

A Comparative Analysis of Maithili and Canadian Folk-Songs

Dr. Bijayendra Jha

*Former Principal, Head, Department of Maithili, L. N. T. College,
(A Constituent Unit of B. R. A. Bihar University) Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India*

Abstract— “A Comparative Analysis of Maithili & Canadian Folk Song”, the objective of the article is to understand the mutual understanding of Maithili and Canadian culture. The study reveals that the Canadian indigenous (First Nation, Inuit, Me'ties) people and the people of Mithila may have had the same early cultural tradition. Over time, due to differences in the pace of development, there may have been differences in the external forms of cultural tendencies of both. Just as folk songs are sung on the occasion of various rituals in Mithila, similarly it is also sung in Canadian society. The only difference is that most of the folk songs of Canadian society are focused on nature, whereas in Mithila, there is a tradition of folk songs based on the diversity of Gods and goddesses, faith, karma, salvation etc. However, in conclusion it can be said that the roots of culture of human society all over the world must have been the same, although differences are visible in it due to differences in the pace of development over time. The historical background of both the understandings is easily known from the folk songs prevalent in Mithila and Canadian society.

Index Terms—Comparison, Canadian, Honour song, First Nation, Folksong, Indigenous, Inuit, Me'ties, Mythology, Maithili, Seasonal song

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, such songs are called folk songs which are popular among the people, composed by the people and focus on folk subjects.

Which is adopted not by any one person but by the entire society. The creator of folk songs dedicates his personality to the people. The rhymed speech that a human being spontaneously creates in the wave of his joy, without paying special attention to the classical rules and using it for common folk behavior, is a folk song. {1}

The title of the presented article is Comparative Analysis of Mithili and Canadian Folk Songs. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the social structure of Mithila and Canada here.

Mithila society has always been conscious of its culture since ancient times. Here people of different castes, religions and sects have been living in harmony with each other. People from every section of the society have been helping each other in their sorrows and happiness. Sodash Sanskar has been prevalent in the social life of Mithila since ancient times. It has become an integral part of life from birth to death. On the occasion of these various rituals, people celebrate their emotions by singing in times of enthusiasm, joy, happiness and sorrow etc. In this, all the people of the society – men, women, children and old people participate equally. The songs sung on such occasions are called folk songs. Due to lack of development of writing technology, it has been transmitted orally from one generation to another.

On the other hand, the history of Canada has also been very old like Mithila. It starts with the original inhabitants here who were divided into many tribes, like First Nation, Inuit, Me'ties etc. They had no common language, rather they spoke more than 60 different dialects. The First Nation who lived in the southern central plains of Canada. The Inuit people lived in the extremely cold northern Arctic region of Canada and the Me'ties community was born from the intermarriage of later indigenous peoples and European immigrants, which is considered to be a Me'ties hybrid. In the beginning there was no written tradition here either. Therefore, like Mithila, the people here also memorized their sentiments and kept transferring them from one generation to the next.

Maithili folk song is an important genre of Maithili literature. Its area is very huge. It is related to human

life. There is an expression of the human conscience in it. Maithili folklore gives a glimpse of the social, cultural, religious economic scenario of Mithila society. In this article the Maithili folk songs are divided

into various sections, its description is made- such as Samskara Songs, Devi-Devataka Songs, Nursery Rhymes, Seasonal Songs, Caste Songs, Miscellaneous Songs etc. These songs are sung on a special occasion in Mithila. In conclusion, the cultural tradition of Mithila can be known only through Maithili folklore. {2}

Similarly, the songs of the Canadian community sung by the indigenous people of Canada have a very old history. Today, the history of Canadian literature is flourishing on the foundation of these folk songs. 'Honour Songs' and anti-sanctions songs can be mainly cited as Canadian folk songs. Like Maithili folk songs, Canadian songs also continued to grow through oral tradition. In these songs, while on one hand songs are sung to remember different stages of daily life, relationship with nature and collective history, on the other hand, an attempt has been made to keep alive our oral heritage by hiding under the songs against the restrictions. It may be noted that in the history of Canada from 1884 AD to 1951 AD. The "Banning of the Ceremonies Act" was imposed on indigenous festivals and songs, forcing them to adopt a culture imposed by Europeans.

II. FOLKSONG-CARRIER OF CANADA AND MITHILA

The main custodians of the songs and stories of Canada's oral tradition have been the Elders and Song-Carriers of Indigenous communities (First Nations, Inuits and Metis). These people preserved the history, law and culture of this place through folk-song and folklore due to which the tradition of these songs continued to be passed on from generation to generation. Later, some prominent song-carriers compiled and edited it and gave it stability. The names of such main Canadian Song-Carriers are written below.

Maggie Paul: He belongs to the Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet community. He is considered the patron of traditional folk songs in Canada. Maggie Paul secretly saved his ancestors' ancient songs from extinction by remembering and singing them when

colonial laws banned Indigenous cultural practices and songs in Canada.

Jeremy Dutcher: He also belongs to the Wolastoqiyik community. He was greatly influenced by Maggie Paul. He was a famous singer from Canada. They revived the songs of their ancestors recorded on Wax Cylinders in the early 20th century. They used to sing in their Wolastoq language. At present, the number of people who speak the Wolastoq language is only 100. Tanya Tagaq: Tagaq comes from the 'Inuit' community, who are world-renowned performers of the traditional throat singing of the Inuit women of Canada's Far North. Their contribution has been important in gaining recognition across the world by combining modern (Rock/Punk) with ancient oral folk songs.

Alanis Obomsawin: You are from the Abenaki community and a renowned filmmaker. You are also a very influential traditional lyricist and storyteller. You have worked to save the oral history and struggles of the society through your songs.

Willie Dunn: You are from the Mi'kmaq community and have adapted the oral folktales of indigenous peoples and the historical songs of other communities. Their song reflects the human connection with Canada's forests, rivers and nature.

Susan Aglukark: You belong to the Inuit community and are one of Canada's most famous popular Inuit songwriters. She sings in a mixture of her traditional Inuktitut and English languages, and her songs are based on the oral stories and social messages of her culture.

Similarly, Maithili folk songs were also passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition in ancient times. Fortunately, like Canada, Mithila experienced foreign invasion and colonization much later. Therefore, folk songs got ample opportunity to flourish here. Later, the scholars of Mithila also transcribed it on Talpatra, whereas during that period in Canada, records were made on the Wax Cylinder. Although the spirit of folk songs in Mithila was kept alive by Maithil women in their throats since ancient times, but in the medieval period, there were many writers who wrote Sohar, Samdaun, Nachari, Maheshvani, Varhamasa, Chomasa, Chaumasa, Lagani, Ropani etc. If we look closely, the spectrum of Maithili folk songs appears to be wider than Canadian folk songs. Among the folk songs here, deity songs, ritual songs, seasonal songs, baby songs, fasting

songs, labor songs etc. are prominent. Initially, Maithili folk songs were not considered a literary genre, due to which its compilation and editing started much later. Nevertheless, the work that has been done so far in Maithili folk songs cannot be said to be inferior not only to the Indian language or the Canadian language but to any language in the world. If we look at the scholars of modern times, scholars like Dr. Jaikant Mishra, Dr. Ramdev Jha, Dr. Anima Singh, Dr. Vishweshwar Mishra, Dr. Rajaram Prasad, Dr. Prafulla Kumar Singh 'Maun', Dr. Mahendranarayan Ram and Phoolopaswan etc. have done commendable work. If we look at the field of singing, then from the ancient singers Jayat, Ghanshyam Mallik, Lochan, Bhana Jha, Chanda Jha, Gananath Jha, Anand Mishra, Chandranath Mishra 'Amar' etc. to Sharda Sinha, Chandramani, Harinath Jha, Kunjvihar Jha, Juli Jha and currently Bihar Assembly member Maithili Thakur have taken Maithili folk songs from Mithila to the global stage, has played an important role in delivering.

III. COMPARISON OF MAITHILI AND CANADIAN FOLKSONG

Sir George Abraham Grierson is known to have been the first Scholar who tried to collect Mithila folklore in such works as Bihar Peasant Life (Published from Calcutta, 1885), Maithili Chrestomathy (Published in JASB, 1882), Bihari Grammars (Published from Calcutta, 1887) and Dinabhadrika Gita (ZDMG, 1885, p. 617) and Nebaraka Gita. {3}

The folk songs of Mithila are of numerous kinds. Their broad division according to the women, Mithila is into "Dev Paksha songs" and "Rusa Paksha songs. But they cover almost every aspect of Mithila Society; because it is said that literature is the mirror of society. For the study purpose, we may divide them under eight heading-- (1) Drvi-Devata-ka Gita, (2) Sanskar Gita, (3) Vtata-Upasa O Samayik Utsava-ka Gita, (4) Season Song, (5) Work Song (6) Nursery Rhymes, (6) Communal song, (8) Miscellaneous Song.

IV. CANADIAN DEVI-DEVATA-GITA

Canadian mythology and folk songs are a wonderful blend of Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Métis), French-Canadian, and English-Canadian traditions. In these, nature, vast forests, snow storms and struggles

of life are depicted through stories and mysterious creatures. The main deities and folklore of Canada are outlined as follows:

(A) Mythologies Of the First Nation

Nanabozo: In Anishinaabe traditions, this is a very powerful and clever deity or 'Trickster' who has the ability to breathe life. Thunderbirds: In Algonquian and Iroquois mythology, these are powerful birds of the upper regions of the sky that create thunder and lightning by flapping their wings. Wendigo: A very famous and scary monster from Algonquian folklore that symbolizes greed, starvation, and cannibalism.

(B) Inuit Folktales

Sedna: In Inuit mythology, Sedna is a powerful goddess of the sea and all sea creatures. If she is not respected, she withholds food (animals) and can cause storms. Qalupalik: In Inuit legends, this is a humanoid and fearsome creature that lives in the sea and steals children who wander along the water's edge.

(C) French-Canadian Folktales

Quebec and French-Canadian culture are deeply influenced by the Catholic Church and European myths. La Chasse-Galerie: This is the most famous legend known as 'The Flying Canoe'. In it, woodcutters make a deal with the devil and travel across the night sky in a flying canoe.

Loup-Garou: He is a French-Canadian werewolf, who transforms into a dangerous beast at night due to a curse.

(D) Popular Canadian Monster (Cryptids)

Sasquatch: A giant, hairy human-like creature that lived in the forests of western Canada.

Ogopogo: A mysterious water monster that lives in British Columbia (Okanagan Lake).

Canadian mainstream culture (of European origin) does not have Hindu folklore or worship of specific 'gods and goddesses' like traditional Indian culture. However, in the Indigenous or First Nations culture of Canada, folk songs are sung deifying the 'Great Spirit/Creator' and various forms of nature.

One of Canada's most famous Indigenous folk songs is "Land of the Silver Birch", which pays respect to nature, the mountains and the waters as sacred. An example of the lyrics of this traditional folk song along with its translation is given below:

(i) "Land of the silver birch, home of the beaver, where still the mighty moose wanders at will."

It means - This sacred land of silvery birch leaves, this home of beavers, where even today the giant moose (deer) roams freely of its own free will.

(ii) "Blue lake and rocky shore, I will return once more."

It means - blue lakes and rocky shores,
I will come back here once again.

(iii) "Boom-de-de-boom-boom, Boom-de-de-boom-boom, "Boom-de-de-boom-boom, bo-oo-oom." {4}

(This is a musical term denoting the traditional drums of the natives and the sounds of nature.)

Key Features of the song: Deification of nature: In this folk song, instead of any human form of God, mountains, blue lakes and dense forests are considered to be the supreme and sacred power. Reverence for animals: In Canadian native culture, animals such as beaver and moose are considered totems or sacred protectors.

Mithila (India) also has an abundant number of folk songs of this category, but while the Canadian Gods and Goddesses inspire fear, discouragement and awe, these folk songs of Mithila increase courage, strength, enthusiasm, well-being and self-confidence. People get positive energy from the songs of Gods and Goddesses prevalent in Maithila and get the right path and inspiration to live a happy life.

It is a devotional song in Mithila, and also may be mythical and zonal. These songs (Gitas) are a significant Hindu philosophical text from the Shakta, Shaiva and Vaishnava, which centres on worship of the Goddess Devi (the Divine Mother), Shiva and Vishnu respectively. These three Devi-Devatas are of the main denominations within Hinduism, where Shaivas worship 'Shiva' as the supreme deity and Shaktas to 'Shakti' as the ultimate essence of the cosmos. Perhaps these deities are borrowed from the popular above demands. They are sun to 'Brahma' (A village deity supposed to be the soul of some Brahmana who died before his sacred Thread-ceremony) ; to 'Gosauni', to 'Gauri', to 'Bhairava', to 'Hanumana', to 'Govind', to 'Jivachha', to 'Mahadev', to 'Vishnu', to 'Rama', to 'Kamala', to 'Shitala', to 'Visahara', to 'Ganga', to 'Jvalamukhi', to 'Dharmaraja', to 'Ganesha', to 'Jalpa', to 'Gahila', to

'Bamati', to 'Devi Bhavani', to 'Kalika', to 'Bhairava' and to 'Tajiya', to many others. These deities are worshipped by certain families only, and they even give them preference to "Gosaunika-Gita" on an auspicious and gala occasion. Among these Maheshvani, Nachari, Vishnupada, Bhajana-Kirtana prati, and Sanjhaka- Gitas are more important. The compulsion, poverty and compassion of commonality have to be expressed in it. See the following example: "Tutal maraiya sita-sita-vadna,

Kon vidhi bachstani laj yau.
Gauri ken nahi chhani nua chetara,
Nahi chhani phatal purana yau.
Ekahi kammal tini putra mili
Ghichi tiri ghamasan yau.
Pusa Goitha jara khepalani,
Basaho gelni parai yau.
Agave sag khesari par e,
Magho khepati dai yau." {5}

Following are the types of folksongs in Mithila:

(i) Gosaunika-Gita (Song):

Gosaunika-Gita is the most important song which is sung on every auspicious occasion in Mithila. The idol or Pidi of 'Gosauni' is installed in every household of Mithila. The Gosauni-ka Gita or Devipad or Bhagavati-ka Gita is the devotional song or hymn in praise of several forms of Sakti. Notable contributions to this type has been made by Vidyapati, Malla of Nepal, Ratnapani and Ganganath Jha though almost every poet has been known to have written in this form. Among these 'Gosauni-ka Gita' of Vidyapati (1350-1450) is the most popular- as for example see his song-

"Jay jay bhairavi asur bhayaun, pasupati bhamin maya. /Sahaj sumati var dia he gosauni, anugati gati tua paya. /Vasar rain savasane sobhit, Charan chandramani chura. /Kataok daitya mari muhe meral, katan ugali karu kura. /Samar vadan nayan anuranjit, jalad yog phul koka. /Ghan-ghan-ghanan ghughuru kati bajay, han-han kar tua kata. /Vidyapati kavi tua pada sevak, putra bisaru jan mata." {6}

(ii) Nacari

The Nachari are distinguished by the direct prayer to lord 'Siva' The name Nachari seems to have been derived from the ecstatic dance of 'Siva' and is probably intended to liken the cognate state of the devotee into which he loses himself while praying to

the lord. The name Nacari is now often confused with Mahesavani in common parlance, but there is really a marked distinction between the two. In this context, Ain-i-Akbari (1598) by Abul Fajal notices the 'Lacharis' of Tirhut as one of its specialities,{6} and this is also why hundreds and thousands of Mithila pilgrims visit Pasupati, Kapilesvara, Singhesvara, Videsvara or carry heavy 'Kamaru' on foot to the Temple of Baidyanath Dhama singing - "kakhana haraba dukh mora he Bholanath" and shed innumerable tears of devotion. See one of the examples of Lacari written by "Muse kavi' (Musai Thakur).

"Visam vipatti haru he Siva, visam vipatti haru
Hamahu dhael sharan ahanka, kakar asha karu"{7}

(iii) Maheshavani:

The Mahesavani is merely a song about 'Siva Vani' (speech) of Mahesa (Siva) but the 'Vani' in honour of Mahesa. Mahesavani is frequently addressed to 'menaka' (Called in Maithili 'Manaini', due to these Bengali scholars call it- "Haragauri-Padavali") the mother of Gauri and represents songs of the marriage of 'Siva', song from the days of Vidyapati, Lalakavi, Kanharan Das and Chanda Jha. Generally, Mahesavani and Nacari are mixed in practice, but there is a clear difference between both of them. As above mentioned, Nacari is purely the prayer of Siva but Mahesavani is the domestic life songs of Siva and Parvati. See an example of the very popular Mahesvani in Mithila:

"Aju nath ek vrata mahasukha lagat he
Tohe siva dharu natavesha ki damru bajabah
he.Bhanahi Vidyapati gaola gabi sunaola he
Rakhal Gaura ker man, Hara nachai dekhaola he"{8}

(iv) Bhajanas (Kirtans):

Bhajan (Kirtan) of Maithili" refers to devotional songs sung in lyrical form. These songs, sometimes referred to as bhajans or chants, invoke deities like Radhe - Krishna, Rama-Sita, Siva- Parvati, Visnu- Pada, Kali-Durga Hanumana and many others to foster a deep connection to the divine, promote inner peace, and build a sense of community among listeners. The songs are primarily focused on praising and connecting with deities. Bhajans are known for their rhythmic and melodic qualities, which are designed to create a sense of peace and joy.

On the other hand, there are many kinds of Bhajans. They are generally sung in the early morning or on auspicious occasions. The 'Prati' (morning) songs include 'Jajamanti', 'Vihaga', 'Bhairavi' and 'Prati' songs. They are generally in the praise of Lord Visnu sung in the order of time indicated by the order given above, and their language is generally a mixture of Maithili and non-Maithili languages. Songs in Praise of Ganga, Vishnu (Visnupadas) and Mahesa and Sakti (Gosaunika Gita or Bhagavatika Gita) are also sung with reverence in the morning. See the following Visnupad sung on the occasion of Satyanarayan Puja: "Gaika gobar mangaeb, ohi sau angana nipaeb yugal jori Ahe Ram Siya he yugal jori. Oipar chauka baisaeb, yugal jori. Arva chaur mangaeb, oime chini milaeb, Oi sau chautath banaev jugal jori."{9}

(v) Prati (Parati)

Prati songs are morning devotional songs sung in Maithili, and their lyrics vary widely by artist and theme, often focusing on deities like Ganesha or praising the beauty of Mithila. In the context of Mithila's culture, "Prati" refers to devotional songs sung in the morning, similar to Bhajans or Kirtan. Prati songs aren't a single song but a genre of folk music. They can praise various gods and goddesses, express feelings of love, or celebrate the land of Mithila.

Prati, Parati or Prabhati is a very popular song in Mithila. It is a traditional song. It is sung early in the morning, due to this, it is known as "Parati" or "Prabhati" also. The important God-Goddess are Rama, Krishna, siva, Ganga Maiya, Ganesh, Janaki, Gauri and many others. See the following pada:{10}

"Prata darshan dev he Ganga Maiya
Prata darshan dev" -- (For Ganga Maiya)
"Laj mora rakhu he vrijaraja"
(For Visnu or Krishna)

The song "Sanjha" in Mithila is sung by the women. This song is sung to enlighten Maa Lakshmi. These songs are sung in the question-answer style, there is a description of the golden lamp (Sona Ka deep), jute wick (PatuaKa Vati) and mustard oil. The women of Mithila worship the "Tulsi" in the "Sanjha" song, sing the Sanjh-Gita so that they can become a virtuous wife like Vrinda. See the following lines as an example:

"Sanjha dia sanjha dia Jasumti Maiya,
Kathi ker deep kathi ker bati
Kathi ke tel jaraya sagar rati."{11}

Sanjhaka Gita and Badisatika Gita are sung on such Vrata days as Tusari and Harisano are really made up to Nacaris and Mahesavanis. Thus, Devi-Devata Gita includes the song of the Ganges, the song of Sheetla, the song of Brahma and the song of Guru etc. These songs are all associated with the folk life of Mithila.

V. CANADIAN AND MAITHILI'S SAMSKAR-SONG

Songs related to 'Life Cycle Rituals or Rites of Passage' are found in the traditional folk music of the Canadian people. Although there are no Hindu rituals (such as Mundan or Janeu) as in India, Canadian culture does have specific traditional songs sung on the occasions of birth, marriage and death/funerals. This music of Canada mainly derives from the cultural traditions of its original inhabitants (First Nations, Inuit, Métis) and French and British immigrants. Here are Canadian songs related to major life rites of passage: {12}

(a) Birth & Lullabies:

Singing lullabies is an old ritual among Native Canadian and French-Canadian families to celebrate the birth and childhood of a child.

(b) Inuit Lullaby: The Inuit natives of the far north of Canada welcome the birth of a child with drums and their traditional 'throat singing'.

(c) La Poulette Grise (The Gray Hen): This is a very famous traditional cradle song of French-Canadian origin, which has been sung for centuries by mothers as they put their babies to sleep.

(d) Wedding Songs:

At traditional weddings in Canada, especially in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, it is customary to dance and sing together folk songs.

(e) Mariez-Moi, Ma Petite Maman (Mother, Marry Me): This is a very old folk song from Quebec. In it a young girl expresses her traditional desire to marry her mother and be free from loneliness.

(f) Vive La Canadienne: This song is especially used at weddings and family celebrations to honor and praise the bride (Canadian woman).

(g) The Log Driver's Waltz: This is a very popular folk song from Ontario and rural Canada. It is about a young girl getting married and how she will marry a log driver because he swims very well on water.

(h) Funeral & Memorial Songs:

In the history of Canada, many people have lost their lives in maritime accidents, mining accidents and logging. Special "Laments/Disaster Ballads" are sung to mourn these tragedies and the loss of loved ones:

(i) Lost Jimmy Whelan: This is a very famous 'Ghostly Lament' from Canada. It is sung in memory of a young man who drowned in a river while cutting wood in the forest, with his girlfriend singing his mourning.

(j) Un Canadien Errant (A Wandering Canadian): This song, reflecting the grief of Canadians deported from the country after the Rebellion of 1837, is still sung as a solemn rite at farewell or condolence meetings.

(k) The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald: Sung by Gordon Lightfoot, this song has become a modern Canadian memorial song for the ship that sank in Lake Superior and the deaths of its sailors.

Indigenous/First Nations communities in Canada do not have a set written verse or chant for their wedding ceremony. Their musical tradition is based on oral traditions and "Honor songs" passed down through generations, which vary by tribe. Main songs and traditions associated with indigenous weddings: Honor Songs - These songs celebrate different stages of life and connection with nature. For example, the "Mi'kmaq Honor Song" (compiled by Linda Adams) and the "Nisakihaw" (Love Song) are often sung at ceremonies. Métis community: This community has a very popular traditional music/dance during weddings and celebrations, called the 'Red River Jig'. Love and respect songs: Songs like 'Skidegate Love Song' and 'He Na Na Ho Ho' are also sung on these occasions.

The lyrics of these songs are often sung orally, reflecting the sounds of nature, respect for ancestors, love, and a sense of community, rather than literal translation.

On the other hand, In Mithila, Samskar Gita (song) reveals the social and cultural aspects of social life. Under this song it is sung on the occasion of various rites from birth to death. Such as Sohar, Chhathihar, Mundan, Upanayan, pitar, parichhani, Gorlaggi etc. In

Mithila, sixteen rites from the tradition are prevalent. This rite is performed to make the body of Dwij varna strong, conscious and holy. In this regard, Dr. Jayakant Mishra, an eminent historian of Maithili literature says-- " Samskar songs are sung on the occasion of several samskara. They may be divided under four main heads--Mundan and Chudakaran songs, Upanayan songs, Marriage songs and Tattooing songs." {13} Here, we discuss the different kinds of Samskar Gita which are as follows:

(i) Mundan And Chudakaran Song:

These songs are few and are generally mixed with 'blessing' songs and Upanayana songs. During these two Samskaras some songs are merely occasionally.

(ii) Upanayana Song:

There are many Upanayana songs. Some are connected with the rites observed on this occasion. Such songs are Keskatti song, Charakha song, Kumarama song, Kaulikalyani song, Chagadana song, Bhikh songs etc. The most common songs in Upanayana are those in which the blessings of the ancestors of the boy are invoked, they are called 'Pitara-ka Gita.' According to Ramaikabal Singha, "Some songs sung during Upanayana describe the life and responsibilities of the new Brahmchari." {14}

The Upanayana is regarded in many ways as a more important Samskara in a Brahminical country like Mithila than Marriage and the number of songs sung on this occasion are numerous. Songs in praise of 'Siva ' a 'Sakti' song of blessing, songs of various other kinds resound for about a month in the house where Upanayana is celebrated. Among it in some songs the joy of the parents at being able to witness the Upanayana of their child (son) is celebrated. This is also the sentiment expressed in many blessings. See the example:

"Aju maya purala manorath mana ko
Damodar bar dekhi tan pulkit,
sudhina rahalani taniko". {15}

(iii) Marriage Song:

Marriage is the most important event in the life of women -folk and it provides a large number of ritualistic occasions. It is the one great occasion when songs of the most poetic kind are sung. Some of them narrate the story of divine marriage such as the marriages of Siva and Ram; some describe the appearance and the joys of the bride and the bride-

groom; some welcome or taunt the guests. They all combine to build up an atmosphere of mirth and gaiety. These songs of Mithila can be studied from three points of view- Daughter's marriage songs, son's marriage song and song of duragamana. On these occasions many kinds of songs are also very important; like -- Laba Bhujae ba-ka Gits, Dahakans song, Padichain, Othangara- Kutabaka Gita, Vedi-Ghumbaka Gita, Naina-Yoginika Gita, Mauhakaka Gita, Gauri-Pujaka Gita, Chumaunaka Gita, Juti kholbaka Gita, Ama-Mahu Viahaka Gita and so on or so forth.

Most of these are just songs describing a particular custom. But the songs that are the most poetic of all folk-songs are those which deal with love generally. Love songs on the occasion of marriage include some of the literary types as well e. g. Tirahuti, Batagamani, Jog, Uchati and Rasa. Mahesavani and Nachari may also be included. Of course, songs in these forms are sometimes available which cannot be called 'literary' from their language and their treatment of the subject matter. A few forms very rarely connected with literary types of Maithili lyric are 'Jhumari', Sammara', 'kobar', 'Sarang', 'Udasi' and 'kautuka' songs.

Here, 'Jhumari' is not a strictly speaking marriage song. They are erotic playful songs said to be sung in the course of oscillating on a swing. 'Sammara' is sung on the occasion of the actual giving away ceremony of the bride. The commonest Sammaras are Sita, Ram Rukammini, Usa and Jagannatha- Sammaras. The Summaras describe the story of some celebrated marriages of the past. Saranga songs are also love songs and are distinguished by their ' raga'. See the following:

"Ham na jae b dadhi bechae -- He Rama
Chikahi leli Radha dahi re matukia
Krishna tokala adhi- batia -- He Rama
Jau krisna marata phulak saria
Surdas prabhu tumhare daras ko
Gvalini rahali chhapai -- He Rama" {16}

VI. CANADIAN AND MAITHILI'S VRATA-UPAVASA & SAMAYIKA UTSAV:

The Indigenous Peoples of Canada also have a rich tradition of spiritual purification, fasting and special songs, like the Mithila-fast. However, there is a slight difference in the purpose and manner of presentation of the songs of both the cultures. In Mithila, fasting

songs (like Madhushravani or Chhathi songs) are mainly associated with the praise of gods and goddesses and social celebrations. In contrast, among the First Nations of Canada and other indigenous groups, songs sung during fasting are associated with personal spiritual exploration, connection to nature, and receiving messages from ancestors. The main traditions of fasting and associated songs in indigenous communities are as follows:

(i) Vision Quest and fasting songs:

The indigenous people, at major turning points in life (especially when entering puberty), go into solitude and observe a strict fast for four days.

(ii) Sacred Drum and Songs: During the fast the person keeps a sacred drum with him.

(iii) Invocation of the spirits: While hungry and thirsty they sing traditional songs. It is believed that after listening to these songs, holy spirits come to help them and tell them the purpose of life.

(iv) Sun Dance Festival Songs

The indigenous people living in the Prairies of Canada celebrate a large spiritual festival called the 'Sun Dance'.

(v) Fasting before the ceremony: Just before participating in this main ritual, participants purify themselves by observing a strict fast for four days.

(vi) Collective singing and drum beats: During this time the entire community gathers and sings special songs to the slow beats of the sacred drum. These songs are sung to express gratitude towards the creation and for the welfare of the society. {17}

(vii) Honor and Healing Songs:

Like the fasts of Mithila, here too the songs sung during the fast pay respect to the 'Creator' (God/Creator) and the elements of nature (like sun, water, eagle bird).

These songs are not just for entertainment, but they are considered a kind of prayer. When the body is weak and the mind is calm due to fasting, then these songs work to give strength to the society. Under this, songs like Anantapuja, Chhathi, Badisaita, Bhratri-Dvitiya, Madhushravani, Sama-Chakewa, etc. come. In this type of song, the sensitivity of the human element is found to be some expression. In the following lines, the Chhathi song, there is a poignant description of the disregard of sterile and the prayer of sorrow:

"Sasu padhai chhathi gadia ho Dinanath nanadi thunakabae,

Par ke janamal gotiniyan ho Dinanath seho dai ulahana" {18}

In Mithila, many types of Vrata-Upavas and festivals are celebrated throughout the year, all the songs sung on this occasion come in this category. Such as Madhushravani's songs, Nagpanchami's song, Tusari's song, Barisait's song and other Sanskar songs. In this context, Dr. Jayakant Mishra says, "Pavanik Gita are songs and Rhymes sung on the occasion of the Vrata. Most of them merely glorify the various rites of Vrats but some of them rise in devotional feelings." {19} Similarly, the Sama-Chakewa's song is very popular in Mithila. In these songs, a feeling of mutual love and satisfaction emerges like -- Bati kuti khaya Raja ghar jaya". See the following Sama's song:

" Sam chake sam chake abiha he, abiha he

Jotala khet me basiha he, basiha he

Sab ranga patia bichhabiha he

Ohi patia par kae-kae jana, kae-kae jana

Sato jana, sato jana

Ek-ek jana par kae-kae puri, kae-kae puri

Ek-ek jana par sata-sata puri, sata sata puri" {20}

VII. SEASONAL SONGS

The culture of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada has special traditional songs (Seasonal Songs) based on the seasons and the cycles of nature, like the folk songs of Mithila (such as Kajri, Phaag, Sohar, and Ritu Geet).

Like the Mithila culture, the First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities of Canada also count time not by months, but by changes in nature. These songs and music of his are not just entertainment but also a medium of sacred ritual and thanksgiving to nature. Some of the major seasonal songs and festivals of Canada's Indigenous communities are detailed below:

(i) Song of Spring (Ziigwan) and 'Maple Syrup'-

Just as folk songs are sung at the time of spring and harvest in India, here at the beginning of spring:

(ii) Maple Thanksgiving (Ziigwan): Anishinaabe people celebrate the Maple Syrup Ceremony in the spring when sap begins to flow from maple trees.

During this time, special traditional songs are sung with hand drums to thank the trees, welcome the first thunder (lightning) and celebrate the return of migratory birds. {21}

(iii) Songs of Summer Solstice:

Indigenous peoples across Canada celebrate when the longest day occurs in the month of June.

(iv) Sunrise Ceremony: Honor Songs are sung early in the morning along with the sacred pipe ritual to thank Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth.

(v) Powwow Season: Summer hosts large social gatherings called powwows. Hundreds of people gather here and perform traditional dances to the beat of drums and sing 'intertribal' songs, which are very similar to the songs of our fairs.

(vi) Songs of Autumn and Hunting:

Just before the harsh Canadian winter is the time for harvest and hunting. Inuit and other northern tribes sing hunting songs during this season. These songs are sung to appease the animal spirits and ask for permission from nature.

(vii) Winter Solstice and Mid-Winter Song:

Just as in Mithila, stories and Sohar/Bhajans are sung while sitting near the bonfire in winter, the same atmosphere prevails in the harsh winters of Canada.

(viii) Story and Longhouses: Communities like the Coast Salish gather in large wooden houses (Longhouses) in the winter. In this season, songs of mysterious and mythological stories (Storytelling Songs), which are sung only in winter, are sung.

(ix) Haudenosaunee New Year: Midwinter Ceremonies At the beginning of the new year, songs and dances are performed to exchange sacred ashes to revive nature.

In Mithila, seasonal songs are of several kinds. In a climate where health, life, and comfort depend on the regularity of the seasons, songs of the whole year and of particular months" are particularly popular. Their theme is mainly frustration or disappointment in love, often due to the callous absence of the lover or the husband. The common type of these songs surveys a number of seasons in one long song. Barahamasa, Chhaumasa and chaumasa are like Barahamasa of Bengal. following the old poetic tradition of describing twelve, six or four months of separation. Each month comes with its charms and has its individual's reaction to the feelings of the separated

partner. Other seasonal songs are chaita or chaitavar, Kajari, Phagu or Holi, Vasanta, Jhula, Pavasa and Malara. These are all love songs but Malara and sometimes Basants display highly poetic sentiments. See a compassionate description of spending different months by a poor woman:

"Puss goitha dahi tapab magha khesarika sag yo
Phagun hunka chhimmari-mokari chsita khesarika dali
yo Katika sukh-dukha sangahi khepaba, aghana dunu
sanjha bhata yo."{22}

Main Similarities: Oral Tradition- Like the folk songs of Mithila, the indigenous songs of Canada are also not written down, but have been passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Connection with nature: In both cultures, no song is complete without thanking nature (trees, rivers, sun, crops).

VIII. WORK- SONGS

Indigenous Canadian communities such as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis also sang songs associated with various occasions and daily tasks (work songs), similar to the Mithila culture. However, the context and style of these songs differ from the agricultural or ritual songs of Mithila. 'Work songs' and 'rhythm songs' have been very important in the traditional music of Canadian Indigenous peoples:

(i) Hunting and fishing songs: Special songs were sung before going hunting or while fishing (such as whaling) for success and thanks to nature.

(ii) Songs for daily activities: Claps, beats and group singing were used to maintain rhythm during various daily activities and community functions.

(iii) Water Songs: Traditional songs were sung to show respect for water and nature and also to create a connection with the environment.

(iv) Inuit Throat Singing: Inuit people living in the northern regions practice throat singing called 'Katajjak', which was often used to produce rhythmic musical sounds during games, entertainment and functions.

Indigenous Canadian folk music and their traditional methods have been passed down through oral tradition through generations. {23}

Similarly, in Mithila, labor songs (Work-Song) are sung to reduce labor. It is a song of a complete spiritual

spirit. Under this, Lagni, Ropani Charkha, Ukhai kutaba kal, Sanghi Utheba kal, Karin Pteba kal, Godana etc are sung at the time of neet. The song "Lagani" is the most popular song. "Lagani" are songs mostly by women of lower classes while they grind their hand mills. There are longer Laganis too. They relate more graphically tales of women's sacrifice and love. See example:

"Gauri paravata sau koiliya ek ayala
Sutal koiliya jagavah---ho Rama.Marihsu bangalana
chhauri
Toro jetha bhaiya vari vayasa Sugga bilamaol...ho
Rama"{24}

IX. NURSARY RHYMES

Like Mithila (Bihar), Canadian society also has a rich tradition of nursery rhymes (lori or traditional songs) since ancient times. Both the Indigenous communities of Canada and the later European immigrants who settled there have their own nursery rhyme traditions. The main aspects of the Canadian nursery rhyme tradition are:

(a) Traditions of Indigenous communities:

Nursery rhymes have been sung for centuries as an oral tradition among the indigenous peoples of Canada (such as the Inuit, Cree, Mohawk, and Haudenosaunee). The purpose of these songs is not only to put children to sleep, but also to connect them with their culture, language, and nature. For example: "Ho Ho Watanay" is a very famous traditional song of the Haudenosaunee.

Traditional songs of the Inuit people, which describe nature and their surroundings, are still sung today. In some songs, words like "Ogichidaa" are used to express the feeling of cherishing children as future warriors and protectors. {25}

(b) Impact of European Settlers:

Settlers from Europe (particularly Britain and France) in the 19th and 20th centuries brought their traditional lullabies and children's songs with them to Canada. These include "Rockabye Baby" in English-speaking areas and- "C'est la poulette grise" among French Canadians. {26}

(c) Cultural Preservation:

Native communities across Canada are currently attempting to revive these traditional nursery rhymes

to preserve their endangered languages and cultural knowledge. These songs are being preserved through several books and audio projects (such as 'Baby Raven Reads'). On the other hand, In Mithila, Nursery Rhymes is also known as Jingles, and Children's Play Songs. There are many kinds of these songs. Grown up girls when playing with their dolls use the songs of the elders, but young children have set formulas for their games. These are numerous. The renowned scholar of Mithila, Pandit Riddhi Nath Jha has collected some Nursery Rhymes. See examples: {27}

(i) " Atakan matakan, dahia chatakan
Magh masa karaila pharai
Amun goti jamun goti
Tetari suhag goti bansa karai thanya-thanya nadi
gungunai kamalak phul dunu alagal jaya."

(ii). "Ghughua jhul, malel jhul kon gam jhul, beli jhul
Pokhari kata-kata hirana laga Hirna gelau tuti, dunu
gelau rusa

X. CASTES SONG

Like Mithila, Canada also has its own rich ethnic and cultural folk music tradition. Like the culture of Mithila, the folklore of Canada also reflects its diverse communities, their history, and their connection with nature. Canadian folklore is a mosaic of many cultures:

(i) Different ethnic and indigenous groups

Canada's indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) have centuries-old musical traditions. For example, the Inuit community has a traditional 'throat singing' called 'Katajjaq', which is sung by two women sitting facing each other.

(ii) French and Anglo-Celtic (British) traditions

When people from Europe came to Canada in the 16th and 17th centuries, they brought their folk music traditions with them.

(iii) French-Canadians (Québécois):

Call-and-response songs and foot-tapping music styles are very popular here.

(iv) Anglo-Canadian: Songs of Irish and Scottish origin, sung in Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces, are associated with ocean waves, fishermen, and forest life.

(v) Song of cultural heritage:

Like Mithila, where folk songs are related to the livelihood, customs and festivals of the people, the folk songs of Canada also offer a glimpse of the culture there. Canada's multicultural heritage can be seen in its patriotic and folk songs called 'Coat of Many Cultures'.

In Mithila, people of various castes live in mutual equality. Each caste has its own religious belief. Caste song is prevalent on the basis of these beliefs. In which Bhagait, Biraha, Lorika, Bhata, Vakkho, Gopi Chand and Nirguna are able to be taken and they are related to different castes and classes.

XI. MISCELLANEOUS SONG:

Spirituality, nature and healing are deeply valued in Indigenous Canadian cultures, including concepts of clearing negative energy through 'medicine' and traditional songs. However, the specific tantric forms of witchcraft or vashikaran that are practiced in the Mithila region are not directly found in indigenous Canadian folklore. Oral traditions are of great importance in the indigenous cultures of Canada (such as First Nations, Inuit and Métis). These traditions include the following beliefs rather than witchcraft: Positive Energy and Healing: Songs, drum beats, and prayers are used in indigenous beliefs for physical and spiritual healing. For example, mantras/prayers to ward off 'evil spirits' or illness are sung through medicinal plants and traditional songs. Storytelling: Stories of the Water Goddess (Sedna) or the Trickster (like Coyote) are told through generations in indigenous oral traditions. The purpose of these stories is to impart moral education and maintain balance with nature, not to subjugate. The recorded history of magical traditions in Canada comes primarily from the folklore of European settlers (particularly the French Acadians and the Scottish). Acadian folklore in the Maritime provinces (such as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland) contained stories of witchcraft casting off the 'evil eye' or affecting livestock/fishing trades. On the other hand, there are some other specific types of songs in Mithila region. This special song is sung on the auspicious occasion. These songs are attached to human life. These types of songs are Jhijhiya, Jharani, Tantra -Mantra, Witchcraft, Jhumari etc. The song Jhijhia is sung on the occasion of Durgapuja. It is

a song of Question-Answer Style. It is sung for anger from witches (Dine-Yogini). The following Jhijia song is seen as for example:

"Kekara kothia me dali chaur, kekara kolhua me tel,
Babak kolhua me dali chaur teliak kolhua me tel,
Kathi ker diara, kathi ker bati, kathi ker tel
Sona ker diara, patbar sut bati sarisok tel
Jarae lagal diara, jhahake lagal bati

Jhijhari par rahihen khavardar,
Maia ge jhijhari par rahihen khabaradar."{28}

Similarly, the songs of Tantra-Mantra are used to cure the poisoning of snake-bites. See example:

"Visahari visahri sunie visahri, visahari bada agiari
Vikh khai vikha, lae jae, vikha lae karae vihari.
Jai din visahari visha nahi pave, puhpi vet set se dhawe.
Kahan Bhagatia bhagat karai chhal, ham chhelau
Gaura dai ke beti... Visahara visham bharo hara."{29}

XI. CONCLUSION

In the presented article "A Comparative Analysis of Maithili and Canadian Folk Songs", one can easily understand the cultural similarities and differences of both the societies. Just as folk songs are sung on the occasion of various rituals in Mithila, similarly it is also sung in Canadian society. The only difference is that most of the folk songs of Canadian society are focused on nature, whereas in Mithila, there is a tradition of folk songs based on the diversity of Gods and goddesses, faith, karma, salvation etc. However, in conclusion it can be said that the roots of culture of human society all over the world must have been the same, although differences are visible in it due to differences in the pace of development over time.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Sammelan Patrika*, Loksanskrit, p. 250.
- [2] B. Jha, "The Folk-Song of Mithila: A Critical Analysis," *IJCRT*, vol. 13, no. 9, pp. e216–e223, 2025, ISSN: 2320-2882.
- [3] *Nevaraka Gita*, Maithili Printing Work, Madhubani, Dist. Darbhanga, India, 1929; S. Sharma and M. Sharma, Eds., Kanhya Lal Booksellers and Publishers, Darbhanga.
- [4] J. M. Gibbon, Sel. and Transl., *Canadian Folk Songs (Old and New)*. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1929.

- [5] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 254.
- [6] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 254.
- [7] J. Mishra, *History of Maithili Literature*, vol. 1, Early and Middle Period. Allahabad, India: Tirabhukti Publication, 1949, p. 20.
- [8] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 256.
- [9] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 256.
- [10] J. Mishra, *Maithili Lok Sahitya-ka Adhyayan*. New Delhi, India: National Publishing House, 1984/2007, pp. 112–113.
- [11] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 257.
- [12] E. F. Fowke, Ed., *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs*. London, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1973, ISBN: 0140708021.
- [13] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 257.
- [14] J. Mishra, *Introduction to the Folk Literature of Mithila*. Allahabad, India: All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, 1951, p. 21.
- [15] R. I. Singh, *Maithili Lok Sahitya*, p. 92.
- [16] J. Mishra, *Introduction to the Folk Literature of Mithila*. Allahabad, India: All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, 1951, p. 21.
- [17] E. Fowke, *Folklore of Canada*. Toronto, Canada, 1990.
- [18] J. Mishra, *Introduction to the Folk Literature of Mithila*. Allahabad, India: All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, 1951, p. 21.
- [19] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 259.
- [20] J. Mishra, *Introduction to the Folk Literature of Mithila*. Allahabad, India: All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, 1951, p. 16.
- [21] H. Creighton and D. Senior, Eds., *Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia*. Toronto, Canada: The Ryerson Press, 1950, p. 211.
- [22] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 260.
- [23] H. Creighton, Ed., *Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia*. Toronto and Vancouver, Canada: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1932/1966/1992, p. 53.
- [24] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 260.
- [25] W. R. Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*. London, U.K.: Harvard University Press, 1928, p. 94.
- [26] W. R. Mackenzie, *Ballads and Sea Songs from Nova Scotia*. London, U.K.: Harvard University Press, 1928, p. 105.
- [27] B. Jha, *Maithili Sahityak Itihas (Adikal A Madhyakal)*. Muzaffarpur, India: Pratibha Prakashan, 2023, p. 261.
- [28] T. Lal, *Maithili Lokgito Ka Adhyayan*. Agra, India: Vinod Pustak Mandir, 1962, p. 305.
- [29] Personal recollection.