Exploring the Unraveled Naktauri-Geet: A Study on a Ritual Performance in an All-Women Space in a Hindu Marriage Ceremony

Priyam Dubey

Student, Ambedkar University Delhi

Abstract

This research explores the ritual performance action known as *Naktauri*, which occurs during Hindu marriage ceremonies. In these ceremonies, women from the bridegroom's family are excluded from the wedding rituals at the bride's house and are left behind by the men. (In contemporary times, few women have begun to attend the wedding ceremony at the bride's house. However, this step remains very limited in rural parts of the northern belt of India.) These women then engage in a ritual performance that enacts the entire sequence of the marriage, including the first night of the couple (*suhagraat*) and the birth of a child. This enactment is complemented by *geet* (songs), dance, and male impersonation, and it takes place in an all-women space where men are strictly prohibited. Any male attempt to intrude is met with a barrage of abuses.

Based in Akbarpur, Uttar Pradesh, a place in northern India, this study underscores the importance of location as this performance holds multiple signifiers depending on its regional context. The performance of *Naktauri* has received negligible attention in academic discourse. This research aims to illuminate the significance of the *geet* and dance elements within this ritual performance, highlighting their role in providing a space for women's cultural expression and agency.

Keywords: Ritual Performance, Women's agency, Community Performance.

Introduction

Geet hold a rich historical and cultural significance in Indian society especially in the Northern belt of India. They represent the diversity of Indian music, provide a means of cultural expression, foster social cohesion, and serve as a link between the past and the present. *Geet* serve as a powerful medium for expressing various emotions, such as love, longing, joy, and spirituality. They embody the cultural fabric of Indian society, reflecting the diverse linguistic, regional, and religious traditions across the country. They are performed during festivals, weddings, and other celebratory occasions, bringing people together and reinforcing cultural bonds. Every rituals and customs are incomplete without *geet* being a part of it. Dr. Champa Singh, a Professor from the Hindi Department in Banaras Hindu University says, *Jahan geet nhi gaya jaata hai wahan log apsagun maante hai, ki batao kaisa gaon hain yahan geet hi nahi gaya jaata.*

[Villages were *geet* are not sung is considered to be an ominous place and people avoid such places] Singh posits that *geet* are fundamental to understanding the cultural fabric of any village. These songs encapsulate the essence of a village and its inhabitants, reflecting their daily lives, values, and traditions.

In northern India, *geet* are inseparable from the region's rituals, customs, and festivals, forming an integral part of these celebrations. Their presence is so pervasive that it would be inconceivable to find a cultural or religious event without *geet* playing a significant role. Through these songs, one can gain deep insights into the social and cultural dynamics of the community.

Hindu marriages are an elaborate process spanning almost ten days, with various rites and rituals occurring before and after the auspicious day when the marriage ceremony takes place in front of the sacred fire. Throughout this process, *geet* are omnipresent, each ritual accompanied by songs that reflect the specific emotions of the occasion. Among these, *naktauri-geet* has received limited attention in academic discourse. These songs, performed during the *Naktauri* ritual, are particularly significant and warrant further exploration. In this paper, I will discuss the *naktauri-geet*—songs performed during *Naktauri*, a ritual in Hindu marriage ceremonies. *Naktauri* involves the women from the bridegroom's family, who are left behind and do not participate in the wedding ceremony at the bride's house. Instead, they perform a mock marriage ceremony, complete with the *Suhagraat* (first night) and the birth of a male child. This ritual features male impersonation, songs, and dances, all conducted in an all-women space where men are forbidden. This paper will analyze these *geet* and the significance of *gaari* (slangs) within them, exploring their importance to the women who perform these songs.

How Important *Geet* are for women?

Indian society has been marked by gender disparities and restrictive norms that often limit women's freedom of expression. *Geet* are something which brings women in the center. Within the realm of *geet*, women have emerged as both protagonists and torchbearers, utilizing this artistic expression to challenge societal norms, express their innermost emotions, and assert their agency. *Geet* have acted as a powerful tool for women to challenge patriarchal structures and norms. *Geet* have provided a safe space for women to express their desires, aspirations, and frustrations, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on women's rights and social change.

Stuart Hall, in his work "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," argues that the struggles and disparities of different social classes are the foundation of popular culture. This concept is exemplified in geet (traditional songs), which have served as a form of resistance for women. Through geet, women can boldly critique social hierarchies, disparities, and the injustices they face. These ritual practices have acted as a barrier of resistance, eventually becoming integral to popular culture. For instance, the Bhojpuri film industry frequently incorporates geet into its movies. Additionally, the rise of social media has transformed the consumption of cultural content, bringing geet into the popular mainstream. The millions of views on these songs across social media platforms demonstrate their incorporation into and celebration within popular culture.

In Northern India *vivaah-geet* are incomplete without *gaari (*slang) being a part of it. *Gaari-geet* are essential in a Hindu Marriage providing women with a unique opportunity to publicly critique men, who are expected to remain silent in response. Dr. Champa Singh says,

Gaari toh bahut zaroori hai geeton mein, Bhagwan Ram jinko bharat mein har jagah puja jaata hai, unko Mithila[1] mein gaali diya jaata hai, aur isko log shubh maante hain. Mardon ko shaadi mein gaali padhna ek pratha hai.

---

[1] Goddesses Sita, wife of Lord Rama, belongs to Mithala, a place in Bihar.

[*Gaari* are most essential element in *geet*. Lord Ram who is worshiped in entire India is bashed with slangs in Mithila and people find this auspicious. In marriage it is a custom to abuse men.]

Hindu marriage rituals are deeply rooted in Hindu mythology, with the story of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita being particularly prominent. *Geet* often invoke this narrative. According to the myth, King Janak, Sita's father, set a condition for her marriage: the suitor who could string the Pinaka, the bow of Lord Shiva, would win her hand. Rama succeeded in this challenge, leading to their marriage. Sita belongs to Mithila, and due to the relationship established through her marriage, women from Mithila have the right to humorously abuse Rama in their songs. These songs, which include satirical and humorous *gaari,* are performed during marriages and are not meant to be taken literally. Instead, they serve as a foundation for building new relationships between the two families. In Hindu marriages, *geet* are predominantly sung by women from both the bride's and bridegroom's sides. Women from the bride's side often use *gaari* to humorously critique the bridegroom and his family. While the rituals are mainly performed by men, with women playing a supportive role, *geet* provide a powerful platform for women to assert their agency, challenge societal norms, and express resistance. In this context, *gaari* within the *geet* highlights women's presence and emphasizes their hierarchical position within a gender-divided society.-divided society.

Geet in Naktauri

"Saare barati barate gaye, Priyam badwa ghar hi rahe"

[Every *barati* has gone for the marriage along with the bridegroom; this pimp named Priyam is staying back home.]

This is how the procession begins when all the *barati* (People who go along with the bridegroom to the bride's house for the wedding ceremony) leave for the marriage. I witness this procession of seeing off the *barati* along with the women of the house, and they made this song on me. The summary of the song is that since this pimp has not gone for the marriage, he must now perform all the household chores like laundry, dishwashing, cooking, and then sleep with one of us. They also mocked my sexuality in the song, labeling me as impotent and attributing my absence from the marriage to this. They continued singing this repetitively until I left the space. I later asked them to record this segment for me, but they refused. These *geet* are part of the procession and are difficult to recreate. They flow with the situation and rely on the support of other women, making it challenging to perform them individually. The ephemerality of the performance intrigued me to learn more about these *geet*.

Naktauri comprises multiple genres of *geet*, but there are three major divisions within this performance: *Sohar, Uthaan,* and *Nakata*. There are likely more versions and types available depending on the location of the marriage. It is important to understand the rhythm of the music rather than the lyrics in *vivaah-geet*. In these performances the rhythm is primary, and the lyrics vary from place to place. The lyrics in *geet* involve the names of family members, the location, and the current situation. Thus, the lyrics are not fixed and are improvised with each repetition and performance. The *geet* are repetitive in nature, but the repetition is never exactly the same.

For example, in the line *"Saare barati barate gaye, Priyam badwa ghar hi rahe,"* the first line remains constant, and in the second line, names are added one after another, followed by repetition. Suppose there are three people who have not gone along with the *barati*: Priyam, Tushar, and Anand. The geet would go like this:

"Saare barati barate gaye, Priyam badwa ghar hi rahe Saare barati barate gaye, Tushar badwa ghar hi rahe Saare barati barate gaye, Anand badwa ghar hi rahe"

[Every *barati* has gone for the marriage along with the bridegroom; this pimp named Priyam is staying back home. And then the lines are the same but with the names changing to Tushar and later to Anand.]

This is how the repetition would take place. Repetition is important in *geet* and occurs in two ways. A group of women sings these *geet*, and to involve everyone in the performance, someone begins with a line, and then that line is repeated by all the other women. This is one kind of repetition. Another kind is in the lyrics, where a certain line is repeated again and again, adding the names of family members. A dialogue-like interaction happens during *geet*.

The rhythm continues with changes in the lyrics. The change in lyrics is very impromptu, but the rhythm remains fixed. A set rhythm progresses, followed by the changing lyrics. It is not essential to be a vocalist or have a pitch-perfect voice for this performance. The imperfections enrich the celebration and togetherness of the space. The important part is to enjoy, not to be perfect, in these spaces.

Sohar

Sohar, is a traditional genre of folk music which is typically sung on the occasion of childbirth and is associated with the celebration of a newborn baby. *Sohar-Geet* is often performed to express joy and convey blessings for the mother and the baby. The songs usually have a lively and rhythmic melody accompanied by traditional instruments such as the *dholak* (hand drum) and *jhal/spoon.*(majorly percussion instrument only) The lyrics of *Soha- Geet* often depict the happiness of the family, prayers for the well-being of the mother and child, and reflections on the beauty of motherhood. In *naktauri* a birth of a male child takes place and then it is followed up by *sohar-geet*. As soon as the birth takes place women begin with the *sohar-geet*. There are multiple *sohar* songs which are sung. I will be discussing two of them and the reason of bringing these two songs only is that through this I want to talk about how people adapt popular in their language and the influence of Bhojpuri and Hindi film industry on these spaces.

The first song is *"Jug Jug Jiya Su Lalanwa"* which was used in the film *Piya ke Gaon (1985)* and sung by Alka Yaganik. It is mentioned in the copyright label of music that the lyrics is written by Dr Ram Nath Pathak. I tried to find about him more but could not get much. At the moment it is difficult for me to claim weather Pathak adapted it from the *geet* or this spread into the *geet* from the film. The song celebrates motherhood and birth of the male child. It is from the prespective of a mother giving blessing to the newly born and procrastinating how the child will be the torchbearer of the family. There are multiple other renditions of this song available and interestingly people have made this song their own by adapting it in their own language. The lyrics written by Pathak goes like this….

Jug Jug Jiya Su Lalanwa,
Bhavanwa Ke Bhag Jaagal Ho,
Lalna Laal Hoihai,
Kulva Ke Deepak Manwa Mein,
Aas Laagal Ho ॥

Aaj Ke Dinwa Suhawan,
Ratiya Lubhawan Ho,
Lalna Didiya Ke Horila Janmale,
Horilawa Bada Sundar Ho ॥

Nakiya Tahwe Jaise Babuji Ke,

Ankhiya Ha Mai Ke Ho,
Lalan Muhwa Ha Chanwa Surujwa Ta Sagro,
Anjor Bhaile Ho ॥

Sasu Suhagin Bad Bhagin,
An Dhan Lutaveli Ho,
Lalna Duara Pe Bajela Badhiya,
Anganwa Uthe Sohar Ho ॥

Naachi Naachi Gaaveli Bahiniya,
Lalan Ke Khelaveli Ho,
Lalna Hansi Hansi Tihuki Chalaveli,
Ras Barsaaveli Ho ॥

Jug Jug Jiya Su Lalanwa,
Bhavanwa Ke Bhag Jaagal Ho,
Lalna Laal Hoihai,
Kulva Ke Deepak Manwa Mein,
Aas Laagal Ho ॥

This song has been adapted by people in their own language where the message and meaning of the song remains same but the lyrics is transformed into their language. Interesting thing to know here is the similarities in between languages in the parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. These *geet* are prevalent in this space and the dialectics of these places have a commonality with Hindi, hence they do not need to make multiple changes to the lyrics but as the Bhojpuri film industry has grown its popularity in these space and they have used *geet* in their film a huge mass consider all these songs are in Bhojpuri only and the commonality in these dialectics makes it more believable but the difference could be traced by the people who belong to those spaces.

Lets us look at the lyrics and especially at the term '*lalanwa*' which is used to pronounce a male child. The above *sohar* is for a celebration of a male child. Another example which I would be talking about, also celebrates the birth of a male child. Laxmi Tewari in her work, *Sohar* child birth sing of Joy says, "I have not yet heard a single *sohar* song in which the birth of a daughter is celebrated." (Tewari, 1988) It is not that I could not find any *sohar* which depicts celebration of a girl child or other gender. *Sohar* are entirely written in the celebration of the male child only. There is a desire of male child and people celebrate when desires are fulfilled. Female child are considered burden for the family and hence no *sohar* is written in celebration of a girl child.

I found an interesting thing which happened in Uttar Pradesh India where 20 professional folk singing troupes gathered together and through a workshop recreated the folk songs for the celebration of girl child to raise the gender awareness. The workshop titled '*Lok Geeton Mein Beti*' (Daughters in our folk songs) was organized by State Innovation in Family Planning Services Project Agency (SIFPSA) in 2015 and they created song like….

"Janmi hai bitiya hamaar, saheliya mangal gao," which mean my daughter is born everyone sing happily.

"Meri beti badi sayani phoolon ki khushbu si hai, which means my daughter is intelligent and she is like the smell of the flowers.

This workshop was specially designed to recreated the *sohar-geet* as their existed none which celebrated the birth of a female child. Tewari, in her work on *sohar* gives two reasons why there are no *sohar* songs on girl child. The first is because a girl child leaves her native after her marriage which makes her not a part of patrilineal line and the second reason is dowry. At the time of the marriage the gift giving obligation will be imposed on her family. (Tewari, 1988) This makes her a burden on her family and people do not celebrated when they are in loss because they consider the birth of the girl child as their loss. This is a major reason why no *sohar geet* are written for daughters.

Influence of Popular culture in community spaces

Another *sohar-geet* which I want to bring is "O Jaccha Mud Mud Dekhe Palana", this song has been made on the melody of a very famous song "Ude Jab Jab Jhulfe Teri" from the film Naya Daur (1957). This song has a catchy rhythm and could easily be transformed and adapted with other lyrics and the melody depicts some kind of celebration and happiness which is apt for *sohar* and the recreation on this melody is prominently sung. The influence of popular culture is quite normal in community performances. The popular is easily catchable and known to masses and enjoyed by everyone.

Bollywood songs hold a special place in the hearts of millions around the world. These vibrant and melodious compositions have not only captivated the Indian film industry but have also become an integral part of many community performances and *vivaah-geet* being a prominent example. According to author Rajesh Subramanian, "Recreating Bollywood songs in community performances allows for the continuation of cultural traditions, ensuring that younger generations stay connected to their roots." (Subramanian 2019) This is exactly the scenario with *geet*, younger generations have come up with more recreations from the popular culture and this is how they have survived this spaces in contemporary times holding the masses together. The popularity and catchy tunes of popular songs make them accessible to a wide audience, regardless of language barriers. By recreating Bollywood songs in community performances, organizers engage participants and spectators, creating an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all. Community performances often aim to combine traditional elements with contemporary trends. The recreation of Bollywood songs in community performances serves as a bridge between cultural heritage and contemporary expression.

The lyrics of the song used my area of research after recreation goes like this....

O Jaccha Mud Mud Dekhe Palana

O Jaccha Mud Mud Dekhe Palana

Ki Gora Gora Kispe Gaya

Ki Gora Gora Kispe Gaya

Mera Lalana ॥

Iske Baba Kale Kale

Iske Papa Kale Kale

Ki Gora Gora Dadi Pe Gaya

Ki Gora Gora Mummy Pe Gaya

Mera Lalana ॥

The core idea of this song is whose impression the newly born child has and one by one they compare it from all the relation and interesting thing here is how in comparison all the male are sung as dull faces

and women as beautiful faces and in every paragraph the child eventually is said to have an impression of female member of her family because the child is beautiful just like the female members of the family. I have mentioned two paragraph of the song because with this two you can create the song further. The first paragraph is the chorus which is followed with improvised lyrics further. In the first two lines the names of the male member of the family is added and they are said to be dull faces and in the second paragraph the female members are added and they are sung as beautiful faces. This could also be looked how the look of the new born child is measured and made important. These songs also shape the idea of the society. These are the minute things which are present in these performance and they are all adapted from the social norms of the society.

Uthaan

Uthaan geet are continuation of *sohar-geet.* These melodious compositions often capture the essence of daily life, including the humorous encounters and playful altercations that occur between women. With their witty lyrics and lively tunes, these humorous geet offer a delightful glimpse into the lighter side of female relationships. There are multiple nuances when we look at certain relationships in Indian context. The relationship between a daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law, mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law and in between the other daughter-in-law's of the family there is always a playful altercation and humor which goes on in their life. This is an essential part of their life and a major source of entertainment. There are *geet* which talks about this playful altercation and that is the theme of *uthaan-geet.* After a marriage a woman is bombarded with multiple relationships and in this patriarchal structure and the other women in her family becomes their closest alliance where she spends most of her time. These grow certain level of love and even altercations which are marked by most folk writers in their lyrics.

In *naktuati, uthaan* are sung after *sohar* and through the songs the story proceed with a narrative of how none of the women helped the mother during her pregnancy and now as she has given birth to a male child they all have come up for the celebration. In this celebration satire in the lyrics breaks the hierarchy between women and creates a space where feelings are expressed through humor in public. The character of a mother-in-law in Indian society especially in Northern India is portrayed as a villain who makes her daughter-in-law perform all the domestic labour and tortures her. I am not going into analyzing the villainy thing but we would look at the *geet* which are made depicting these narratives.

Lalan Mukh Dekh Liye

Dil Bhaiyo Thanda

Apan Amma Aai Hai Aangan Mein Gadab Jhanda

Hari ke Amma Aai Hai Marab Chaar Danda ॥

Lalan Mukh Dekh Liye

Dil Bhaiyo Thanda

Apan Bhabhi Aai Hai Anangan Mein Gadab Jhanda

Hari ke Bhabhi Aai Hai Marab Chaar Danda ॥

This popular *geet*, sung in various regional languages across northern India, humorously depicts the conflict between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. Through light-hearted banter, the daughter-in-law playfully tells her mother-in-law that she will beat her. The song begins with a sense of relief for the daughter-in-law, who has given birth to a baby boy—a status that elevates her position within the family. This elevated status is not typically afforded to mothers of baby girls. Because of her new standing, the daughter-in-law cheerfully welcomes her own mother to the house, while humorously

threatening to beat her mother-in-law with sticks. The lyrics continue in this vein, with the daughter-in-law warmly welcoming every woman from her side of the family and threatening to beat every woman from her in-laws' side.

The song showcases the comical dynamics of these relationships, allowing women to find joy and camaraderie in their shared experiences of navigating familial ties. This is just one example among many *geet* that depict similar narratives and are widely enjoyed. These *geet* serve to neutralize the hierarchy within relationships during the *Naktauri* performance, fostering a sense of unity and equality among the participants and at the same time depicting the patriarchal structure which exists and is celebrated in these performances.

Another relationship prominently featured in *geet* is that between a daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law. Folk music often delves into this dynamic, with numerous *geet* narrating the complexities of this relationship. For a daughter-in-law, the sister-in-law can be both a troublemaker and her closest companion—serving as emotional support, friend, and sometimes a source of altercation. These nuances are vividly depicted in *geet*. While the sister-in-law may hold a position of power and dominance, the relationship also allows the daughter-in-law to engage in playful banter. Sarcasm often plays a significant role in the lyrics, adding depth and humor to their interactions. Let's analyze a *geet* that explores this relationship in detail.

Rupaiya Maange Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaiya

Ek Rupaiya More Sasur Ke Kamai

Athanni Lela Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaai ॥

Rupaiya Maange Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaiya

Ek Athanni Mere Jeth ki Kamai

Chawanni Lelo Nanadi Laal Ki Badhaai ॥

Rupaiya Maange Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaiya

Ek Chawanni Mere Devar Ki Kamai

Duaani Lelo Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaai ॥

Rupaiya Maange Nanadi Laal Ke Badhaiya

Ek Duaani Mere Piya Ki Kamai

Thenga Lelo Nanadi Laal Ki Kamai ॥

The above lyrics are from the perspective of a daughter-in-law addressing her sister-in-law. The sister-in-law is asking for a gift following the birth of a child, a common practice in Hindu culture, particularly after the birth of a male child, when gifts are distributed among family and friends. In the lyrics, the daughter-in-law lists the earnings of various family members, detailing the amount the sister-in-law will receive. However, in the final verse, she humorously concludes by saying she won't give her any money as a gift.

These *geet* are performed after the birth of a child during the *naktauri*. Characters such as the aunt, mother-in-law, and other family members appear in the songs to request gifts and bestow blessings upon the newborn boy.

Nakata-Geet

Nakata-geet are vulgar is what I got from the women during my interviews. The all hesitated in singing and even mentioning the lyrics of the *nakata-geet*. All my interviewees suggested me that I should not try to get the lyrics as for them the lyrics are too vulgar to be part of any scholarship. In my interview

with Dr Champa Singh, who has written a book on the Bhojpuri folk music I asked her the reason behind not mentioning *nakata-geet* into the book and she says that she deliberately avoided them as slang are the integral part of these songs and she was a bit too shy to bring the bold reality into the academic writings. It was difficult to get any of those *geet* as those geet glorify the abusive behavior and promote a vulgar narrative according to my interviewees hence all of them hesitated to talk about it.

"Howayala Ho Naktauri ke Puri...."

[Everyone join to make the *Puri* for *Naktauri*]

In all my interviews, this is the only line which I found. This song is sung when the cooking of meal happens before the *naktauri* begins. I tried to get some more lyrics but they all hesitated. There was a taboo in between us and I could not push them much. The women avoid using abusive words in daily life generally and I was a stranger to them so it was impossible that they could come up with these songs easily. It is the moment of *naktauri* which enables them to sing these songs. The presence of other women singing along them and their excitement and celebrations is essential for these songs to be performed. It would be difficult for any Woman to individually pull of these songs and there are multiple reasons behind it. The space, moment and the support of the other women is essential for *naktauri* to happen and *nakata-geet* to be performed.

Yuko Yagi, mentioned this performance as *Naktoriya* has provided a verse in her work which is an example of *nakata-geet*. The verses are:

"We put food on a golden dish, the bridegroom doesn't eat.

A bridegroom who cannot move his hip is a child.

We put water in a cup, the bridegroom doesn't drink,

A bridegroom who cannot move his waist is a child.

We made a bed with cover and pillows.

A bridegroom doesn't sleep.

A bridegroom who cannot move his waist is a child." (Yagi, 2008)

She explained that the phrase "cannot move his hips" refers to the husband's inability to perform in bed. This song is sung from the perspective of a newly married wife who has been trying everything to gain her husband's love and attention, but he continues to ignore her. Simultaneously, the wife accuses him of not being good in bed. *Nakata-geet* often revolve around such themes and are filled with sexually charged acts in their depiction. These themes are cherished within these spaces, but due to societal taboos, women often avoid mentioning them openly. This reluctance is a major reason why these *geet* have not been widely included in academic scholarship.

Analyzing the Geet Performance

The performance of *geet* during marriage ceremonies is important for women. The only source of entertainment for women is through these performances. Remember I am using *geet* here to talk only about the *geet* involved in *naktauri* because if we go into the etemology of *geet* it is beyond *naktauri*. This cultural tradition plays a significant role for the bodies to express joy and celebrate. *Geet*, form an integral part of *naktauri* performance, where women's bodies become mediums of artistic expression. Through the elements of *Naktauri* different kind of expression could be seen in the *geet* performance. *Geet* in *naktauri* are not merely recited or sung but are enacted through bodily movements, gestures, and expressions. The emphasis on the embodied aspect of the performers highlights how *geet* lyrics become living texts when performed. The lyrics are never same in any performance there is a structure which

exists and a rhythm which is followed and the improvisation goes on until they rupture the rhythm. The performers never rehearse *geet*, but all of them land on the same note during the performance. There will always be someone who would lead and rest of the performers would join her in chorus. The lead has the responsibility to improvise the lyrics and call out names of the family member when they are being abused. Women avoid taking names of their husband and all other men who are elder than her husband which makes it necessarily that a senior women who could call out names to take the charge.

The rhythm of the *geet* is simple and catchy, making it accessible and enjoyable for everyone. This straightforward rhythm is crucial in fostering inclusivity, allowing all women, regardless of their musical or dancing abilities, to join in the performance. The simplicity of the rhythm means that even those who are not confident singers or dancers can easily follow along and participate, creating a communal atmosphere of celebration and unity. This communal participation is essential in *Naktauri* performances, where the primary aim is not to showcase individual talent but to create a shared experience that binds the participants together. The repetitive and rhythmic nature of the *geet* ensures that the performance remains lively and engaging, encouraging everyone to contribute their voice and movements to the collective celebration. This inclusivity and participation enhance the joy and festivity of the occasion, reinforcing the cultural significance of *geet* as a medium for communal expression and bonding.

Geet are incomplete without dance. Through dance, gestures, and expressions, women convey emotions, depict narratives, and symbolize various aspects of love, marriage, and familial relationships. The movements and body language of women convey the essence of joy, passion, and devotion, adding depth and richness to the overall celebration. These dance performance prominently have hip movements and slow hand movements following the rhythm. These are simple steps which could be followed by the rest of the women. The interesting part in these performance is the enthusiasm of bring other women into the spotlight and make her move on the rhythm. Not everyone is a dancer but all of them are brought into the spotlight and made their hip move and follow the rhythm. The drama in bringing someone who does not dance and make them dance forcefully is highly enjoyed. This creates a multisensory experience for the participants.

These performances try to negotiate gender roles and power dynamics within the community. Traditional gender norms may be reinforced or challenged through these performances, showcasing both the agency and constraints experienced by women. For example, during the performance of *Uthaan-geet,* the playful banter between the daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law challenges power dynamics, though it is difficult to assess how much these dynamics are negotiated after the performance.

In *Naktauri* performances, *geet* and dance are central. The storyline of *Naktauri* is interwoven with *geet* and corresponding movements, creating a celebration where women momentarily shed the constraints of a patriarchal society and enjoy a sense of freedom. However, even in these matriarchal spaces, elements defining the existence of patriarchy are never forgotten.

Conclusion

The exploration of *geet* in *Naktauri* performances reveals a rich tapestry of cultural practices that highlight the significant role of women in Hindu marriage ceremonies. These *geet* serve not only as a source of entertainment but also as a powerful medium for women to express their emotions, challenge societal norms, and assert their agency within a traditionally patriarchal structure. From the humorous and satirical depictions of familial relationships to the sexually charged and playful banter between

daughter-in-laws and sister-in-laws, *geet* encapsulate the complexities and nuances of women's experiences.

In analyzing *Naktauri-geet*, we observe how these performances create ephemeral spaces where traditional gender roles can be both reinforced and challenged. While they often mirror the patriarchal realities of the broader society, they also provide a platform for women to subvert these norms through humor, satire, and collective celebration. The performances of *geet* thus become acts of resistance and empowerment, allowing women to navigate and negotiate their identities and relationships within the confines of societal expectations.

Moreover, the inclusion of *gaari* in *geet* adds another layer of complexity, enabling women to critique and mock the social hierarchies and gender disparities that pervade their lives. These elements of *geet* are often overlooked in academic scholarship due to their taboo nature, yet they are integral to understanding the full scope of women's cultural expressions and resistance.

Through *Naktauri-geet*, women celebrate their femininity, showcase their artistic skills, and build solidarity among themselves. These performances are not just about entertainment; they are about creating a shared space where women can express themselves freely, challenge the status quo, and find joy and camaraderie in their collective experiences. As we continue to study and document these cultural practices, it is important to recognize their value in providing insight into the lived realities of women and their enduring spirit of resilience and creativity.

Bibliography

1. Foley, M., & Valles, M. (2018). Community Performance: An Introduction. Routledge.
2. Gupta, K. (2018). Gendered Socialization in Indian Families: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Relationships. Journal of Family Issues, 39(2), 403-426.
3. Blackman, L. (2008). The body in critical theory: An introduction. In The Body: The Key Concepts (pp. 1-17). Berg.
4. Davis, T. (2015). Performing Embodiment: Women's Body Art and Feminist Perspectives. Hypatia,
5. Subramanian, Rajesh. "Bollywood Music: A Journey of Cultural Heritage." Journal of Indian Arts and Culture, vol. 8, no. 2, 2019, pp. 45-62.
6. Dutta, Ananya. "The Universal Language of Bollywood Songs." International Journal of Performing Arts, vol. 14, no. 3, 2020, pp. 112-129.
7. Mukherjee, Rina. "Bollywood Songs: A Catalyst for Fusion in Community Performances." Journal of Cultural Studies and Creative Expression, vol. 6, no. 4, 2017, pp. 78-91.
8. Butler, J. (1990). Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Routledge.
9. Muñoz, J. E. (2009). Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity. NYU Press.
10. Joshi, R., & Dhapte, V. (2019). Sexual health: An essential aspect of human health. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(Suppl 4), S675-S681.
11. Sarkar, T. (2017). When a woman wants more: The silent violation of women's sexual rights. Economic and Political Weekly, 52(8), 35-40.
12. "Sasu Ji Tune Meri Kadar Na Jani" - Geet from North India - Source: Folk songs and cultural performances in North India by A.K. Ramanujan
13. "Sajan Rupiyalo Pidho Karo" - Geet from Gujarat - Source: Traditional Folk Songs of Gujarat by Rasik Shah

14. "Gol Gol Chundadi" - Geet from Rajasthan - Source: Folk Music and Folk Songs of Rajasthan by Raghava Menon

15. Storey, John. "Cultural Studies and Popular Culture: An Introduction." University of Georgia Press, 2006.

    Sharma, Sudhir. "The Sacred Institution of Hindu Marriage." Journal of Hindu Studies, vol. 10, no. 2, 2017, pp. 125-142.

16. Rai, Meera. "Abusive Geets and Patriarchy: Unraveling the Nexus." Journal of Social Sciences, vol. 32, no. 1, 2019, pp. 45-62.

17. Yagi, Yuko (2008) Women, Abuse Songs and Erotic Dances: Marriage Ceremonies in Northern India. Serni Ethnological Studies.

18. Schechner, R. (2013). *Performance Studies: An introduction*. 3rd ed. London ; New York: Routledge.

19. Taylor, D. (2003). *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press.

20. Selwyn, T. (1979). Images of Reproduction: An Analysis of a Hindu Marriage Ceremony. *Man*, *14*(4), 684–698. https://doi.org/10.2307/2802154

21. Omvedt, G. (2000). Towards a Theory of "Brahmanic Patriarchy" [Review of *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*, by Uma Chakravarty]. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *35*(4), 187–190. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4408843

22. Tewari, L. G. (1988). "Sohar": Childbirth Songs of Joy. *Asian Folklore Studies*, *47*(2), 257–276. https://doi.org/10.2307/1178279

23. Robin D. G. Kelley. (1992). Notes on Deconstructing "The Folk." *The American Historical Review*, *97*(5), 1400–1408. https://doi.org/10.2307/2165942

24. Links - https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/uttar-pradesh/folk-songs-remixed-to-make-girl-child-welcome/articleshow/47089550.cms (Accessed on 12/06/2023)