



Research Paper

## Inimitable Literary Style of Tenyidie Geizo

Dr.Petekhrienuo Sorhie

WSC,Nagaland University

**ABSTRACT :** *Treasures of beauty hidden in ethnic literatures remains to be discovered and studied through serious academic research works. This paper is a humble attempt to study the poetic style of the Tenyimia people called as Tenyidie geizo. Tenyimia people have abundance of literary work and it can be surmised that the most popular of their literary forms is lyrical poetry. Their passion for beauty and artistic work appeared in their form of songs which is not written down but treasured in the memory and brought out to music. This paper explores Tenyimia poems in an effort to bring out its beauty and its unique qualities and features of composition.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tenyimia, Tenyidie, Geizo, Phichüja ,Rüheja, Metrical, Ethnic.*

*Received 06 August, 2021; Revised: 18 August, 2021; Accepted 20 August, 2021 © The author(s) 2021. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Tenyimia is a group of people among the Naga tribes of Nagaland, a state located in the Northeast of India. This group is made of tribes like Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Zeliang, Pochury, Poumai, Maram, Mao, Thangal and Inpui. This group of tribes share common ancestry. According to D. Kuolie an eminent Tenyimia academician in his work Structural Description of Tenyidie says that, "Tenyimia is a community with the largest speakers of a standard language and share a single largest socio-cultural and political identity in Nagaland." Tenyidie therefore connotes to the common language shared by this group of people. *Tenyi* stand for the common name shared by this group of people and *Die* means language. Therefore in simple terms Tenyidie is the language of the Tenyimia people.

Tenyidie, as history records, became a standardized language only after the advent of American missionaries who came to the land of the Angamis to spread the gospel. In due time, the first American missionary Rev.C.D King who came to the Angami region took up the task to learn the language of the people and gradually began to teach Tenyidie as a subject starting from the year 1884 in the mission school he had set up at Kohima. In due time, in order to bring a coherence in the pattern of spellings and word divisions amongst the Tenyimia community, Angami Literature Committee (ALC) was constituted in 1939 which could be taken a marked period in the history of Tenyimia Literature. The setting up of this committee also set into process a clear standardization of the language. The scope of ALC was broadened in the year 1971 when the committee took a major decision to change its nomenclature to Ura Academy with a broader horizon beyond the development of literature to preservation and perpetuation of socio-cultural aspects of Tenyimia people. Ura Academy is therefore the premiere institute to the development and promotion of Tenyimia literature as well as to preserve and perpetuate Tenyimia culture.

Broadly speaking, the history of Tenyimia literature therefore can be divided into two literary ages wherein prior to the year 1939 can be considered as period of literature in its oral form but with the standardization of the language in the year 1939, people took to writing and to development materials suitable for academic purpose as well for reading purpose. For the matter of this paper, the discussion will be confined to the form of poetic literature that existed in its oral form in Tenyimia community.

### II. TENYIDIE GEIZO

As afore discussed, Tenyidie pertains to the standardised language of the Tenyimia people and Geizo is the Tenyidie literary term of the genre of poetry.

The Tenyimia in general are a people whose cultural and social life is connatural with their love of singing in the form of folk tunes. The Tenyimia people sing various folk tunes according to occasions wherein

lyrics are composed keeping in mind the theme of the occasion. These folk songs have variations where it can be sung as duets, individual songs, mourning songs, group songs etc.

Tenyimia have abundance of literary work and it can safely be surmised that the most popular of their literary forms is Lyrical poetry. Their passion for beauty and artistic work appeared in their form of songs which is not written down but treasured in the memory and brought out to music. Folk songs composed out of their lyrical poems are sung in social groups and they are sung according to occasions which vibrantly display their social ethos, belief system and religious ethos.

Many of the songs are sung while at work in the field, at a feast or themed on a victorious warrior or a man of wealth. A romantic song may be composed when a man sits by the side of a woman at ease. Thus, according to the times and occasion, tunes and poems were composed to be sung relating to the occasions.

An inimitable feature of Tenyimia Geizo is that it is birth out of the folk songs that are composed. In order to bring about a composition of a folk song, lyrics are first composed taking the form of poetry. Thus, contrary to English compositions, tenyidie poems, enjoys a unique style of composition in that it requires to imperatively first set the tune and only then fit in the lyrics of poetry accordingly. The language used in songs is often archaic rendering a difficulty for the modern readers to understand and thereby requires assistance of the older generation to read and comprehend.

Tenyimia people are traditionally an agrarian society and therefore the folk songs compositions sung during their field work were most popular according to the frequency of its use. The Tenyidie Geizo can be categorised according to the variation of its usage, composition style and structure as well as its theme.

- a) Working song – Social poems having a single tune which are mostly highly emotional and personal in subject.
- b) Invocation Poetry – religious in nature.
- c) Modern Poems – mostly on social criticism.

At a closer reading, tenyidie Geizo comes close to English lyrical poetry. Lyric in English was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of a stringed musical instrument called the Lyre. Even though later, the notion and practice of the Lyre accompaniment was dropped only to mean a poetic or song composition emphasizing the emotions of the poet. Purely assumptive in nature but one thinks, if a stringed instrument used by a few groups of the Tenyimia called Tati which is a musical instrument used for accompaniment to singing folk-tunes could possibly bring about a commonality to the musical nature of English lyrical poetry with Tenyidie geizo.

Tenyidie geizo can in some ways be even compared to English poetic form called the Ballad because of its narrative form which is amply found in Tenyidie geizo though there is a wide variation in the treatment of theme.

Poems called as *Phichijja* or *Rüheja* in Tenyidie are the religious poems which have their own style of composition. Unlike the lyrical poetry, these types of poems are purely to be spoken and no tune can be attached to them. These poems are written specifically for occasions. *Rüheja* translated would mean Blessing of Consecration. It is a form of poetic expression which can only be pronounced by the priest when consecrating a person for the service of priesthood. *Phichijja* translated means Blessing of the Elderly. This poem alike the *Rüheja* is spoken only by the priest. The priest pronounces the blessing over the couple who would host a feast for the village community during a festival known as *Terhüny* which is celebrated as an act of thanksgiving to God for the year's bountiful harvest and good health over the people.

### III. METRICAL FORMAT

One of the most unique natures of Tenyidie lyrical poetry lies in its rigid nature of metrical composition adding to the beauty of world literature. Unlike the varied English poetry usage of metrical feet, the Tenyidie poems follow a common metrical format for its composition. Though there is variation in its length, every line in the poem is composed of nine syllables. This is strictly followed for reason that folk tunes are to be fitted into it only after composition of the lyric. Failure of maintaining the nine syllable line measures to unsuccessful composition as the tune to be fitted in requires nine syllabic sounds. The Tenyidie tonal sound does not require feet measurements as is required for English poem composition as Tenyidie naturally is imbued with tonal sounds in every syllable making it impossible to change the rigidity of the composition.

Another feature of the Tenyimia poetry is that the first four syllables must connect without a break in between lest the beauty of the rest is lost. These poems are read on full lines without breathing in between or every line are read with long sustaining sound of each syllable. Despite thematic variation the same pattern of composition is followed by every composer. A poetic specimen of the nine syllable composition is given below to vivify this inimitable feature of Tenyidie lyrical poems. The poem entitled as *Zeneilenuo* is elegiac in nature where a mother laments over her son.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ze	nei	lie	nuo	so	ke	zie	u	chü,
Ke	ba	u	nuo	jü	zhü	ü	pu	rü;

Hei	rei	thei	ba	Nei	lie	nuo	shie	chü,
Chie	cha	chü	se	se	vo	nie	dzie	nu ;
So	lhi	zie	u	nie	shie	lie	lie	yha
ki	luo	nu	tha	ke	lhou	nei	mo	va,
Nie	zuo	chü	se	tsa	li	ca-	o	Chie;
A	pa	u	le,	a	ki	luo	co-	u,
No	ha	jü	ro	suo	nie	n	sou	chü,
A	pa	u	le,	a	ki	luo	co-	u,
No	ha	jü	ro	suo	nie	n	sou	chü,
A	vu	ki	nu	ba	tso	lie	tuo	shi?
Thie	zha	zo	we	Nei	lie	nuo	rü	li,
Rü	kra	zo	tha	pie	khru	tie	ca	ü;
Me	kou	nu	sh	ü	u	ro	ü	sieu,
Sia	zo	rü	yo	nie	ki	tie	ha	cie;
Zo	ta	hie	di	la	rü	the	hou	nu,
Ke	yu	chü	shü	u	kro	mia	hou	rhe;
Zo	ba	lie	luo	kro	mia	kho	khrie	o.

#### IV. CONCLUSION:

Literature in Tenyimia community was primarily oral in nature which showcases various aspects of Tenyimia culture. With miniscule in-depth research carried out on its various form of literature, Tenyidie literature still remains an open field for the intellectually curious minds. The most popular literary form essentially one of verse meant to be sung or recited specific to occasions or events the inimitable poetic literary genre definitely opens an intriguing space of ethnic literature study as a major medium which can be reviewed in true academic spirit of poetic study.

#### REFERENCES

- [1]. Shürhozelie, U Niedimia, Ura Academy, 1989.
- [2]. Shürhozelie, Üca -53, Ura Academy. 1898.
- [3]. Shürhozelie, Tenyimia Dze, Ura Academy, 1992.
- [4]. Petekhrieo Sekhose, A Critical Study of Tenyimia Classical Poetry, Department of Tenyidie, Nagaland University, 2003.
- [5]. Kuolie D., Structural description of Tenyidie : a Tibeto-Burman language of Nagaland, Ura Academy, 2006.