

গগনা



GOGONA

একাদশ সংখ্যা, ছিডনী ২০২০ Eleventh Edition, Sydney, 2020

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**2020 Executive Committee of Assamese Association  
Australia (NSW & ACT)**

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Link to Sydney Virtual Rongali Bihu 2020: <http://www.assaminaustralia.org.au/bohag-bihu-2020>



গগনাৰ একাদশ সংখ্যাটিয়ে আপোনালোকলৈ কঢ়িয়াই আনিছে নতুন বছৰৰ শুভেচ্ছা আৰু ৰঙালী বিহুৰ হিয়া ভৰা ওলগ। চাওঁতে চাওঁতে চকুৰ প্ৰচাৰতে আমাৰ সকলোৰে অতিকৈ মৰমৰ বাৰ্ষিক আলোচনী ‘গগনাই’ একাদশ সংখ্যাত ভৰি দিলে। এই যোৱা এঘাৰটা বছৰত আমি ‘গগনা’ খনিক নতুন ৰূপত সজাই পৰাই সকলোৰে আগত আগবঢ়াবলৈ অশেষ প্ৰচেষ্টা চলাইছো। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত আপোনালোকৰ সহায়, সহযোগ আৰু অৱদান সদায়ে উল্লেখনীয়। বিগত বছৰৰ দৰে এইবাৰো গগনাৰ চলিত বছৰৰ সংখ্যাটি সকলোৰে মৰমৰে আকোৱালি ল’ব বুলি আশা ৰাখিলো। মহামাৰী ক’ৰনা ভাইৰাছৰ সংক্ৰমণে সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বতে ভয়াবহ ৰূপ ধাৰণ কৰি ত্ৰাসৰ সৃষ্টি কৰিছে। শত-সহস্ৰ লোকে এই মহামাৰীৰ কবলত প্ৰাণ হেৰুৱাইছে। প্ৰতি মুহূৰ্ততে বৃদ্ধি পাইছে ক’ৰনা আক্ৰান্ত লোকৰ সংখ্যা। এক উদ্বিগ্নতা আৰু অনিশ্চয়তাৰ বাতাবৰণত ভ্ৰাৰাক্ৰান্ত আজি আমি সকলো। এনে দুৰ্যোগৰ দিনত প্ৰতি দিনে-নিশাই সেৱা আগবঢ়াই যোৱা সকলো কৰ্মীক আমি নতমস্তক কৃতজ্ঞতা জ্ঞাপন কৰিছো। আহকচোন আমি সকলোৱে একত্ৰিত হৈ এই কোভিড প্ৰতিৰোধী যুঁজত সকলোৱে সহযোগ কৰি চৰকাৰৰ প্ৰচেষ্টাক সঁহাৰি জনাও। আশা ৰাখিছো এই সংকটৰ মুহূৰ্ত যেন অতি সোনকালেই সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বৰ পৰা নাইকিয়া হৈ পৰে আৰু সকলোৰে জীৱনলৈ সুখ, শান্তি, প্ৰীতি আৰু সমৃদ্ধি পুৰণ ঘূৰি আহে তাৰেই কামনা কৰি চলিত বছৰৰ গগনা খন আপোনালোকলৈ আগবঢ়োৱা হ’ল।

The eleventh edition of Gogona is bringing you all the good wishes for Assamese New Year and Rongali Bihu. With a blink of an eye, everyone’s dearest annual magazine ‘Gogona’ has reached the Eleventh edition. In the past eleven years, we have been trying to endeavour to present Gogona in a unique style. In this regard your help, support and contribution are remarkable. We are presenting the current edition of Gogona with the utmost hope that it will be embraced by everyone with love like last year.

The global outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created havoc and panic everywhere. The transmission of this pandemic is extremely severe and has already taken away many lives. The numbers of infected people have risen every moment and caused global tension. Today we are living life in the atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety. In this global crisis, we would like to extend our huge thanks to all front-line workers who have been providing service day and night under unprecedented pressure. Let’s get united to fight against this global pandemic and acknowledge the effort of the Government. We are presenting the current year’s Gogona with the hope that this crisis situation would soon vanish from the entire world and brings back peace, happiness, prosperity to the lives of everyone.

From Gogona Editorial Team

(গগনা সম্পাদনা সমিটিৰ হৈ)

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## বিহু নাচ,পথাৰৰ পৰা মঞ্চলৈ

স্নিদ্ধা চৌধুৰী (লুকি)

“১৯৩৪ চনত গোলাঘাটত ৰঙালী বিহু পোণ প্ৰথম বাৰৰ বাবে মঞ্চত পৰিবেশন কৰা হৈছিল বুলি জনা যায়।”

বিহু নাচৰ উৎসনো কি বা বিহু নাচ কেতিয়াৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ হৈছিল তাক সঠিকৈ কোৱাটো কঠিন। মানুহে সভ্যতাৰ পথত খোজদি খেতি কৰিবলৈ শিকাৰ আগতে হাতত আজৰি সময় নাছিল বুলিয়েই ক’ব পাৰি। প্ৰতি দিনৰ বেছি ভাগ সময় খাদ্যৰ সন্ধান আৰু যোগাৰ কৰোতেই পাৰ হৈ গৈছিল। খেতি কৰিবলৈ শিকাৰ পাছত খেতিৰ ফচল চপাই মানুহে অলপ উশাহ লবলৈ সময় পোৱা হ’ল। এই আজৰি সময় হাতত অহাৰ পৰাই লাহে লাহে কলা-কৃষ্টিৰো আৰম্ভ হ’বলৈ ধৰিলে। খেতিৰ ফচলত নিজৰ কষ্টৰ ফল দেখি আনন্দত আত্মহাৰা হৈ ডেকা-গাভৰুৱে মিলি মুকলি পথাৰত, নৈৰ পাৰত আপোন পাহৰাহে নাচ-গানত মগ্ন হৈ পৰে। মানুহৰ বিশ্বাস আছিল যে নাচ-গানৰ শব্দই প্ৰকৃতিক উৰ্বৰা কৰি তোলে। আধুনিক বিজ্ঞানৰ মতেও গীত-মাতৰ শব্দই শস্যৰ ফচলত সহায় কৰে বুলি কয়। মুঠতে অসমত মানুহে খেতি কৰিবলৈ শিকাৰ সময়ৰ পিছৰে পৰা বিহু নাচ আৰু তাৰ পাছত বিহুৰো আৰম্ভ হোৱা বুলি ক’লে হয়তো বৰ ভুল কৰা নহ’ব।

বিহু অসমীয়া জাতীয় উৎসৱ আৰু ই কৃষিকেন্দ্ৰিক। সকলো জাতি, বৰ্ণ বা ধৰ্মৰ লোকে এই উৎসৱত অংশ গ্ৰহণ কৰে। বছৰৰ বিভিন্ন ঋতুত কৃষিৰ লগত সঙ্গতি ৰাখি যুগ যুগৰ পৰা অসমত তিনিটা বিহু পালন কৰা হৈ আহিছে। বসন্ত কালত যেতিয়া কৃষিৰ প্ৰস্তুতিৰ সময় আহে, তেতিয়া উদ্যাপিত কৰা হয় বহাগ বা ৰঙালী বিহু, তেনেদৰে শৰৎ কালত খেতি ৰোৱা, সামৰা সময়ত পালন কৰা হয় কাতি বা

কঙালী বিহু আৰু শীত কালত খেতিৰ ফচল চপোৱাৰ সময়ত পালন কৰা হয় মাঘ বা ভোগালী বিহু। বিহু তিনি বিধ যদিও ৰঙালী বিহুৱেই হ’ল অসমৰ মূল উৎসৱ।

এতিয়া আহো বিহু নাচলৈ। অনুমান কৰিব পাৰি যে ডেকা-গাভৰুৱে বিহু নাচি যেতিয়া ৰাইজৰ আগত প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিব পৰা হ’ল, সমাজৰ গণ্য-মান্য লোক সকলে এই বিহুৱা দল সমূহক ঘৰৰ চোতালত বিহু নাচিবলৈ আমন্ত্ৰণ কৰা আৰম্ভ কৰে। এই দৰেই বিহুৰ জনপ্ৰিয়তা বাঢ়িবলৈ ধৰে।

শুনা যায় যে অসমত বিহু নাচৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতা কৰা প্ৰথম জন ৰজা আছিল আহোম ৰজা স্বৰ্গদেউ সিংহ।



১৭০৬ চনৰ পৰা ৰঙালী বিহুত বিহুৱা দলক ৰংঘৰৰ সন্মুখত বিহু প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিবলৈ আমন্ত্ৰণ কৰা হৈছিল আৰু তেখেতৰ পৃষ্ঠপোষকতাতই বিহু নাচৰ বিস্তাৰ আৰম্ভ হয় বুলিও কোৱা হয়।

তেজপুৰৰ ওচৰে-পাজৰে পোৱা নৱম শতিকাৰ বহুতো বুৰঞ্জীমূলক ভাস্কৰ্য ফলকত বিহু নাচৰ নমুনা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়। সেই প্ৰাচীন কালৰ বিহু গীত আৰু বিহু নাচ সময়ৰ লগত বহুতো সলনি হ’বলৈ ধৰিলে। সময়ৰ সোঁতত সমাজ এখন সলনি হোৱাতো স্বাভাৱিক। অনুমান কৰিব পাৰি যে বহু ধৰণৰ সলনিৰ পিছতহে বিহু নাচে বৰ্তমানৰ ৰূপ ধাৰণ কৰিছে। প্ৰাচীন কালৰ আৰু বৰ্তমানৰ বিহু নাচৰ মাজত নিশ্চয় আছে আকাশ পাতালৰ পাৰ্থক্য। তথাপিও বিহু গীতৰ মূল তত্ত্ব হয়তো অত্যাধিক ভাবে সলনি হোৱা নাই বুলি ভাবিব পাৰি। বিহু গীতবোৰত প্ৰেম, ভালপোৱাৰ আবেগ, বিৰহ ইত্যাদি অনুভূতি বোৰ প্ৰাচীন কালৰ পৰাই চলি আহিছে

আৰু বৰ্তমানটো সেই ভাবেই চলি থকা দেখিবলৈ পোৱা যায়।

এতিয়া কথা হ'লযে বিহুক কেতিয়াৰ পৰা পথাৰৰ পৰা মঞ্চলৈ অনা হ'ল? ১৯৩৪ চনত গোলাঘাটত ৰঙালী বিহু পোণ প্ৰথম বাৰৰ বাবে মঞ্চত পৰিবেশন কৰা হৈছিল বুলি জনা যায়। তাৰ পাছত ৰঙালী বিহু ১৯৩৫ চনত দেৰগাঁৱত আৰু ১৯৪১ চনত শিৱসাগৰত মঞ্চত পৰিবেশন কৰা হৈছিল। গুৱাহাটীৰ উজানবজাৰত ১৯৫২ চনত ৰঙালী বিহু মঞ্চত পৰিবেশন কৰাৰ পাছতহে মঞ্চত ৰঙালী বিহু পতা কথাটো সমগ্ৰ গোটেই অসমবাসী ৰাইজৰ মাজত জনাজাত আৰু জনপ্ৰিয় হৈ পৰে। এবাৰ মঞ্চত স্থান পোৱাৰ পাছত বিহু নাচ দ্ৰুত গতিত

সলনি হ'বলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে। হুচৰী, জেং বিহু, বিহু-ৰাণী অথবা বিহু সম্ৰাজ্ঞী আদি বিহু সমূহ আৰম্ভ হৈ আধুনিকতা বঢ়াৰ লগতে বিহু নাচ লোক-নৃত্যৰ ছাপৰ পৰা আঁতৰি অহা যেন অনুভৱ হয়। এই বিষয়ে ৰাইজেই বিচাৰকৰ্তা হ'ব লাগিব।

**তথ্য সংগ্ৰহ:**

<http://www.xahitya.org/2013/04/14/%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BF%E0%A7%B1%E0%A7%B0%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%B0-%E0%A6%AA%E0%A6%A5%E0%A6%A4-%E0%A6%AC%E2%80%99%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%97-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%B9%E0%A7%81-%E0%A6%B2/>

<https://www.nezine.com/info/TUhcBfFUMGd5S29oQIN6WfY1RGg1Zz09/evolution-of-bihu-nach.html>

<https://www.nezine.com/info/TUhcBfFUMGd5S29oQIN6WfY1RGg1Zz09/evolution-of-bihu-nach.html>

## ৰঙালী বিহুৰ সোণসেৰীয়া পৰম্পৰা

মনোৰমা দেৱী, শিলপুখুৰী, গুৱাহাটী



বিহু অসমৰ জাতীয় উৎসৱ। অসমীয়া মানুহে বছৰেকত তিনিটা বিহু অতি নিষ্ঠা আৰু একাগ্ৰতাৰে উলহ মালহেৰে পালন কৰে। এই বিহু তিনিটা হ'ল-ৰঙালী বিহু বা বহাগ বিহু, কঙালী বিহু বা কাতি বিহু আৰু ভোগালী বিহু বা মাঘ বিহু। বছৰৰ শেষৰ মাহ চ'ত। এই চ'ত আৰু বহাগ মাহৰ দোমাহীত ৰং-ৰহইছেৰে পালন কৰা বিহুটিয়েই হ'ল বহাগ বিহু। আহিন আৰু কাতি মাহৰ দোমাহীত পালন কৰা হয় কাতি বিহু আৰু পুহ আৰু মাঘ মাহৰ দোমাহীত পালন কৰা হয় মাঘ বিহু। আমাৰ এই বিহু তিনিওটাৰ প্ৰত্যেকৰে লগত সংগতি ৰাখি আমি কেইটামান অপৰিহাৰ্য্য কাৰ্য্য সম্পাদন কৰি আহিছো।

বহাগ বিহুৰ লগত বিহুৱানৰ ওতঃপ্ৰোত সম্বন্ধ। বহাগ বিহুৰ সময়ত প্ৰকৃতিয়েও নতুন সাজ পিন্ধে। গছ-গছনিৰ পুৰণি পাতবোৰ সৰি নতুন পাত ওলায়। ফলে-ফুলে গছবোৰ জাতিষ্কাৰ হৈ পৰে। অসমীয়া মহিলাসকলেও পৰিয়ালৰ প্ৰতিজন লোককে বিহুৱান দিবলৈ উঠি পৰি লাগে। অনাগত দিনৰে পৰা অসমত বিহুৱানৰ গুৰুত্ব আৰু সমাদৰ চলি আহিছে। আমাৰ অসমীয়া সমাজৰ প্ৰতিটো পৰিয়ালত তাঁতশালৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আছিল, বৰ্তমানো নথকা নহয়। অসমৰ প্ৰতিগৰাকী মহিলাই আগৰ দিনত কাপোৰ বব জানিছিল। ঘৰখনৰ লাগতিয়াল কাপোৰখিনি তেওঁলোকে নিজহাতেৰে তাঁতশালত বৈ উলিয়াইছিল। বিহুৱান ববলৈ ফাগুনৰ মাহতে সূতাৰ মাৰ দিয়া কাম শেষ কৰিছিল-অৰ্থাৎ ফাগুনৰ মাহতে বিহুৱানৰ আৰম্ভণি কৰি বিহুৰ আগতে বৈ উলিয়াইছিল। বিহুৱান বুলিলে ৰঙা আৰু সূতাৰে পাৰি দিয়া ফুল তোলা গামোছাকে বুজোৱা হয়। বৰ্তমান গামোছাৰ সলনি ব্যৱহাৰৰ উপযোগী ভিন্ ভিন্ সাজপাৰকো বিহুৱান বুলিয়ে কয়। মূঠৰ ওপৰত গছে নতুন পাত ধাৰণ কৰাৰ দৰে মানুহেও বছৰৰ আৰম্ভণিতে নতুন বস্ত্ৰ পৰিধান কৰে। আগৰ দিনত মা,

আইতাকে ধৰি পৰিয়ালৰ মহিলাসকলে অতি আদৰ আৰু সন্মান সহকাৰে বিহুৱান বৈ উলিয়াইছিল। ফাগুনৰ মাহতে বিহুৱানৰ সূতা কিনি আনি মাৰ দি বাতি কাটি কাপোৰ ববলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে; কাৰণ চ'তৰ মাহত বিহুৱানৰ আৰম্ভণি কৰিব 'নাপায়' বুলি বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ জনে কয়। সেই সময়ত বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ জনে 'নাপায়' বুলি ক'লে-কিয় নাপায়' তাক সোধাৰ প্ৰয়োজন বোধ কোনেও কৰা নাছিল। তেওঁলোকে কোৱা সকলো কথাই বিনা প্ৰতিবাদে সকলোৱে পালন কৰিছিল। গতিকে অসমীয়া নাৰীয়ে ঘৰখনৰ যাবতীয় সকলো কাম কৰিও অতি হেপাহেৰে বিহুৱান বোৱাত ব্যস্ত হৈ পৰিছিল। তেওঁলোকে বিহুৱানক ইমানেই মৰ্য্যদা প্ৰদান কৰে যে অশুচি গাৰে তাতশালখন স্পৰ্শই নকৰে।

বহাগ বিহু সাধাৰণতে সাতদিন ধৰি পালন কৰা হয়। দোমাহীৰ দিনা প্ৰথম বিহু। সেইদিনা গাৱঁৰ নৈ-বিল বা খাল আদিত পৰিয়ালৰ ল'ৰা বুঢ়া আদি সকলোৱে মিলি ৰং ধেমালি কৰি গৰুক গা ধুৱাই। অসম কৃষি প্ৰধান দেশ। সেয়েহে কৃষক পৰিয়ালৰ বাবে গৰু অপৰিহাৰ্য্য। হালোৱা গৰু নহ'লে তাহানিৰ দিনত খেতি কৰা অসম্ভৱ আছিল। 'যাৰ নাই গৰু সি সবাতোকৈ সৰু'। এই প্ৰবচন ফাঁকিয়ে অসমীয়া লোক জীৱনত গৰুৰ স্থান নিৰূপণ কৰে। গৰুক গা ধুৱাবলৈ নিওঁতে সিহঁতৰ গাত মিঠাতেল সানি দীঘলতি মাখিয়াতিৰ ডালেৰে কোবাই কোবাই লৈ যায়, লাউ, বেঙেনা চকল চকলকৈ কাটি মালা গাঁঠি গৰুক মালা পিন্ধায় আৰু এনেদৰে গায়-'দীঘলতি দীঘল পাত, গৰু কোবো জাত জাত। মাৰ সৰু বাপেৰ সৰু, তই হবি বৰ গৰু।' গধূলি গৰু গোহালিলৈ আহিলে সিহঁতক মৰাপাট আৰু শুকান তৰাগছৰ আঁহেৰে তৈয়াৰ কৰা নতুন পঘাৰে বান্ধে-সেই নতুন পঘাই হ'ল গৰুৰ বিহুৱান।

দ্বিতীয়দিনা মানুহ বিহু। সেইদিনা ঘৰৰ মা-আইতাহঁতে তাতশালৰ পৰা নতুন গামোছাবোৰ কাটি আনি, ধুই ৰ'দত শুকাবলৈ দিয়ে আৰু পৰিয়ালৰ ল'ৰা ছোৱালীকে ধৰি আন সদস্য সকলেও গা-পা ধুই জা-জলপান খোৱাৰ পিছত এডাল মাৰিৰে গামোছাবোৰ অৰ্থাৎ বিহুৱানবোৰ আনি ভাগে ভাগে প্ৰত্যেকৰে গাত দিয়ে। সৰু কালত ল'ৰা ছোৱালীহঁতে মাকে বা আইতাকে মাৰিৰে আনি বিহুৱান গাত দিয়া কৌশলটো দেখি বৰ আমোদ পাইছিল। ল'ৰালি কালত মোৰ ডাঙৰ ল'ৰাটোৱে জা-জলপান খোৱাৰ পিছত আইতাকে বিহুৱান দিয়া সময়খিনিলৈ অধীৰ অপেক্ষা কৰিছিল আৰু বিহুৱান ডিঙিত মেৰিয়াই লৈ আনন্দতে নাচি-বাগি আটাইকেইটা ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীয়ে আনন্দত আত্মহাৰা হৈ পৰিছিল। আজিও সেই দিনবোৰ তাৰ মনত সজীৱ হৈ আছে আৰু অতীতৰ মধুৰ স্মৃতি সুঁৱৰি সি বৰ আনন্দ পায়। আমাৰ এই পৰম্পৰাগত ভাবে চলি অহা নিয়মবোৰ সঁচাকৈয়ে বৰ আদৰ্শনীয় আৰু আমোদজনক আছিল। এই সাতবিহুৰ ভিতৰতে জী-জোঁৱাইক মাতি আনি বিহুৱান দিয়ে আৰু পৰিয়ালৰ আনসকল মিতিৰ কুটুম্বৰ মাজতো বিহুৱানৰ আদান প্ৰদান কৰে। এই কাৰ্য্যই পৰিয়ালৰ মাজত থকা মৰম-চেনেহ, শ্ৰদ্ধা-ভক্তি, আন্তৰিকতা, একাগ্ৰতা আদিৰ সুন্দৰ পৰিচয় দাঙি ধৰে। বিহুৱানৰ আন এটি পৰম্পৰাও এইখিনিতে উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি। আগৰ দিনত কিছুমান পৰিয়ালত প্ৰথম সন্তানটোক (ল'ৰাই হওক বা ছোৱালীয়েই হওক) বহাগ বিহুত "আনাকাটা" বিহুৱান দিছিল। "আনাকাটা" গামোছা, চাদৰ, ধুতি আদিৰ প্ৰচলন এতিয়াও আমাৰ মাজত আছে। সাধাৰণতে বিয়া, উপনয়ন, চূড়াকৰণ আদিত এই কাপোৰ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। "আনাকাটা" কাপোৰ এবাৰত এখনহে বৈ উলিয়াব পাৰি। কাৰণ গামোছা, চাদৰ, ধুতি আদি যি কাপোৰেই নহওক বোৱা শেষ হোৱাৰ পাছত নকটাকৈ তাতশালৰ পৰা উলিয়াই অনা হয়। গতিকে এই কাপোৰ বোৱা অতি যত্নৰ কাম। তদুপৰি এই কাপোৰখনক বহুত পবিত্ৰ আৰু গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ বুলি বিবেচিত কৰা হয়। সেয়েহে শুভ কাৰ্য্যত ইয়াৰ ব্যৱহাৰ অতি আৱশ্যকীয়। বিহুৱানৰ লগতে আমি পৰম্পৰাগত ভাৱে পালন কৰি অহা আন এটি নিয়মৰ কথাও উল্লেখ কৰিবলৈ বিচাৰিছো।

বিহুৰ দিনা পৰিয়ালৰ সকলোৱে গা ধুৱাৰ কাৰণে মা-আইতাহঁতে মাটি মাহ, হালধি আৰু আমৰ কলি একেলগে

মিহলাই পিহনাত পিচি যতনাই দিয়ে। সেই মিশ্রণটোৰে গা ধূলে বছৰটোলৈ চৰ্ম ৰোগ, ঘামচি আদিৰ পৰা পৰিত্ৰাণ পোৱা যায় বুলি এটা লোকবিশ্বাস চলি আহিছে। অৱশ্যে অসমৰ সকলো ঠাইতে এই পৰম্পৰা নাথাকিবও পাৰে।

বৰ্তমান বিশ্বায়নৰ যুগত সামাজিক ৰীতি নীতিৰ পৰিবৰ্তন আৰু পৰিবৰ্তন তথা মানুহৰ জীৱন সংগ্ৰামৰ প্ৰকোপ বাঢ়ি যোৱা বাবে এই পৰম্পৰাবোৰৰ ধৰণ কৰণ সলনি অথবা বিলুপ্তি ঘটা পৰিলক্ষিত হয়। কিন্তু এই সোণসেৰীয়া নিয়মবোৰ অসমীয়া মানুহৰ স্বকীয় বৈশিষ্ট্যৰ পৰিচায়ক।



## শৰৎ বন্দনা

শৰতৰ সন্ধিয়া আকাশত জ্বলিছে  
পূৰ্ণিমাৰ ৰূপালী জোন,  
চোতালৰ আগৰ শেৱালী জুপি  
গোন্ধে আমোল-মোল।

বৰ নৈৰ পাৰত হালিছে-জালিছে  
কহুৱা বিৰিণা থাগৰি নল,  
বিলৰ পানীত চৰিছে-ফুৰিছে  
ৰাজহাঁহ খৰালিৰ দল।

পূৱতি নিশা নিয়ৰৰ মুকুতা সৰিছে  
দুবৰিৰ সেউজীয়া দলিচাত,  
তাকে দেখি বকুলেও মাৰিছে হাঁহি  
লুটি-বাগৰি তাত।

ঢাক-ঢোল শংখ ধ্বনি বাজিছে  
দেৱী দুৰ্গাৰ বন্দনাত,  
উলহে-মালহে নধৰা হৈছে  
এই সুন্দৰ বসুন্ধৰাত।

আন্ধাৰৰ পাৰ ভাঙি পোহৰেও মেলিছে বেহা  
দীপাৱলীতে হৈ উদ্ভাসিত,  
ভেদ-ভাৱ পৰিহৰি প্ৰেমৰ গান গাও  
আমি সকলোৱে হৈ একত্ৰিত।

স্বপ্না মজুমদাৰ চন্দ

## ব'হাগ মানে ৰঙৰ মেলা

ব'হাগ মানে ৰঙৰ মেলা  
 সেউজীয়া, ৰঙা, নীলা, হালধীয়া  
 ৰঙৰে ভৰপূৰ  
 চোৱাচোন তুমি এবাৰ, মনৰ চকুৰে  
 প্ৰকৃতিক ৰূপৰ পজাঁক।  
 বসন্তৰ ৰঙ্গমঞ্চত ব'হাগৰ আগমন  
 পলাশৰ দলিচাত সদ্যস্নাতা কুমাৰীৰ,  
 সুগন্ধি পুষ্পাংসৱ।  
 ব'হাগ মানে উৎসৱৰ মেলা, প্ৰতিধ্বনি,  
 হৃদয়ত ৰাগৰঞ্জ, প্ৰেম আৰু প্ৰকৃতিৰ আলিঙ্গন,  
 তোমাৰ বাবে ব'হাগ উপসিত কামদেৱ,  
 তোমাৰ বাবে বসন্ত প্ৰেমীৰূপ ৰাতিৰ সুবাস,  
 তোমাৰ বাবে ফাগুন প্ৰথম যৌবনে,  
 দুচকুত জগাই তোলা অনুৰাগ, অনুভূতি,  
 তৃষ্ণাতুৰ যৌবনে নাচে; নাচনিহৈ,  
 মতলীয়া মন উপচি পৰে,  
 ঢোল, পেঁপা, গগণাৰ সুৰ সঙ্গমত,  
 হৃদয়ে হৃদয়ে জাগে অতৃপ্ত বাসনা,  
 প্ৰকৃতিৰ ছন্দ ৰূপে ব্যঞ্জনাত ---,  
 মিলনৰ বৰ্ণমালা, বিহুগীত, বনগীত।  
 গীত গাই ব'হাগে, নবজন্মৰ, সেউজ বিপ্লবৰ--,  
 সঙ্গ দিয়ে--জীৱন দিয়ে, সহস্ৰ অক্ষুৰৰ।  
 বৰদৈচিলা মাকৰ ঘৰলৈ যায়,  
 বিজুলিয়ে বাট দেখুৱাই।  
 যুগল বন্দী, বিহুগীত, নাচনী আৰু গামখাৰু  
 গগনাৰ ৰেচম সুৰে নাচি নচুৱাই প্ৰাণ।  
 কুলি, কেতেকী আৰু মইনা চৰাই সুৰীয়া সঙ্গীত,  
 অসমীয়াৰ অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ মেৰুদণ্ড;  
 প্ৰাণ উচ্ছল কৰে ৰঙালীৰ ৰঙ্গশালাত।

## আশা

জুই ধৰিছে  
 জীপাল হৈছে সকলো  
 কৈছিল - ময়োতো যাব লাগে !!  
 নালাগে জানো?  
 যোৱা, জীপাল হোৱা  
 অভিনন্দন তোমালৈ!!  
 সেমেকা নিয়ৰ হৈ ৰৈ আছে  
 আহিবা জানো  
 তিতিবলৈ??  
 মন আছে??  
 জানো, আহিবা এদিন  
 নিয়ৰত উৰুঙা হোৱা  
 হিয়াৰ শীতলতা  
 জুইয়ে দিব নোৱাৰে।  
 আশা.....  
 এদিন তুমি আহিবা!!

প্ৰাঞ্জল কুমাৰ অধিকাৰী

ৰোহিনী কুমাৰ বেজবৰুৱা



## আমাৰ আদৰৰ গামোচা

শ্ৰুতিধাৰা কৌশিক

‘গামোচাৰ আঁচলতে  
পদুমৰ চকা,  
মুখতে মেৰিয়াই আছে  
পাহুৱাল ডেকা’।

‘গামোচা’ শব্দটোৰ লগত অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ এক এৰিব নোৱৰা সমন্ধ নিহিত হৈ আছে। অসমীয়া জনজীৱনত গামোচাৰ আসন সদায় সুকীয়া আৰু বৈশিষ্ট্যপূৰ্ণ। ৰঙালী বিহুকে কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি প্ৰতিটো বিহু আৰু উৎসৱ-পাৰ্বণৰ লগত ওতপ্ৰোত ভাৱে জড়িত হৈ আছে আমাৰ সকলোৰে আদৰৰ অসমীয়া জাতিৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতীক গামোচা খন। গামোচাই হৈছে অসমীয়া সমাজৰ অনন্য স্বকীয় পৰিচয়। এই ফুলাম সৰু কাপোৰ খনিৰ মৰ্যাদা, ঐতিহ্য, সন্মান আৰু বহুল ব্যৱহাৰ অসমীয়া সমাজত অতিকৈ উচ্চ। বিহুৰ ‘বিহুৱান’ গামোচাৰ অবিহনে যেন অসম্পূৰ্ণ। গামোচাখনৰ বাহিৰে আন কোনো উপহাৰেই যেন মানত ডাঙৰ হ’ব নোৱাৰে। সেয়েহে ই আমাৰ জাতীয় সংস্কৃতিত প্ৰীতি-সম্প্ৰীতিৰ এনাজৰী।

গামোচাৰ উৎপত্তিৰ সন্দৰ্ভত ক’বলৈ গ’লে দেখা যায় যে তান্তশালত শিপিনীয়ে বস্ত্ৰ বয়ন কৰিবলৈ লোৱাৰ আৰম্ভনিৰ পৰাই প্ৰয়োজন সাপেক্ষে এই বস্ত্ৰখনি তৈয়াৰ কৰা হৈছিল। ঐতিহাসিক সমলসমূহৰ পৰা জনা যায় যে আহোম সকলৰ ৰাজত্বৰ দিনৰে পৰাই অসমত হস্ততাঁত আৰু বয়ন শিল্পই যথেষ্ট প্ৰসৰ্তা আৰু সমৃদ্ধি লাভ কৰিছিল। বিশেষকৈ স্বৰ্গদেউ প্ৰতাপ সিংহৰ দিনত এই শিল্পই প্ৰাণ পাই উঠিছিল। এই শিল্পৰ আৰ্দ্ৰশই যথাসময়ত সমগ্ৰ জাতি, জনজাতিকে কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি বৃহত্তৰ অসমীয়া সমাজত এক সুদৃঢ় ৰূপত খোপনি পুতিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। এতিয়াও অসমীয়া সমাজত এই হস্ততাঁত আৰু বয়ন শিল্পৰ চৰ্চা, প্ৰভাৱ আৰু জনপ্ৰিয়তা কোনো দিশতেই হ্ৰাস পোৱা নাই। গতিকে এই বয়ন শিল্পক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি গামোচাৰ প্ৰচলনও আহোম শাসনকালৰে পৰা অসমত ব্ৰতি আছে বুলি জানিব পাৰি। আহোম ৰাজত্বৰ আমোলতেই অসমত মুগা শিল্পৰো আৰম্ভনি হৈছিল। তেতিয়াৰে পৰা মুগাৰ গামোচাও অসমত প্ৰচলিত হৈ আছে মহাপুৰুষ শ্ৰীমন্ত শংকৰদেৱৰ সময়তো গামোচাৰ বহুল প্ৰচলন হোৱা কথা জনা যায়। গামোচাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ অসমৰ উপৰিও বিহাৰ, পশ্চিমবংগ আৰু উৰিষ্যা ৰাজ্যতো দেখা যায়। কিন্তু অসমীয়া গামোচাৰ লগত এই ৰাজ্যসমূহত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা গামোচাৰ যথেষ্ট পাৰ্থক্য আছে। অসমীয়া মানুহে গামোচা খনক অসমীয়া জাতীয় সজ্জা তথা সাংস্কৃতিক প্ৰতীক হিচাপে সন্মান জনায় আৰু ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। কিন্তু আন ঠাই সমূহত ইয়াক নিত্য ব্যৱহৃত সাধাৰণ সামগ্ৰী হিচাপে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰাহে দেখা যায়।

গামোচা শব্দটো ‘গা’ আৰু ‘মোচা’ এই দুটা শব্দৰ পৰা লোৱা হৈছে। ‘গা’ অৰ্থাৎ শৰীৰ আৰু ‘মোচা’ মানে মোহৰা ‘অৰ্থাৎগা ধোৱাৰ পিছত গা মোচিবলৈ ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা বস্ত্ৰ। ই প্ৰায় ডেৰ কাঠি বা তিনিহাত দীঘল আৰু এহাত এমুঠন বহল। গামোচা খনৰ দুই কাষে ৰঙা আঁচুৰ বহলকৈ পাৰি দিয়া আৰু এটা আগত ফুল বচা আৰু আনটো আগত আঁচুৰ শেল মৰা থাকে। গামোচাক তিনিভাগত ভাগ কৰিব পাৰি। সেইয়া হৈছে সাধাৰণ গামোচা, ফুলাম গামোচা আৰু শুচি সূচক বা পবিত্ৰ গামোচা। আমাৰ অসমীয়া সমাজত দৈনন্দিন ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা গামোচা খনেই হৈছে সাধাৰণ গামোচা। কৃষক সকলৰ এই খনেই অপৰিহায্য বস্ত্ৰ। তেঁওলোকে এইখন

ককালত টঙালি বা কান্ধত আঁৰি লয় আৰু মুখ-হাত মোচাৰ বাবেও ব্যৱহাৰ কৰে। ৰোৱনী, দাৱনী, ৰান্ধনিৰ পৰা আদি কৰি গৰখীয়া, খৰিকটীয়া সকলোৰে বাবে গামোচা খন হৈছে অবিচ্ছেদ্য সামগ্ৰী। উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি যে এই গামোচা খনতে বান্ধি ৰোৱনী সকলে বা ঘৰৰ গৃহীণীয়ে দিনৰ আহাৰ খেতিয়ক সকলৰ বাবে খেতিপথাৰ লৈ যায়। সঁচাকৈয়ে ইয়াৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আৰু প্ৰয়োজনীয়তাক অসমীয়া জনজীৱনত প্ৰতিটো মুহূৰ্ততে অনুভৱ কৰা হয়। এই গামোচা খন ৰঙা আঁচুৰ পাৰি বা সৰু সৰু ফুল বাছি বোৱা হয়। এই গামোচাৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আৰু প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা আমাৰ সমাজত ইমানেই বেছি যে দৈনন্দিন জীৱনত এই খন এৰিলে সঁচাকৈয়ে বিপদৰ সন্মুখীন হ'ব লগীয়া অৱস্থা হ'ব বুলি অসমীয়া বিহুগীতটো এনেদৰে উল্লেখ আছে –

‘ছাতি লাঠী তিয়নী  
নেৰিবি ঐ নেৰিবি  
এৰিব যে লাগিলে  
থিয়ৈ থিয়ৈ মৰিবি’।

বিহু বুলিলেই বিহুৱানখনৰ কথা মনলৈ আহে। ৰঙালী বিহুলৈ কেইমাহমান থাকোতেই এই ফুলাম গামোচা বা বিহুৱানখন বোৱাৰ ক’ত প্ৰস্তুতি যে চলোৱা হয়। আগতে তাঁতশালত শিপিনীয়ে ‘বুকুৰ উমেৰে, হেঁপাহৰ বাণীৰে, মৰমৰ দীঘেৰে, ৰঙা আঁচুৰ পাৰি দি’ বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ ফুল বাচি বহু আশা-আংকাফাৰে এই আদৰৰ গামোচাখন আপোনজনলৈ বৈ উলিয়াই। বিহুৰ দিনা জেষ্ঠজনক সন্মান আৰু শ্ৰদ্ধা জ্ঞাপনৰ চিন স্বৰূপে এই আদৰৰ গামোচা খন যঁচা হয়। অসমীয়া সমাজত পৰম্পৰাৰ মাজত বৰ্তি থকা মৰম, ভালপোৱা, মিলাপ্ৰীতি আৰু আশীৰ্বাদৰ চিন স্বৰূপে এই গামোচা প্ৰদান কৰা হয়।

বিভিন্ন সভা সমিতি, মেল-মিটিং আদিত এই ফুলাম গামোচাৰে বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিক সম্বৰ্দ্ধনা জনোৱা হয়। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও আন ৰাজ্যৰ আৰু বেলেগ দেশৰ পৰা অহা ৰাজনৈতিক

নেতা সকলোকো এই গামোচাৰে সাদৰ সম্ভাষণ জনোৱা হয়। ই সঁচাকৈয়ে অসমীয়া জাতিৰ অতিথি অভ্যৰ্থনাৰ এক অনুপম উদাহৰণ। দেশ-বিদেশতো আমাৰ এই মৰমৰ গামোচা খনৰ আদৰৰ অন্ত নাই। বিহু সন্মিলনৰ তোৰণ, ৰঙালী বিহুৰ উৎসৱ স্থলীৰ সাজসজ্জা কৰণৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি ঢুলীয়াৰ ঢোলত, বিহুৱাৰ মূৰত আৰু ৰঙালী বিহুৰ আলোচনীৰ বেতুপাতলৈকে এই ফুলাম গামোচা খনে শোভা বৰ্ধন কৰি আহিছে। সেইবাবে বিহুৱা ডেকাটিয়ে বিহু মাৰি এই গামোচা খনক উদ্দেশ্য কৰি গাইছে-

‘ফুলামকৈ গামোচা বৈ দিয়া সৰু ভনী  
নেলাগে বিলাতী কাপোৰ ঐ’।

আমাৰ সকলো মাংগলিক কাৰ্যত ব্যৱহাৰ হোৱা তৃতীয় বিধ গামোচাক শুচিসূচক বা পবিত্ৰ গামোচা বুলি কোৱা হয়। সকলোধৰণৰ পূজা-সেৱা, সৰাহ, নামঘৰ, সত্ৰ, মন্দিৰ, খান, ভাওনা ইত্যাদিত এই গামোচা ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। আমি সকলোৱে নিশ্চয় লক্ষ্য কৰিছো যে নামঘৰৰ মণিকূটত, থাপনাত, নামঘৰৰ খুটাত আৰু প্ৰায় প্ৰত্যেক জন অসমীয়া মানুহৰ গোঁসাই ঘৰৰ থাপনা আদিত এই গামোচা ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। তাৎপৰ্যজনক কথা এই যে এনে গামোচাত কীৰ্তন, নামঘোষাৰ শ্লোক আৰু ভগৱানৰ নাম শিল্পী সকলে অতি সৃষ্টিশীলতা আৰু নিপুন ভাবে লিখি বৈ উলিয়াই। নামঘৰত নাম-প্ৰসংগৰ সময়ত বৈষ্ণৱ ভক্ত আৰু আয়তী সকলে কান্ধত অতি ভক্তিৰে গামোচা লোৱাটো আমাৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ পৰম্পৰা। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে নামঘৰ বা সত্ৰত প্ৰবেশ কৰোতে কান্ধত গামোচা ব্যৱহাৰ কৰাটো অতি পবিত্ৰ বুলি গণ্য কৰা হয়।

বিবাহৰ ক্ষেত্ৰটো অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিত আমাৰ এই আদৰৰ গামোচাখনৰ স্থান সদায়ে উচ্চ আৰু লেখতলবলগীয়া। বিয়াৰ সময়ত শহুৰৰ ঘৰত জেষ্ঠ জনক মান ধৰিবলৈ অন্যান্য সম্পদৰ লগত ভালে মান গামোচাও পঠোৱা হয়। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও জোৰোণৰ দিনা কইনাই

দৰালৈ দি পঠোৱা সাজযোৰৰ লগত গামোচাও দিয়া হয়। ঠিক সেইদৰে নতুন জোৱাই বিয়াৰ পিছত কাৰোবাৰ ঘৰলৈ ফুৰিবলৈ গ'লে অন্যান্য বস্ত্ৰৰ লগত গামোচাও উপহাৰ দিয়া হয়।

ইয়াৰ উপৰিও নামনি অসমত প্ৰচলিত আন এখন গামোচা হৈছে আনাকটা গামোচা। আনাকটা বুলি এই কাৰণে কোৱা হয় যে এই গামোচা কাটি উলিওৱা নহয়। তাৰ সলনি তাঁতশালত গামোচা বোৱা সম্পূৰ্ণ হোৱাৰ পিছত দুখন গামোচা পৃথক কৰিবলৈ কেচি বা ব্লেড বা কটাৰী ব্যৱহাৰ নকৰি হাতেৰে সূতাবিলাক ছিঙা হয়।

অসমীয়া জাতিৰ বুকুৰ আপোন আৰু অসমীয়া সংস্কৃতিৰ পৰিচয় এই গামোচাখনিৰ ব্যৱহাৰ আমি অসমৰ পৰা দূৰত বিদেশটো পদে পদে অনুভৱ কৰো। অসমীয়া মানুহৰ গামোচাৰ প্ৰতি থকা মৰম অতুলনীয়। প্ৰতিবাৰে অসমলৈ গ'লে উভতি আহিবৰ সময়ত মায়ে আথে-বাথে কেইবাখনো গামোচা দি পঠাই। এতিয়াও মোৰ সৰু গোঁসাইঘৰৰ থাপনা পবিত্ৰ গামোচা দি শুৱনি কৰিছো। গামোচা অবিহনে যেন ছিডনীত আয়োজিত প্ৰতিটো অনুষ্ঠানে অসম্পূৰ্ণ। এই খিনিতে উল্লেখ কৰিব পাৰি যে ২০১৮ চনত ফিনলেণ্ডত অনুষ্ঠিত ২০ বছৰ অনুৰ্ধ্ব বিশ্ব এথলে'টিক্সত প্ৰথম গৰাকী ভাৰতীয় ৰূপে ৪০০ মিটাৰ দৌৰ প্ৰতিযোগিতাৰ স্বৰ্ণপদক বিজয়ী অসমৰ নগাঁওৰ হিমা দাসে বিজয়ৰ পিছত অতি গৌৰৱৰে দুয়োহাতে ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় পতাকাৰ লগতে গামোচা দাঙি ধৰি বিজয়ৰ জয়ধ্বজা বিশ্ববাসীৰ আগত প্ৰদৰ্শন কৰিছিল। যেনেকৈ

গামোচাই অসমৰ প্ৰতিটো জাতি-জনজাতি, ধৰ্ম-নিৰ্বিশেষে সকলোকে মৰম আৰু একতাৰ দোলেৰে বান্ধি ৰাখিছে ঠিক তেনেকৈ আশা ৰাখিছো এই ৰঙালী বিহুৰ আয়োজনৰ দ্বাৰা যেন অষ্ট্ৰেলিয়াত বসবাস কৰা প্ৰতিজন অসমীয়াৰ মাজত মৰম-চেনেহ, মিলাপ্ৰীতিৰ সুবাস বিলোৱাৰ লগতে ঐক্য আৰু ভাতৃস্বৰোধৰ বতৰা কঢ়িয়াই আনে।

### উৎস:-

-অসমীয়া জাতিৰ সংস্কৃতিৰ প্ৰতীক গামোচা, মীৰা দত্ত, আজিৰ সময়, এপ্ৰিল সংখ্যা, ২০১৭

-বিহুগীতত বয়ন শিল্পৰ বতৰা, ড° সুনীল বৰগোহাঞি, জনমভূমি, ৰঙালী বিহু সংখ্যা, ২০১৭

-Gamusa-The Identity of Assam and Every Assamese, Naina Chakraborty, Rising Voices of Students, 2014

<http://risingvoices.in/gamusa-the-identity-of-assam-and-every-assamese/>

-Gamusa, Asamese Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamusa>



## বৰষুণ

ৰাগু শৰ্ম্মা

বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
ভাল লাগে অনখাৰ আয়োজন  
কজলা মেঘৰ যোৱা  
বিজুলিৰ চিকমিক, মেঘৰ গঙ্জন  
ভাল লাগে মোৰ  
ভাল লাগে হিৰ্ হিৰ্ কৈ  
নামি অহা বৰষুণ জাক  
এনে লাগে দুহাত মেলি  
খিয় হম মুকলি আকাশৰ তলত  
ধুই নিব মনৰ মান অভিমান  
নিকা হব সকলো দুখৰ  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
বৰষুণ চাই মন মোৰ হৈ পৰে নষ্টালজিক  
মনত পৰে সেই শৈশৱৰ সোণালী দিনৰ  
কাগজৰ নাও সাজি চোঙা পানীত ধেমালি কৰা  
তিতি বুৰি লগৰ লগত নাচি বাগী মতলীয়া হোৱা  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
ভাল লাগে ৰাতি ছালত পৰা  
বৰষুণৰ টোপাল বোৰ শূনি  
সাৰ পাই ভাবত বিভোৰ হোৱা  
হাহাকাৰ কৰি উঠে মনহৈ উণ্ডল-খুণ্ডল  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
সেই খিৰিকি মুখৰ ৰঙা ফুল জোপাত  
বৰষুণ পৰি ওলমি থকা পানী বোৰেও যেন  
এধাৰি মুকুতাৰ মালা গাঠিছে

সেইবোৰ চাই মোৰ বৰ ভাল লাগে  
বৰষুণ দিলে এনে লাগে  
প্ৰকৃতিও যেন আনন্দত আত্মহাৰা হয়  
দুহাত মেলি নাচি বাগী আকোৱালি লয়  
প্ৰাণৰ প্ৰিয় জনক  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
ভাল লাগে নাকত লগা সেই  
পোৰা মাটিৰ গোন্ধ  
পৃথিবী যেন হ'ল উৰ্বৰা  
ভাল লাগে চাই কান্ধত নাঙল যুৱলী লৈ  
ওলোৱা কৃষকৰ দল  
এখনি সেউজ ধৰণী নিৰ্মানৰ বাবে  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে  
ভাল লাগে দোকাল দাকাল  
পানীৰে ওপচা নৈ, জান, জুৰি  
আনন্দত যেন মতলীয়া হৈ দুপাৰ ভাঙি  
গৈছে যেন মিলৰ বাবে  
সেয়ে বৰষুণ মোৰ ভাল লাগে।

## সুন্দৰবন

কণিকা শৰ্মা

পৃথিৱীৰ বিভিন্ন দেশ বিভিন্ন চহৰ ফুৰি চাকি নিজৰ ঘৰৰ ওচৰত থকা ঠাইবিলাক যেন কেতিয়াবা অৱহেলা কৰা হয়। গুৱাহাটীত থকা দিনত বহুবাৰ কলিকতালৈ গৈছো যদিও সুন্দৰবন চাবলৈ সুযোগ পোৱা নাছিলো। সেইবাবে এইবাৰ অক্টোবৰ মাহত গুৱাহাটীলৈ যাওঁতে ভাগিনী ভতিজাৰ উৎসাহত সিহঁতৰ লগতে কলিকতালৈ গৈ সুন্দৰবন চাও বুলি ঠিক কৰিলো। সেইমতেই আমাৰ ভতিজা জোঁৱাই অসীমে আমাৰ Tour Plan কৰিলে। লগত আমাৰ নিলীমা বৌ, ভাগিনী স্মৃতিশ্ৰী, ভতিজা ছোৱালী ৰিতুপৰ্ণা, কণমাণি আয়ন আৰু অসীমৰে সৈতে আমি কলিকতা পালোগৈ।



পিছদিনা কলিকতাৰ পৰা SUMO গাড়ী এখনত গৈ প্ৰায় তিনি ঘণ্টাৰ পাছত সুন্দৰবনলৈ যোৱা বাটত আমাৰ কাৰণে ৰৈ থকা নাওখনত উঠিলো গৈ। আৰু এই নাওখনেৰে আমি আমাৰ Resort লৈ গৈছিলো। কলিকতাৰ গৰমৰ পাছত নাওত থকা সময়খিনি বৰ কৈ উপভোগ কৰিছিলো। তিনি ঘণ্টাৰ মূৰত আমি আমাৰ Resort খন পাইছিলো। নতুনকৈ সজা আমাৰ Resort খন বৰ ধুনীয়া আৰু পৰিপাটি আছিল। Resort ত নামি মুখ-হাত ধুই আমাৰ দুপৰীয়াৰ সাঁজ খোৱাৰ পাছত আমি আকৌ আমাৰ নাওখনত উঠি যাত্ৰা কৰিলো সুন্দৰবনৰ সৌন্দৰ্য উপভোগ কৰিবলৈ।

সুন্দৰবন পৃথিৱীৰ ভিতৰত আটাইতকৈ ডাঙৰ দ্বীপপুঞ্জৰ সমষ্টি। গঙ্গা, ব্ৰহ্মপুত্ৰ আৰু মেঘনা নদীৰ সঙ্গম স্থলত য'ত পশ্চিমবঙ্গৰ হুগলী আৰু বাংলাদেশৰ বালেশ্বৰ নদীৰ সঁতিবোৰ লগ লাগি সুন্দৰবনৰ ব-দ্বীপ (Delta) গঢ়ি উঠিছে। সুন্দৰবনৰ Mangrove Forest পৃথিৱীৰ ভিতৰত আটাইতকৈ ডাঙৰ। সুন্দৰবন অভয়াৰণ্য UNESCO ৰ World Heritage Site. গোটেই সুন্দৰবন ১ মিলিয়ন হেক্টৰ জোৰা-ইয়াৰ ষাঠী শতাংশ বাংলাদেশৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত বাকী চল্লিশ শতাংশ ভাৰতবৰ্ষত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত। ৰামমঙ্গল নামৰ নদীখনে এই দুয়োখন দেশৰ সীমা নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰিছে। সুন্দৰবনত চল্লিশ বিধৰ পশু-পক্ষী--২৬০(দুশ ষাঠী) বিধৰ চৰাই চিৰিকতি, ৩৫ বিধ সৰীসৃপ আৰু বিখ্যাত বেঙ্গল টাইগাৰ সুন্দৰবনত আছে। আৰু আছে বনৰীয়া গাহৰী, ফুটুকী হৰিণা আৰু মাকাক বান্দৰ। মাজে মাজে বান্দৰ চাৰিওফালে জপিয়াই ফুৰা দেখিছিলো। ফুটুকী হৰিণা বা বেঙ্গল টাইগাৰ দেখাৰ সৌভাগ্য নহ'ল।



নদীৰ কাষত ঘৰিয়াল চকুত পৰিছিল।

গধূলী সময়ত বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ চৰাই দেখা পাইছিলো। চৰাই চিৰিকতিৰ মাতত গধূলীৰ নিস্তকতা ভাঙি গৈছিল। গধূলী ঘূৰি আহি আমি যেতিয়া আকৌ Resort পাইছিলো। আমাৰ বাবে ঝুমুৰ নাচৰ আয়োজন কৰা হৈছিল। আমিও আটাইয়ে ঝুমুৰ নাচত ভাগ লৈছিলো। ৰাতিৰ আহাৰত আমি সুন্দৰ বনত পোৱা বিশেষ মাছ খাইছিলো।



পিছদিনা ৰাতিপুৱা আমি আকৌ আমাৰ বাবে ৰখা নাওখনতে উঠি সুন্দৰবনৰ পৰা উভতি আহিছিলো। আমাৰ সকলো খোৱা-বোৱাৰ ব্যৱস্থা নাওখনতে কৰা হৈছিল। আমি উভতি অহা সঁতিটো বেলেগ ফালে অহাবাবে আকৌ দিনটো বিভিন্ন প্ৰাকৃতিক দৃশ্য উপভোগ কৰিছিলো। ঠায়ে ঠায়ে নাওৰ পৰা নামি আমি চৰকাৰৰ ফালৰ পৰা সংৰক্ষণ কৰা গছ-গছনি চাবলৈ গৈছিলো।

সুন্দৰবন দেখি বৰ ভাল লাগিল। আটাইতকৈ ভাল লাগিল চৰকাৰৰ ফালৰ পৰা লোৱা ব্যৱস্থা বিশেষ। কিন্তু যিমানবোৰহে নতুন নতুন Resorts হৈছে, মানুহৰ সমাগম ইমান বেছি হ'লে পশু-পক্ষীবোৰ লোপ পাব বুলি মোৰ অকণমান চিন্তা হৈছিল। মুঠতে নিজৰ পৰিয়ালৰ লগত গৈ হাঁহি-ফুৰ্তি কৰি সুন্দৰবনৰ সৌন্দৰ্য উপভোগ কৰাৰ অভিজ্ঞতা মোৰ জীৱনত সদায়ে সজীৱ হৈ থাকিব।



# Rongali Bihu Celebrations 2019



# Bhogali Bihu Celebrations 2020





# Community News Flash

## Dr Rukmi Dutta receives IEEE Award

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), NSW Chapter awarded Dr Rukmi Dutta Outstanding Women-in-Engineering volunteer for her contribution towards power engineering.

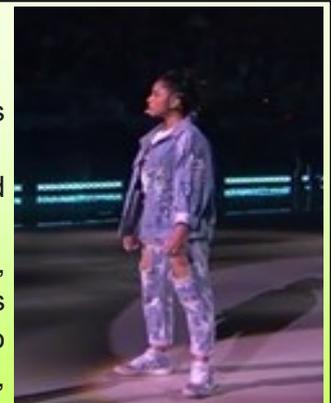
Dr Dutta was also selected as the secretary of Electric Machine Committee (EMC) of Industrial Application Society (IAS), an influential professional society of IEEE during the annual meeting in Baltimore USA, 2019. This role will progress to vice-chair and then chair of the committee by 2026. The role is considered to be very prestigious by the professionals of the field of Electric machine.

Dr Dutta will be the first female to serve this role in the long history of IAS EMC.



## Diya Goswami shines at Schools Spectacular 2019

At the end of November 2019, Diya Goswami performed as a solo Featured Artist for Slam Poetry in Schools Spectacular 2019 held in Sydney. The Schools Spectacular is produced by the New South Wales Department of Education. It is one of the world's largest variety shows and is a real celebration of the performing arts, with slam poetry being a new addition this year in 2019. Titled "The Universe In Us", Diya's original piece struck at the core of the important issue of environmental change. It was a long journey for Diya with auditions, many rehearsals and workshops that culminated in a performance at Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney Olympic Park on November 22 and 23 which was also televised on Channel 7. Diya is a Year 10 student at Baulkham Hills High School, Sydney.



## Promotional video promoting T20 Women's World Cup

A proud moment for all of us as Chayanika, Indrani, Brinda, Banani, Abhilasha and Jharna (left to right) featured in the promotional video, representing Assam & Meghalaya for T20 ICC Women's World Cup 2019.



## Bihu Performance at India Day Fair 2019

Outstanding performance by our Sydney Bihu Dol in India Day Fair organised by Federation of Indian Association of NSW, Australia.

Artists: Aditya, Raja, Jharna, Bedashree, Pragati, Banani, Abhilasha, Leena, Pranab, Bhaskar (Lead) (left to right).



# News Flash

We welcome the little ones to our community



## **Nyra (Gungun) Saikia**

Proud Parents  
**Pallabi Saikia**  
&  
**Akash Saikia**

Born on 22nd July 2019  
in Canberra



## **Rikita Rubi Saha**

Proud Parents  
**Hriya Saha**  
&  
**Dimond Saha**  
Born on 7th August 2019  
in Canberra



## **Rhean Jatin Chowdhury**

Proud Parents  
**Vinita Baruah**  
&  
**Agnirath Dutta Chowdhury**

Born on 24th January 2020



KOOL KID'S CORNER

অকণিৰ চ'ৰা



"RAINBOW"  
BY - JASMINE CHOWDHARY



LOVE TO MUMMY DADDY  
BY - ARIADNE ROSE



DAD'S LOVE  
BY - DAVYON KASHYAP



COLOUR PENCIL  
BY - AUDRIE HAZARIKA



Audrie is always fascinated by the beach and she displayed her imagination by drawing this picture. She drew the mountains with green colour, sun with the red, the sea water with blue, sand with brown and a beautiful rainbow in the middle by holding five colour pencils together.



KOOL KID'S CORNER

অকণিৰ চ'ৰা



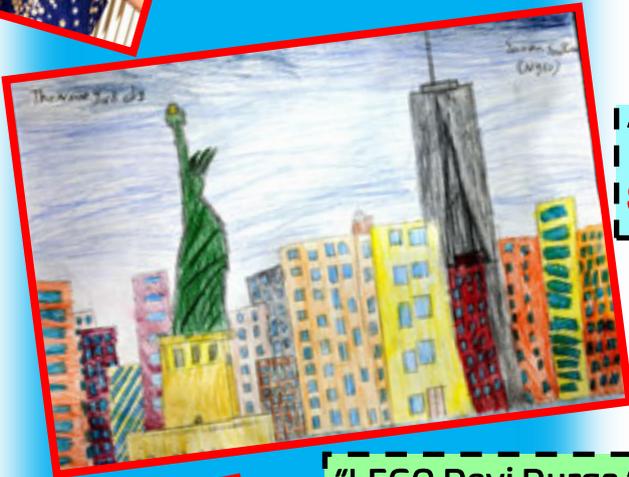
"Collage of Leaf impressions and Thread paintings"

By **Dhiyan Saha**



"Bohagore Botorot" By

**Springle Kropi Baruah**



"The New York City" By

**Saanvi Saikia (Nyra)**



"LEGO Devi Durga" By

**Aneesha Afreen**



**Vedanshi** is busy doing painting!





## Golden Hour | By Avaneesh Sarma

On 03/02/2020 I wanted to paint a picture of sunset or sunrise. To get some idea I did google search. Once I got the idea I started to paint. I had to paint few times like 4/5 times before I did my final copy. My first one was terribly terrible, my second one was terrible, my third one was not so good, my fourth one was goodish because it was tiny bit great. But my fifth one was my best/final one. When I finished, I realized my painting had some mistakes, but I fixed them. My mum was very impressed with my painting and she sent it to five people. All of them liked it. I think it is my best artwork yet.



## How to be a pro in Minecraft | By Ryan Barman

So, to become a pro in no time you have to collect wood from trees. Then you have to collect items and food for animals and then craft new items out of your old ones. Also make tools so that you can mine ores like diamonds, iron, gold and Redstone but before mining these minerals you have to mine the iron first to make an iron pickaxe. And then mine the ores now, BAM! You are a pro now enjoy!



## The binding of Fenris Wolf | By Akash Dutta

The Norse (Viking) god Loki, who is a friend and an enemy of the Norse Gods, had 3 hideous and strong children with the giantess Angrboda. The first was the serpent Jormungand (pronounced your-mun-gand, in Old Norse its spelt Jörmungandr and it means great beast) the second was the death-goddess Hel. The third was the wolf Fenrir A.K.A Fenris (Fenris wolf is the wolf's actual name and Fenrir in Old Norse means he who dwells in marshes).

The gods had predicted terrible things about these three beings, and they were absolutely correct. Jormungand would later kill Thor during Ragnarok destruction of the nine worlds. During these events, Fenrir would devour Odin, the king of the gods (but then Fenrir would be killed by Odin's son Vidar).

In order to keep the monsters at bay the gods threw Jormungand into the ocean where he encircled Midgard, the world of humans (Earth). Hel went to the underworld (Helheim). Fenris however inspired too much fear to be out of the god's sight, so they kept him chained in Asgard palace of the gods. Only Tyr, the god of law and honour dared to approach Fenris to feed him.

Fenrir grew at an alarming rate and soon the gods decided that his stay at Asgard would be temporary. Knowing well how much destruction he would cause if he was free, the gods attempted to bind

him with various chains. They gained the wolf's trust by telling him these were tests of his strength and they clapped and cheered each time he broke free.

At last, the gods sent a messenger down to Nidavellir (Nidavellir means the dark fields and in Old Norse its spelt Niðavellir, another name for Niðavellir is Myrkheim or Svartalfheim), the realm of the dwarves. The dwarves being the most skilled craftsmen in the cosmos were able to forge a chain whose strength couldn't be equalled. It was made from the footfall of a cat, beard of a woman, roots of a mountain, breath of a fish and the spit of a bird. In other words, the chain was made from the impossible or almost impossible things. The chain was named Gleipnir (which means open). When the gods presented Fenrir with the curiously light and supple Gleipnir, the wolf suspected trickery and refused to be bound with it unless one of the gods would lay his or her hand in his jaw as a pledge of good faith. None of the gods agreed knowing this would be a loss of a hand. At last the brave Tyr, for the good of all life, volunteered. And sure, enough when Fenrir discovered he couldn't escape he chomped off and swallowed Tyr's hand. The beast was then transported to some lonely place where he was tied to boulder and a sword was placed in his mouth and there he would howl until Ragnarok.

This is the Norse mythical story of the chaining of Fenris Wolf.



Drawing: Akash Dutta



## My 2019 Year 5 Camp | By Vedantik Bhattacharyya, Year 6, Randwick Public School

Everyone was pumped and enthusiastic for The Great Aussie Bush Camp, Teagardens. The camp was to go on for 3 days and 2 nights with day activities like high ropes, giant swing, the mud run, powerfan, raft building, canoeing, initiatives, and archery, and night activities like disco; commando; poison ball. It was a lengthy 4-hour bus drive that felt like the whole day and we were meant to watch a movie but unfortunately the television screen on the bus wasn't working and we ended up with little entertainment for the trip.

When we arrived we got settled into our assigned cabins and had custom burgers for lunch in a mammoth dining hall. Our first activity was initiatives - an activity all about teamwork and cooperation. Our first task was to swing across the so-called 'lava', one by one, onto a small pallet and try to fit the whole class on the pallet. In our first attempts we were nowhere near being successful but we soon found a secret platform underneath the pallet in which we could snag an extra 5-10 people. In the end we finished with 28/30 people as our highest score and sadly I was one of the two people left.

We then swam into our first water activity - canoeing! We put some PFD's (personal floatation device) on and we were ready to go canoeing in the long, elongated lake. We had a short tutorial/pep talk before we lifted our canoes to the entry point. We started to paddle on one side in our three-man canoe but we soon realised we would just be continuously turning around and spinning in circles. We decide to have a constant, fluctuating 2:1 ratio for each side. A couple of times we hit other canoes and we avoided some collisions by paddling backwards. We also hit the bank and all the collisions/bumps were pretty hilarious and made us all laugh. Once, the bank was so muddy and sticky that the front of our boat got wedged into the bank and we had to push off the bank using our hands and paddles. The most memorable moment though, was when someone in our group got out of the boat to push us off but me and the other guy had already gone past him and he jumped in the water, if that's possible, and reached out to touch the sides of our canoe. Thanks to him, our boat nearly tipped over and capsized and me and the guy in the boat had to yell at him to come on quickly and board the canoe.

After that buffoonery, we had snow cones, muesli bars, and apples as a quick snack refreshment before dinner-spagbowl and ice-cream for dessert and got changed into our darkest clothes for commando, an ultimate game of hide & seek.

Commando was our first night activity of the camp and had to be played in the dark as this game uses flashlights and you have to hide from them. As a warm-up we played Sardines as it wasn't dark enough to play Commando. We were all in our stealth mode after playing sardines and we were in pitch-dark clothing. After that warm-up game, the instructor explained the rules of Commando. We got into groups of four and each got a 'life token'. Seven 'hostages' were sent off to hide in the woods and the other students had to try and find the hostages in half an hour, avoiding the teachers who had flashlights and would try and find you before you can get to the hostages. If you get caught by a teacher, you had to go back to home base and give your life token back to the base. You would have to earn another life token by completing an assigned task the base set you. After half an hour the teachers easily crushed the students because we only found 1 of the seven hostages. We then had supper-choc milk and cookies, and then went to sleep in our cabins.

I couldn't wait for the next day-it was to be a colossal day, packed with four day activities and a night one. After we had chosen from an assortment of breakfasts-toast, pancakes, scrambled eggs, cereal, sausages etc, we went to the riverbank for raft building. We were split up into groups of ten and we were given some tyres, rope, and wood. We had to take a minimum of two trips and needed to raft about 25 m to the island and we had to all touch the island. In the end nobody won because every team left about half their team in the water.

After morning tea, we got ready for our first harness and height activity - powerfan! It was an activity where we climbed up a pole which had rungs on it and at the top of the pole there was a platform which could fit two people at a time. We would then jump off it and glide towards the ground because of the harness. From the ground it looked pretty short for something that was a whopping 16 m, but once you got to the top it felt like it was 50 m high and you feel like you might plummet to the ground. Powerfan was the first activity that made everyone feel a bit queasy and nervous.

We then had lunch and then got ready for a flying

fox, a 10 m high obstacle course, and our second harness activity in the high ropes course! For this activity we had to put on a harness that had a fox attached and a pair of bright saffron clickets (things you attach to the ropes course to keep yourself from falling off). There were many obstacles like tightropes, moving barrels, wobbly steps, and just a plain jump. The course ended with a peak point flying fox which was very quick and rapid. The peak of the whole course was about 11-12 metres.

All of the teachers were all talking about this one, the mud run! We were all excited to get nice and muddy through an underwater obstacle course filled with mud. The odour and stench of the mud was lethal, it smelt like rotten eggs with outdated blue cheese. Despite that, everybody embraced this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and got as muddy as they could get. Everybody smeared themselves in mud and put it on as a 'face-mask'. We then went for a thorough shower to get all the muck out of places.

After we were done tipping mud out of our ears we had dinner and then went to the dance/disco hall and got ready to move and groove! To start the night, we played a game called mouse trap. Essentially, the whole year formed an oval of around 120 students and 3 places in the oval there were two people standing and holding hands and making a tunnel which the rest of the students went through. When the music is playing, everyone moves through in the oval formation and when the music stops, the oval freezes and the mouse traps swing their hands down to trap a victim. That victim then joins the mousetrap, making a triangle and making the trap bigger. After a couple of times the traps will start to expand and gradually the gap between each trap will shorten and there will only be a few students left, running in and out of each trap. The last person to be caught is the winner.

After a few rounds of that we played a game called poison ball. This game was very different but still had the same formation. There were three balls passed around the oval. One ball was an 'atomic bomb' and eliminated the person holding it, and the people next to him/her. The fart bomb eliminated the two people on either side of the fart bomb because you can't smell your own farts. The



last ball, the Grenadian, eliminates the person holding it. As the music plays, the balls are passed around. When it stops the rules I explained apply. Last person standing wins. Our final game before the disco was cheerleader. Everyone goes solo to start and chooses a random person next to them and plays scissors, paper, rock. Whoever loses has to cheer for their successor and the process is repeated until everyone is cheering for one person. I sadly only got 2 people cheering for me until I got knocked out by somebody. We then finished the night off with a disco party. All the boys made a big conga line and everyone danced to the beat. We then had supper and slept for the last night in our cabins.

Everyone in our class was ready to aim their bow and arrows accurately and then finish on a high with the giant swing, literally swinging 17 m high in the air. Archery was much harder than anybody anticipated and only one person in our class got a bullseye. I didn't even hit the board but it was still

fun trying.

We then had morning tea to get ready for our final activity, the giant swing! The giant swing was a harness activity that needed goggles for your eyes as you would swing really fast. The suspense was immense when you looked at the swing. Be warned, you will get a massive wedgie when you are being hoisted up 17 m. As you slowly creep up to the top you hear the laughter and chatter in the background come to a halt. You pull the rope that will release you. You flop back and for a second you feel as if you will be stuck up there dangling in the air. You then plummet down at top speed and after a while it's pretty fun. Most of our class were brave enough to go to the tippy top and somebody who was really scared and didn't even want to go halfway went to the top anyway. We had hotdogs and fizzy drinks before going on the long bus trip home. It was indeed a memorable Year 5 camp for all of us that we will cherish forever!!!

## MANUHE KI KOBBO

A SATIRE BY NEEM PILLAI



The gossip culture that is prevalent within our Indian community is often dismissed as typical aunty behavior that has the power to damage reputations and erode the trust between parents and their children. As impressionable teens, it is easy to fall into this mindset. But if we step back and examine the situation, how could we believe that people we call 'aunty' and 'uncle' and whose children we have grown up with, could ever have anything but the best intentions for us? It's clear that the toxicity doesn't lie within the innate need for aunts to share their unwarranted opinions, it is after all their civic duty to police bad behavior and maintain order within the community. Rather, it lies within the teenage mentality which is so closed off to criticism that we can't accept that the aunts who reveal our vices, only do so, to better our community.

We find ourselves at an age filled with temptations that threaten to decay the foundation of our upbringing, that is conservatism. Drinking, partying, dating. It is easy to be pulled down into these unnecessary habits when our Australian peers indulge so freely. However luckily, we have an extremely effective disciplinary mechanism which is the prosocial aunts that make up our community. It should be reassuring that the community is always looking out for us. We might confuse this networking as voyeuristic rumor mongering; however, we need to question why would our aunts want to spread lies about us? When this village has helped raise us, why would they want to drag us down? This cynical mentality exposes the hypocrisy on our part. We are criticizing these altruistic aunts for simply doing their best to make sure our parents, their friends, their cousins, and the wider community, know exactly where we are, whom we are with, and whether what we are doing is safe and aligns with the morals of our community.

Recently there have been whispers amongst the Indian teens. These whispers carry the judgements on what Aditya said at Ben's party or how hard Kavita was trying to impress Matthew, in a tone not dissimilar to the idle chatter of the aunts. It is extremely healthy for us to hear our friends' and our family friends' commentary on our shortcomings, failures and mistakes. If we carry on in this fashion, we can be rest assured that the community that we will inherit will be as healthy and tight knit as our parents' generation. This ethos not only bonds us and ensures that we take initiative towards personal growth but further, makes us more resilient especially in this era where depression and anxiety has become a trend.

We might be under the delusion that the rumors that the aunties spread are destructive to our mental health. However, what's actually delusional is the fact that we think we deserve to be happy when we have given the aunties an opportunity to disapprove.

Ironically, it's actually girls, the future aunties, that have the most trouble accepting the aunty regime. We fail to see how much we are valued in this community, more so than even our brothers! The aunties might label us as 'loose' for flirting with boys or 'not of good character' if they see us wear revealing clothes, but only because they want to correct us before the rest of the world has to, or worse, the relatives back in India. For those worried that they have become too dependent on this disciplinary method to keep them in line, and who fear that they might stray once it is no longer en-

forced, need not fear, because the aunties will continue to gossip about us well into our adulthood. After all, no one will want to marry us if we have 'gone around' and it is our aunties duty to caution us so that we don't have to face these struggles when we come of age. Women supporting women, that's what the aunties stand for and its inspiring to see our community exemplify this progressive ideology.

And thus, gossiping aunties, or more appropriately, prosocial observers, will live on in our community forever. This undertaking has interwoven itself into the essence of us Indian teenagers becoming one with our identity and making a mark on our psyche. We collectively need to accept its crucial role in our community—but just how compliantly we do so continue to be the subject of much controversy.



## My Borneo Adventure

*By Kashika Goswami*

*Year 10, Pymble Ladies College*

Dec 2019, together with a group of students and teachers from my school "Pymble Ladies College" we embarked on a 2-week trip of a lifetime to Borneo, Indonesia. It was a school expedition, a week with a local community to build their school and a week at the Rainforest helping reforest the region. This trip was extremely beneficial for me, it helped me with personal goals, gave me new experiences and I made new lifelong friends.

When we arrived, we were greeted at our campsite by the camp staff and were given a beautiful welcome ceremony. This ceremony made us feel at home and was our first representation of how friendly and welcoming the culture over there was. This was our only easy day for the next couple of weeks. We spent a week at Camp Bongkut where we participated in cultural activities, project work and interacting with the locals.

### Project work

Our project work consisted mainly of rebuilding or repairing things around the village. Our second day, we cemented the main road. Our second day, we cemented the main road. Cynthia taught us the correct ratios to make the concrete, then we repaved the road. This was exhausting no matter how many times we did it, we got better the more we did it, but it was still physically draining every time, but I still really enjoyed it because I felt like I was doing something useful. The locals there would now be able to drive easily, and it was improving their quality of life. We also did some bricklaying to help build their new youth centre. We got a short introduction on how to lay the bricks by the chief of the village.

We spent most of a very sunny, hot afternoon out in the sun making the walls of a future youth centre for the community. While we were all very hot and tired, it felt great to know our small actions still impacted them in positive way and we contributed to their bigger goals.

One project we did that did not include physical labour was that teaching the local kids English. One afternoon, we split up into small groups and planned activities for the kids.



We taught them colours, animals, shapes and more. We stated with games like bulrush and duck, duck, goose. The kids loved these games and they were adorable as they would always hold our hands and play with us. Towards the end a young boy and his sister played with me and we became friends.



We repaired and painted tables for the local primary school in the village, created storage spaces under the main top desk and repainted all the tables at the school. I enjoyed this one the most as I saw the progress and impact, we made right in front of my eyes. I got to learn carpentry and new skills to actually be able to make the tables. It felt amazing to do something with my own two hands that positively contributed to their society.

**Cultural activities:**

When we weren't doing project work at Camp Bongkut, we were usually having meals or doing cultural activities. On our first day, we learnt a few traditional songs and dances, one of the dances was even very similar to a Bihu dance. They also taught us how to play the gongs which we got to perform at other welcome ceremonies. We learnt a song in Malay and a dance to go with it which we performed on our last night, we tried our best, but I don't think we did as well as the locals. We also had a couple Malay lessons where we learnt the language, most of us forgot everything the next day but it was a great experience as well as learning dances and languages, we also learnt how to make a banana cake and make cute beaded bracelets. The bracelets were incredibly hard to make but once I got the hang of it, I was a pro. In the evenings, we would often go up to the shops or play soccer games with the locals. This was usually one of the highlights of our day as we got to talk and meet the locals and they were always so friendly and welcoming. These activities allowed us to be more culturally educated and understand our new environment.

**The rainforest:**

Our second camp for the next few days was in the middle of the jungle; our work here was to assist in their reforestation program. We camped in hammocks for 2 nights and spent most of our day knee deep in bush and surrounded by trees. On our first day we didn't have much time, so we set up our hammocks, which are sur-



prisingly very comfortable and easy to sleep in and had mostly free time. The second day

was extremely difficult, we had a briefing on replanting and how we had to place each tree, then we spent the rest of the day planting endangered tree species, most of us got mild heat stroke or felt sick during the day but we conquered on and my group got a total of 20 trees planted throughout the day before we had to head back because it started raining and everyone was soaked. In the evening, we went on a river tour around our campsite, we saw monkeys, birds and other beautiful animals and then we went back to camp and had dinner. The next day, the weather was still too bad for us to continue our project work, so we went to a bat cave that morning instead. We climbed up some very steep hills and rocks but once we got to the cave, it was worth it.



Our guide told us all about the history of the place and we got to see lots of bats and structures from older communities that have been in the cave for hundreds of years. Once we got back, we packed our stuff and headed to an accommodation for the night as it was heavily raining so much that it was unsafe for us to stay any longer. When we got back to the main village and got to our accommodation, we got hot showers, and everyone was ecstatic about it as we all missed little things like that. After dinner, we all just reflected on our time in Borneo as it was our last proper day. We all talked and then went to bed as we were all too exhausted to do anything else.

Overall, this trip was the best experience I have ever had, I loved every single tiring moment and I would do it all over again if I could. I met some amazing people from all over Australia and even the world, I learnt so many new things and I highly recommend doing any similar trips.

*“Selamat tinggal Borneo, terima kasih atas keramahan Anda yang baik, tetap aman sampai kita bertemu lagi.”*  
*Goodbye Borneo, thank you for your kind hospitality, stay safe till we meet again.*



## MY TRIP TO Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

### PRAJNA GUPTA, YEAR 6

In the last summer break, we had a holiday in Ho Chi Minh City on our way back from India. Ho Chi Minh City, also known as Saigon, is a city in Southern Vietnam well known for the vital role it played in the Vietnam war. I was thrilled to explore a brand new place and was very excited. As we drove out of the airport, the first thing that struck me was the colourful flowers along the road and the beautifully manicured green median strips dotted with pretty flowers. It was like a picture postcard. I could not help but wonder how fertile the soil would be. Everywhere you looked, you could see either beautiful flowers or fruits hanging on trees. The city was vibrant and colourful.

On our first day, we strolled around the main city and enjoyed the sights. There was a street food market close to our hotel with almost every type of cuisine from around the world. We went there for dinner every night and tried out different kinds of food.

The next day, we visited the Cu Chi Tunnels which is an extensive network of tunnels used during the Vietnam War. During the war, these tunnels were used by the Vietnamese Communist people known as Viet Cong as part of their guerrilla warfare tactics to fight the better supplied US soldiers and the South Vietnamese people. I was amazed to see the different guerrilla tactics used during the war and was filled with respect and admiration for the Vietnamese people for being so brave, hardworking and resilient in those times. We went in one of these small tunnels and I felt like I was transported back in history— it was very exciting.

We then went to the War Museum which showcased relics and remnants of the Vietnamese War. Some of the relics and photographs were quite confronting and it was heartbreaking to see the atrocities inflicted on the Vietnamese people. Yet again, I was filled with admiration for the Vietnamese people for having bounced back and doing so well despite their turbulent past.

We also visited the colossal Independence Palace which was a spectacular building and I was awestruck by the grand and elaborately decorated rooms. We even saw the well laid out bunker rooms which was to be used in case of any emergencies.

The next day we did a tour of the Mekong Delta which is the agricultural hub of South Vietnam. We went on a cruise on the mighty Mekong river, got to see a coconut farm and how coconut candies are made, a honey bee farm and honey making. We also had the opportunity to enjoy traditional Vietnamese food and fruits and enjoyed the folk songs and dances. It was a very beautiful countryside and was quite an educational experience. We even got to do some crocodile fishing where we used fish as bait for crocodiles.



My favourite part of the trip was the bike tour where we went around Ho Chi Minh City on bikes and got to see the real city life and the local way of living. I just loved being on the bike, through the bustling city, seeing the sights with my hair flying everywhere. It was interesting to see the lifestyle of the local people, their living quarters and the markets. It was interesting to see the lifestyle of the local people, their living quarters and the markets.

We also visited many Pagodas and temples in Ho Chi Minh City which were beautiful architectural monuments with intricate designs and ornate carvings. Close to where we stayed was a huge street market called the Ben Thanh Market. You could find everything in it ranging from beautiful Vietnamese vases and paintings, hand painted crockery, clothes, shoes, exotic fruits and vegetables and many more things. We did a lot of shopping in this market.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip in Vietnam and learnt a lot about the history and culture of the country. I was amazed to see how hardworking, resilient and progressive the Vietnamese people are and salute them for bouncing back so well after going through prolonged periods of war which ended only in 1975.



## Reflections from **VIETNAM**

### Pragnya Gupta -Year 10

**O**n my recent trip to Vietnam, I had the pleasure of enjoying a Saigon on Motorbike tour. In this tour, we had the opportunity to visit several places in Saigon that one could not see otherwise as they were very deep into the city's heart. We visited many local Pagoda's and drank fresh coconut water by the Saigon River as well as visiting the flower markets and eating Pho at an authentic restaurant. However, something that really made this tour stand out was that we got to visit a slum. That's right, a slum!

In the beginning, "slum tourism" felt very peculiar. To me, slums have been treated as off-limits and a place that tourists would generally avoid. But in Saigon, "slum tourism" was far from being viewed as a place of extreme poverty but was rather promoted as a bonafide tourist attraction. I kept wondering why someone would want to visit a slum rather than spending their time at beaches, restaurants and monuments. After doing some research I found out that there are a plethora of reasons why tourists decide to travel to slums. According to Forbes, "slums are appealing as they offer a way to hear the authentic stories of locals and to learn more about their culture". It seems to me that tourists were interested in the inequalities and the stark differences in the lifestyle of the slum dwellers vis-a-vis the rest of the local people.

This provoked another question, how come India's slums are viewed by tourists as contaminated, "unliveable" and filthy? How were Saigon's slums viewed as a tourist destination while the slums with perhaps the richest history were judged unfairly?

First, a little information about Indian slums: According to CBC, in the 2011 Indian Census, it was recorded that over 64 million Indian people lived in slums nationwide. That is roughly one- third of the Indian population of 1.2 billion people. Slums are an integral part of Indian infrastructure and culture and are home to many street markets, street food hubs and communities.

Asia's largest slum is located in Mumbai and is known as the Dharavi slum. Many books and documentaries have been produced about such slums with a view to show the inside story of the slums that people who do not live there may have never seen before or cannot even imagine. Slums need not be looked down upon. In fact, many of the slum dwellers are quite educated, have decent occupations, are highly skilled workers and prefer to live in those areas. A lot of these slums exist as close knit communities and their inhabitants would not chose to live anywhere else even if given the option to do so. Mumbai, being a city where accommodation is quite expensive, slums offer a more affordable option to those who cannot afford a home otherwise. This is not to justify the unhygienic conditions in slums as there is definitely room for vast improvement in that sector however it is to show that Indian slums are not that different from Vietnamese slums.

Slums are an integral part of developing countries and show that the worlds of both the rich and the poor co-exist side by side. It all boils down to how we showcase them. We can either showcase them as a tourist location or we can treat them as a place of poverty. I think that we should draw inspiration from Vietnam and have pride in our slums. Whilst we should continue to take measures to improve the conditions in the slums, we should treat them with respect, recognise their unique culture and characteristics. We should not treat them as less than us, as at the end of the day they are also part of the nation.

This is a short poem drawn from the experiences of seeing the slums of both countries from my perspective.

## Only a World Apart

*Homes that are fragile  
As fragile as glass  
About to collapse should a harsh wind blow  
Leaning on each other for support  
The home and its residents both  
In the slums of India*

*Imagine waking up  
To the dim and dusky sunlight  
Shining through the gaps between the ragged wood  
planks  
Conscious of the unyielding and filthy floor  
Covered by the blanket that was tired of protecting  
In the slums of Vietnam*

*The men tirelessly working  
The women relentlessly toiling  
The children playing cricket on the cramped field  
Oblivious to the horrid thoughts  
That ran through the minds of those on the outside  
In the slums of India*

*Soon they would come  
Flocks and flocks of them  
The people that gawked and stared them down  
The ones who took photos  
Talked in absurd dialects  
In the slums of Vietnam*

*Sitting on the footsteps to her home  
Sat an ambitious and determined girl  
Dreaming about what she could be  
If she wasn't  
Confined in this painfully suffocating situation  
In the slums of India*

*She shook their hands  
Charmed them with her smile  
And posed for photos with her Ao Dai*

*She watched them exploring her home  
And eating her mother's food  
In the slums of Vietnam*

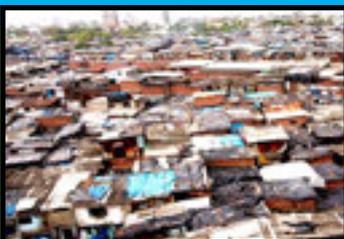
*She finished her work at home  
Cooked and cleaned and washed  
Then walked to her master's house ready to work  
some more  
Dealt with the irritable patience of her mistress  
Fatigued and overworked, she limped home  
In the slums of India*

*She heard some heated arguing  
But in the end, she saw her father  
Desperately collecting cash from the man who made  
her father work  
She ran towards her father  
He scooped her up and took her home  
In the slums of Vietnam*

*Later on that night  
As she sat by the fire  
Surrounded by her family and friends  
She realised she didn't have most things others had  
But she had the things  
That mattered most to her  
In the slums of India*

*Both had toiled continuously  
But this was nothing extraordinary  
This was what they did everyday  
Yet they found joy and satisfaction in their tasks  
Knowing that their home was their home  
In the slums*

**VietnamNet, 2015**



Shaikh, 2016

### Image Source:

Shaikh, A. (2016) *Mumbai: Largest slum in Asia- Dharavi gets ready for a makeover* [image] Available at: <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-mumbai-largest-slum-in-asia-dharavi-gets-ready-for-a-makeover-2164220> [Accessed 18 February, 2020]

VietnamNet Bridge. (2015) *Images: Life in the slums near high rise buildings* [image] <https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/vietnam-in-photos/136460/images-life-in-the-slums-near-high-rise-buildings.html> [Accessed 18 February, 2020]

# A Journey to the Grand Canyon

Travelling to and across the Grand Canyon was a very exciting trip and a memory I do not want to forget. I went on the trip with Ady and his family. Until then, the trip had been amazing and all of us had a lot of fun. I was sure that a helicopter trip across the Grand Canyon would not be disappointing.

Flying across the expanse of the Grand Canyon, one of North America's most beautiful sights, I could see the massive valleys that had been carved by the Colorado River for millions of years. The mountains and gorges stretched beyond my vision; it was definitely one of the world's largest canyons. Going up to a higher altitude, we could see more of the rocky terrain in the canyon, but it was a small portion of the 270-mile long piece of land.

The helicopter eventually landed on a plain consisting of cacti and bushes among all the sand. The plain was the only place in the area where the helicopters could land, as it had been lent to the tourism companies by the Native Americans that lived in the area. The hill was a flat plain which was steeper around the edges. From close up, the canyon seemed like a wasteland. It was sandy and dry without many fauna or flora. There were small patches of grass around the place, but no large plants. As I got back onto the helicopter and began to ascend, I observed the plain from a distance. It looked as if the place was much greener; the plants from all over the plain appeared closer, the more we flew away. There were animals in the Grand Canyon, however unfortunately we did not get to see any animals in the landing area, as the tourism companies took precautions to keep them away for the passengers' safety.

The helicopter diverted routes and after flying over some mountains we came to stop at an area that was filled with snow. The area looked like a service station for the helicopters. We hopped off and the air felt not nearly as cold as we thought it would be. But it only took a few minutes for the cold air to seep through our jackets. Even though we tried to ignore the cold, we started shivering. While we were waiting for the pilot, I had some fun playing with the snow, as it was not very often that I got to see snow in Australia. We were not at the place for very long and soon hopped back onto the helicopter to fly back to where we began the ride. The ride was amazing it was definitely one of the best parts of our entire trip

to America.



By Swapnav Saikia (Neev)



USA



TRIP

By Ady Saikia

This trip was a unique and fun experience getting to see such iconic landmarks and buildings, that we all know and have seen in Hollywood movies. I had my family and my close friend Neev and his family going along, so I was really looking forward to this holiday.

It all started on 24th December; my luggage was already set to go. This was only a 10-day trip, however, it was amazing. We reached the airport bay where it was around 8:00pm we went for a quick feed at McDonald's before boarding on our plane. This flight was going to Hong Kong and it would take about 9 hours. The inflight entertainment system was more than enough to get me through the long flight. After 9 hours of flying, we finally reach Hong Kong airport where we have to

wait an extra 6 hours for our next flight to New York, but it would be worth it.

Finally, after 6 hours which felt a lot longer, we board our plane which will fly to New York passing Alaska and Canada. This flight would take 15 hours roughly which is so far the longest flight I have taken. Once again, I would enjoy myself watching movies to get going through the long hours.

We were getting very close to reaching New York and we could already see the buildings and they were huge! We started to drift away from the city to land at JFK airport. We were all relieved we had finally reached our dream destination, NEW YORK!

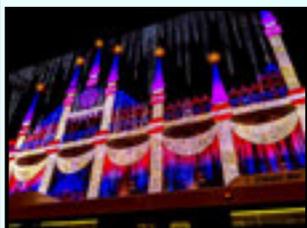


Going through airport security wasn't a hassle at all, in fact before you know it, we were already outside.

The first thing we had already noticed and felt was just how cold it was, it was ridiculously cold. But we wore heavy jackets but even that surprised us. We took a Taxi to our Hotel, we were in the borough called Queens, our first hotel was located in Manhattan Times square, the drive there was amazing because we saw so many iconic places in New York city where we have seen them in our favorite Hollywood movies.

We reached our hotel and got inside to freshen up a bit before heading outside to experience Times Square for the first time and may I tell you it was amazing, Seeing the lights and massive digital billboard ads was quite extraordinary. The whole vibe was amazing, the people, the cars, the mini street food shops, it's everything I thought it would be and I loved it.

Since it was Christmas, in New York a lot of people crowded up during the night we were there. There were many shows going on including probably the biggest Christmas tree I have seen. We had seen a light show which was shown at an old building which had beautiful patterns. We had also realized how crowded it was, it was very hard to move.



That was our first night in New York. The next morning, we woke up, got ready and headed outside where we took a tour bus that took us through some

amazing sightseeing with a tour guide. We want pass Adam Sandler's house who is a Hollywood actor. We went through Wall Street which is famous for its stock market. We stopped near the Statue of Liberty where we took some photos, but the statue was barely visible, so we decided to take a ferry to get up close with it and take photos. It was a fun experience being on the ferry, and once the sun went down, we could see New York city light up while we were still on the ferry. It was amazing to see that.

The next morning was a busy one because we were leaving New York. We had to pack our luggage and headed for the domestic airport which took us to none other than LAS VEGAS. It was a 5-hour flight which wasn't bad.

We reached Las Vegas around midafternoon where we were instantly greeted with slot machines inside the airport.

Once we got past the airport, we collected our luggage and went for our taxi where it took us to the heart of Las Vegas which is where everything happens. Our hotel was there, and it was called



the Paris Hotel. The hotel was huge and it's first floor was an entire casino/shopping mall. It was just massive and filled with restaurants. We got our room which looked amazing filled with nice decorations and a wonderful view of Las Vegas itself. We immediately went to go eat lunch and took some rest before we

headed out at night and had a walk-through Las Vegas. The lighting was just amazing filled with art and decorations with massive casinos and shopping malls left right and center.



We walked long enough to go see a circus show. It was called the Cirque du Soleil-Mystere show. And it was great fun seeing the people do amazing stunts. Once the show was done, it was time to head back to the Hotel and call it a night.

The next day was a day I was waiting for. We were going to go on a Helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon. We woke up bright and early, got ready, had breakfast and headed outside to wait for our Taxi which would take us into Arizona, where the small Hangar was. The drive from Las Vegas to Arizona was about 2 hours long. Once we got to the Hangar, we were given a safety demonstration and before you know it, we were up in the air flying over the

desert. It took us about 15 minutes to get to the Grand Canyon. Once we got there, we could see the huge canyons right before our eyes.



We stopped in an area inside the Canyons where we chilled out for a bit and took photos. We headed back but before that, we had to make

a pit stop because the Helicopter needed fuel before we could leave, in the meantime we played in the snow that was at the stop of the canyon where the bay was. Once that was done, we headed back to the hangar, ate lunch. And was on our way back to Las Vegas. Once we were back it was around 5:00, Neev and his family had to leave to go to Boston to see family friends. So, they left the Hotel and headed for the airport.

We still had one more day in Las Vegas, so we got up around 11:00 and went outside to have a walk, went to shopping malls and enjoyed ourselves for our last day in Las Vegas. Our flight was around 10:00pm so we left at around 7:00 pm. Once we were at the airport, we boarded our flight back to New York where we would spend our last 4 days.

Back in New York we arrived at our new hotel still in Manhattan. It was around 5:00 in the morning. And we were pretty tired, so we took a nap and slept till 12:00pm where we woke up and went downstairs to visit Papu mama and Purobi mami. it was wonderful meeting them as I have not seen them in 7 years. We were soon hungry and went to eat lunch at an Indian restaurant called Junoon. It was good. As night started to fall upon us, we explored much of Times square that we didn't before. And we found some interesting shops



We decided to eat our dinner at the Hard rock cafe. This cafe was very unique and special in the way that it is basically a museum full of guitars from famous guitarists. This cafe had guitars from the Beatles, ACDC, Rolling Stones, Queen all signed in in glass cases. It was very cool to see them up

close, these guitars are a piece of modern rock history and that to me is very special to see.

Neev's family had come back from Boston and had planned that they would meet us inside the rock cafe.

The next morning, we left New York to go to Washington DC to see the white house. The drive was about 6 hours, about 5 hours into the trip we stopped at a space museum. This place was fun because there was so much variety in what we wanted to explore. We first went to a section of the museum all to do about the Wright brothers and how they were the first successful people to make aircrafts. And then we went on to this huge model of a Rocketship where you can go inside and have a look around at all the things that you could have not seen before. And then we went on a Virtual reality experience which was fun, we were put on these chairs that move to give you that feeling that you are in space.



Once we got out of the museum we were back on the road. Another hour in and we were at our destination, we went to the capital, Lincoln memorial and the white house. It was nice. We came back that night and spent our final night in New York. We also went to the Brooklyn bridge which was fabulous. The next very early morning we woke up, got our luggage ready and started our journey back to Australia. This flight back to Hong Kong was spectacular. We flew over Greenland, Russia and Mongolia. And we could actually see the snowy mountains!



I think in this trip I have learned a lot about American culture and have given me a good knowledge about the place and cities I went to. I would definitely come back one day as I have enjoyed these past 10 days. It was a place I have always dreamed to come to, and it was worth it. I would 100 percent recommend anyone planning to come to the USA.



## **Lucy's Dad** | By Prakriti Borua (Meek) Year 2

Once upon a time there lived a little girl called Lucy. At the time when Lucy was born, a war was going on in Lucy's place. A few days before she was born Lucy's dad went out for some work and never returned home. Everybody thought he was shot dead by gunfire. As such, Lucy never really got to see her father, but have seen some of his old photos!

As Lucy grew up, she came to know about all these things. She missed her dad dearly and kept thinking of him. She wondered how her dad might have looked like, what he would have played with her, where they could go together and all such things. Even at school, she could not help thinking about her father. As days passed by, she became more and more lost in her father's thought, she became miserable.

Suddenly, one day when she was at school, she saw a person who looked very much like the one in the photo she knows as her father. She followed the person and noticed that there was a tattoo in his hands that said, "Lucy's Dad"! She was not quite sure if he indeed could be her father; all she knew was that he was shot dead. She approached the person and asked who Lucy is. The person told her that it was his daughter whom he had lost in the war.

Lucy's mother had told her that her father had named her "Lucy" even before she was born! This time Lucy was sure that the person in front of her is indeed her father. She introduced herself to him and took him home. The family recognized him. Lucy's dad was caught as a prisoner of war to a distant country. Now he is free and hence is back to his own place.

Lucy became so happy when her father gave her a hug for the first time. Tear flowed down her eyes. She felt like she has got a second life! She is no more sad. Lucy is a happy girl alive in this whole wide world because her father is alive. Her father bought her a watch that she would wear every-day to school. Guess what is written on the watch-"Lucy's Dad".



## **The Banana Girl** | By Parthivi Borua (Muse) Year 2

Once upon a time there lived a little girl named Dorothy. Her family was poor, and they had nothing to eat. One day, the whole family went to buy something in a faraway place.

They bought a long, curvy, yellow fruit in the market. Dorothy just did not know what that yellow fruit was! She had never seen one like that before in her life! She showed to her father who checked with other people in the town. Finally, she came to know that it was called a BANANA!

She took a bite of the yellow fruit to find that the white fleshy part inside the yellow peel was really yummy! She brought a lot of bananas to her hometown and sold them in the market. Soon she earned a lot of money and her family lived happily ever after.

## The Spirit of Sydney Bhaxa Ghor



*Sydney Bhaxa Ghor has been pioneering to impart Assamese culture and language to our young generation. We appreciate and congratulate our wonderful community members for taking such inspiring effort of spreading our knowledge and culture to our next generation.*

# Software Engineer at school

**Nayan Barman**



It was a late evening. I was waiting patiently at a bus stop when I met a 15-year-old boy, who was on his way back home from tuition class. I started a casual conversation and impulsively asked him what profession he would like to take in future. He promptly replied that he wanted to become an engineer, precisely a software engineer. Being already into this career for last 10 years, I asked him, what was he doing for that. He replied, "I am studying hard at school". Being aware of prevalent educational system and hazy mindset of an adolescent, I was not taken aback by such a naive response. Our educational system is not methodical enough to let us choose our career early, but I strongly believe that infusing the wandering youngsters with guidance can help them to find their way.

The first thing I asked him was what he knew about the prospects of being a software engineer. He said that his elderly neighbour's son, who stays in Bangalore, told him something about it when he visited last to his neighborhood. He said life's pretty cool there with cordial ambience, complimentary food, good people around, and most importantly loads of money. I smilingly said, "True, but there can be other avenues which can lead to such a lifestyle. So why do you choose this? What special prospects do you see in it?"

He didn't utter a word and looked coyly blanked. Then he quietly asked, "So, what do you think? What is the best thing about this profession?" I retorted, "This industry is thriving for one and only aspect - innovation. There are plenty of monotonous, routine works in IT which can be significantly automated by a system - devised by an imaginative brain. You can in the best way use your creativity here". Indeed, software industry is all about innovative mind that runs the complex automatic processes.

As we engrossed more in the discussion, the bus came in and we both embarked on it. Sitting beside each other, we continued with the discussion. I posed him, "What exactly are you yearning out of these options: wealth, status, and community service?" He said his primary objective was to earn money so that he could live a luxurious life, though he wouldn't completely avoid the other 2 options. I assured him all these can be accomplished in this line of work by its own way: wealth - earning handsome salary depending on your skills, status- more you climb the ladder, the more you earn recognition, community service - there are lot more voluntary means by which you can benefit the society.

Mesmerized in the conversation, he then hurriedly looked outside the windows to ensure that he did not miss his stop. I further quizzed, "Do you know what does Engineering really mean?" He said, "No, not really". I imparted, "Engineering is nothing but bringing ideas into realities and it is exciting doing such things in a wide global way". I continued, "And software engineering is about converting our ideas into realities through Mobile Apps, website, computer programs etc."

He got excited, and readily asked me "Is the industry looking only for innovative ideas, that's it?" I smiled, and told him, "Yes, but it has to come in some form. First, you need to understand the persisting problems and demanding challenges that the industry is facing. After the problems are analyzed, you can initiate to think about the solution in the form of innovative ideas. If your idea looks feasible, then it has to be further implemented through programming".

He looked composed and eagerly inquired, "So what do I need to do from today?" I advised, "Do your Math properly. Do tricky ones, apply your brain. Think of different solutions for the same problem. Try solving puzzles in your free

time. It will enhance your problem-solving ability". I continued, "Do your English well. Never neglect it. Communication skill is something which can rightly put you to the top of the world". I further continued, "Make yourself aware what's going on around the world. Knowledge is always powerful".

As he reached his destination, he sat up and slid past me courteously, and bidding goodbye, alighted from the bus. He looked content and I am sure I was able to paint a clearer picture in his mind.

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## Women in technology – an Indian perspective in the global scenario

Dr Rukmi Dutta

In recent years, we have seen a global push for gender equality in all professional fields. Traditionally technology, science and engineering are male dominated. All of us, who are in these fields, have the first-hand experience of male dominance. In my batch of BE 1995, we had merely 9 girls in a class of 60 of electrical engineering, which won the crown of having the highest percentage of girls that year. Some other branches of engineering had only one or two girls out of 60. Somehow in our society, a girl engineer is a misfit and hence, there is less encouragement to be an engineer than let say to be a doctor. I mistakenly thought that this biased perspective was exclusive to Indian society. But when I came out of India and went to Tokyo University, Japan, I was shocked to find that a highly advanced country like Japan is no better than India in gender equality. In fact, Japan was worse than India. I struggled to find any woman as a professor of Engineering or even high-level executive of those well-renowned tech companies such as Sony. I thought (again mistakenly) that bias toward women in technology was probably an Asian cultural thing. But how mistaken I was! After coming to live and work in Australia and travelling to USA and Europe many times, I have become acutely aware that the gender inequality in the field of technology is not Indian or Asian but a global problem. Developed country like US and many European countries are struggling to encourage young girls to take the profession of engineer and scientist. Actually, compared to these countries, India is in a better position. Limited choice of secure profession in India has pushed many talented girls towards engineering and technology, which is a good thing. According to a report published by WES (<http://www.wes.org.uk/>) in 2017, women studying engineering in India is over 30%, which is more than double of UK. It is a positive development for India. It was a proud moment for women engineers of India, when global television screens flashed the scenes of a bunch of women scientists/engineers of ISRO, India celebrating the record launch of satellites. A number of Australian TV news readers even expressed surprise to see sari-clad Indian women celebrating an engineering feat. But, we women engineers of India should feel proud of such achievements and India could be a catalyst to bring the global changes of gender equality in the field of engineering/technology.



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# Getting married in Assam

Alex Chetia

I did not know what to expect when flying from Sydney to Dibrugarh last November for our wedding, but I knew the experience would be different from my last journey there three years ago, when I visited as the “good Australian friend” of my now husband Manab. This time, I would be at the epicenter of a big (by Western standards) Assamese wedding! At the time, this was the only information I had about the plans for the coming weeks.

Our wedding involved seven separate rituals and parties spread across five days, most of which took place in a beautiful marquee that had been constructed in a friend’s garden in Duliajan Oil Town. The festivities kicked off on a Thursday, with a solemn ritual called the Na-Purukh Shardha in Manab’s family home.

Lasting a few hours, it honored the last nine generations of his paternal side and the last three generations of his maternal side and sought their blessings prior to the wedding. That night there was a mehndi party with my Aussie friends who had flown out from Sydney to celebrate with us. This involved a few hours sitting waiting for the mehndi to dry and then leaning over dustbins peeling it off, while various friends and family members came to say hi and share some food.

On Friday, the first ritual at the wedding marquee, my Juron, took place. This was an opportunity for me to honour and farewell my parents and be welcomed into the Chetia family by my mother-in-law, who literally showered me with gifts (mostly dresses and jewelry for the other wedding events) while the group of priests chanted and blessed us. This was followed by the Tel-Diya, where part of my wedding dress was draped over me like a bridal veil and my mother-in-law applied sindoor (the vermilion mark of a married woman) to my hair parting. I was also hand-fed some delicious sweets, then I hand-fed my friends some sweets, and my mum gave everyone some Paan-Tamul, betel leaves with raw areca nut—a taste combination I unfortunately have not developed much appreciation for, the number of times I have tried it!



That evening, two more rituals were performed by the priests—one for me and one for Manab. Usually these take place in separate locations, however, because I had such a small group of family and friends in attendance, they were both conducted at the wedding venue separated by a large sheet (to prevent Manab and I from seeing each other—an interesting pre-wedding rule to adhere to when staying in the same house). Both rituals ended with the priests busting out some traditional Assamese dance moves and inviting others to do the same. A band performed later in the evening, which included a violinist who invited me up to play at the end of the night. This would have been quite enjoyable, except that his violin had left-hand-tuning—which meant I had to reverse all the bowing and fingering in my head on the spot in order to play—possibly the most challenging set of mental acrobatics I have ever ‘performed…

On the Saturday of the wedding, the Pani Tula and Nuoni took place for both Manab and I. The Pani Tula is the ceremonial fetching of water from a nearby river by the women from the bride’s and groom’s side. Then came the cleansing bath, which involved sitting on a small bench while my mother, Manab’s mum’s female friends and my Aussie friends each took turns smearing my face, hands and feet with black gram and turmeric paste, then pouring a jug of water through a white sheet draped over my head. I was not allowed to watch Manab’s bath, however, apparently his uncle carried him to and from the bathing area like a small child, wearing nothing but a sheet!



During the time in between mine and Manab’s baths, the wedding photographers decided it was the ideal

time to do a photoshoot in a nearby tea plantation (even though we technically still weren't allowed to see each other...). So as soon as I got back from the Nuoni, with turmeric-stained hair and skin, I quickly showered, re-did my hair and makeup and put on another mekhela chadar (the fourth one in two days, by that point!) We drove out to a large tea plantation on the edge of Duliajan and had fun doing poses with our friends and being followed around by a drone!



On the night of the ceremony, when I arrived at the wedding venue, I was promptly ushered out the back to wait for Manab and his entourage to arrive. They arrived an hour or so later. Manab was covering his mouth with a piece of cloth (apparently to stop himself from saying anything that might jeopardies the marriage!) As he walked in, guests from the bride's and groom's side had a rice fight, which Manab and his best man walked through the middle of with an umbrella (this was all described to me later, as I was sitting out the back wondering what was going on, and I still don't quite understand why it all happened!)



Then I was brought out for a short pre-ceremony ritual and everyone kept telling me to cry while I walked (apparently that is what most brides do...) After this, my brother lifted me and lead me to the ceremony altar (I think my outfit would have added almost 10kg to my overall weight!) The altar had a circle of 101 oil lamps burning, surrounded by garlands of flowers. It was beautiful and mesmerizing. As Manab is from the Ahom tribe, which has Thai ancestry, the wedding ceremony was spoken in both Assamese

and an old form of Thai (and Manab's father sat behind us quietly translating it into English!) The ceremony involved us repeating our vows in Thai, receiving Thai blessings, exchanging flower garlands, me giving Manab a sword to defend me with, and playing a game of "find the wedding ring" in a bowl of rice. When we stepped off the mat, we were then considered married.

After receiving lots of congratulatory hugs and kisses from our guests, we were driven back to Manab's parents' house where we were welcomed by his parents and followed into our bedroom by many of the guests! Here is a photo of us with my high school friends and Manab's best man in our bedroom at the very end of the night (around midnight)!



After having a much-needed rest day, our reception took place on Monday afternoon (running until around midnight). After sampling the numerous dishes available in the spectacular buffet Manab's parents had arranged, we made our way to an elaborately decorated stage with a comfortable sofa. There we spent around six hours greeting each of the approximately 900 guests. Each had the opportunity to congratulate us, give us a gift (it took five of us over half an hour to open them all!), take a photo with us, and I would offer them fennel seeds and dried coconut from my xorai (pictured). My Aussie friends and brother also got "the celebrity treatment", as many of the guests and staff wanted selfies with them! At the end of the evening, everyone joined together for dancing, then Manab and I had the opportunity to sample some more of the delicious food before thanking the waitstaff, cooks and photographers, and heading home for a much-needed sleep.

When I think about this experience, the words that come to mind are vibrance, love, reverence, inclusiveness, solemnity, sensory overload, confusion, meaning, exhaustion, enrichment, community and family. I have never had an experience like that before and I wonder if I ever will again! I am so grateful to Manab's family for making it possible, and to my friends and family for embracing the Assamese culture and customs so whole-heartedly.

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## *The Moonlit window*

*Clasped in the night's darkness,  
Glimpse of an unknown smile,  
A bright hue in the magical sky,  
Dances to the melody of life,  
And Whispers in my ears a long forgotten song..*

*As I close my eyes and my dreams soar high,  
As I reach out for the stars,  
A touch of wind gushes by,  
And that reminds me of a long forgotten song..*

*Had I been to the sky,  
The ground would have been the Star,  
And today as I stand on the ground,  
The endless sky is my ultimate home,  
But the distant star still reminds me of a long forgotten song..*

*Endless nights of hope and despair,  
Often pass by my door,  
But today the moonlit window still reminds me  
Of a long forgotten song..*



**Gargi Gogoi**

## *Our Beloved Bihuwan*

*Bedashree Gogoi*

Bihu is now synonymous with Assam-its culture and sentiments. It is an indispensable part of the Assamese society. The cultural aspects and chronicles are hidden in Bihu. Everyone literally jumps at the very mention of the word Bihu. The whole world seems to be in delight with the sounds of dhol pepa (musical instruments used in Bihu). The significant importance of Bihuwan or Gamosa in socio-cultural life of the people of Assam can easily be appreciated in relation with Bihu.

**Moromor digh di      Senehor bani boi**  
**Hepahor asure buwa**  
**Xopunor fulere      Fulam mur bihuwan**  
**Monedi abeli luwa**

The Bihuwan or Gamosa is considered to be the most honoured textile and plays a pivotal role in Assamese society. As a symbol of friendship, love, regards, warmth, hospitality, the Bihuwan is intricately and intimately woven into the social fabric of Assam. It is presumed that the Bihuwan received glory during the rule of the Ahom kings. The subjects gifted Swargadeo (the king) the Bihuwan during Bihu who in turn accepted it as a special blessing from them. Later the ministers followed the same ritual. And this is how the idea and concept of gifting beloved with Bihuwan came into existence.

This Bihuwan exemplifies the art, ideology and culture of Assamese women in the society. One such tradition that has overcome the ebb and flow of time is traditional weaving. In our society the taat xaal or the handloom is of immense value. The weaving and spinning of Assamese rich textiles by the womenfolk prove how much the people are passionate about handloom. Fabrics from Assam include cotton, muga silk, pat silk (mulberry) and eri silk (endi). From centuries old womenfolk have spun numerous clothes not only for daily wear but also for festive occasions. Also, among the folk arts of Assam, the dress made out of the weaver's loom elicits the highest attention, is the cynosure among all. Every Assamese woman prides in possessing a weaver's loom. Under the patronage of the Ahom Swargadeos, the weaving art progressed formidably. History has that in ancient times Assamese women weaved amulets in their weaving looms under only a night for their gladiator husbands. Every Assamese woman, once upon a time, used to be a dexterous weaver. Each Assamese attire became a symbol of mental toil and beauty under the confluence of the heart and the hands of the Assamese weavers.



Bihuwan is a celebration of craftsmanship, an ode to human ingenuity. Women weavers work from a graph of small designs which are generally geometric patterns embellished with floral tracery in between coloured strips and is woven on a loin-loom with traditional colours. The age-old traditions of having a taat xaal (weaver's loom) in every household immortalised the beauty of the house. The one element that unites them all is the knowledge of weaving honed and passed down over generations. It can be rightfully heard in Bihu songs as



**Luitar xuwoni      Borkoi sapor**  
**Sutalor xuoni taat**  
**Lahorir xuwoni      Misiki hahiti**  
**Bethai loga juwa maat**

In today's world the modernization and the use of machinery has led to the downfall of our traditional taat xaal and use of machine made gamosa instead of handmade gamosa. Still in several parts of Assam, the women folk get busy in the month of Chot (Mid-March to Mid-April) to weave out the beautiful Bihuwan. It becomes a sorry state of affairs for the lovely ladies of not gifting Bihuwan to guests, elders and beloved ones in Bihu. It was also considered a matter of shame for the women of not knowing the art of weaving during the bygone era which can be heard in Bihu songs as -

**Bobou najane      Katibo u najane**  
**Lukor xale xale fure**  
**Randhibo najane      Badhibo najane**  
**Khori muthamuthe pure**



Literally Gamosa means a cloth to wipe the body - "Ga" means body and "mosa" means wipe in Assamese. So 'Gamosa' is equivalent to 'towel' by meaning, but it is not merely an item of multi-purpose physical convenience. Its services extend far beyond the body into the sphere of mind and soul. These towels are white with patterns at both ends with stylised forms of birds, animals, humans, flowers, foliage and geometric motifs.

The gifting of Bihuwan in Rongali Bihu has been an age-old tradition. As per custom, the young women have to present a self-woven Bihuwan to her beloved as a token of love, and to elders as a symbol of respect in Rongali Bihu. Also, it is not likely that the Bihuwan is gifted only in Bihu. The gifting of gamosa to guest has been prevalent for a long time. It is customary to welcome the dignitaries in Assam always with a Phulam (ornamented floral designs) Gamosa offered in a special style as garlanding the guest with warmth, love and regards. It then becomes a souvenir of reverence and oneness, no matter from which corner of the globe the guest comes, what his language is or what

his culture is. Bihu dancers wear gamosa around the head and waist.

Gamosa is also used as turban cloth by men on such festive occasions with the flaps flaunting at the sides. The musical instruments used in Bihu like the dhol is also wrapped decoratively with gamosa. It is also used to cover the altar at Namghar (the prayer hall) and Singhasana (the crowns) of the Satras with the words “Krishna” “Ram” “Hari” written on them. The scriptures too are covered with gamosa as a sign of devotion and reverence. The farmers use it as a Tongali (waistcloth) or a Suriya (loincloth). The use of gamosa in auspicious occasions is also seen. Without gamosa, the wedding rituals couldn't be thought of Gamosa occupies its importance as an additional item of dress too. On festive or ceremonial occasions, it is neatly folded and worn around the neck. Amalgamated with such multihued thoughts, emotions and gestures, the Gamosa has acquired distinctive symbolic significance as an identity by itself for the socio-cultural life of the people of Assam.

The importance of Bihuwan or Gamosa has never faded in the Assamese culture and society and will never be. Bihuwan is an identity of us since our forefather's time. Recently the Bihuwan has earned the coveted geographical indication (GI) recognition, thereby getting legal protection to prevent its unauthorized use.

As long as our Assamese society will live our beloved Bihuwan or Gamosa will also live magnifying our existence.

### Source:

*Bihugeet Aru Bonghosha, Second edition, Banalata Publishing (Assamese Book 2014)*

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### Image Source:

<https://www.instagram.com/earthsy.in/>

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/assamese-musician-playing-traditional-musical-instrument-104759393>

## On Coincidence

Wasim Raja

(CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science, Marsfield)

Ever since K2 was introduced on our bus route (my erstwhile place of residence, my hostel at Aswathnagar), I had a fantasy of being able to travel in it. The bus looked amazingly clean from outside (remember, this is not an A/C bus), and although I had no reason to travel in it, I in my heart of hearts, craved for one. As if destined, I had to find a place of residence at Rajajinagar where I on a fine day, saw a K2 plying on the road close to my new place! And when I got the muscle spasm that prevented me from using my motor bike, I was kind of ecstatic at the prospect of fulfilling what I had fancied years ago -- travelling in a K2!

The first day, I went in our institute vehicle to the bus stop in front of Ramaiah College where I could board a K2 to my new residence. I was a little late and I had missed the last bus. I walked the 6 kms.

On the second occasion I had recovered from the muscle spasm and had started using my bike again; it was raining.

And the prospect of fulfilling my destiny (?) came alive (together with the desire of having kebabs at my favourite food-joint Ginger!). I ensured this time that I had reached well in advance so as not to miss the last bus. I had my food and kept waiting for almost an hour when the *paan shop wala* told me that K2 is unpredictable in the evenings. This time I did not walk the 6 kms home, but took the institute's vehicle from the hostel (that was close -by), and rode back home in my bike.

Today was the third occasion (self-created by the weird me). There was no reason for me to go *shorts-hunting* all the way to my old hostel area. Yet I went, and I went in a bus (despite having my bike), with an inner desire to come back by a K2 (please do not laugh, it is a serious matter!). And although I was least bothered at finding my favourite Custom Department's Sale shop at New Bel road "go poof", I actually rejoiced at being free to brisk-walk to the Ramaiah bus stop where I could finally catch a K2. It was only 5:30 in the evening, and there would be plenty of them before the last one. Hardly had I finished reading Narayan Murthy and his son's (re) joining Infosys on the first page of the Times of India that I had bought from the corner shop than a K2 appeared at the stop. It was beautiful -- as beautiful as it had been in my fantasy -- **clean and spacious** (*you should travel in a Bengaluru city bus before laughing me away*)! I boarded it. I did not get a seat but hoped to find one by the time the bus reached Yeshwantpur. Harsha called to find out if I would be going for the play her sister and her brother-in-law were performing in, and I told her (sparing the details of my ecstasy at finally being on the inside of a K2) that I could not come today. The bus passed Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and a muddy spot there reminded me of an earlier hunt for a K2 go futile. I mocked at *fate* and boasted "*What do you have to say today, huh!*" And believe it or not, just as this thought crossed my mind, we heard a thud! The bus broke down! The steering wheel would not steer anymore! So, we were all asked to get down.

I asked the conductor if he planned to send us in a different bus. He assured that the same ticket would hold valid. I was least bothered about the ticket. I wanted to know if it would be a K2 that would take us all farther. He said, for those of us who wished to go to Yeshwantpur, he would arrange our travel in any bus going there, but those travelling farther ahead, will have to wait for the next K2. I was very happy to hear the latter.

The not-so-frequent K2's enabled me to witness a pleasant evening under the thundering sky. Everyone was pleasantly calm -- the driver, the conductor, and all

the passengers. (I really love and appreciate this calm and patience in us Indians at times of disasters). The driver made a series of calls and the conductor and another staff stopped buses going to Yeshwantpur for the passengers travelling until there. A traffic policeman arrived, annoyed at being sent to this bus-breakdown scene that had caused a visible slowing-down of the traffic. He ordered the bus to be steered to a convenient position (as if the driver would not have, had it been possible). The bus crew explained to him the situation, and surprisingly, he regained his calm, and immediately started disciplining the traffic. It was inspiring to watch him work in the rain. I wish he and his colleagues' everyday efforts (despite the noise, the dust, the smoke and the chaos) were appreciated by all of us in the public, in general.

Suddenly a person in an all-blue uniform jumped down from a moving bus and came running to our wreck. He was greeted with an ear-to-ear smile by both the driver and the conductor. And after an equally extensive smile in return, the blue-suited guy dived underneath the bus immediately! I realised he was the mechanic. It was such a pleasure to see him work.

With all these happenings, and with passers-by in cars and bikes glancing sympathetically at us and our wreck, I spotted another K2! I could not resist shouting to my fellow passengers (those that remained) of the arrival of our saviour! I thanked the driver and the handyman for stopping it for us and boarded it. This time I was literally polite to *fate* and did not dare antagonise it. The bus reached Yeshwantpur terminus without any glitch. The conductor said something to me and gestured to me the direction to the door. I reminded him that I was one of the rescued passengers from the *wreck*, and that my destination was farther ahead along the route. While I explained this to him in *Hindi* (with a few *Kannada* words emphatically plugged in-between my *Hindi*), I saw other passengers getting down from the bus grumbling at something. Then from within the commotion, my sensitive ears picked up two English words -- "Tyre" and "Puncture".

(Reproduced from my personal notes written originally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2013. The incidents mentioned in this note coincides with the time I was winding up my PhD Thesis at the Raman Research Institute, Bangalore.)

**Disclaimer: Pursuit of a PhD does not render people crazy.)**

PS: I waited for the next K2, and it did bring me to my place of residence.



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