

# The Historicity and Role of Bhojpuri Language in Indian Freedom Struggle with special reference to Bhojpuri Lok Geets of Bihar: A Thematic Analysis

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## Abstract

The subject of this article is inspired by the combination of oral and cultural history with an emphasis on Bhojpuri Lok geets of Bihar. These Lok geets can be proved as one of the best ways to research the pre-existing thoughts of a region regarding numerous aspects of the society as these are part of oral traditions, which refers to a variety of facts and information that are passed down orally from person to person or from generation to generation rather than through written documents or manuscripts. In Bihar, Bhojpuri speaking regions, there are numerous lok geets, some of which are named Sohar, Faag, Barahmasa, Chaturmasa, Poorvi, Batohiya, Firangiaa, Ropni, Birha, Chaitaar, Saanjh, Chhathihar, and many others. All these types are classified naturally in different kinds representing the life-cycle events, the annual calendar of events, seasonal songs, wisdom songs, devotional songs, songs of love and beauty, songs of glory and regarding Indian freedom struggles. But, in this article the significance of Bhojpuri lok geets in the Indian liberation movements will be highlighted specifically, along with how they were employed at the time to disseminate revolutionary ideas and communicate with large numbers of people. Rather, each and every freedom struggle—whether it was the 1857 uprising, the indigo revolt, the agitation against the teen kathiya system, the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, or the Quit India Movement—has its own narrative in Bhojpuri lok geets and a proper place in many of the lok poets' compositions. Various Bhojpuri lok poets are known but only mainstream poets are discussed and their geets are cited in this article so that the readers can relate how much these geets had promoted the sense of patriotism which gradually became a serious concern at that time for British authorities.

**Keywords:** Bhojpuri, Lok Geet, Lok Poets, Bihar folks, Cultural History, Oral Tradition, Indian Freedom Struggle, Indian National Movement

## Introduction

The word “Lok” has been used in this article instead of folk as Kapil Tiwari has discussed in his writings and conversations how the word “Lok” fits the Indian context when it comes to folk customs. It is also very clearly augmented by J. Nandakumar in his work ‘Lok, Beyond Folk’ he has made an intriguing point regarding Indian culture and its prevalent customs, which are centuries old in our minds, and how it needs to be readdressed in a new form, expressing it with its indigenous word, “Lok”. John Greenway in his article ‘Folk Songs as Socio-Historical Documents’ has opined about how folk songs are a medium to understand the people who made them and about their pre-existing behaviours and social narratives in the past (1-9). Lok geets are mainly studied from the perspectives of anthropology, linguistics, and musicology. However, when it comes to history, it is unclear how and where to determine the historicity and relevancy of

these lok geets. But before this one should seek the origin and its ways of interpretation so that the various aspects can be analysed easily. The origin of a language cannot be very exactly or perfectly known but can be tried to reach its first place where it has been heard. There was a big pargana named Bhojpur in Buxar sub division in Shahabad district. The origin of the name of the pargana as Bhojpur comes from two small villages named '*Navka Bhojpur*' and '*Puranka Bhojpur*' near the Ganges, two to three miles north of the capital Dumraon (D. Singh 1). The name of the language spoken in this Bhojpur pargana and its surroundings is Bhojpuri, which is spoken today even in far away districts. The name of this dialect Bhojpuri is taken from the ancient city called Bhojpur. This city was situated a few miles south of the Ganga, at a distance of 60 miles from Patna. Today it is a small village but at one time it was the capital of powerful Rajputs whose leader was the Maharaja of Dumraon and who was a follower of '*Kunwar Singh*', the leader of the revolution of 1857 (D. Singh 2). John Beames' note on Bhojpuri language in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (3: 383-408), Bhojpuri is a dialect of Bhojpur, which is situated in the northwestern part of Shahabad district. Apart from this, Shri Pt. Uday Narayan Ji Tiwari studied for many years and wrote a thesis on Bhojpuri language and its grammar. In that too, by citing the evidence of British scholars and Muslim documents like *Ain-e-Akbari* and *Badshah Nama* e.t.c. He has presented the bravery and valour of the Ujjain Rajputs and has proved that this caste existed from Muslim times till the rebellion of 1857. They did not allow their power on this land to be destroyed by their might and always maintained their supremacy (Upadhyay 23).

Bhojpuri is a very open language, just like any other living language. It is constantly prepared to take in and modify vocabulary and idioms from any language. Speaking Bhojpuri has become much more common as a result of the migrant brothers' presence not only in a large portion of India but also in Africa, Burma, and other islands. This language has its own character in the realm of lok geets as well and since it gained popularity during the Indian independence movement and was viewed as a covert metaphorical weapon at the time.

Even before 1857, literature critical of the British was being written and sung in folk customs and ballads. It has been observed that the British were portrayed in these songs as being unjust, cruel, and dishonest. We observe that throughout that time, a great deal was written and spoken about the horrors of the British Raj in folk languages like Bhojpuri and Magahi, aside from Urdu. This shows us two different kinds of streams. Both written works and songs from folk culture contain a significant amount of literature. A large number of these folk ballads were never recorded. Through singing, it was still passed down from one generation to the next. This demonstrates the folk singers' awareness even at that era. Numerous poems written in the languages of Awadhi, Bhojpuri, and Magahi express the uprising against the British Raj. One of the heroes of the Revolt of 1857, Babu Kunwar Singh, has been the subject of numerous Bhojpuri and Magahi discourses. The story of the 1857 insurrection was sung by the Bundela Harbols, the Bhats of Awadh, the Jogis, and the poets and lyricists of the Bhojpuri region, who also provided music for the revolutionary songs. One of the epicentres of the Sepoy Mutiny, the first and largest organised uprising against the British Raj, was located in the Bihar district of Bhojpur. The 80-year-old Babu Kuwar Singh blew the whistle in this place to rebel against the British Raj. Newspapers weren't around during that time. Bhojpuri lokgeets were therefore very important to mass communication at that time.

The sounds of the first liberation fight, *Charan literature*, and the revolutionary type of national consciousness can all be clearly heard and observed when discussing Bhojpuri folk songs. The compositions of Bhojpuri date back to approximately 1857, for instance *Kunwar Vijaymal*, a well-known Bhojpuri ballad poem that was published in the *Asiatic Society of Bengal* through Dr. George Abraham Grierson (Diwakar 738; D. Singh 38). Similarly, a large number of lok geets with a strong nationalistic attitude were produced and frequently sung in public or on ceremonial stages. Numerous lok geet poets can be heard on records contributing to the writing of these songs that raised awareness among their audience or the Native people in a revolutionary way.

## Bhojpuri Lok Geets and Indian Freedom Struggles

Lok geets provide a variety of viewpoints on social structure and conventions in various contexts. The core of Bhojpuri Lok geets' culture and customs are readily apparent; this regional language has a distinct character due to the way it speaks with vigour and strength combined with a sense of pride. The famous first fight of independence in 1857 left a lasting impact on the bhojpuri regions, which also gave rise to a variety of tales in their lok geets. The lok geets in bhojpuri also played a role in inciting the nationalistic and revolutionary impulse in its people. In the Bhojpuri area in 1857, Bihar had its own hero, Kunwar Singh, whose name is mentioned frequently in all literature related to the uprising of 1857 (Upadhyay 49). Tofaa Rai, a contemporary of Kunwar Singh, was born in North Bihar's Saran district. He was the court poet of Hanthuaa Raj and penned the well-known *Kunwar Pachasaa*, a poem that rejoiced in Kunwar Singh's triumph over the British forces. His collection of lok geets in Bhojpuri are centralised towards elevating the bravery of Kunwar Singh in the age of eighty and inspiring young people to have a sense of revolution against Britishers who were making them slaves in their own land. In Bhojpuri-speaking areas, honouring Kunwar Singh is still highly widespread, and as a result, a vast body of material has been produced.

In the excerpt below from Tofaa Rai's composition the valour of Kunwar Singh can be seen while illustrating the violent scenaric sketch of revolt between Britishers and fearsome Kunwar Singh. The people of Jagadishpur are in disbelief at what they see in Veer Kunwar Singh, an eighty-year-old man with two swords in each hand and fiery eyes that convey his current state of dread. His swords are ravenous for the blood of the British, who are pressing him to cede his motherland and pay taxes to them. Seeing that everyone is comparing his attack to thundering clouds and that he is prepared to play Holi with the blood of opponents, he is charging them with his weapon with great ferocity :-

“देवता देखे लागल जोगनी भखे लगलि  
गोरन के रक्त लाल पीके पेट भरल नू  
ऊपर आकाश गरजे, नीचे बीर कुंवर गरजे  
गोर फिरंग संग पावस होले खेलल नू” (D. Singh 36-44)

Many notable personalities have been associated with the 1857 uprising, including the previously stated one and his bravery in the Bhojpuri Lok Geets. However, the sacrifices made by commoners cannot be overlooked. There is no shortage of geets that speak to the common people and sing of their sorrows in order to make the audience aware of the circumstances and the problems they face. Narmadeshwar Prasad, a Bhojpuri poet and lok geet singer, from Shahabad district was another contemporary of Kunwar Singh's who was also his brother. In his works the ongoing freedom fight was exhibited while addressing the issue of rebellions sacrificing their blood and breath for their country with such grace and beauty. How Indian men were recruited in the British army and how the British have been humiliating them for a number of years as a result of their own might is also highlighted by him. His poems did a fantastic job of illustrating the “*Divide and Rule*” tactic. In the following few sentences below, which stress these points, Prasad is alluding to the Indian recruits in the British army when he says that there is no longer any distinction between natives and outsiders, adding that they are all at war with their own people. For the sake of their so-called lords, the British army in which the Indian recruits are aiding the foreigners in war and divulging the secrets of their own country. It also proves that without help of insiders the foreigners could never took of their freedom so easily and cleverly :

“देसी अउर विदेसी के फरक कह राखल नाही  
अपने में लड़ लड़ के विदेशी के जितौले बा

*गोरा सिख सेना ले निडर जे चढ़ल आवे  
घर के विभिखन भेद घरवे नू बतवले बा.”*

Many Lok geets were composed which directly indicates and gives meaning in their social context but some geets were not supposed to reveal its meaning to targeted foreigners. At the time of the Indian freedom struggle anyone found writing, singing or acting against Britishers were charged and jailed with harsh punishments. Due to this many poets emerged who started expressing their words in indigenous and unrevealing sentences so that only natives could understand its sense while making them safe from the inhumane charges by Foreigners. One of them, Mahendra Misir, the emperor of *Purvi's* song in Bihar, was born in Mishrawalia, Chapra. Since he was a young child, thoughts about music and riding horses took birth in his mind. Later on he got more involved with music and geets. *Purvi* is a type of lok geet for which Misir was well known. Several nations, including Fiji, Mauritius, Britain, and others travelled by him while always carrying his geets and spreading his messages to Indians in foreign. In addition to social issues, he was crucial to the nation's independence as he also lived in the same era as Mahatma Gandhi. In order to undermine the British economy and diminish British authority, he had created counterfeit notes. Mahendra Misir was later subjected to a conspiracy against him by the British government. He was apprehended and imprisoned as well. Many of the funds had been raised by selling Misir's jewels in an attempt to free him from prison, but Mahendra Misir was ultimately charged. Mahendra Misir never stopped singing about the issues facing the people. His lok geet conveys adoration, love, and separation. His geets' lyrics were composed in a way that made it difficult for British people to understand their true meaning, but the songs themselves were very revolutionary in nature and were meant to rally people against the British who were pillaging the country.

It is possible to read and understand the Mahendra Misir *Purvi's* excerpt below but in a straightforward denotative sense, but it is very different to extrapolate the meaning in which Misir was singing these lok geets. In these lines of Lok Geet, the word "नगिनिया" (female snake) alludes to Queen Victoria of England. Misir is attempting to convey how Queen Victoria has harmed the nation and its citizens, and telling his men to work together and get rid of this snake as soon as possible. Yearning of every native is expressed in this geet as every pores of the body are burning and begging for relief. There is also mention of how he travelled from east to west but was unable to find anyone who would aid him in getting rid of this snake-kind Britishers. Native are compared to fish without water, longing for freedom and tranquillity in their own territory. He is urging everyone to get rid of these thorns, who are perceived as outsiders in their peaceful lives. No one can relate to the connotative meanings of these songs without understanding their true meaning, which demonstrates how and for what purpose he composed these lines :-

*“अंगुरी में डसले बिया नगिनिया रे ए ननदी दियरा जरा दा,  
अंगुरी में डसले बिया नगिनिया रे ए ननदी भइया के बुला दा,  
पोरि पोरि उठेला लहारिया रे ए ननदी भइया के बुला दा,  
पूरूब गइनी राम पच्छिम गइनी से  
कतहू ना मिलै विषहरिया रे ए ननदी दियरा जरा दा,  
अंगुरी में डसले बिया नगिनिया रे ए ननदी भइया के बुला दा,  
पोरि पोरि उठेला लहारिया रे ए ननदी भइया के बुला दा,  
तड़पेला देहिया जइसे जल बिनु मछरिया  
रेगुनी के काट भइल सिजरिया रे ए ननदी दियरा जरा दा,” (Dwivedi 25)*

The British Raj never left any chance to exploit Indians in different ways, forcing them to harvest Indigo in their lands also known as *Tinkathia* system, and if not done they did not hesitate confiscating their lands. The indigenous farmers of Champaran, Bihar, were compelled to grow indigo on three out of every twenty plots of land under the *Tinkathia* system. Their discontent was mostly caused by the little compensation they were paid for their crops. Additionally, they experienced intimidation and mistreatment from workers at the factories. The poor value of indigo compared to its considerable labour and maintenance costs caused great unhappiness among the Champaran inhabitants. When there was no one to hear their sorrows; lok poets noticed and expressed their melancholy through Bhojpuri lok geets, which are still sung in this area to honour the sorrows of their ancestors. In this regard among the lok poets, Shivsharan Pathak of Champaran from a village named Pakri composed lok geet against indigo cultivation and atrocities of britishers on natives. Bettiah Maharaj, who was also a poet, felt heartbroken while listening to his geets when Pathak sung his geets in front of him. In his lok geets, feelings about the pain and broken hearts of his fellow citizens who are coping with the wrongdoings of the British Raj can be sensed easily and be felt how emotions in these geets are submerged by him. The suffering from lack of food grains as a result of being forced to plant only the indigo crops that the British required and that is implicitly their own lands taken away from them while compromising their freedom. Here are a few sentences that capture the essence of the situation: the farmer, sitting on his field in deep anguish and foreseeing his ultimate downfall due to the actions of the foreigners, is described as follows. Even the straws and chaffs are not left in the field when growing indigo; instead, the farmer is thrashed wherever he goes to express his sorrows. The farmer asks God if there are any more righteous men in the world who could help him stop growing indigo. It is now too much for him to work twice a day tilling the soil, especially with its intense labour. Everyone is advising him not to put up with this much suffering, and instead of doing so, they are telling him to speak with Bettiah Maharaj ji about his sorrows. But once more, he will be let down because comforting words alone will not be able to end his impending eternal suffering. The only person who can now grant him a way out of this situation is Goddess Kali ji, who is also his only source of hope at this point in time. :-

“ना बाचेला ढाठा पुअरा, ना बाचेला भूसे।  
जेकरा से दुःख हाल कहीला से मारेला घूसे॥  
होइ कोई जगत् में धरमी, लील के खेत छोड़ावे।  
बड़ा दुःख बाम्हन के भइले दूनो साँझ कोडवावे॥  
सभे लोग तो कहेला जे काहे ला दुःख सहऽ।  
दोसरा के दुःख नाही छूटे, तऽ महाराज से कहऽ॥  
महाराज जी परसन होइहें छनही में दुःख छूटी।  
कालीजी जब किरपा करिहे, मुँह बयरी के टूटी॥” (V. Singh)

After 17 years from the composition of above cited geet by Shivsharan Pathak, in 1917 Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Champaran and started satyagraha against Indigo cultivation and *Teen Kathia* system by the British. After the Champaran struggle came to an end, Gandhiji returned. However, the folklore and folk songs, as well as dialects like Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi, Angika, Vajjika, etc., still have the essence of his movement's influence on popular consciousness. It's not at all true that the suffering of the farmers was only brought to light through songs following Gandhi's Champaran Satyagraha; instead, the people have poignantly conveyed the agony of their exploitation in their native tongue. In Bhojpuri and other dialects, numerous songs about the Champaran Satyagraha have been written. Many subjects are covered in these songs, such as the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Dandi March and violation of the Salt Law, Bhagat Singh's Kirtigatha, Netaji Subhash's fierce fight, and more. These may be the subject of a

book. Trying to cover everything in one article is difficult. Another huge irony is that songs like these are becoming less and less popular among the present generation. (Pathak)

The beauty and prosperity of India with its diversity is known to everyone in this world, hence the lok poets of bhojpuri didn't allow themselves letting this specialty of Indian culture being unsung, hitherto another name rose up in this stream of geets that is *Raghuveer Narayan Singh*, he is known for his famous work *Batohiya*. He was born in October 1884 in Dahiyawa village of Saran district of Bihar. His lok geet *Batohiya* got respect and celebrated as much as *Vande Mataram*, Acharya Shivpujan Sahay addressed this song as *Vande Matram* of Bhojpuri. Dr. Rajeshwari Shandilya, while discussing this song in her article, '*Gandhi Darshan in Bhojpuri Folk Songs*', has written that "In this song, along with the philosophy of India, a very lively description has been presented about its important people, their principles and also about the rivers, plants and animals and birds of the country. By reading, singing and listening to these songs, people felt eager to sacrifice their lives for their beautiful motherland." In 1911 *Batohiya* was composed by the suggestion of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, just one year before our national anthem was composed. One of the popular lines cited below from *Batohiya*, here the poet in the first line praises the Indian subcontinent by illustrating his emotions for his beautiful motherland in which his life resides, while giving credibility to his words in the second line the poet describes the geographical beauty of his nation where from one side Himalayan range is standing as a natural guard and from other three sides of the boundary line of subcontinent the deep Indian ocean has surrounded. These lines are frequently found in *Batohiya* geets, which showcase every aspect of Indian beauty through metaphorical illustrations. Ultimately, these geets inspire love and pride for the Indian people's motherland, motivating them to fiercely defend it and actively participate in all freedom struggles. :

“सुन्दर सुभूमि भैया भारत के देसवा से मोरे प्रान बसे हिम खोह रे बटोहिया।  
एक द्वार घेरे राम हिम-कोतवलवा से, तीन द्वारसिंधु घहरावे रे बटोहिया।” (Shandilya “गाँधी और गाँधी-मार्ग”)

Every region of India had to confront the Raj because of the uprisings and freedom struggle, which arose in the early 20th century and had a profound effect on all of them. However, it was not feasible merely via physical unity and a sense of physical defiance among the natives; especially among these were the indigenous arts, which inspired the Indian people to oppose the Raj with a charged mentality and high morale. (Upadhyay 17) To a large degree, Lok Geets fulfilled this function by showing the abuses and exploitations perpetrated by outsiders. To ordinary people who were disconnected from the outside world and current events, the lok geets conveyed these ideas by contrasting and analysing the many ways in which these colonial rulers devastated and pillaged Indian land. These factors gradually energised and inspired the locals and were vital in bringing the people together throughout the Indian independence movement. Among the well-known names in this Bhojpuri region was *Manoranjan Prasad Sinha* (1900) from Shahabad district of Bihar was also a famous author popularly known for his work *Firangiaa*. He was principal of Rajendra College, Chapra. *Firangiaa* was composed during the Non-Cooperation movement in 1921 by him. In Motihari, the 18th Bihar Hindi Sammelan *Sinha* was chosen to lead as its president. To expel the British at any costs in order to save their nation, by citing the declining political, economic, and religious conditions in India under British rule numerous compatriots were urged by him. Indentured labourers and migrants also took a strong liking to these geets. The British government later outlawed this song because of its provocative content, which became increasingly concerning them. From the work of Rajeshwari Shandilya a few lines are cited from *Firangiaa*, here the past beauty of the motherland is being praised but at the same time the agony of the present situation is being felt. In the below lines *Sinha* is blaming foreigners as *Firangiaa* while saying how beautiful the Indian land was and today it became a crematorium because of you foreigners. Grains, money, people, strength and wisdom everything is destroyed and even no marks are left. All of these are being blamed to Britishers who

devastated everything in Indian land and left nothing to cry upon. The sorrowness and torment can be realised by these lines which can provoke anyone to confront that evil outsiders at any cost : -

“सुन्दर सुघर भूमि भारत के रहे रामा  
आज इहे भइल मसान रे फिरंगिया  
अन्न, धन, जन, बल, बुद्धि सब नास भइल,  
कौनौ के ना रहल निसान रे फिरंगिया।” (Shandilya “गाँधी और गाँधी-मार्ग”)

Indentured labour and British recruited army in foreign lands was very general in those days and due to this even the families were suffering by many daily events of life. This became one of the unpopular but important concerns for few lok poets resulting in a new form of Bhojpuri lok geet that is “*Bidesiya*”. It is a very famous geet of Bhojpuri by Bhikhari Thakur born in Kutubpur(*Diyra*), Saran, Bihar. Bhikhari Thakur was an uneducated poet from the barber caste who lived in poverty and was isolated from society's norms. After Mahendra Misir, Bhikhari Thakur is known for promoting Bhojpuri language and its lok geet, he used his words as emotions of people's heart and spreaded his brilliance all over nevertheless, some of the verses that are provided below demonstrate his brilliance of thought. When one compares the "*Virhan*" of a distinguished Hindi poet with this account of Bhikhari Thakur, the ignorant poet of Bhojpur, one can clearly see the excellent calibre of his poetry. This lok geet had to be outlawed by the British government in some areas. The "*Bidesia*" book is read in states that speak different languages in addition to Bhojpur. However, Bhikhari Thakur still remains unknown to the many Hindi scholarly communities. In the below excerpt the *Virhan* by Thakur is showing the heartache of brides who are waiting for their husbands for several weeks or seasons. At that period of time huge numbers of Indian people went as labourers or British recruited army in foreign lands, one of those regions was Bihar especially in Bhojpuri speaking regions and due to this several young brides or wives wait for their partner while singing these lok geets by painful hearts. Again the reason behind this pain were Foreigners who not only took the freedom of natives but also their loved ones forcefully or by compulsions caused by them. The group of these grieving female partners are sitting together and start expressing their painful words for her partner, they are singing every minute details of her surroundings - about month of *saawan* ,about pleasant weather, chirping birds, dark clouds ready to rain, the thundering clouds- which means she needs her partner in this idyllic environment but no one knows when they would meet their loved ones. The entire stanza reads like an agonising conversation among female friends who are impatiently awaiting the arrival of their partners. The complaining attitudes of female partners who are denouncing these outsiders for severing them from their loved ones can also be seen in these sentences.

“सखिया सावन बहुत सुहावन, ना मनभावन अइलन मोर।  
एक त पावस खास अमावस, काली घाटा चहुँओर॥ सखिया॥  
पानी बरसत जिअरा तरसत, दादुर मचावन सोर॥ सखिया॥  
ठनका ठनकत झिंंगुर झनकत, चमकत बिजली ताबरतोर॥ सखिया॥  
कहत ‘भिखारी’ बिहारी पिअरी से, होई गइलन चित्तचोर॥ सखिया॥” (Kumar 509-519)

Among the Lok poets active in the early 20th century, their role was not only limited to write or sing geets but few examples are there in which lok poets personal involved themselves in freedom struggles and one name in this long list was Babu Narayan Singh, famous writer and author of Bhojpuri Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh near to the border line of Bihar. His poem *Jawahar Swagat* was appreciated by Jawaharlal Nehru and he also worked as a freedom fighter and took part in the independence struggle. His name is worth mentioning in this article as his composition was very famous in Bihar also as people nearby Ballia border still sing these lok geets.

At the time of Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement it was very important to mobilise people of India for independence but the challenge was about how to mass communicate with this huge population. Numerous methods were introduced like meetings, stage shows, radio communication, newspapers and also by lok geets. These lok geets played a crucial role in spreading the cause and awareness for uprisings and gave a strong sense of patriotism inside Indians. Again being specific the bhojpuri region has its own poets and among them *Gopal Shastri* was a famous name in Bhojpuri lok compositions, from Saran, Bihar. In his youth, he participated in the liberation fight in Bihar and began his career as a journalist. He was chosen as president of Uttar Pradesh Congress in 1932. During the Quit India movement in 1942, he was imprisoned. In addition, *Shastri* played a key role in founding the All India Youth Congress, of which he was elected president in 1950. The Civil Disobedience Movement in Bihar was promoted with his lok geets, his geets were very famous at that period of time resulting in his all works being confiscated by British authorities. Popular lines from his composition are cited below will make the readers believe why he was needle in the eyes of Britishers. The line quoted below exemplifies Gopal Shastri's tireless efforts; in it, he tells Indians to wake up because foreigners are robbing the nation while everyone is asleep and the country is more valuable than life itself considering that it gave birth to the most revered Hindu deities, Lord Ram and Krishna. Shastri is attempting to mobilise the Indian populace by highlighting the significance of the nation through its religion and culture, as these are the most potent convictions that have the capacity to inspire anyone to take a position and speak out against injustices.

“उठु उठु भारतवासी अबहु ते चेत करू,  
सुतले में लुटलसि देश रे विदेशिया।  
जननी- जनम भूमि जान से अधिक जानि,  
जनमेले राम अरुं कृष्ण रे विदेशिया।” (Shandilya “गाँधी और गाँधी-मार्ग”)

Another Bhojpuri lok poet and a Gandhian in ideology who was active and helped in the Indian freedom struggle by his heart awakening lok geets was Sardar Harihar Singh from Buxar, Bihar, a very strong personality and famous bhojpuri poet who dedicated his works to patriotism for his own country. From 26 February to 22 June 1969, he led Bihar as Chief Minister. After leading a productive life of 88 years, he passed away in 1988. During the well-known Salt Satyagraha, he organized and guided the Shahabadi populace in a Gandhian manner, earning him the nickname "Sardar." His composed lok geets were triggering in nature and also informative mass communication tactics so that he could lead his people against the British government. He supported Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy by awakening the youths and making them conscious of the independence and freedom of our country. The excerpt below, which addresses Mahatma Gandhi, explains in plain, simple Bhojpuri how Harihar Singh is calling on the people to wake up Indian brothers from their sleep and come together. At the time of Quit India Movement Gandhi was imprisoned by Britishers and for this Singh is mass communicating by his geets that Gandhi like personality is imprisoned, and it is very necessary now that everyone band together to secure his release as soon as possible. These lines simply exhibit how Singh is mass mobilising the crowd and showing them the strength of togetherness and unity.

“चलु भैया चलु आज सभे जन जन हिली मिली.  
सूतल जे भारत के भाई के जगाई जा ।  
गांधी अइसन जोगी भइया जेहल में परल बाटे  
मिली जुली चलु आज गांधी के छोड़ाई जा।” (D.Singh 36)

This is not the end of the list of Bhojpuri poets who used their language to speak out against the British Raj during the independence movement. Many more poets from Shahabad, Ballia, and Chapra utilised their poetry to criticise the British Raj and to raise public awareness through songwriting. Bhojpuri literary work



can be categorised into five periods based on when it was created. In his work, Durga Shankar Prasad Singh divides Bhojpuri poets into poetry periods and categories. He regarded the time between 1900 and 1950 as the modern era of Bhojpuri lok poetry. (D.Singh 1-16)

Lok geets in the Bhojpuri language are customarily sung in the Bhojpuri region of India and Nepal, as well as in certain other nations where speakers of the Bhojpuri language have settled. These lok geets are common in the Bhojpuri-speaking region of India, which includes sections of eastern Uttar Pradesh, western Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. sections of Nepal's Terai region also fall within this region. In other places where Bhojpuri speakers reside, such as Suriname, Fiji, Mauritius, and others, it is widely used. The collection of Bhojpuri lok geets is the product of several people's hard work and dedication. A few Bhojpuri folk songs were gathered by renowned linguist and linguistic surveyor of India, George Grierson, who also published an English translation of these songs in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1886. Also Devendra Satyarthi by gathering a few printed Ahirau tunes, or "*birhas*". Many people have examined Bhojpuri folk songs from a literary perspective; among them, Krishnadev Upadhyay's work is very significant (Diwakar 739). Additionally, many lok geets in Bhojpuri have been gathered and analysed by Sridhar and Vidyanivas Mishra. Each and every collection of bhojpuri lok geets provides the same glances of Indian freedom struggles inside them and also an example of how a language, especially its lok geets can help in starting a revolutionary chain of events.

## Conclusion

In India, there are various sources in ancient, medieval and modern periods of history but the question arises when there is discussion about the regions, community or tribes where tradition and culture becomes the most important thing in its society and their past. The diversity of every sector in India makes it a tough task for historians to get every possible data that they are expecting, the villages, landscapes, ethnic groups or tribes every section of Indian society has its own story and perspectives of their past which sometimes clashes with factual data collected by historians. In countries like Africa and America oral sources got their importance when historians found it difficult to manage written or well established sources for reconstruction of the past. Jan Vansina's in his popular work '*Once upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History in Africa*' it is made obvious how oral historians can use oral sources to their fullest potential, free from subjectivity and assumptions and allowing the information contained in the voices of cultures' wisdom to be used with ease.(442-468) Primarily relying on archaeological findings, ethnographic information, scientific facts, and written records to the extent feasible, historians tackled the problem of accurately extracting facts from oral sources, which are often tainted with varying opinions and viewpoints, resulting in a subjective approach. Many lok geets are still vivid in the imaginations of ordinary people, and many more are documented in recorded form. It seems difficult to generalise anything about India, a nation with widely disparate languages and traditions. There are many works available in both Bhojpuri which are rich in literature and culture, yet there are certain barriers to grasping the underlying historical aspects of lok geet.

Our oral heritage includes lok geets as one of its ingredients, and this article strengthens its historical and cultural significance regarding our Indian freedom struggle. The history of ideas and viewpoints cannot be completely captured by history because it is somewhere written based on facts. Because of this, it's important to employ a variety of sources when interpreting historical ideas and practices. This article highlights the Bhojpuri lok geets and attempts to establish its significance in cultural history mentioning specifically the lok geets concerning our freedom struggles. These lok geets express themselves as an important source of information concealed within them and also a way to establish connection with peoples of that time who were singing these geets and using this as one of the weapon to concentrate and mobilise the crowds especially the youth to take part in our national freedom struggles in various ways.

The purpose of this article is to increase readers' comprehension of our lok culture and its role in promoting the sense of freedom and agitation towards Britishers. Acknowledging its significance in the field of history is also necessary because it will highlight the value of our diverse culture, which has been frequently overlooked when studying in a scientific temperament. It will offer our lok tunes, which are typically only heard in literary or linguistic contexts, providing it a new kind of recognition.

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