

The Presence of Gandhi in Bhojpuri Folk Songs

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi occupies a significant place not only in the political history of India but also in its rich folk traditions. Bhojpuri folk songs, which reflect the social, cultural, and political consciousness of the people of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and adjoining regions, serve as an important medium for understanding the popular reception of Gandhi's ideas. The presence of Gandhi in Bhojpuri folk songs demonstrates how his philosophy of truth, non-violence, self-reliance, and national unity became deeply embedded in the everyday lives of rural communities. During the Indian freedom struggle, Bhojpuri-speaking regions actively participated in various nationalist movements led by Gandhi, including the Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, and Quit India Movement. Folk singers and local poets composed songs that celebrated Gandhi as a national leader, a moral guide, and a symbol of resistance against colonial rule. These songs often portrayed him as "Bapu," expressing affection, respect, and devotion among common people. Through simple language, local metaphors, and musical traditions, Bhojpuri folk songs communicated political messages and inspired collective participation in the struggle for independence. The study of Gandhi's presence in Bhojpuri folk songs reveals the dynamic relationship between folk culture and nationalism. These songs not only documented historical events but also preserved popular memories of Gandhi's leadership and ideals. Even after independence, Bhojpuri folk traditions continued to invoke Gandhi as a symbol of ethical values, social harmony, and rural empowerment. By examining these songs, scholars can gain valuable insights into the cultural dimensions of the freedom movement and the role of folk literature in shaping public consciousness. Thus, Bhojpuri folk songs represent an important cultural archive that reflects the enduring influence of Gandhi on the social imagination and collective memory of the Bhojpuri-speaking people.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Bhojpuri Folk Songs, Nationalism, Freedom Movement, Folk Culture

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From Gandhi, farmers have got the hope that the killing of justice, which is being done b burden of tax, all the laws are strange. Farmers are requesting Gandhi Maharaj to see all these laws. On 27th February, 1917, on behalf of farmers of Champaran, Rajkumar Shukla had written to invite Gandhi, "Respected Mahatma, listen to the stories of others every day, listen to my story today. You showed that portent which Mahatma like Tolstoy used to think only.... Our sad story is much more... than the tyranny of that South Africa. We do not want to grieve your soft heart by telling our grief. The only prayer is that see us with your eyes, and then you will be convinced

that in a corner of India, the people are suffering in pain like beast life of living.¹ .."

'Dheere bahu dheere bahu pachhuabayariya.

Ghamva se badareekarahurakhavariya."

Jug jugjohejehijagatpuraatan.

Dharatee par utarelapurooshsanaatan.

Naaheenbaduyesankh chakra, Naaheen gadaadhaaree.

Naaheenhauvedasarath Sut dhanudhaaree..

kanhen pat peetnaaheen, muraleeadhar naaheen.

Saaky-rajaputnaaheen, banal bhikhaaree.

abakeejabroopdhilegiradhaaree.. '2

This Bhajan song presents Gandhi Baba as one of the most different of incarnations of God. It is the first Giridhari (Krishna), whose cloth is weird. They do not have any physical weapons to fight their enemies. He is just like beggar. It is well known that the image of Bhole Shankar has been popular in the people for such strange costumes, but he is a mythical character while Gandhiji is a historical person. The success of Champaran Satyagrah is transforming him from a historical person into a mythical character. Gandhi also has the power to do everything but he does not do anything for himself. He does it for the whole nation. It is not dispensable to discuss here that after coming to India from South Africa, Gandhiji used to wear Dhoti till the waist and kept the upper part of the waist open, which was in line with the clothes of the villagers. At that time most of the farmers used to live bare body on the waist in summer and rain. Not only this, the accommodation in the villages was easily made of available soil, bamboo, wood, weeds, etc. Gandhiji also adopted the same house-building technology to build his Ashrams. From South Africa's Phoenix, Tolstoy Ashram, to India, Ashrams like Sabarmati, Sevagram, have been constructed with the help of locally available bamboo and wood. The people used to connect themselves to Gandhi's clothes and shelter, and were ready to follow his every step.

'Gandhi ke Aail Jamana,
Devar Jehalakhaana ab Gaile.
Jab tape sarakaarbahaadoor, bhaarat mare
binu daana. devarjehalakhaana...
Haathhathakadiyaba, godavameinbediya..
Desavabharihoildivaana..
Ijjatraakhilehu Bhaarat maiya..
Charakhachalaavahumastaana
Kamala, sarojane, vijaykelakshmee..
Kaam Kailee maradaana. Devar jehalakhaana"³

In this jhumar song, a sister-in-law is saying to her brother-in-law, it is time of Mahatma Gandhi. Now the fear of going to prison and the red hat is over. brother-in-law also went to jail for service to the nation. Ever since the British Government's reign,

in the hands of patriots and a pair of legs. The whole Indians are dying without food. There is a handcuff country has gone crazy. O Devar! Now you have the Sarojini Naidu and Vijay Lakshmi Pandit have done honor of Bharatmata. Kamla devi Chattopadhyay, brave work like men. So, you also get in the service of the nation.

'Ab ham kaatabicharakhava, piya mati jaahoo bidesava.

Ham kaatabi charakha sajan tunhu laav, milihen ehi se suraajava.piyamati..

Hoihen suraaj tabe sukh

milihen..katijaihensabakekale sava..piyamati...

Desavakelaajrahecharakhase.. gandhee
kemaanosanesava..piyamati... Kahataar
egaandheejee ki charakhachalaavahu, ehee se
hatihenkalesava..piyamati...' 4

In this jantasari song, a woman tells her husband that O husband! Now I will use the spinning In this Jantasari song, a woman tells her wheel. So you do not go to Videsh (abroad). Bring you the spinning wheel, I'll use it. We will get Swaraj from this way. Then the countrymen will get happiness and the suffering of all people will be overcome. Get the message of Mahatma Gandhi. The reverence of the country will remain from the Charkha itself. Gandhiji says that charkha is to run. This will end the pain of the countrymen. During the Champaran Satyagraha, the farmers and labourers were being migrated in large numbers from Bhojpuri region. It was so much that people were moving towards cities of industry and plantation like Calcutta and Assam. In Calcutta, their statistics are available in the colonial writing in the context of the presence of migrant workers in jute industries. In 1905, a British officer, B. Foley, wrote in his report, "Twenty years ago, all the hands (in jute mills) were Bengalis. These have been gradually replaced by the "Hindust(h)anis from the United Provinces and her brother-in-law, it is time of Mahatma Gandhi. of the hands is composed of up-countrymen"⁵, those In this Jhumar Song, a sister-in-law is saying to Bihar... So that at present in most of mills two-thirds of the hands is composed of up countryman"¹¹, those days, it was so much

publicity of national sentiments in folksong had become so popular that the small children of the village were singing the songs of 'Suraj'. In villages, singers sang 'Suraji song' and people were singing by them. In which Marriages dowry are not taken, are called 'Suraji Vivah'. In 'Suraji' marriage, bride and groom had wear Swadeshi (indigenous) costumes for their marriage. So they would be called 'Suraji Var-badhu'.

'Phiri jaahun Phiri jaahun gharava
ansamadhiya ho, mora dheeya rahiain kunaari.
Basan utaari sab phekaahoon bidesiya, mor poot
rahiainughaar.

Basan sudesiya mangae pahiribo ho, tab
hoihen dheeya ke biaah' 6

This is a Gaari Song. In this song, the village women ask the groom's father to return to their home because the groom dressed in foreign clothes. As long as the groom does not come dressed up with Swadesi cloths, the bride will not get married. Similarly, in a Kajari song of Chancharik, the case of spinning wheel has emerged in response to British persecution:

'Saavan bhaduva barasatava ke dinava raama.
Hari hari baithi ke charakhava katavai re haree.
Apane ta katabai avaroo gotinee se katavibe re haree.
Hari hari gaandhee ke hukumava ham manibe
reharee.
Apane nagariya ham ta karabai ho surajava raam.
Hari har idesava ke alakhava ham jagibe re haree.' 7

A woman living in a joint family in this Kajari song, say that she will be spinning charkha in the rainy season, and she will also get involved with her sister in law in this campaign. She will follow Gandhi orders and will propagate it. In fact, thousands of folk songs will be found in the Bhojpuri region, from which the following folk songs have been very popular which reflect emotional attachment to Gandhi and khadi. See this following song;

'Rangal khaadee ke chunariya laharadaar ba,
Pahir dil tohaar ba na.
Chunaree baate teenapatiya,
Ome laagal ba kinariya

Oh mein sagaro gandhee baba ke Jayakar ba.
Pahir dil tohaar ba na.⁸

Among the folk songs, the most tales are about Gandhi Baba. In reference to some interesting things related to the miraculous powers of Gandhi in folk consciousness, historian Shahid Amin has said that these miraculous powers make Gandhi as Mahatma.⁹ Hassan Imam¹⁰ has carried forward his article in this way. People used to tell that Gandhi could not keep in jail even against his will, that Gandhi had 'miraculous' power and when he wanted this power to open the gates of the prison and he would use to go similarly, there is a Haryanavi folk song:

'Ek jalebee tel mein. Gandhi bhejya jel mein..
Jail ka phaatak gaya toot. Gandhi aaya phoran chhoot.'¹¹

Gandhi as Avtar:

'Dhodayacharitmanas' also mentions this notion, 'suddenly news comes Gandhi Baba is coming to do 'Shabha' at Jirania. No one can put him in jail. He come out by breaking the lock and wall from the same point of view.¹² In the novel 'Maila Aanchal' written by Renu, the Mahanth Sevadas, (head) of the monastery, is seen in 'Satguru Saheb' dream and lobbied for Gandhiji. It is said, 'The work of welfare is happening in your village and you do not know? Gandhi is my Bhagat (Devotee). Gandhi is doing the work of welfare in this village. Give a feast to the whole village.'¹³ Gandhiji's image among people was the incarnation of compassion. He is such a great saint that if the mustard plant in the courtyard is pressurized with a broom, their heart cries.¹⁴ Lakshmi thousands of folk songs will be found in the Bhojpuri Kotharino of 'Maila Aanchal' explains Baldevji, 'Do region, from which the following folk songs have not leave the creed of Mahatma ji, Baldevji! been very popular which reflects emotional Mahatma ji is an incarnate.... It has seen Mahatma ji attachment to Gandhi and Khadi. See this following with eyes, do not let sin come in it. Do not settle sin a woman, living in a joint family in this Kajari song, says that she will be spinning Charkha in the rainy season, and she will also get involved with her sister-in-law in this campaign. She will follow Gandhi's orders

and will propagate it. Infact, in the heart of Mahatma ji who has done Mahatma ji... Mahatma ji is a Bhagat of Satguru.¹⁵ And Baldev is a devotee of Gandhiji. It is so big that 'sometimes Mahatma ji is filled with (being a Goddess of Goddess). Chuni Gosaini is in the early morning.'¹⁶ On Gandhiji's death, Kamala's mother says, 'he had I have heard that Gandhi is now an incarnation. Until come up with a form of male ... and went away after showing Leela,¹⁷

Mahatma Gandhi was so popular among the public that any work started by people used to his oheer'. After the address of Lakshmi in Maila chouted 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai'.¹⁸ Once again, at the meeting of the Singh Saheb (Babu Saheb) and the Tehsildar Saheb it was said, the only thing of Mahatma Gandhi ki jai'¹⁹ Baldev used to speak Mahatma ki Jai' many times in his dreams.²⁰ The announcement of opening of the Khambhar (barn) of Maryganj is also done by Mahatma ki 'Jai'.²¹ There are so many forms of Gandhi in folk consciousness that people drag him into violent and non-violent activities. In Maila Aanchal, the Yadava Sena' of Guar Toliis going to attack, with the slogan of 'Mahatma ji ki Jai' along with Mahabir ji ki jai."²² Aanchal, Baldev's speech was about to start- People consciousness has played a very important PiyareBhaiyo!", then the young men of Yadava Toli role in nmaking Gandhi a person of avatari man: Maryganj 's people, who are going to Purnea procession, know that 'in whose hands therkoe is a flag of Mahatma, Guard babu and TTE (Train Ticket Examiner) of railways do not ask for tickets.'²³ In 1921, some farmers in Faizabad district looted the belongings of a landowner. These poor farmers were told that Mahatma Gandhi wanted them to loot; And they shouted slogan 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!'. They follow his order by sloganeering²⁴

It is clear that 'miraculous powers' came along Win Gandhi when he came to Champaran in 1917. On reaching Champaran, people welcomed Gandhi as the new God. Raj kumar Shukla publicized that he is the innarnation of God' and he has been sent for the liberation of India from Britishers. The

farmers were assessing that only 'God' could get the Support of great advocates who had been paid by them a lot of fees even for his crying.²⁵ D.G. Tendulkar mentions a funny story of the village of Bihar. A very old lady came around and said: 'Maharaj, my age is 104 years old and eyes have become blurred. I have visited many pilgrimages. There are two temples established in my own house. I knew that Ram and Krishna were two incarnations.i have heard that Gandhi is now an incarnation. Until I see them my soul will not remain peacefull²⁶ the vicinity of Betiya, the image of Gandhi began to emerge on trees and plants to pumpkins, '²⁷ At the root of all this, people had the belief that Gandhi was not an ordinary person but an Avatarari man:

Gandhi kahai, gaandhee kahai, man chitt laiko.
Ganga sarajoo chaahe koopa par nahaikē,
Lihale avatar ehee deshava mein aai ke.²⁸

Considering Mahatma Gandhi as an avatar, he has been compared to Ram and Krishna. Hanuman and Lakshman were with Ram. Krishnas was accompanied with Gwal-Baal and Balram. Like them, Jawahar Lal Nehru and people of India are associated with Gandhi. Gandhi has come to remove Ravana's and Kans's unjust empire:

'Avataa rmahaatma gaandhee kai,
Bhaarat ke bhaar utaarai kaan,
Siri raam maare raavan kaan,
Gandhi jee jag maan paragat bhaye,
Anyaaayee raajy hataavai kaan,
Avataar mahatma gaandhee kai,
Bhaarat kai bhaar utaarai kaan..²⁹

Even in a folk song in Braj, Gandhi has been described as incarnation:

Avataar mahatma gaandhee
Hain bhaarat ko bhaar utaaran ko
Siriraam ne raavan maara tha,
kaanha ne kans pachhaada tha
Ab gaandhee ne avatar liya
in angarejan ke maaran ko

Siri raam ke haath mein Dhanush baan,
Kaanha ke haath Sudarshan tha
Gandhi ke haath mein charakha hai.
Bhaaratavaasin ke taaran ko. ³⁰

In the days of Satyagraha, there was a slight
change in the lyrics of this song:

Ve chakr Sudarshan dhaaree the,
Tum charakhaadhaaree kahalaate ho.
Ve maakhanachor kahalaate the,
Tum namakachor kahalaate ho. ³¹

Gandhi's arrival in Indian politics was like
bursting on the horizon. This Punjabi folk song,
bathed with the new ray of hope, says:

'Sade behade sooraj chadhiya, Sooraj chadhiya
Sooraj vekhan aao gaandhee, aao Gandhi
Toon vee te ikk sooraj en, ikk sooraj en
sooraj vekhan aao Gandhi, aao Gandhi. ³²

The sun has risen in our courtyard, the sun has
risen. Come to see the sun, O Gandhi, come. You
too are a Sun, come to see the sun, O Gandhi, come.
In this song, Gandhi's style of performing
comparisons with Sun is quite impressive. Folklore
is not disinterested in the freedom fight, and hero of
this fight is Gandhi. He came with English education
but his Indian nationalism was unmistakable in the
eyes of the people. Gandhi is remembered as a
liberator in Santhal folklore:

'Chetaan disam khun Gandhi
Baabaaye darae kaan
Teere taape naayogo kaanun puthee
Bahak retae khaddar toparee
Taarin retae naaya go mota gamachha
Maaho disam ren maanavaan vanchaav
Tabon lagatie hai akaana.

O Mother! Gandhi Baba has come from the
west direction, in his hand is the book of law, he has
a hat on his forehead, he has a thick cloak on his
shoulder, listen to him, he has come to rescue us.

Conclusion:

After the success of Champaran Satyagrah, folk songs also make us understand how Gandhiji becomes a Mahatma and how the process of becoming a Mahatma creates a sense of nationalism among public. The process of becoming divine from a human being is the process of becoming a myth. Roland Barth's views and analysis are more relevant to understand the mythology's historical and cultural traditions. In the oral tradition, there is more historicity of the object's status and the memory of is: the method of reading and understanding myths, the false creations is destroyed. The second argument in which he talks about taking the help of metaphysics, besides the syllogism and linguistics. Understanding the meaning of myths is not enough, but it is also necessary to understand their mythological intention that a specific symbol is assumed new meanings. His third argument is to understand ancient myths in new references.

Even after the rise of historical consciousness; historical persons have been made legends or myths in collective consciousness, which has greatly influenced the masses from their actions. History gives factual details about Buddha, Gorakhnath, Kabir etc. Gandhi and his Satyagrah come in that line. After being converted into myth, history does not remain the same, it becomes a ritualized history, a ritual of the folk sensibility and with our distance growing, it starts to symbolize the meaning. In this process of history myth and public trust are an important part of myth. On one hand, folk mind places history on the lap of myth, and on the other hand, folk mind adds the myth to the realm of his family relationships and engages it in daily activities. In other words, the people have continuously tried to give their mythical beliefs, rituals and nature a grassroots identity. This effort leads to create the process of nation building through its ethnic assimilation.

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