

# Geo-Environmental Appraisal of Baul Culture with Special Reference to the Lalon Philosophy

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## 1. Introduction

In 2005, the Baul tradition was included in the list of “*Masterpieces of the oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*” by UNESCO. The origin of Bauls is not known exactly. Baul thought has mixed elements of Tantra, Sufi Islam, Vaishnavism and Buddhism. the word "Baul" has appeared in Bengali texts as old as the 15th century. The word is found in the *Charyapada*, *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, as well as in the *Chaitanya Charitamrita*. The word "Baul" has originated from two Sanskrit word, i.e. 'Vakula', indicates restless for 'Moner Manush'(the Man of the Heart)and 'Vatula' means mad from air.

## 2. Objective

This paper includes the following objectives, i.e.

- Tracing the relationship between Baul philosophy & Lalon Philosophy.
- Appraisal of Baul culture from Geo-Environmental approaches

## 3. Methodology

- **Pre field work:** includes preliminary study on the doctrines of geography and the philosophy of Baul.
- **Field work:** includes interview with Bauls and the interested persons to this culture and careful observation

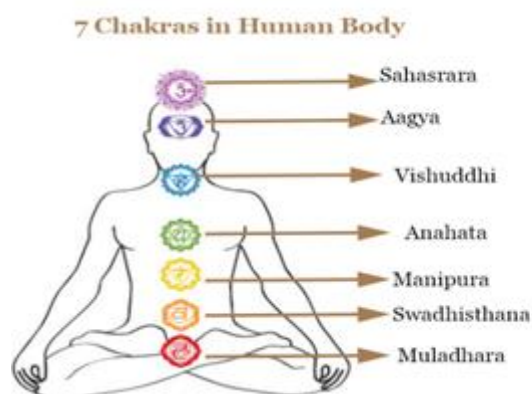
on different baul festival i.e. Pous Mela, Sonibar er Hat at Khoai, Joydev Mela etc. and various Baul ashrams.

- **Post field work:** it involves processing of primary and secondary information.

**Tracing the relationship between Baul philosophy & Lalon Philosophy:** Baul is a folk religion which expresses its doctrine, philosophy, view of life and their belief through literature in the language of music. It is a body centric religion. They believe that God inhabits in the human body. They try to find God by practicing the doctrine of *dehotattwa* (belief that *body is the seat of all truths*). The objective of the baul is to meet with '*the man of the heart*'.

According to *dehotattwa* the sperm (*Pitri bostu*) of the body is the '*moner manush*' or '*sahoj manush*' to the bauls. Because our body have been created by the sperm of our father. So bauls try to stop the downward flow of the sperm and drive it upward to the '*Sahasrara*' by practicing *Yoga* which is a Master (*Guru*) oriented learning. Bauls think Women are the '*Mahamaya*' helps men to practicing aforesaid *Yoga*, called '*Sadhana*'. In this way bauls active their power of the seven wheels of the body. Except the doctrine of body there are some other doctrines on which bauls also write song i.e. spirit, guru, love, creation and human.

### Performing Baul song



Lalon (c. 1772 – 17 October 1890; Bengali: 1 Kartik, 1179)said “*milon hobe katodine / amar moner manusher sone*” or “*when shall I meet with the Man of my heart.*” Lalon fakir learned the aforesaid '*Sadhana*' from his guru *Siraj Sain*. Lalon said that not only to stop the downward flow of the sperm is not the one and only objective of the man but also to become a actual man is the real '*Sadhana*'

of the man. So he said “*koto dev – devigon kore aradhon jonmo nite manobe*” that means Gods and Goddesses also worship to take birth as human being. He didn't obey any communal boundary, he always advised men to cultivate good behaviour in themselves, so said “*porer drobbo porer nari horon korona/ pare jete parbena*” that means to snatch the things as well as woman of other is a very hateful work,

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which is an obstacle for achieving nirvana. Laon fakir was too much influenced by *Chaitannya Dev*. He wrote many song on *Chaitanny Dev*(who introduced himself as a Baul), i.e. “*eneche ak nabin gora notun aaien nadia te/ ved puran sob dichhe duse sei aaien er bichar mote*” that means in Nadia (birth place of Chaitannya dev) a young boy has brought a new law which deny all the hard law of Veda and Purana.

Therefore we take Laon fakir as a Baul(*mad for the man of the heart*),wrote more than 1200 song among which I have gotten 851 song in the books ‘*Lalon samagra*’ by Mobarok Hussain Khan.

**Appraisal of Baul Culture from Geo-environmental approach:** Baul is a tradition which try to drives man in the way of develop from both spiritually and materially so that man can develop peaceful society. On the other hand geography is a man related subject which deals with man nature relationship and by developing this relationship man can built a actual society. Therefore we can find a good relationship between the philosophy of baul and geography. Here I have tried to establish my view with special reference to the Lalon philosophy that Baul tradition has a important geo-environmental appraisal.

**Teleology and Baul Philosophy:** Teleology was based on religious faith of human beings superior to nature. It deals about the super natural power i.e. the world is created by God.

Bauls also say to keep faith on God, because all the doctrines of it related to this faith. But it is possible with help of guru so baul say “*Vobe manus guru nistha jar/sarbo sadhon sidhi hoi tar*” that means if anyone is greatly devoted to his guru, can achieved all types of super natural as well as natural knowledge .

**Determinism & Baul philosophy:** Determinism, an important philosophies, Its essence lies in the fact that the history, culture, living style and stage of development of a social group or nation are exclusively or largely governed by the physical factors of environment. Arab geographers tried correlate the environment with the human activity. Al – Masudi for example asserted that the land where water is abundant, the people are gay and humorous, while the people of dry and arid lands are short tempered. Therefore it may be concluded that the hot and wet tropical climate have a role to make man lazy as well as idealistic.

And in the language of baul Lalon said “*jar vabe mureachi matha/ se jane r ami jani / r k janbe moner kotha*” that means I have shaved my head by sinking in the feeling of the man of the heart and it is not possible to realize the feelings for anyone. Here we can’t deny the impact of climate on the thinking of baul, but it is not the one and only cause so the other doctrines have come casually.

**Positivism & Baul Philosophy :** Positivism is called empiricism. It limits knowledge to facts that can be observed and to the relationship between the facts. The aim of this philosophy is to be scientific , to be objective, truthful and neutral. Actually it gives importance on Reality and in the world mortality is the most important reality.

So lalon said “*Pakhi kakhon jani ure jai/ akta bad haowa lege khanchai..*” that means Baul does not know when the bird will fly, influenced by a bad wind in the cage. Here ‘*Bird*’ is ‘*Life*’ and the ‘*Cage*’ indicates the ‘*Body*’. And at the Lalon became confused and said “*k ba khancha r k ba pakhi*” that means Lalon does not know who is the bird and who is the cage. Because after dead one’s body is known as dead body we forget the name of the person casually.

**Possibilism & Baul philosophy:** Possibilism has been developed after the first world war by the historian Lucian Febvre. it explains that (a)*Nature does not drive man along a particular road*, but it offers a number of opportunities from among which man is free to select (b)*freedom of man to choose is most important*. It indicates to develop our self confidence.

And baul saint Lalon said “*akash patal khujis jare ei dehe se roi*” that means if we give importance to ourselves we can realize our own power within me and we can do anything and everything.

**Humanism and Baul philosophy:** Humanism is a conviction that men & women can best improve the circumstances of their life by thinking and acting for themselves. It is an approach in human geography distinguished by the central and active role it gives importance to human awareness and human agency, human consciousness and human creativity.

And in the baul philosophy Lalon said “*vojo manuser charan duti/ nitto bostu hobe khanti/ morile sob hobe mati/ tara ei vab nao jene*” in this lines baul say to worship the foot of the human as a result eternal things will be pure, as after death all will be meaningless so it is necessary to realize this feeling. This lines inspired us to do something for mankind.

**Behavioralism and Baul philosophy:** It was a psychological term in Human Geography. It analyzethe man environment relationship. Here man is viewed as a motivated social being whose decisions and actions are mediated by his cognition of the spatial environment. It is based on the development of the behaviour of human being.

And *Lalon fakir* said in his song “*sotto bol supathe chal ore amar mon / sotto supathe na chinile pabine manuser darshan*” in this lines Lalon asked for everyone to say truth and to drive their life in a true way if it is not they can not see the man of the heart. *Tuntun Fakir* said that if anyone can take this feelings of the Lalon shai then he can’t do evil work and in recent it is very necessary to cultivate this wise concept in the land of our heart.

**Welfare Geography & Baul philosophy:** Welfare human geography correspond to a major shift in social concern , from narrow economic criteria of development to broader aspects of the Quality of life. It gives importance on the issues of poverty, hunger, crime as well as on social service.

In the language of baul song *Lalon* asked “*koto shato lokkho yoni vromono korecho jani /manob kule monre*”

*tumi ese ki korile ?* ” here in this line *Lalon* wanted to say that by passing through hundreds of lives we get the life of human and our motto will be to serve man, but we spent our time in meaningless work.

**Radicalism & Baul philosophy:** This approach believes that inequality is inherent in the capitalist mode of production. In fact Marxism provides a firm theoretical base for the radical movement. It has many objectives among which- to expose the issues of inequality, deprivation, discrimination, casteism, racism most important. Actually radical geographers are concerned for social value.

On the same way baul tradition dreams about a democratic casteless society so the baul saint *Lalon* said “*jat hate pele puratam agun dea*” that means if he get cast in his hand he burn it. As well as he also said “*sob loke koi Lalon ki jat songsare / Lalon bole jat er ki rup dakhlam na ei najore*” this line say that people are confused by thinking about the cast of *Lalon*, and *Lalon* say that he does not see the shape of the cast. Like radicalism baul is also a movement for construction of good quality society.

#### 4. Conclusion

With passage of time different kind of doctrines like determinism, possibilism, radicalism etc. have been developed in Geography, we can't t refuge any doctrines because each doctrine has a unique importance in its ground in the same way baul philosophy is also inter related with geographical philosophy. Therefore like geography baul is also a synthesize culture. Though it is a folk religion yet Rabindranath Tagore highly praised the way of life of the Bauls, which is free from discrimination driven by caste, religion and communal denominations, and called it human religion.

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