



## EDUCATION OF VALUES IN KOKBOROK FOLKTALES AND BOROK ABORIGINES' RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS: A STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Anything which we receive and react is an education. It is a soul of both individual and social development. In addition the human development is impossible without the education of values. The etymological meaning of value is 'be strong or be worth' derived from Latin word 'valere'. It is said that education without value is a crime; it is a spirit of society. It can differ from one society to another society depending on the philosophical ideal, cultural habits and religious beliefs of that society or community. However there are some universally accepted values: these are peace, freedom, love, sympathy, truthfulness, non-violence, social well-being, equal right, self-discipline, respect, caring other living things and environment. The purpose of giving value education is long term goodness of the individual as well as the whole world. The development of values depends on social environment. Geographical surrounding influences greatly to one's development of values. Nowadays value based education is more necessary than information centric or knowledge based education. Because the aims of life is to realization of the world and it is possible only through quality education and for quality education value education is pre-requisite.

The folktale gives us amusement, recreation and entertainment but it is seen that they also gives us the education which we need in daily life. In this paper it is attempted to search the value education inherent in the Kokborok folktales imparted in the form of dialogue and story. Besides this it is also the endeavor to look into the value education consisting in the Kokborok speaking aborigines' religious traditions. The Kokborok speaking aborigines are the title having Debbarma, Jamatia, Reang, Noatia, Rupini, Kalai, Uchoi, Murasingh and Tripura. And finally, how these value educations contributes to the quality education, is the main concern of this paper.

**KEYWORDS:** Value education, Folktales, Aborigine, Kokborok and Religion.

### INTRODUCTION

Man is a rational being by nature, he has the power of deliberation and because of this he is different from other animals. Value is something which is the standard of an effect of education, something which is usefulness for the society or one's judgment of what is good in his life. The term value is inseparably connected with the objectives of man's life. In brought sense value means how much an object is important or necessary for the individual or society, no matter what is its monetary value. The values can differ from one society to another society depending on the philosophical ideal, cultural habits and religious beliefs of that society or community. However there are some universally accepted values: these are peace, freedom, love, sympathy,

truthfulness, non-violence, social well-being, equal right, self-discipline, respect, caring other living things and environment. Gandhi said, the goal of education should be a value education and the character-building education so that one should forget the selfish in working.<sup>1</sup> The values are the bearer and carrier of culture and custom of the society. And it also keeps the permanence and liveliness of the society. The behavior approved by the society in the social surrounding.

G.W. Allport said, "Values are centralized systems of psycho-physical dispositions capable of making a larger portion of environment functionally equivalent to the individual and generating in him appropriate type of adaptive and impressive behavior."<sup>2</sup>

M.T. Ramje opines that, "A value is what is desired or what is sought. Values may be operationally conceived as those guiding principles of life which are conducive of one's physical and mental health as well as to social welfare and adjustment and which are in tune with one's culture."<sup>3</sup> Thus confidently we can say that value education helps us to develop mental and physical health it also helps to adjust with the environment and bring the harmony and goodness in the society.

### CLASSIFICATION OF VALUE:

We can divide the value into two kind viz., intrinsic and instrumental value. Intrinsic value is the value which is good for itself, e.g. love, peace etc. While instrumental value is the value which is good for something, e.g. money, Instrumental value is judge on the basis of his result. According to the thinkers the position of intrinsic value is higher than the instrumental value, since intrinsic value is judicable by itself. Again we can divide value in view of his subject-matter, i.e., social, economical, recreational and religious value etc. a man who can live his or her life by good relation with the other people of society, that person is the appropriate person for healthy social life. Else healthy social life is possible only through value education.

### NECESSITY OF VALUE EDUCATION:

The prime aim of education is all round development of the person and helps to develop his or her integrative personality. And all round development is not possible without the education of values. As Tagore said, the main objective of education is to realize the absolute being and this realization is possible only through value education. Aurobindo also opines that the supreme aim of education is to develop spiritual value. The values bring the firmness, the joy and the peace in our life. It preserves our culture, develop morality and change our behavior towards affirmative. As a result, society gets better and we get quality life.

### Value Education in some randomly selected Kokborok folktales:

The folktales have its own power to satisfy one's curiosity by joyful stories, not only that it has gives some value education sometimes in the form of dialogue, sometimes in the form of metaphor and sometimes in the form of story. The Kokborok folktales is not exceptional one, it gives us amusement, recreation and entertainment and also gives us the value education, morality, ideal, wisdom and strategy which we need in daily life. Let us see what kinds of values we have in Kokborok folktales, it is discuss below:

<sup>1</sup> B.K. Lal, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, p.152

<sup>2</sup> Quotation taken from Dr. Dehashis Pal, *Shikshar bhitti o vikash*, Rita Book Agency,p.138

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p.138

**Tale no.1 The Nuwai birds and two sisters:**

This is the story of two sisters Kosomti and Kormati who care each other, worked at the huk (Jhum/ shifting cultivation) to help the family. But due to some misunderstanding the elder sister Kosomti has to stay in the bamboo-made cage. After that she was free with the help of Nuwai birds (Pelicans). In this story we get the following values.

**To support or help in household activities:**

Kosomti and Kormati, the two sisters both worked in house and outside the house i.e. in the huk (Jhum/ shifting cultivation) together to help their parents. Here we find the helping attitude as well as sisterhood value which can be very powerful force to equilibrium of mental and physical health. From this tale we get also the sense of responsibility and interest of work to the family.

**Sharing with the family members:**

One day two sisters were went to huk with Langa (a kind of basket made by bamboo or cane). The younger sister began to gather vegetables and fruits, thinking that the fruits will take with all the family members together. While the elder sister Kosomti, without kept anything in her Langa, what she gets either green or ripen everything she has swallowed. Not only had that she asked to Kormati to give what she has gathered in her Langa. But Kormati replied that she want to eat all the fruits which she collect with all family members of the house. From this we get the knowledge of value of the sharing.

**Punishment:**

It is an indirect value or we can say negative value. When we punished someone it is because of betterment of that person, the aim of punishment is to make the person good, healthy and fit for the society. Punishment is only justified when it is helpful to the society.<sup>4</sup> And this value we found in this tale, the father of Kosomti gives her punishment because she conspired to kill Kormati. The father build up the big cage made by bamboo and sent Kosomti into the cage.

**Sympathy and Kindness:**

It is seen that Kormati has sympathy and kindness towards Kosomti. Although Kosomti pushed her into the mouth of death yet she has enough sympathy and kindness for her elder sister. She requested to her father to free the Kosomti from the cage. Moreover by responding to the request she provides water and food to Kosomti secretly.

**Freedom:**

Kosomti, so long she was inside the cage. Now she wanted to be free, when all the family members didn't listen to her, she started to request Nuwai birds, those who were flying in the sky to give some feathers, beaks and nails. Finally she gets everything what she wants and like a birds, she flies with Nuwai birds in the sky. Here it is metaphorically describe that if you desire something from the inner core of heart certainly you will get that desired object. Even the birds, animals or nature will surely help to achieve your desired things.

Important of equal behavior:

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<sup>4</sup> C.L. Ten, *Crime, Guilt and Punishment*, received on en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/sociology of punishment

Another thing which we have from this story is that, since Kormati the younger sister is beautiful with turmeric complexion so she received more attention from her family members than Kosomti whose skin color is black. This is not a wise thing, if you separate someone, you will be separated by someone. We should behave equally to all people irrespective of caste, creed and color. As Andreja Pejic said, all human being deserve equal treatment, no matter their gender, identity or sexuality.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise we will lose our near ones, dear ones or daughter like the father of Kosomti and Kormati. We get the knowledge about the important of equal behavior from this tale, which is one of the most important values of our life.

### **Tale no.2 The Old Lady and Iguana:**

This is the story of the old lady and iguana. The old lady lived in a small hut on the hillock in the corner of a village. Beside her hut one big iguana lived in a hole. The old lady used to go everyday for begging in the village. Her day goes through whatever she gets by begging.

She loves very much to that iguana; she didn't take any food before giving some rice to the iguana. But one worse day the iguana was killed by some village people. Because of that the whole village is drowning due to curse at night when everyone is sleeping. The old lady was also sleeping, but she heard that some one is saying again and again that 'if you want to live run away this moment'. The old lady afraid and ask that who are you and why you are frighten me in this way? Are you man or ghost or god, who are you? Then the Iguana replied that I am your Iguana, I am coming to inform you that if you want to survive please leave this village as soon as possible. Hearing this old lady started to run and save her life. Next day the people of adjacent village seen that all houses are drown into the water except one house.

In this story we found that love to animal and feed to animal, no matter how much you have. If you have a will you can do anything. Even the beggar who is living by begging he or she can help by feeding someone, as we seen in the story that the old lady beggar scatter some rice in front of hole of that Iguana before she cooked for herself. Another thing is if you protect someone, you will be also protected by someone. As you sow, so shall you reap, Things will occur to you good or bad according to how you behave. Whatever you do certainly you will get its result. Since the old lady was take care and gives food to Iguana, so the Iguana also saves her life. That is why the law of karma said that, by free righteous actions man gain merits and by unrighteous actions they acquire demerits.<sup>6</sup> The results of your good deeds you will get one day surely.

### **Tale no.3 The Piece of Pumpkin:**

This is the story of two sisters, the elder sister is very poor and the younger sister is very rich financially. Although the younger sister is financially rich yet she does not help, care and gives importance to her sister. Because her elder sister is poor and financially she is not equal to her. She does not give any financial assistance despite receiving the request from her elder sister. One day when the elder sister visited to her home, she gave only one piece of pumpkin and some rice and she is never compassionate and sympathetic to her sister. Rather she is selfish and crooked minded women. Even due to her evil-thinking and being angry she took away the piece of pumpkin from her sister on that day. Miraculously, when the elder sister becomes rich she visited her elder sister's home and invites to come in her home. Accepting the invitation the elder sister visited again to her

<sup>5</sup> Line taken from <https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/equal>, retrieved on 18-10-2018

<sup>6</sup> See the law of karma section of *A Manual of Ethics*, by Jadunath Sinha, New Central Book Agency, p. 371

younger sister's home, but this time she did not take any foods although her sister offered various delicious foods. Observing this the younger sister interrogated, why have you not taken anything sister? The elder sister promptly reply that when I visited your home in my woeful situation you offered me only the piece of pumpkin which was also took away by you. Not only that you insult me by saying that if I pass by the in front door then your children will be hurt, and you drove me away through the back door. Now you are showing much more interest to me because I am rich, I have wealth and gold. It seems that you do not love me, you love my wealth and for that I am not taken anything from your home. By saying this she left the home.

From this story we learned that love to man, not his or her wealth. A man may be poor at present but he or she may be rich in the near future. It is not wise to insult and to give sorrow to anyone simply because of that fellow is poor. Morally it is our duty to help our relatives and fellow citizens. If you are not able to assist someone at least do not insult to them and you have not right to harm other people. Love to the man means love to the God, because all the man under the sky is the children of the God, said by the M.K. Gandhi.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, you can get the kind of behavior from other, the kind of behavior you do with others. Here in this story the elder sister didn't take any food to insult her younger sister who was insulted her by took away the piece of pumpkin which was given to her as an alms. Thus the elder sister insulted her sister understanding the opportunity. The younger sister was pay back with the same coin. Therefore you should not do anything because you have the power. Who knows probably there is someone who is more powerful than you, here it has been said that deals everything with good behavior and treat everything with good thought.

### Value Education in Religious traditions of Borok Aborigines:

The religious traditions are the most important sources among the various sources of value education. S. Radhakrishnan said, "Values in education although they find their source in philosophy have a second source in society, the people, their culture and their ideals." All most all the religion in their unique way imparts the education of values. "Life without religion is life without principle, and life without principle is like a ship without a rudder" said by M.K. Gandhi.<sup>8</sup> Let us find out what values we have in religious traditions of Kokborok speaking aborigines' or the Borok aborigines.

### Lampra:

It is one of the important religious customs of the Borok community. Literally Lampra means cross street or road, 'Lam' means lane or street and 'Pra' means branch. This worship is done at house level as well as community level; the main objective of this worship is peace and welfare of the individual and the community or society. The inner meaning of Lampra mantra is let their life be as long as river, and unaffected by anything as imperishable stone.<sup>9</sup> So we can assume that they give the utmost priority to peace and welfare of the people as well as they want unaffected authentic hassle free life.

<sup>7</sup> For more see <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/humanity.htm>, retrieved on 20-10-2018

<sup>8</sup> Quotation taken from Dr. Debhashis Pal, *Shikshar bhitti o vikash*, Rita Book Agency, p.116

<sup>9</sup> For more see P.K. Palit, *History of Religion in Tripura*, Kaveri Books, p. 151

**Ker:**

In the Ker, several deities are worshipped, namely Mwtai kotor, Mwtai kotorma, Thumnairog and Banirog etc., it is done at village or state level. The main purpose of this worship is to ward off and to protect the village or state from the evil spirits, safety from diseases and brings peace and harmony in the village or state. It has been observed that performing this worship they come into close, awaken we-feeling, developed sense of unity and integrity among the people of the village. So from this we learned how to live in unity and how to attain peace in life.

**Garia:**

Garia is a benevolent deity the protector, the fulfiller of one's good wishes and the provider of health, wealth and strength. It is think that He is the destroyer of evil forces. It is seen that Garia worship is a mixture of naturism, animism and fertility cult. Along with other animals, offering egg is noteworthy in this worship; an egg is a symbol of fertility, symbol of life and cause of maternity. That is why it is called that Garia is a deity of fertility. And the purpose of the worshipping Garia is to keep the house in order, ensuring the peace and serenity inside the home. This worship is done at community level also.

**CONCLUSION:**

Thus, the faith to the belief is found in their religious traditions, they believe that if they worship properly, the deities will be satisfied and give them peace and welfare. Basically the Kokborok speaking aborigines (Borok) are peace lover and peace and welfare is the central theme of their religious customs, it is cleared by the above discussion. E.T. Dalton rightly remarks that "a trace of their old faith is to be found in their present religious festivals and worshipping." In addition to this it can be said that their old faith of peace and welfare is very much required in the present scenario. Because peace, sympathy, belief and mutual respect to each other are the main elements of development of any community or nation and these values we can acquire through education only. Quality education is impossible without the education of values. To making the peace and keeping the peace, education of values is the only key.

Almost in all the worship we find that bamboo is the most essential part of worship. They think that deities reside in bamboo and bamboo represent the deities, beside this it is fact that bamboo itself is worshiped in its natural form like river(Twima), earth (Haa), wind (Navar) etc. generally they are nature-worshippers.<sup>10</sup> If we look keenly to their religious customs we will find that there is purpose of worship and the purpose is to get ride from worldly sufferings, evils and diseases. That means they want freedom, so the aims of their religious customs is to salvation, to achieve the truth, to realize the nature and according to that living peacefully in nature. We can say

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<sup>10</sup> Nature is beautiful because  
 She has different shades of color;  
 Let us try to keep the beauty of Nature  
 By giving greatest value to the Nature  
 And become a votary of Nature  
 Reimburse the debt of Nature.  
 (written by the Author)

that the characteristic of so-called National and Universal religion is found in their religious customs.<sup>11</sup>

In the Kokborok folktales we have seen that freedom, sympathy and cares are the prime point of the story. It is said that the most folktale is the tale of indulges. In some extent it is true, in regard to Kokborok folktales and it is necessary because without the wish or dream a man, a community or a nation can't grow, without wish man is like clay. We have also seen that there are some words of morality sometimes expresses in the form of metaphor and sometimes as a dialogue. Moreover, directly-indirectly these tales are educate us about the morality, peace and love not only to the human being but also other living being as animals, plants, trees and overall to the Nature. Finally the question is why value education is necessary for quality education?

Quality education is an education which leads us to the realm of realization and value education is one of the most important ways we can say to attain the quality education. And we have learned from the above discussion that Kokborok folktales and religious traditions of Borok aborigines are the good sources of values.

At last,  
Even the flowers blooming on the hills  
May be there is wild-fragrance  
Yet, they are blooming  
Outside, everyone's eyes...

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Galloway divides the religion into Tribal, National and Universal religion. For details see D. Miall Edwards, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, pp.64-91