

## REVERBERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SELECT FOLK SONGS IN AWADHI FOLKLORE

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### Abstract

Awadh region is culturally very prosperous, vibrant and colourful .It offers a rich treasure of songs touching the issues of global concern like peace, amity, equality, justice and human rights. The irony is that they are not well documented and preserved. The changing socio-cultural paradigms are almost endangering the rich cultural heritage of the dialects. Postmodernism and deconstruction have opened the windows for these under the paradigm of alternative modernity, yet many cultural texts are still found in oral tradition –waiting for the connoisseur to record, translate and disseminate them among the larger audience. The present paper discusses the traces of Human Rights in the select folk songs from Awadhi Folklore.

**Key Words:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Awadhi Folklore, Equality. Orature, Cultural Text.

Folklore comprises a vast range of expressions of the masses, handed down through generations. It consists of a rich body of creation; myths, folk tales, animal and bird stories, poems, rhymes, songs, riddles, sayings and proverbs where the spoken word is closely connected with specific pictures of story-telling, dance enactment, song cycles, symbolical acts and plays, that have evolved over thousand years of human activities in the land and the environment concerned. The folk songs sing a unique world in themselves .These songs are characterized with the zest, anguish, celebration, redemption , problems and solution to them.

Awadh region is culturally very prosperous , vibrant and colourful .It offers a rich treasure of songs touching the issues of global concern like peace, amity, equality justice and human rights. The irony is that they are not well documented and preserved. The changing socio-cultural paradigms are almost endangering the rich cultural heritage of the dialects. Postmodernism and deconstruction have opened the windows for these under the paradigm of alternative modernity, yet many cultural texts are still found in oral tradition –waiting for the connoisseur to record, translate and disseminate them among the larger audience. On these

grounds the present work is envisioned.

The present paper takes up studying the traces of Human Rights in the select folk songs from Awadhi Folklore. I have collected them from the orature. These texts show a special version of the culture of Awadh. Such texts, I am sure, can open many vistas of the folk culture and show the patterns of the alternative modernity to look at. Since the forte, here, is to see the patterns of human rights in the select cultural texts of Awadhi folklore I find it appropriate to introduce the human rights, their background and tradition. With the declaration of the Human Rights under the rubric of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations Organization, the human rights came under discussion and practice. The United Nations Organization announced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948, and called them the most sanctified ordains for human race across the history of human being on this earth. The General Assembly of the UN has mentioned 30 human rights under General Assembly Resolution No 217 A. These are the general guidelines and suggestions for the nations of the world. The UN expects that these shall be followed in ideals and working of the governments and individuals. Alka Singh's comment on Human rights is quite appropriate here. She finds that,

Human Rights are broadly divided under three categories; the first generation rights, the second generation rights, and the third generation rights. The First Generation Rights include civil and political rights that were preferred generally in Europe and the United States of America. The Second Generation Rights include economic, social and cultural rights and the Third Generation Rights comprise wider socio cultural spectrum including the right to truth, right to development, right to defining and or renaming identity, and right to clean environment, right to human solidarity and peace. It is from the third generation of human rights that we look for the concern of literature.()

While exploring the universe of Awadhi Folklore, interestingly I have noticed the impression of the first five articles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in select Awadhi songs. Out of the galaxy of Awadhi songs, I have selected three significant texts for the purpose of this study.

The following song (mentioned here as Text No 1 for practical purpose) sings the spirit of Article 1 and 2 of the UDHR. For a ready reference, these articles are given below, followed by the song: Article 1 reads that, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Let us analyze the songs now:

Text No 1

**Ekai rakat , majja maas ek,**  
Ekai rakat , majja maas ek,

rang -roop, pardes yakay  
tab kahe chhot badan kara phera  
kahe man ma aisa dera.

Nahin chahi ab gair barabari,  
na chahi takrar  
nahin hamka chaah hai kavnav  
bas prem shaanti kay darakaar.

Lai lai kayiv baat, ann- pani  
pher maan jujhe baudam gyani  
Tara -tara kere bhed batavain  
in par un par sabai luhavain.

Chhorav ab takrar  
o manayi yahai rahi manuhaar  
yahai hai hamari guhar.

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The English Rendition of the above song is given below:

Similar blood, and same the built  
the looks and land are same , I find  
then why the tantrum of big and small  
why the thoughts bring brackets along.

Neither we want any inequality  
nor any sort of arguments even,  
even no aspiration we ever aspire,  
our want here only love and peace.

They scratch the facts , the life and all  
stuck so the erudite and mundane,  
they speak difference so,  
one assails the other, and the other throws back.

Let's leave arguments of all sorts,  
man ! this is my request  
and my appeal !

We find that the song conveys the ideas that if all the humanity is one, human beings having the same blood, flesh, and organism, why then the issues of big and small in stature and place? Why different kinds of discrimination so? The masses further sing that they do not endorse any kind of inequality and arguments leading to discrimination of any kind. They have no greater aspiration but love and peace. They wonder why both the categories of people - the knowledgeable and mundane are stuck in useless arguments with great stamina to exhibit. They talk of different issues of discrimination, and assail one another. The song persuades the men and offers an entreaty before the humanity to giving up offensive and dividing arguments.

Moving ahead we find that the Article 3 of the UDHR reads so, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>). The spirit of the article may be noticed in the reverberations of the following text in Awadhi orature (Text No 2) :

**Text No 2**

**Ham sab ek janak ke janme**

Ham sab ek janak ke janme  
roop rang chahai jaat alag  
ham sab mil hain manayi manayi  
ham sab ka jeevan adhikaar.

Ham sab jeebai- sukh se garvit  
manyi-jaat- janam- adhikaar.  
Hamari rakscha hamar samaj  
hamare janam mila adhikaar.

Hamaar des, au hamar samaj,  
kihisi bada bhari upkar.

The English rendition of the song is as follows:

We, the offspring of the same father .  
May the form and colour, our race differ,  
we all human being –we Adam's son.  
We have right to live.

We will live our life decently  
It is our birth right.  
Our society protects us  
by our birth, we have our rights.

Our land and society

has done great favour ,see!

Thus we find that the song illustrates that the entire humanity is in existence from the same parents. May there be the plurality of race, colour , land and language .By virtue of being human they have their rights , i.e. the human rights .Being born in human race ,one has right to good, decent and happy life. The society and land will protect and ensure the decent living of human kind .The orature concludes with extending gratitude to society and land for granting peaceful life and associated rights.

The following song(Text No. 3) shows the spirit of Article 4 and Article 5 of the UDHR. The articles mention that : “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.” (Article 5, UDHR <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>). Further ,“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”(Article 6, UDHR, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>)

### **Text No 3**

#### **Miti gulami au bhed**

Badi vipatt sahin hai purkhay  
badi ladayi larin jhankh kai,  
badi badi vipada ka dekhin  
ab na rahi kincha matr.

Sabai tara ker bhed mite hain  
na kaunav raha gulam  
na kavnav raha rank na raja  
nahin kavnav riyaya navab  
ab miti gulami au bhed.

Chaarau ori phaila unjer  
ho dekhav phaila hai sab jag unjer.

The English rendition of the above text is as follows:

The forefathers have seen a bad time  
They faced calamity  
and fought injustice in distress,  
They saw many disasters, now nothing remains.

All forms of discriminations wrapped up

No one remains a slave.

None is the ruler, and no minion their remains

Slavery and discrimination, yes they all extinct.

Light we see effulgent around.

The universe is lit and on.

The above mentioned text is a true impression of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The provision of this article bans all sorts of slavery or servitude .

Thus in the light of the above discussion, we find great similarity in the spirit of the songs and that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a fact that the folk milieu of the region has no familiarity neither with the United Nations Organization nor with that of the UDHR, but both the parties speak the heart of humanity .So is the reason for similarity .We have already noted that the folklore, in general, offers the saga of the agrarian and folk society .It's social set up has the warp and woof of equality and amity. Most of the partakers in the social exchange of affairs in this set up have their limited business environment for their professional activities, and are seen in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and craftsmanship. The social set up offers a closed community in the notional sense of the term .People live in the region down the ages and develop a special relationship with one another.

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