

CENTRE FOR CULTURAL STUDIES & DEVELOPMENT

**A Report on National Seminar
'Baul Tradition - An Eternal Journey towards Mysticism'
on 15th February 2020, 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM
at Lecture Room 1 (Annexe), India International Centre,
40 Max Muller Marg, New Delhi**

A seminar titled '**Baul Tradition - An Eternal Journey towards Mysticism**' was organized by the Centre for Cultural Studies and Development (CCSD) at national capital's India International Centre on February 15, 2020. The idea behind the seminar, as CCSD Secretary Paulami Guha pointed out, was to bring forth the essence of Baul tradition, its philosophy, modern day relevance and importance.

The two sessions of seminar had an esteemed panelists comprising of prominent scholars, musicologists, and professors -- Dr Selina Sharma (Vice Secretary, Vraja Kala Sanskriti Sanstha, Vrindaban) Dr Indranil Acharya (Professor of English, Vidyasagar University, Midnapur), Dr Intaj Ali (Asstt Professor of English, Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata) Dr Swapan Mukhopadhyay (renowned folk singer & an empanelled artist with AIR, Kolkata). The seminar sessions were aptly chaired by Dr Urmimala Sarkar Munsu (Professor in School of Arts & Aesthetics, JNU).

The seminar emphasized in a lively and engaging manner -- the need to search for the real and original Baul song and its tradition, its scope, relevance and importance in the space of traditional Indian music.

Interesting and fundamental questions were raised followed by some engaging debates and discussions about what is an original Baul song and who is a Baul, the existing Akharas, gender equations, connects and disconnects with religion, existence as an alternative culture, its mysticism, understanding of body & sexuality, relevance in modern times, how Bauls are being misused by politicians for its election campaign and how to protect, revive and popularize the Baul tradition.

First panelist to speak on the subject was **Dr Selina Sharma**, who emphasized on the "**Guru Tattva: the Core essence of the Baul Spiritual Journey**" by reciting the spiritual lines: "The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Viṣṇu, the Supreme Master is Lord Śhiva. The guru himself is the Absolute Being – to this revered Master I bow in respect."

She started on philosophical note: "The Bāul's 'eternal journey towards mysticism' as the theme of this seminar puts it – that is, the Bāul's spiritual journey, his incessant search for his inner divinity whom he reverently calls the moner mānuṣa or 'Man of the Heart', the Bāul's relentless striving for the accomplishment of his spiritual goal, in short, the Bāul's sādhanā, is the quintessence of the Bāuls' philosophical concept, the core truth of his utter existence. To the outside world this sādhanā, the innate principle of the Bāul's being, remains incomprehensible as it rests beyond the observer's sensual perception."

She pointed out: "What is visible is the Bāul's outward activity – his singing, his dancing and playing the ekatārā or khamaka, hence the Bāuls are commonly perceived as a community of folk singers who enchant the world with their charming melodies and energetic rhythms. The Bāuls' songs captivate the listeners through their beautiful poetic lines, but the philosophical essence conveyed through their simple poetic imagery becomes comprehensible only to those familiar with the larger concept of Bāul sādhanā. The words of 'Bāul Samrat' Purna Das sum up the core spirit of Bāul philosophy, the quintessence of the Bāuls' spiritual thought. The Bāuls' religion is the religion of man

– mānuṣa dharma, and their most fervently worshiped divinity is the human being -- Worship man, serve man, In man, Lord Hari lives forth."

She concluded with Bāuls' ultimate message to the world –**mānuṣa bhojo, mānuṣa pūjo... Worship man, serve man...- do respect man, do respect the human being as the sacred most abode of divinity**, hence do let the human race live in peace and harmony nourished by mutual respect through realizing the divine energy that dwells in each and every human being."

The second speaker was **Professor Indranil Acharya** who dwelt upon "**Rabindranath Tagore and the Canonization of Baul Tradition**" meaning how Rabindranath Tagore was influenced by Baul song & culture and how he was instrumental in recognising and popularising the tradition. Dr Acharya said: "Tagore repeatedly emphasized the psychological instruction embedded in Baul songs. In fact, this tradition is also a hallowed part of folk literature. Some of the songs of Lalan Fakir and one special song of Gagan Harkara inspired Tagore in many of his creative writings. He used to converse with Baul saints during his stay at Silaidaha estate. He had imbibed the universal spirit of Baul renderings since the days of his early youth. Baul philosophy helped him to formulate exactly the Religion of Man."

Prof Acharya pointed out that: "Tagore was eager to know about the mysteries of Baul life and attempted to restore their philosophy of universal love. This liberalism was, in a way, a silent protest against the bigoted intellectuals of urban Bengal. He could enter into an intimate dialogue with Baul philosophy in a state of heightened consciousness. Rabindranath frequented Silaidaha after Lalan's demise, but could recognize the genius of this departed soul. He had known for sure that the kernel of popular Baul song consisted of the treasures of physique-based austere meditations. It is believed that Tagore's collection of Lalan Fakir's music notebook was a real game changer. The cult of Baul would have remained as a minor religion and paled into insignificance had not Tagore repeatedly discussed Baul philosophy in his songs, essays, stories, novels and poems. It could be extinct by now had he not explained the glory of Baul compositions. It was Rabindranath who bolstered the public image of Baul tradition in overt and covert ways. The main objective of this paper is to discuss Tagore's initiatives to restore and revive the authentic flavour of Baul philosophy."

Prof Acharya observed: "In this time of endangered Baul culture, we need the reassuring presence of the Baul whom Tagore presented before the world. Baul does not merely imply an indulgence in sensuous physicality and beauty; they had a rich philosophical heritage too. There is an urgent need to develop people's awareness in this regard. Tagore popularized the songs of low caste Bauls in the urban upper caste Babu culture. Despite having estates in Sajadpur and Patisar, Tagore spent maximum time in Silaidaha listening to Baul renderings. Rabindranath met and interacted with Gagan Harkara, Kangal Harinath, Gnosai Ramlal, Gnosai Gopal, Sarbakhjepi Boshtami and other followers of Lalan at Silaidaha. He got an opportunity of listening to Baul songs of Lalan in these meetings with folk performers. In the Indian Philosophy Congress of 1925 Rabindranath introduced this unknown rural tradition of Baul in his lecture. Besides, he documented and preserved handwritten copies of 290 Baul songs through his estate manager Bamacharan Bhattacharya. Later, these Lalan Fakir songs were preserved in Rabindra Bhavan at Santiniketan. When he received Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 his endorsement and patronage of Baul philosophy was more readily accepted by the urban intellectuals of Bengal. Tagore revived people's interest in Lalan Fakir. He played a crucial role in canonizing low caste cultural practices in the upper caste cultural spaces."

He also emphasized that many leading Baul artists have gratefully acknowledged Tagore's contribution. Sanatan Das Baul, Biswanath Das Baul, Basudeb Das Baul, Debdas Baul, Ananda Das Baul, Gour Khyapa, Nityananda Das Baul and Golam Fakir of Bankura, Birbhum and Nadia have paid

glowing tribute to Tagore for his great commitment to the cause of Baul philosophy. His initiative paid rich dividends and attracted American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg to learn this mystical tradition.

After the presentation of the first two panelists, the first session of the seminar was thrown open to discussion with questionnaires from audience and fellow panelists. Moumita Ghosh, a classical dancer from Delhi, asked the first question-"Historically, do we have a record of the origin of the word Baul and its tradition? How did the word Baul emerge?"

Dr Selina Sharma replied by saying Baul's origin could be traced to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Vaishnav philosophy so the Baul tradition dates back to the 16th Century. Dr. Intaj Ali further added that the word Baul emerged from the word Batul (mad) or Byakul (eager). Baul tradition was not a family tradition; it's a Guru-Shishya tradition as most of the Bauls, Sadhus and Gurus do not have child so it can't be a family tradition. Dr. Intaj further inquired from Dr. Selina "Is it all about Sadhana? then why are we going to Bauls why not to Godman figures who consider themselves as 'God'?"

Dr Selina Sharma threw light and insight on the subject: "while many branches of 'Baul' were dying out because they did not have a suitable shishya or disciple. Many Bauls chose to marry and have children and thus they pass on their legacy." She pointed out: "...to do Sadhana you don't need to be a recluse, go somewhere in isolation and leave everything. That is being very selfish. The best thing is to do it among all in everyday life. So these are the two branches."

Adding further, Dr Indranil Acharya remarked that Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's acceptance of Baul tradition not just as a Sadhana but as other alternate forms of practices as empowerment. "What struck Tagore was the philosophy of empowerment. The 'shudras' or the lower caste people could also do self realisation and emancipation through Baul song & tradition."

At this juncture, Dr Acharya asked a curious question to Dr Sharma "I would like to know from Dr Selina whether different impulses and sensations in our body be discovered by knowing the body and realising it as part of 'Sadhana'? Can we at the same time come to know about lobhi guru and kama shishyo? When we are in the quest of exploring the body, desire comes as a form of realisation. How do we orient our Shishyas regarding our inevitable intervention of desire? How does this process work out?"

Dr Urmimala Sarkar Munsii, chairing the seminar, intervened with an add-on question: "I am curious to know about the Tantra, Tantriks and how does this supernatural comes into the body? What is the parallel form of worship? When and how did it start? Whom do we worship?"

The answer was straight and simple. Dr Sharma said: "Just like in Vaishnav philosophy, like the love of Radha Krishna distinguishes as to how we live, it's like to translate the physical energies into spiritual energies and to that in a completely detached manner. So first & foremost, Kama vasana has to be destroyed. If it comes everything will be destroyed. Simple way is to say transform your sexual energies into spiritual energy."

To the other question of the origin of Vaishnav philosophy, Dr Sharma observed that Bauls were free to do their own way of worshiping. "In man it's in-built. They don't need to go to temples, mosques, churches. Bauls feel there is actually no need to worship because you have it in yourself."

Dr Acharya quickly pointed out that in language same thing was evident. "People of minor languages are competent in multi languages. They can speak 3 to 4 languages. Speakers of major languages are becoming monolithical. They feel one language is sufficient. The practitioners of minor folk cultures are becoming compulsorily multi-cultural. Their minority positions join into majority performances. So they do not have any problem in accepting the majority tradition. On the other hand, the majority

practitioners are reluctant to take up and recognize the minority cultures. So I think the Baul tradition can embrace different cultures specially the majority cultures, the Fakir and Buddhist traditions. So it speaks volumes of their inclusive nature. It also speaks of their inner strength how strong their minority culture/tradition is. It shows that they can receive and not get swept under the majority culture."

The importance of gender in Baul tradition was raised by Dr Urmimala Sarkar Muni. "How does gender apply to spiritual order and authority? It's always 'Him' or a 'Man'. Is there space for both the genders?"

Dr Selina took the question: "He or she is just a matter of language convenience. Baul sadhna has something called 'nayika' or 'sadhika' where a sadhak and sadhika perform. It's a form of advanced stage of sadhana where you have mastered your passions. In Baul tradition, women in the family are also a part of it. It's not an exclusive male tradition."

Dr Acharya threw light on the role of gender in tradition adding that Dr Sharma was the best to answer as she had taken initiative in this process.

"As far as Tagore is concerned, it's true that his Brahmo upbringing caused a male oriented notion with liberating symbol like "Jibon debota" and "Vishwa debota". We find Tagore talk about liberation of the mind and search for 'debota.' Somewhere it is a male concept. Definitely, it had a Brahmo belief in it."

He continued: "I would like to mention one female Baul or Sadhika: 'Khepi Baul' who used to visit Tagore and they had discussions. 'Khepi Baul' was a kind of inclusive experience and had an influence on Tagore which inspired him to think about the presence of the feminine and a movement towards androgenic where both male and female experiences can be synthesized and collectively projected as symbol for emancipation."

Another student from JNU Dipanjali asked the next question to the two panelists. "I want to know that if the 'Moner Manush' or the 'Man of the Heart' which is the invisible divinity, is it the body form of the Guru or is it the medium towards that invisible form of God? Does it merge or can Guru substitute that 'Moner Manush'? And secondly, as a scholar where do we locate the devotional philosophy? Is it in the music, text, body or globalised platform?"

Dr Sharma answered the first question: "In Baul, there are different concepts of Guru. One is the teacher who teaches the disciple. Baul identifies the Guru with the moner manush not just the teacher. For them, Guru is not just a human but God himself."

Dr Acharya answered the second question. "Baul has to be located in this world of globalisation, political situations, pressure and many other things that attempts to destabilize the cultural essence. I have interviewed many such global people. One such practitioner told me that earlier there were Bengali Zamindars who used to hire them as performers. Earlier, they used to get regular calls and their tradition was sustained by steady demand on the part of the village patrons. With the abolition of village patron and rise of village political environment like Bengal which is quite volatile in the context of political environment, these artists are forced to canvas for different political parties. If they don't canvas they won't be able to survive. So for their survival they are now forced to write political slogans and create some catchy tunes. Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting offer programmes but that is not enough. Most of the money comes from political parties. So the question is not one of endangerment of devotional aspect. The question is of greater responsibility and tougher challenge to restore the core element of devotion. In this time of crisis, when there is non-recognition of identity, there is a need for reassertion of that identity and also to

inspire the next generation to be motivated by this philosophy and try to perceive the situation to find a solution to the threat to the core identity of these performers."

On that note, the first intriguing and enriching round of discussion concluded with a short tea break.

After the resumption **Dr Intaj Ali** was the first to present his paper titled '**Baul & Beyond**' which attempted to focus on ways through which a Baul sought to represent the socio-cultural life of Bengalese in different parts of the world through their magical performance, social discourse and hybridization of Baul songs through fusion. Dr Intaj Ali said: "The global concept of Baul in the context of place – local, national and transnational -- involves people engaging with wider social, cultural and political changes across the world. Baul song represents Bengali cultural heritage, which transcends both national boundaries and religious differences."

He pointed out that "Baul songs got more attention among the diaspora and as a result, they have been invited all over the world to perform Baul song through which they are trying to search their own cultural heritage. From the socio-cultural perspective, the baul song carries the significance of cultural encounter for the diaspora yet far away from their motherland. In addition to this, for the diaspora or the immigrants, Baul song generally provides a rich arena to recover their own culture from the complexities of the incidents and events involved with memory and nostalgia. In the present era of marketing, Baul song is no more restricted in context of West Bengal and Bangladesh, but has transcended the boundaries of other countries. Hence, different kinds of cultural festivals in the foreign land usually give an important stage for the Bauls to spread Bengali culture among the diaspora people."

He noted that... "Baul music has the authentic voice of a Bengali imaginative folk tradition that has been developed over centuries by singers across the Bengal delta expressing the soul of the Bengali people. The music draws on both Hindu Bhakti and Muslim mystical traditions and the singers perform their songs with the ektara, a single-stringed instrument. Unfortunately, the Baul tradition is in decline, but it still survives in Bangladesh, West Bengal, Assam and Kerala displaying a characteristic disregard for man-made boundaries. Apart from this Bengali diaspora provides a devotional space for the Bauls where Muslims and Hindus interact with each other forgetting their religious boundaries and create a unique one community."

Dr Intaj emphasized "Bauls have now become one of the most prolific examples of counter-culture because they are living 'among' everyone else in the world but not 'amidst' them. They have created a completely new religion, which does not run by doctrine as much as it does by heart. Today, Baul music is quite popular as many artists are experimenting with its forms and content. It is now a genre that permeates to the living rooms of many folk enthusiasts across the world. Today, Bauls are recording their songs in studios and their renditions are featured on television and radio channels. But for all these changes, one must credit the Baul music for maintaining its inherent message and its perceived world view. It is only natural to adapt to new ways of living and to render the crux of their thought in a contemporary relevant way. Bauls try to fit themselves and adapt their way of living according to the changed socio-cultural scenario of the society. There are organized festivals annually held in West Bengal that celebrate the poetry and music of Baul. One of the most famous festivals is Poush Mela; an annual three-day festival held in Shantiniketan in the Birbhum district of West Bengal. It is an event that attracts the largest number of Baul communities.

Another large annual gathering of Bauls occurs in Joydev Kenduli, which is regarded as the birthplace of poet Jayadeva and coincides with Makar Sankranti, which marks the beginning of winter harvest and is considered auspicious. The Joydev Kenduli Mela is organized in the district of Birbhum in West Bengal. Here one can find the gathering of Bauls from all over West Bengal in large numbers. A lot of local people attend this fair to listen to the song of the Bauls. Even people across India as well as

foreigners assemble to enjoy the songs of Bauls. Over time, more urban audiences have flocked to annual shows held in Kolkata such as the Baul Fakir Utsav and Sufi Sutra where Bauls from different districts of West Bengal and Bangladesh come to perform. The Baul Fakir Utsav usually goes on for 48 hours and offers those who do not seek to travel to rural events but get an experience of folk and mystical music right in the heart of urban landscape."

He finally concluded: "The Bauls have a distinctive presence in everybody's heart and soul and their devotional songs have one goal -- to generate shanti (peace) and facilitate union with God through singing from the heart with deep feelings. They are committed to express musically the sacred dimension and music is their sadhana or devotional practice to reach or communicate with God and Maner Manush (Man of the Heart). This oral transmission of spiritual feeling - both earthy and transcended dimensions of spiritual blessing for the Bauls - are similar to Sufi traditions of the Fakirs. In a true sense, Baul music creates the essence of global peace and harmony through their dialogue and soulful music. One can notice the importance of Baul music in the whole world due to its philosophy, which suits for every region. Their commitment to musical and spiritual yogic practice demonstrate a consistent devotion in a world in which materialism frequently results in lack of discipline necessary for spiritual maturity. Baul tries to capture the spirit of fusion in world music where particular musical traditions seek no geographical boundaries. It is free to move beyond horizons, to be incorporated in other cultures. In the end, what evolves is a blending of the original with the adopting culture. The philosopher poet-singer epitomized by someone like Nabani Khyapa, the father of the legendary Purna Das Baul - is giving way to the performer. This has raised questions about the authenticity of many donning the saffron attire. So, who is a true and real Baul, the mystic or the regular performer? Currently the focus of Bauls is very much on their performance, stage shows and concerts at different places, are conducting tours in different foreign countries. People come up with a question where is the Baul sadhana which is based on dehatatva (the theory of the body), or the community's secret sexual practices? Yes, these too we can observe in the rural village but not generally in cities like Kolkata. The urban interest in Baul music has also opened up new vistas for the musicians. The increased acceptance of this folk form in the 'mainstream' appears to be having an impact on the Bauls too."

The final speaker of the second session was **Dr Swapan Mukhopadhyay** who presented his paper '**Baul Tradition: An Eternal Journey towards Mysticism**' and started with singing a few lines from the famous Baul song: "Çhander Gaye Chand Legechhe, Aamra Bhebe Korbo Ki Jhiyer Pete Mayer Janmo, Tare Tomra Bolbe Ki".

Dr Mukhopadhyay said: "In Baul Sadhana, we search for "Moner Manush" connected with the cosmology and philosophy of a secret path of life. Baul songs are sung with instruments like Ektara, Dotara or Gubgubi. Baul is not a simple form of folk songs – it exists with a distinct character of its own. Baul is a way of living, a way to express one's feelings through enchanting music.

In its quest for 'Maner Manush, a Baul takes a journey to express love and dedication from deep within. Baul music is a divine evocation that discards all prejudices, it's a soulful music that breaks all mental and physical barriers."

He pointed out that Bauls are a heterogeneous group with many sects, mainly of the "Vaishnava Hindus" and "Sufi Muslims". Baul music celebrates celestial love with "Deho-tatyo" and "Mono – Siksha". With such a liberal interpretation of love, it is only natural that Baul devotional music transcends into religion and mankind. There are different ways to reach or attain God – through different religion and places of worships like Temple, Mosque, Church etc. But Baul has his own way of reaching the almighty. He wonders why there should be so many ways to connect with God? One of the precursors of Baul music – "Lalon Fakir Sai" had always spoken against communalism and preached love, peace and humanity as the path to reach God."

He noted that "Baul is a divine search of an ultimate person or ultimate God. In today's difficult challenging time, Baul music and philosophy provide solace to our enraged mind and battered soul. Baul song comes as rehabilitation to our stressful life and mental well-being."

He finally concluded by saying: "In my opinion, the terms "FAKIR" and "BAUL" - bear the equal and same meanings. When the Shahriat Muslim selects the way of free life, they are called FAKIR. From the social point of view – Bauls are close to Vaishnabs like the Fakirs are in Muslim religion. Bauls do not depend on the patterns and norms of the society, religions, rituals, rules and regulations. They believe man-made materials are unreal and unnatural. The Bauls do not obey them. They like to spend free and natural life, like animals and birds. Connecting nature with their bodies, they intend to imbibe "Love of God"- in their minds – this is the realisation of Baul religion. They explain the soul as a bird and the body as Cage."

Baul demolishes all rules of religion and begins to reconstruct and build a new philosophy of life. Baul tries to build up a new philosophy of life from the practices of Buddhists and Trantics along with some other cults. They try to assemble these methods with a sublime concept of absolute of Vedanta, a mixed thought from Islam and Love in human heart for divinity as found in Vaisnavism. They also include some technical methods of "Yoga" together with some secret arts of Trantra. A principle which can be learned from the law of creative evolution and the law of emergent evolution that the realisation of the whole Universe is constantly involved in developing new values. Bauls want to use the principle of cosmic evolution but they use their own interpretation, in an unrealistic way. Except for Lalon Sai, Duddu Shah, no other Baul could reach at the level of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Shri Rama Krishna Paramahansa."

After the presentation of final two panelists, CCSD secretary Paulami Guha -- asked the first question.

Paulami asked: Dr Intaj, as you mentioned Govt don't have any archives on Baul tradition, is there any organisation or institution to safeguard the interest of the Baul community or the Akharas which are taking care of the tradition?

To Dr. Selina, you talked about Guru-Shishya parampara. So in the present context how relevant is the Guru-Shishya parampara?"

Dr Intaj Ali threw light on the scope of records but raised question mark over its lack of diversity. He observed that: "There are some organisations (which keeps the records) But the problem is what they are accessing to or taking. There is no documentation as such but for example Aakashvani has a lot of recordings. But they are mostly taking the urban artists and those who are enlisted are categorized into graded artists. But there is very less chance as far as rural artists are concerned.

On this, Paulami Guha wanted to know the difference between 'Gharana' and 'Akharas' as far as Baul tradition was concerned. "When you say Akharas what do you actually mean? Normally, we follow Gharanas mainly in Kathak dance and other forms of classical dancing and even classical singing but when we say Akharas what do we mean... is it something similar to Gharanas?"

Dr. Shambhavi Shukla, Kathak dance exponent asked "Kushti main jo Akhara hai woh humare yahan gharana hain. To yahan yeh kis sandarv mein istimal hota hain?"

Dr Intaj Ali took the first question: "Akhara is the space where most of the songs are performed in the rural level while the space in urban scenario is totally different. This is a place of a different kind of singing at different times like morning, day, evening & night. There is no tradition in Akhara... for example it's something like a light practice with or without audience. Singing is a kind of exercise not like a full-fledged performance. It's a kind of a way of living. My interest is basically in Akharas. Even

in Akharas, there is different 'Gharanas' like Nadia and Murshidabad Gharanas are different and Bauls of Birbhum are also different from Baul communities settled in other regions of Bengal."

Dr Urmimala Sarkar Munsu quickly intervened saying: "I think we are confusing several terms here and it's a dangerous practice. The music gharana or the dance gharana means family. Gharana means Ghar. It started with the history of gharanas, the traditions and then the Gurus and then it takes a group of Shishyas. Tradition started with identification. Guru is considered as a starting point and then Guru takes Shishyas into the fold of tradition. Baul tradition has this freedom that anyone can become a Baul. It's like a 'Calling'. And that 'calling' can be of anybody's at any point of time. Secondly, the word Akhara is very different. Akhara is the space and in many communities if you have a village you have an Akhara. It could be for meetings or it could be for somebody who is legally challenged or any family matters for discussion. So Akharas is something for practice. So Baul Akharas is visualized as something which is seen as some secured place in some region. It's very important to look at the history and also to see how this space looks now. Is it room, house or a country?"

Paulami further questioned: So is there a word called Gharana at all in this?

Dr Adhikari replied to this: Akharas is a space where similar minded people can be assembled where they can discuss their minds, their philosophy. In folk, there is no Gharanas. Gharanas applies to classical. Baul resides in unbound space. No one can own it. They are against hierarchy."

Dr Adhikari, who is a folk singer himself, informed that regarding archiving of Baul tradition or songs, Govt has established so many AIR stations like in Siliguri, Beherampur Radio Station, like Kamla Nagar Station in Tripura. So there are so many archives in Aakashvani and Doordarshan. Personally I also have so many records of Baul singers of different tunings. If you go through Birbhum, Nadia and Murshidabad they are different Baul tunes, lyrics and approach."

Dr Acharya concluded with a nice example. "If you read Tilottama Majumdar's novel 'Rajpat' we found that the central protagonist is a female and she is an urban intellectual. But she has learnt the art of true Baul songs. She reaches the blessings of her famous Guru and there is a wonderful description of how many days she kept waiting. Akharas is also like a sacrosanct area where your past credential is not taken for granted. You need to prove yourself. There is a description of how she had to prove and fight with her inner-self. Can I enter into that area... meanwhile, my life is completely revolutionized. Can I be completely cut off from my urban roots?"

Chairperson **Dr Urmimala Sarkar Munsu** gave her concluding remarks by saying "In this hyper technological space for any tradition to exist one has to have a digital presence. Also due to lack of funding by the Government bodies their own practise space has become restricted. So the basic problem is that the next generation finds it disheartening to get into the Baul tradition." She further pointed out that we always try to impose our classical format of understanding of traditions and handing them over to the next generation. We really don't understand the oral tradition and passing over their practise that becomes much more organic. Dr Urmimala thanked the panelists for presenting their papers with deep insight into the origin of Baul, its different tradition, its mystic and unique identity and CCSD Secretary Paulami Guha for organising the event that engaged with thoughtful discussion with some brilliant questions and their answers in a lively manner.
