

AN ACQUAINTANCE OF TRIBAL FOLK CULTURE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

The present era has witnessed that the social media has been an integral part of the society. It is playing an instrumental role in disseminating information about almost all the aspects of human being today. We have been acquainted with language, customs and traditions cultural phenomenon of various countries, states and communities all over the world through the social media. Similarly, the researcher is acquainted with tribal folk culture of tribes of Palghar district. In fact, near about 46 tribal communities are the inhabitants of Maharashtra state out of them 12 tribal communities like the Kokanas, the Warlis, the Katharis, The Thakars and the Kolis and so on dwell in Palghar district. They have language and culture of their own preserved since ancient time. The tribal communities, though they are illiterate, poor and isolated from the mainstream society, celebrate customs and tradition, festivals and rituals such as Akhati, Koli Bhaji (Eating New vegetables) Bohada, Holi, Nav Khane, Waghbaras and Gauri Ganpati with a great alacrity and they have pervasive thoughts which are significant for both tribals and the non tribals also. But unfortunately the world is not familiar with this unique cultural identity of tribal people. And so, this research paper will highlight on the folk culture of tribal communities living in Palghar district acquainted through social media.

Keywords: Acquaintance, Social media, tribal communities, folk culture and Palghar district.

INTRODUCTION:

It is seen and experienced that the social media has been playing an instrumental role in getting acquaintance with various aspects of human being such as geographical, historical, social and cultural information about a particular area, nation, states and the communities and the like. According to the concept of globalization, the whole world has been a village. This is what has been made possible by the social media which connects us with the rest of the world. Similarly, social media has connected us with every walk of life other groups. And therefore, the ethnic groups that are tribal communities are not an exception to this also. The researcher, being a teacher in the tribal belt of Palghar district, is acquainted with tribal folk culture of tribes residing in this district. Theirs is a unique culture in the Indian context. And so the present paper deals with the tribal folk culture of tribes in Palghar district acquainted through social media.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER:

The main objectives of the paper are:

1. To study the concept and role of social media
2. To study the folk culture of tribes in Palghar district

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The researcher has used videography, audio clips, photos and songs obtained through social media like Facebook, YouTubes, Whatsapp accounts of well-known people from the tribal communities in this area.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

What social media is should be understood before understanding the tribal folk culture. "Social media refers to the means of instructions among people in which they create, share, and /or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks." (Social Media) It denotes that the people share and exchange their ideas and information through the social networks such as facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Whatsapp etc. Most of the people are using these networks of social media for sharing ideas and information in the present era. Tribal people living in Palghar district is also make use of it. As a result of it, they share their rituals

and festivals performed by the tribal communities. And hence, the rest of the world to some extent is acquainted with tribal culture which is totally different from non-Tribal communities.

AN ACQUAINTANCE OF TRIBAL FOLK CULTURE:

The researcher is acquainted with tribal folk culture through social media used by the tribal people. What the researcher has done is that a message requesting to send the video, audio clips and photos of rituals and cultural activities of tribal communities in Palghar district. These requesting messages were sent through the academic Whats app groups and public as well on the occasion of their festivals so that the materials would be easily available and could be recorded and sent. Some of the students have sent videos and audio clips. Based on them, the researcher is acquainted with a unique culture which has significance in the Indian context.

Before understanding the folk culture of tribes, it should be noted and studied what the term folk is. The term folk is related to the people who have analogons occupation, language or religion. It also indicates that a group should have some traditions of their own. It does mean that any group of people who have common occupation, language and their own traditions can be treated as folk.

The tribal communities dwelling in Palghar district has a rich culture which is reflected in their day to day activities, customs and traditions, rituals and festivals. They celebrate and observe several customs and traditions, rituals and festivals such as Akhati, Koli Bhaji, Nav Khane, Waghbaras, Gouri Ganpati, Diwali, Holi, Bohada and so on. In the present era it has been fashion that each and every thing is recorded with mobile phone which is easily available for the. And most of the educated tribal people share their rituals and festivals performed on the special occasions. The researcher is familiar with the festival called Bohada which celebrated with a great pleasure and enthusiasm by the tribal communities in Palghar district. This festival is unique and has cultural significance among them. It is celebrated on the occasion of Holi. The culture of preparing the masks of Gods and Goddesses, deities and many objects which are helpful for them is prominently seen and felt in the festival. There are many masks of deities that are danced in the festival. Some of them are taken for the study as sample here.

1. *Narandev:* (Naran God)

Naran God is regarded as their deity by the Warlis along with all other tribes in Palghar district. They worship the God Naran for the good rain.

2. *Kasav:* (The Tortoise God)

It is seen that the tribes worship *Kasav* as the symbol of happiness and prosperity. Even today this culture is seen in the Indian non-tribal communities.

3. *Jagdamba:*

The Goddess Jagdamba, under whose name this festival is celebrated with great alacrity, is very important mask in the life of tribes. She is treated to be the goddess of the earth.

4. *Kansari:* (The Goddess of grain or crop)

“The word *Kansari* is used by the farmers in Palghar district for paddy or *Kanis*. The *Nagli* grain considered being important and *Kansari* is related to it. The *Kansari* is worshipped on the occasion of the religious ceremony called ‘*Raas*’ the heap of grains *Khala* and offered the first fruits and grains of the new harvest. The tribes consider *Kansari* to be the symbol of all kinds of grains like *Nagali*, rice, *Udid*, *Tur*, *Vari* and *Jawar* etc. Notably the tribes have tremendous respect to the grains. According to this culture, the grains should not be wasted. This culture is seen among the non-tribal farmers also. But they do not call it as *Kansari*. These farmers might have taken the belief from the tribal culture.

5. *Waghoba:* (The Tiger God)

Waghoba, the Tiger God, is important in tribal communities. This is the village God *Gram Devata* worshipped by Gonds, Bhils, Warlis, Mahadev Kolis, and Malhar Kolis etc. The mask of *Waghoba* is also danced in the festival. The folk beliefs of tribes are that the *Waghoba* God protects the cattle from the wild beast in the forest.

6. *Hirva* God or *Hiroba* God:

The *Hirva* God is the deity of the Warlis in Palghar, Nashik and Dhule districts. Nevertheless, all the tribes worship *Hirva* or *Hiroba* God. This god is also considered to be the symbol of prosperity.

6. *Satvai:*

The mask of *Satvai* is also danced in this festival. *Satvai* has very important place in tribal life. After the birth of a child, *Satvai* is worshipped on the 6th day from the birth.

The Festival of *Koli Bhaji:* (Eating *Koli Bhaji*, a forest Vegetable):

A different and unique culture is acquainted through social media that is the celebration of festival called. This festival is celebrated on any Tuesday in the month of June and July. The festival called Eating *Koli Bhaji* is considered to be the first festival of the year for Koknatribes. *Koli Bhaji* is usually celebrated at the end of *Jeshtha* (June or July) or at the beginning of *Ashadha*. *Koli Bhaji* is a forest vegetable. It sprouts from the womb of the earth mother by taking its own flower in the month of *Jeshtha* (June or July). *Koli Bhaji* is a traditional tribal festival. Before celebrating the festival of eating *Koli Bhaji*, the Police Patil *Karvi* the head of the village gives a *Davandi* (Announcements) and calls the men of the village to the temple of *Gavdevi* on Tuesday. It is

customary to celebrate this festival on Tuesday only. After all the villagers have gathered in the temple, the elders and the Patil pray to the goddess by saying:

“O Goddess! The night of four month has come today Pay attention to our children, cattles and men and women!

Let the black night be happy

And do not let the calamity of any kind come.” (My Trans.)

Then all the villagers go to their homes and worship their deity (*Hiroba God*)light the lamp in the evening. During the puja, a plant with flowers of *Koli Bhaji* (vegetables) is placed. After sacrificing coconuts and chickens, they pour the liquor and then after showing the offerings of vegetables and rice, all the men, women and children of the village gather in a big house and an old man from the village stands up and informs all the women and children about the four month night. Then all the women and men bow down to the foundations of the congregation, and the old man allows them to go to their homes and eat the *Koli Bhaji* (vegetables.) Then all the people go to their homes and the head lady of thehouse fasts. After the meal, the whole congregation dances in a large house or in the yard when it is not raining. In this way the festival of *Koli Bhaji* is celebrated, with togetherness and joy.

This is a peculiar festival is celebrated by the tribal communities in Palghar district. It is a part and parcel of their folk life. Until and unless they worship the forest vegetable,they do not eat it. It is prominently seen that they do not eat any kind of fruits or vegetables without offering it to the god. These kinds of festivals are found in non-tribal communities also. It does mean that these festivals might have been transmitted from the tribal folk tradition.

Akhati:

The social media introduced the researcher to the festival called *Akhati*. This festival is celebrated on the occasion of Akshay Tritiya which is celebrated by the Non- Tribal communities in the India. It is seen that it is observed by the Kokanas. It is seen that there is customary that the tribes song many songs on various occasions, They sing songs on this occasions also.

“Soil is brought

Sowed five five colour grains

Water is brought from well

Watered five colour grains

Five colour grains sprouted

Prepared a garland of flowers” (My trans.)

The above song is sung on this occasion with a great devotion. After Gudu Padwa, soil is brought from the anthill. They sow seeds of Rice, *Nagli*, *Varai*, *Maze* and *Khurasani* in a basket filled with earth some day prior to the celebration and water tevery day. The seedlings sprout on the festival day. These seedlings are worshipped on this day of *Akhati*. A procession of sprouted grains kept in the basket is started with a traditional dance popularly known as *Tarpa* from the village and ends on the outskirts of it.

During the procession they sing a song like

“The sprouts kept in the plate

Plate kept on the head

Worshipped and offered to the Ganga (the river)

Offered it to the Ganga

Returned from the Ganga” (My trans.)

This song implies that the sprouts of five kinds of grains are worshipped drawing a particular picture with soil and they keep nuptial chain on it and dance on it. And at the end of the *Pooja* performance they throw it near wall of temple. The essence of this song is that whatever is offered to the Ganga comes back to the human being again. Some home deities are worshipped. Women sing songs and dance. Kokanas offer food to crows in memory of their ancestors. This culture is prominently seen in the tribes.

Holi Festival:

The tribal people celebrate Holi festival with a great enthusiasm. They celebrate it for five days. While celebrating they sing many songs. The researcher has given a sample song sung on the occasion of Holi. The researcher has found this song through whats app.

“How Holubai is adorned

Holubai is adorned with coconut,

Holubai is adorned with vermillion,

Holubai is adorned with Kumkum,

Holubai is adorned with rice,

Holubai is adorned with papad.” (My Trans.)

The above song describes how Holubai (Holi) is adorned and worshipped. The Holi is worshipped offering coconut, vermilion, Kumkum, rice and pappies. These are all offered to the Holi before it is lit. The tribal people celebrate the Holi festival with great pleasure and enthusiasm. Coconut, vermilion, Kumkum, rice and the like are the culturally important things. They are used by the tribal and non-tribals in the nation.

CONCLUSION:

To sum up, cultural world of tribal people is unknown to the rest of the world. But it is the social media which has a crucial role to be played in disseminating and propagating cultural aspects of tribal communities today. As a result of social media, Non-tribal communities can be acquainted with the culture of tribes living in a specific territory. All the same, it is a need of hour to reach the ethnic groups for imbibing the cultural values among the present generation. Governments and NGOs should take initiative for preserving and disseminating folk culture, folk mind and folk belief of tribes who have a pervasive thoughts and worldview which is very significant for the non-tribal communities.

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