

# FOLKLORE RESEARCH IN EAST PAKISTAN

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East Pakistan takes up the eastern part of Bengal, formerly a province of British India. It consists of an area of 55,134 square miles with a population of over fifty-five millions. This land of rivers and green fields has always provided an easy, carefree life for its people, and has moulded their character and folklore accordingly.

The abundant folklore of East Pakistan contains a variety of elements, which is partly to be explained by historical forces. From the third century A.D. on, the Mouryas, the Guptas, the Palas, the Senas and the Muslims came one after another to rule the land, and grafted their ways of life and culture traits on the indigenous population. Subsequently Portuguese, French and English ships anchored in the harbors of Bengal, and left not only their merchandise but also their customs. Among these foreign traders, the British became most powerful, and were able to consolidate their authority at the expense of the fading empire of the Mughal rulers. The battle of Plassy in 1757 ended with the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal. This British victory ensured the supremacy of the British East India Company over the entire subcontinent of present-day India and Pakistan for nearly two hundred years. As a result, in the words of

Toynbee, the civilization has become plural instead of singular.<sup>1</sup> The folklore of East Pakistan, therefore, is a mixture of various cultural traditions.

There is no denying the fact that the first phase of folklore collecting was started by the British rulers of India, though the purpose behind it was obviously political and administrative. As soon as the British East India Company became ruler of Bengal, it requested the British civil officers to learn about the people of the land through their traditions and customs. Consequently, under the directives of the Company, scholars like William Jones established the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in the year 1784. This society promoted the study of the humanities, including materials later recognized as folklore, which were published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.

Under British initiative, the study of folklore was advanced primarily by British civil officers and European missionaries. In order to present the folklore activities of this period, the writers of this paper will discuss these two groups separately.

After the Sepoy Revolution of 1857, we find a more congenial atmosphere in which to investigate folklore. In 1858, by the proclamation of Queen Victoria, the administration was transferred from the East India Company to a Viceroy, the representative of the Queen of England. From then on, the English officials, before leaving England, were instructed to mix with the Indian people, to try to gain their confidence, and also to respect their religion, culture and customs. The officers who came to India were clearly familiar with the importance of anthropology, ethnology and folklore. Such journals and serials were founded as: *Indian Antiquary* (Bombay, 1872-1933), the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* (Calcutta, 1886-1936), *North Indian Notes and Queries* (1891-1896), *The Imperial Gazetteers* (26 vols., London, 1892, 1907-9), *The District Gazetteers*, and *Journal and Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1915-) and *Man in India* (Ranchi, 1932). All of these publications recorded an enormous quantity of folkloristic, ethnological and anthropological material. Additional data on Indian folklore also appeared in non-Indian journals such as *Folk-Lore Record* (London, 1878-1882), *Folk-Lore*

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1. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Between Oxus and Jumna* (New York, 1961), p. 1.

*Journal* (London, 1883-1889), and *Folklore* (London, 1890-1964), *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Baltimore, 1847-1964), *American Journal of Philology* (Baltimore, 1880) and the *Journal of American Folklore* (Boston, 1888).

Because of time limitations, we wish to mention here only the contributions of prominent civil servants. William Wilson Hunter, Commissioner at Dacca, now in East Pakistan, published his *Annals of Rural Bengal* in 1868 in London. He was the first scholar to collect and publish Santal legends. His collection has proved to be of immense anthropological importance. The Santals, a tribe found in East Pakistan and the northeast section of India, engaged such avtice British ethnologists as A. Campbell (*Santal Folktales, Manbhoom, 1891*), C. H. Bompas (*Folklore of the Santal Parangas, London, 1909*), P. O. Bodding (*A Chapter of Santal Folklore, Kristiania, 1924*; and *Santal Folktales, 3 vols. Oslo, 1925-29*). The importance of the Santals in the study of primitive races is now firmly recognized.

Thomas Harbert Lewin, a Deputy Commissioner at Chittagong, now in East Pakistan, offered an authentic ethnological survey of tribal peoples in his *The Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870). He recorded some myths, creation stories, customs and superstitions directly from oral tradition. He supported his comments with documentary notes.

E. T. Dalton, Colonel, Bengal Staff Corps and Commissioner at Chuto-Nagpur, published his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* under the direction of the Council of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1872. He studied the people of Bengal and presented a number of widespread folktales and legends. He was the first scholar to publish a comprehensive ethnological history of Bengali people.

G. H. Damant, another Britisher, contributed a series of folktales to the *Indian Antiquary*. The very first volume of this journal (1872) contains some well-known tales of North Bengal (East Pakistan) which he collected. His harvest of twenty-two tales makes him the first major collector of Bengali tales.

Sir George Grierson, whose love and deep interest for Eastern folklore and language has already become proverbial, arrived in 1873. Ultimately he published material on 179 languages and 554 dialects of India and Pakistan. Because of this scholarship, he received a Knighthood in 1912 and the Order of Merit in 1928 from the King of England. Grierson spent 26 years in India. While in charge of Rangpur District, now in East Pakistan, from

1873 to 1877, he collected from the peasants folk-rhymes, folk-songs and ballads such as the widely known 'Manik Chandrer Gan' (the song of Manik Chandra).

After these songs were published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1878), the search for similar songs was carried out in earnest. In 1898 Grierson was appointed the Superintendent of the Linguistic Survey of India. The famous Norwegian linguist and folklorist Sten Konow assisted him in this work. They decided that "a piece of folklore or some other passages in narrative prose or verse... [should be] taken down... from the mouth of the speaker on the spot"<sup>2</sup> as a specimen of language or dialect. Grierson's nineteen volume *Survey* contains folklore specimens from 364 languages and dialects of India and Pakistan. Volume V, devoted to the Bengali language, is probably the most valuable one. Here he cites much folklore material, including ballads, songs and tales. Grierson is the first collector of Bengali ballads, songs, and rhymes. His folklore essays published in the *Indian Antiquary* and *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* still serve as authentic references.

In *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (2 vols., Calcutta, 1892), Herbert H. Risley of the Indian Civil Service applied to Indian anthropology the methods of systematic research followed by European anthropologists. This work, besides containing a great deal of anthropological information, included myths, legends and fictional folktales from East Pakistan.

Sir Bradley Birt, District Collector of Sylhet, now in East Pakistan, compiled *Bengal Fairy Tales* (London, 1920). This contains some excellent märchen typical of present-day East Pakistan, although Birt does not disclose his sources. However the folklorist can easily identify international tale types in his collection.

Along with the civil servants, the missionaries of Great Britain, Europe and the United States contributed importantly to folklore collection and publication. Since their aim was to preach Christianity among the natives, it was incumbent on them to know the native customs. Among the missionaries, the name of William Carey deserves special mention. Carey served in

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2. George A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1 (Calcutta, 1927), p. 17.

Fort William College<sup>3</sup> from 1801-1831 and with the help of native associates like Mritunjoy Vidylanker, Ram Ram Munshi and others, he published a series of Bengali books, edited newspapers, and encouraged the translation from Sanskrit and Persian of folktales known in oral traditions of both East and West Bengal. Reverend William Morton published in 1832 *A Collection of Proverbs, Bengali and Sanskrit*, a book containing hundreds of Bengali proverbs from East Pakistan. Under the general title, "Hymns of the Earliest Bengali Poets," J. Beam began in 1872 to print Bengali songs in the *Indian Antiquary*.

Reverend James Long was a prolific collector of Bengali proverbs and sayings. His publications include *Three Thousand Bengali Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings Illustrating National Life and Feelings Among Ryots and Women* (1872), *Eastern Proverbs and Emblems Illustrating Old Truth* (London, 1873) and *Two Thousand Bengali Proverbs (Probad Mala) Illustrating Native Life and Feelings* (1868). Many folk rhymes and charms also have been incorporated among these proverbs and sayings.

The missionaries were followed by such native collectors as Kanailal Ghosal (*Probad Pustaka, A Book of Proverbs*, Calcutta, 1890), Dwarakanath Basu (*Probad Pustaka, A Book of Proverbs*, Calcutta, 1893) and Rajendranath Bannerjee (*A Collection of Agricultural Sayings in Lower Bengal, Calcutta*, 1893).

William McCulloch's *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912) may be regarded as one of the best folktale collections of Bengal because of its notes and organization. Though the tales were collected from a Brahmin informant around 1886-87, the book was published in London in 1912 after McCulloch had retired. His notes refer to parallel examples of both literary and oral stories in other eastern and western collections.

Lal Behari Day, a native Christian, whose father came from Dacca, published a series of books and essays on Bengali festivals, holidays, sports and games, caste system, village folk and folk-life in Bengal. His *Folk Tales of Bengal* (London and Calcutta, 1883), collected from an old maid, mother of Govinda,

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3. Fort William College was established by the East India Company in 1800. The aim of this college was to make British civilians familiar with the literature, language and culture of India. Nine Bengali scholars were appointed for this purpose to assist the European teachers.

created considerable interest among European and American readers. Many versions of these tales have since been collected in East Pakistan. Day's *A Bengal Peasant's Life* (1908) is a realistic and objective study of folklife. Sarat Chandramitra also made early contributions to folklore study.

## II

The second phase of the folklore movement was introduced by Bengali scholars of nationalistic tendencies. Rabindranath Tagore was the pioneer during this period. From 1885 to 1899, he published four essays showing the importance of folk-literature. These four essays were compiled in his book *Loka-Sahitya (Folk-Literature)* in 1907. Tagore patronized others and he himself collected a large number of folklore materials from his vast estate in East Pakistan. He himself wrote, "when I was at Selaidah, I would always keep close contact with the Bauls<sup>4</sup> (mystic folksingers) and have discussions with them, and it is a fact that I infused tunes of Baul songs into many of my own songs."<sup>5</sup> Dr. Dusan Zbavitel, professor of Indology in the Oriental Institute of Czechoslovakia, writes: "It is my firm belief that without staying in the countryside for as long as he did Rabindranath could never have become what he was, either as a man or a poet."<sup>6</sup> Critics have commented that Tagore has used numerous folklore themes in many of his poems, songs, dramas, novels and short stories. Tagore's example was followed by the leading Bengali journals. Bangiya Sahitya Parisada, a Bengali literary society, was established under his encouragement in 1895. *The Sahitya Parisada Journal*, from the year of its inception (1895), began publishing folklore materials collected from the various regions now comprising East Pakistan.

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4. Baul is a class of mystic folksingers in Bengal. Due to close contact with Iran from the 13th century on, Iranian Sufism much influenced the thought of the people of India, especially Bengal. Baul singers infused the mystic thought of Sufis in their compositions. To the Bauls, the human body along with its five souls is the most precious object of worship. God can be discovered in the body of a person; Bauls always try to purify their souls through continuous devotion. Baul songs act as the charm for this devotion.

5. Budhadev Roy, "Baul Songs and Rabindranath," *Folklore*, II, No. 4 (Calcutta, 1961), p. 241.

6. Dusan Zbavitel "Rabindranath and the Folk-Literature of Bengal," *Folklore*, II, No. 1 (Calcutta, 1961), p. 14.

The first decade of the present century witnessed a turbulent nationalistic and political agitation, better known as the "Non-Cooperation Movement." British merchandise was boycotted and home made products received preference. Traditions and folklore now were acclaimed. Calcutta University encouraged its professor of Modern Indian Language, Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, to compile ballads. Dinesh Chandra, a resident of East Bengal, was aware of the rich ballad heritage of Mymensingh (now in East Pakistan). Chandra Kumar De of Mymensingh was appointed to collect ballads from this area, including information about the singers. Four large volumes of *Eastern Bengal Mymensingh Ballads*, with texts in both Bengali and English, were published from 1923 to 1932. These ballads attracted attention all over the world. His other works, *Glimpses of Bengal Life* (1915), *Contributions of Muslims to Bengali Literature*, and especially, *Folk-Literature of Bengal* (1920) are invaluable. In the latter book, a comparative study of some East Pakistani tales with those of Europe, he boldly expressed the view that in India the highest level of culture was for ages represented by Magadha. Since lower Bengal, the Banga proper, was an important gateway for enterprising foreign people who traded with India, one consequence was the circulation of the Jatakas, the birth stories of Buddha, from Bengal, or more probably Magadha, throughout the countries of Europe and the Middle East.

Abdul Gafur Siddiqui of Khulna, Abdul Karim Sahitya-Bisarada of Chittagong and Ashraf Hossain Sahitya-Ratna of Sylhet, all in East Pakistan, collected a considerable amount of folklore from their own areas during the period 1920-1938. They presented this material to the University of Dacca and also published articles in various popular journals. Scholars are using this material in comparative studies.

The folktale collections by Upendra Kishore Roy Choudhury and Daksina Ranjan Mitra Majumder deserve praise. Choudhury's collection of animal tales, *Toontoonir Boi* (Book of Toontooni) and Majumder's märchen and ritual tales *Thakur Dadar Jhuli (Grandfather's Story)*, *Thakur Mar Jhuli (Grandmother's Story)*, *Than Didir Thale (Grandmother's Bag)*, *Dada Moshaer Thale (Grandfather's Bag)* and *Brotakotha (Ritual Tales)* were published between 1907 and 1913. Mazumder was probably the first collector to use a phonograph in field collecting, and all his books faithfully reproduce typical folktales and folklife in East Pakistan. Jogindra Nath Sirker's *Khukumanir Chara*

(1899) (*Folk Rhymes for Children*) is an authentic collection of Bengali rhymes.

Mansur Uddin, another prominent folklorist of East Pakistan, took up the task of collecting Baul songs, which had been started by Tagore. In 1942, Calcutta University published his scholarly compilation *Hara-Mani (Lost Gems)*, which included three hundred songs. Since then five additional volumes of his collections have been published in East Pakistan.

Jassim Uddin, who started his career as a collector of folklore for Dinesh Chandra Sen, has published collections of folksongs and folktales. He is, however, most famous for his use of folklore themes in dramas and in poetry. His published folksong collections include *Rangila Nayer Majhi (The Boatman of the Green Boat)* in 1934. His collection of humorous folktales, published in English as *Folktales of East Pakistan* and in Bengali as *Bangalir Hashir Galpa*, has appeared recently.

Special mention should be made of Abbas Uddin, scholar, accomplished singer, and collector of folksongs. His influence in the contemporary folklore movement of East Pakistan is immense. Hundreds of his genuine folksong records pressed by commercial recording companies sold like hot cakes. Popularly known as the "Nightingale of Pakistan," Abbas Uddin has made folksong popular and has created a school of folksingers in East Pakistan.

These three scholars, Mansur Uddin, Jassim Uddin and Abbas Uddin, represented Pakistan at folklore conferences held in London, at Indiana University in Bloomington, and in Germany, in recent years.

### III

The third phase of the folklore movement was begun in Dacca, East Bengal, now East Pakistan, in the year 1938. In that year a conference was held under the auspices of the Eastern Mymensingh Literary Society, at Kisoreganj. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, then Chairman of the Department of Bengali at Dacca University, in his presidential address lauded the great value of folklore study, and his remarks were carried by many of the journals and newspapers of the country. This enthusiasm resulted in the formation of the Eastern Bengal Folklore Collection Society, at Dacca University. Dr. Shahidullah became its president, and Ashutosh Bhattacharya its secretary. Chandra

Kumar De, collector of Eastern Bengal ballads, Sirajuddin Kasimpuri and Purna Chandra Bhattacharya, two enthusiastic collectors, and Jasim Uddin joined their efforts in this project. A. K. Fazlul Huq, then Chief Minister of Bengal, patronized the project and promised substantial monetary support. Shortly, courses in folklore were included up to the graduate level in Dacca University.

In the year 1947 India gained its independence, and Bengal was divided into two parts, East Pakistan and West Bengal. Being a new country and having a definite geographical area, historical past, and political identity, East Pakistan responded favorably to the folklore movement. The wealth of the folklore heritage of the country had already been realized by scholars. Now regional literary societies initiated folklore collecting from the oral traditions of their respective areas: for example, in Rajshahi, the Barendra Anusandhan Samity, in Dinajpur the Goura Banga Shahitya Samaj, in Rangpur the Shahitya Parisad, in Mymensingh the Shahitya Samity, in Sylhet the Shahitya Samsad. The Asiatic Society of Pakistan in Dacca gave recognition to folklore and published research articles on the subject in its journal. The *Mohammadi*, the *Mahe-Nau*, and the *Saugat*, three important monthly journals of East Pakistan, published frequent articles on folklore. Conferences and folk festivals were held in different parts of the country. Folk festivals including dramas, folksongs, and exhibitions of folk arts and crafts became important features of government-sponsored exhibitions and fairs all over the country. Radio Pakistan in Dacca allocated time and money for broadcasting folksongs and dramas. In addition, scholars were invited to take part in the regular discussion programs of folklore in Radio Pakistan. Under the able guidance of the late Abbas Uddin Ahmed, eminent folk singers such as Momtaj Ali Khan, Bedaruddin Ahmed, Sohrab Hussain, Abdul Latif, Abdul Alim and Ferdousi Begum collected folksongs with their tunes directly from oral tradition, to broadcast on the air. This group is still active.

A factor which gave considerable impetus to folklore study was the movement for the recognition of Bengali as one of the two national languages of Pakistan. This movement started in the year 1948 and reached its peak in 1952. The government of Pakistan recognized Bengali as one of the national languages. This new status of the language had a definite effect on the folklore movement of the country. For the first time in history

Bengali had been given the status of a state language. In order to make the language worthy of its role, the scholars of Bengali language and literature sought to inculcate new thoughts and ideas in the language. They began to look at the folklore heritage of the country with a new vision. To satisfy the demand of the students and the general public which originated from the state language movement, the government of East Pakistan established the Bengali Academy in Dacca, in 1954, to promote research work on Bengali language and literature. On December 17, 1955, the council of the Bengali Academy, in the first resolution of its very first meeting, made a decision to promote collecting, preserving and publishing of folklore materials. Sufficient funds were allocated for this purpose. Circulars were issued all over the country through newspapers, private organizations and government agencies, requesting that folklore materials be sent to the Academy. A number of folklore collectors were appointed by the Academy to work on the project in the regions rich in folklore. As a result, folklore materials of high quality poured in in an unending stream. While collecting was thus being established on a systematic basis, the Academy began to publish folklore collections. The first publication, *Momenshahir Lok-sahitya (Folklore of Mymensingh)*, collected and edited by Rowshan Izdani, came out in 1957.

Rowshan Izdani is a devoted folklore collector, but not a scholar in this field. His book contains specimens of different genres of folklore material of Mymensingh district of East Pakistan. He has made no effort to arrange and analyze the material in a scientific way. However, his book provides valuable texts for the use of folklorists.

Under the able guidance of Dr. Mohammad Enamul Huq, former Director of the Academy, folklore research received high esteem, and several scholars took Bengali folklore as the subject of their doctoral dissertations. On being awarded a research fellowship by the Academy, Golam Saqlain began research work on the *Marsia* songs of East Pakistan, receiving his Ph.D. degree from Dacca University in 1962. It should be noted here that Ashutosh Bhattacharya, secretary of the pre-independence Eastern Bengal Folklore Collection Society, as mentioned earlier, received his Ph.D. from Dacca University in 1961 for a dissertation on the folk literature of Bengal. However, his research dealt chiefly with the folklore of East Pakistan.

In 1959 Ashraf Siddiqui, who has given you the history of

folklore activity in the area of East Pakistan, joined the folklore project of Bengali Academy, immediately after his return from the United States with a master's degree in folklore from Indiana University. He assisted in the formation of folklore organizations such as the Pakistan Folklore Society and the East Pakistan Folklore Association.

In late 1960, Sayed Ali Ahsan, Chairman of the Department of Bengali, University of Karachi, became director of the Bengali Academy. Though not a folklorist, he showed keen interest in the subject and took further steps to promote the cause of folklore. The East Pakistan Bureau of National Reconstruction sanctioned substantial funds to the Academy for the collection, preservation and publication of folklore materials. Bengali Academy undertook an ambitious program, and the second book of folklore, *Lok-sahitye Chhara (Rhymes in Folk Literature)*, collected and edited by Sirajuddin Kasimpuri, came out in 1961. Kasimpuri is again the industrious, rather than the trained folklorist. His book contains folk rhymes which he collected primarily from the oral tradition of Mymensingh district. He has made an effort to classify the rhymes on the basis of their functional use, but has not offered any scholarly explanation for his classifications.

In May, 1961, the Folklore Committee of the Bengali Academy resolved that the folklore material collected by the Academy should be edited by eminent scholars before publication. The Committee decided that each editor should work with a particular kind of material from a specific region. In the introductory chapter, the editor was instructed to cover the following points:

1. Information about the field and the informants.
2. Social and cultural background of the material.
3. Functional use of each genre.
4. Typical regional characteristics, if there are any.
5. Historical elements, if there are any.
6. International circulation, if it can be determined.
7. Literary value.

So far the Bengali Academy has published the following books under this program:

1. *Hara Mani (Lost Gems)*, a collection of Baul songs collected and edited by Mansur Uddin.
2. *Uttar Banger Meyeli Geet (Women's Songs of North Bengal)*, collected by Alamgir Jalil and edited by Hasan

Hafizur Rahman.

3. *Baulgan O Duddu Shah (Baul Songs of Duddu Shah)*, collected by Latif Afi Anhu and edited by Borhan Uddin Khanjehangir.
4. *Khulna O Jessorer Chhara (Folk Rhymes of Khulna and Jessore)*, edited by Sivaprasanna Lahiri.
5. *Kishoreganjer Lokokahini (Folktales of Kisoreganj)*, collected by Muhammadur Rauf and edited by Ashraf Siddiqui.
6. *Rajshahir Chhara (Folk Rhymes of Rajshahi)*, edited by Alamgir Jalil.

The following books will be published shortly:

1. *Baul Sangeet (Baul Songs)*, Vol. II.
2. *Syleter Lokokahini (Folktales of Sylhet)*.
3. *Kishoreganjer Lokokahini (Folktales of Kishoreganj)*, Vol. II.
4. *Daccar Chhara (Folk Rhymes of Dacca)*.

Each of these books has an introductory chapter in which the editor has made an effort to discuss the points mentioned earlier. The texts included in these publications are indispensable for the study of Bengali folklore.

The vast collection of the Bengali Academy up to the present consists of thousands of legends, myths, märchen; riddles of all kinds; proverbs and sayings; charms, beliefs and superstitions; information about folk medicines, rituals, and customs; and many classes of folksongs. The valuable contributions of such collectors as Chowdhuri Golam Akbar, Nurul Huq Mollah, Shah Muhammad Kalimuddin, Abdul Majid Talukdar, Dewan Abdul Khalek, Latif Afi Anhu, Abdus Sattar and others are responsible for the present richness of the folklore archives in the Academy.

Since space does not permit a discussion of the qualitative aspects of all the genres of folklore collected by the Academy, I shall attempt only to introduce briefly the varieties of East Pakistani folksongs.

So far thirty-two classes of folk songs have been collected by the Bengali Academy. These classes can be divided into three groups: (a) songs connected with occupation and ritual; (b) songs sung primarily for entertainment; and (c) songs combining both ritual and entertainment.

The occupational and ritual songs include *Palkir Geet*, the

songs sung by the palanquin bearers when they carry passengers; *Chhad Pitanor Geet*, the songs sung by the laborers when they build the roof of a building; *Sari Gan*, the songs sung by the boatmen at the time of a boat race; *Sanp Khelamor Gan*, the songs sung by the snake charmers when they perform with their snakes in public; *Meyeli Geet*, the songs sung by women at the time of marriages and other ceremonies; *Dhan Katar Gan*, the songs sung by the peasants when they harvest their crops; *Bristir Gan*, the songs sung by the women and children with certain ritualistic ceremonies in order to bring rain when there is a drought; and many other songs connected with the functional aspects of rural life and culture.

The songs sung for entertainment include *Bhatiali*, the songs of love, joy and sorrow; *Baul*, the songs of mysticism; *Haboo*, the songs about amusing social occurrences; *Punthir Gan*, the songs of the Muslim heroes and heroines of early times; and various other kinds of songs which are meant for pure entertainment.

*Jari* and *Kabi* are the two most popular types among the songs having both ritual and entertainment aspects. *Jari* contains the tragic events of the battle of Karbala where the grandsons of the holy Prophet of Islam and their families were persecuted and killed by a rebel leader. The Muslims of the Shia sect perform *Jari* in the month of Muharram when they observe martyrdom. Beside this functional purpose, *Jari* is also sung in the villages of East Pakistan, all through the year for entertainment's sake. Two rival singers opposing each other sing this song. *Jari* is sung only by the Muslim singers.

*Kabi* contains Hindu myths and legends, and is sung by two rival singers. Generally the Hindus perform this song at the time of worshipping goddess Kali, the goddess of strength, and goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning. But *Kabi* is also sung all through the year for entertainment. Both *Kabi* and *Jari* go beyond the limit of their respective subjects and introduce modern topics and amusing national and local events, in order to entertain the audience. Sometimes rival singers indulge in personal attacks, often with a high degree of vulgarity.

We have seen that the Bengali Academy is the main center of folklore activities in East Pakistan at the present time. The Academy is quite conscious of its difficult task and is trying to promote the study of folklore on the basis of the modern methods and techniques developed in Europe and the United States.

When Sayed Ali Ahsan, present Director of the Bengali Academy, visited the United States on the Leader and Specialists Exchange Program of the United States State Department in the fall of 1961, he came to Indiana University to learn about its folklore activities. The Bengali Academy is encouraging research scholars not only of East Pakistan but also from other countries of the world to undertake research on Bengali folklore. Dusan Zbavitel of the Oriental Institute of Czechoslovakia worked in the Academy for three months in 1960 in order to study Bengali folklore. Two Bengali research scholars are now employed in the Academy, working on the folklore of North Bengal and a motif-index of folk literature of East Pakistan.

The government of Pakistan established a Bengali Development Board in Dacca, East Pakistan, in 1963. The Board has also undertaken an ambitious program to promote the study of Bengali folklore, and has earmarked a good amount of money for this purpose. Both the Academy and the Board are planning to establish a modern folklore archive in East Pakistan to make materials available to research scholars. A program is under way to translate important theoretical and technical books of folklore into Bengali so that Bengali scholars can study and understand their folklore in the light of modern methods and techniques. But all these programs demand time, money, and scholars trained in folklore. Since the people and the government of the country are emphasizing the study of folklore, it is reasonable to hope that in the near future East Pakistan will become a vigorous center of folklore study, and that foreign scholars will be encouraged to study the folklore of East Pakistan.