When they open the

container, they find wasps. The thieves in anger throw them in the home of the poor man and run for their life. When the family sees the container full of gold, they really become happy and say, “Sustainer is God”. (Brahui, p-87)

Folktales are about the values and beliefs and leaving the things to God (Trust in God) is a characteristic of Brahui people.

There are plenty of love poems in Brahui folk poetry and one of the love poems is ‘Barnazna’. The poem is Brahui and Urdu is available in the book ‘Short History of Brahui Language and Literature’ by Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui:

Come ‘oh’, ravishing sweetheart
Come ‘oh’, ravishing sweetheart
We saw your colorful party
You captivated the heart of many
Come ‘oh’ Sweetheart
Your voice is sweet like music
The flight of coots is high
I saw you in Shawl
‘Oh’ God you are my master!
Do not separate me from friend
I lay down my life for your strolling, ‘oh’ love!
You are a flower of paradise
The water of streams continue to flow
Nature may take care of You.

Conclusion:-

Every society has its own folk-tales and folk songs. As an ancient language, Brahui too has many legends and songs coming from distant past through oral traditions. What is needed is to dig out more tales and bring them in written form. However, commendable efforts have been made by Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahui, Afzal Mengal, Azim Jan, Salah-ud-din Mengal, Kuhdaidad Gul, Aziz Mengal and other young researchers to increase the treasure of folk-literature and present it in the book form.

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