

An Outline to the Festivals of the Indigenous “Tripuri Community” of Tripura

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Abstract: Tripura is a small hilly State situated in the north-eastern part of India. During the British rule, the whole geographical area of Tripura was known as Hill Tipperah. It covers an area of 10,491 sq. km. and is situated between 22° 5' and 24° 32' north latitudes and 91° 10' and 92° 21' east longitudes. A land-locked State, Tripura shares international border of 832 kms long with Bangladesh's district of Comilla on the west, Sylhet district on the north, Noakhalli and Chittagong Hill Tracts on the south and Chittagong Hill Tracts on the east. With mainland India, Tripura is bounded by the Cachar district of Assam on the north-east and the Mizo hills of Mizoram on the East

Keywords: Indigenous, Tradition, Hilly State, Population, Ethnic, Culture, Tripura, Tribal Festivals, Community

I. INTRODUCTION

Embraced by the gentle embrace of the northeastern land, Tripura emerges as a jewel sparkling with a tapestry of enchanting traditions and vibrant customs. This realm of cultural marvels, nestled in the bosom of India, unveils a captivating heritage woven with the threads of history and the vibrant spirit of its indigenous communities. Within its boundaries, a symphony of colours dances in festivals that transcend time while mesmerising dance forms twirl in rhythm with ancient echoes. Delicate strokes of tribal art and crafts paint a vivid picture of creativity, while the tantalising aromas of delectable cuisine invite you to savour its flavours. And amidst it all, the culture of Tripura weaves intricate tales through exquisite handloom, leaving you entranced in its cultural embrace.

Aims and Goals of the Study:-

- To understand the tribal scenario in the state.
- To know the Socio Economic life of the tribes in the state.
- To trace an idea about the tribal traditional practices.
- To have an idea about the religious practices of the Tripuri community.
- To identify about what makes the Tripuri tribal religions different from that of the other Hindus within India.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper totally based on primary and secondary Source materials like books, articles and relevant website which are critically and analytically examined.

Historical Geography, Land and People of Tripura

Tripura is large extent, a melting pot of ethnic diversity, a great number of tribal people are living in Tripura from early times. According to the order of the resident in India in 1956 on the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Tripura. There are 19 scheduled tribes in Tripura. The Bengalis from the plains belonging mostly to different Brahminical sects started to settle in the hilly region of Tripura. This movement of people became more and more intense after the partition of India in 1947 the tribes of Tripura could be divided into two groups as (i) Ab-origin and (ii) Immigrants. All the Ab-origin tribes have been migrated in this territory from a place between Tibet, up hills of Barma like Arakan hills tracts, Shan state and adjacent to China. Ab-origin tribes are Tripuris, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Lusai, Uchai,

Chaimal, Halam, Kukis, Garos, Mog and Chakmas. Other tribes like Bhill. Munda, orang, saotal, Lepcha, Khasis and Bhutia is are the immigrant tribes came and settled here for economic reasons. Most of them are central India tribes and come from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orrissa and west Bengal. Some of these tribes are however, northern frontier tribes come from Bhutan, Meghalayas, Sikkim, and north Bengal, Chakma's and Mog's are Arakan tribes enter Tripura through Chittagong Hills tracts

Puja & Festivals Of The“Tripuri Community”

International Journal of Innovative Science Among in numeral deities of the Tripura community few principle names are mentioned here. The deities can be grouped ads per the mode and purpose of the worship. These are as follows:-

Matai katar and Matai katarama

Matai katar is the supreme deity and Matai katarama is his consort. These deities are worshiped for the enhancement of prosperity and security. They are worshiped household wise or community wise. For these deities a goose is required to be offered, sometimes a he- goat is also offered in case of a promise. Along with this offering, banana, undried rice, vermilion, betel leaf and nut etc, are required. This puja takes place outside the house.

Akhatra and Bikhitra

They are the sons of the Matai katar and Matai katarama. The two deities are jointly named as "Lampra. These two deities are worshipped in Tripura community in the beginning of all social and religious ceremonies.

Toomima

Goddess of water. This deity is worshipped as household goddess as well as village Goddess as a precautionary measure against the attack of pox, Cholera etc. They worship the Toomima deity on the river. As the water helps to spread the disease so they worship the Goddess of the river not to contain the disease. To worship the deity one he-goat or one buffalo is needed as offering.

Sangram

Husband of Toomima Sangram is the God of wealth and prosperity. If any member of a family suffers very frequently from diseases and illness then the worship of the Sangram deity takes place to overcome the sufferings. It is a household deity. At the courtyard of the house the Sangram deity is worshipped. For deity two fowls are required as offerings. In want of fowls, this puja can be performed with two eggs also.

Khoolooma

Goddess of cotton. Mailoma and khoolooma are worshipped jointly for wealth and prosperity. These two deities are household deities. Two fowls are sacrificed for these two deities as offering during this puja. Inside the house the deities are worshipped.

Nakehumatai

The Guardian of homestead. A female deity. Nakehumatai is to be worshipped at homestead to recover from illness. To worship this deity a fowl or a pig of any size is needed. After the worship. The cooked meat is offered to the deity. Thereafter, the meat is eaten by the "Ochai and his helper 'barun' along with the family members of the household.

Suklakmatai

God of health. In the last part of 'magh' or in 'falgun' this deity is worshipped Saklakmatai is a household deity and it is worshipped in the countryard with different types of cakes prepared with oil and with other offerings. In the evening a he-goat is sanctified the house to the deity.

The following deities are named as malevolent in the Tripuri society. All these deities are worshipped as household deities related with the persons concerned.

Thoomnairok and Banirok:-

As these two deities are called the messengers of death news, they are worshipped to keep them in good humor. A he or she goat along with two chickens or two eggs is required as offerings in the courtyard. For banirok two fowls or two gees are need to offer. The Banirok deity is worshipped in the jungle.

Chhakal Jook:-

The guardian deity of witches. To be cured from the illness caused by the witches the Chhakaljook deity is worshipped. Cooked meat of the tortoise and pork are offered to this deity as offering. The Chhakaljook is worshipped outside the village.

Burasa:-

A male deity stand for diseases. When a household member. Especially the children cry incessantly from severe pain of fever it is believed that the 'Burasa' matai has caused this diseases. In order to cure the patient they worship this Matai (deity) with two black fowls along with two eggs. The worship of these deity takes place outside the village.

Haichukma :-

A female deity. She is the wife of "burasa". She rules over animals and forests. The Tripuris believe that when any domesticated animal is lot they pray to this deity to get back the animal and promise worship to the deity.

Priesthood :-

The priest is known as ochi. The ochai is selected by the villager and the profession is not heredity. The women are not permitted to become a prist. In some religious occasion the priest needs a helper. The helper of the priest is called barua in some occasions the Ochai and Barua. In some occasions another man helps the Ochai and Barua whom they call 'Khandal' .

Concept Of Soul:-

The concept of soul among the Tripuris is similar to a certain extent like other primitive people. The soul according to the Tripuris is incombustible, invisible, untouchable, destroyable and can have any form, colour etc. the Tripuris call the soul of humans body 'Fala'. They believe that when a man falls asleep the soul goes out from the body temporarily. In most of the cases of unnatural deaths by accident, snake bites, suicide etc. the tripuris. specially the older generation believe that the soul,may convert into an evil spirit. The custom of offering food and drinks to the soul of dead is another indication about their conception of soul.

Garia Puja Festival:-

Garia is the natural benevolent spirits of the hous hold who looks after the increase of production. Garia is called "Garia raja" that always prefers welfare of his inmates by giving the wealth, peace and children. On the whole, Garia represents the character of our benign nature and he always does well to us.

Kharchi Puja Festival:-

So far as Tripura is concerned, the Kharchi puja is one of the most popular festivals of the Tripura as well as the dwellers in Tripura, although it is said to have been influenced by the Brahmanical Hindus. As a matter of fact, this festival is associated with the indigenous tribal deities. This festival is held sometimes in June July on the suklastami day which lasts for seven days and is essentially a festival of Tripurabasi. The kharchi puja is held at old Agartala, 8km from the state capital Agartala., old Agartala was the capital of the "Manikya Dynasty" and there was a temple of chaturdashdevata where the Kharchi puja would take place before entering into detailed account of the Kharchi puja, we shall now devote a few lines to a description of the deities of the Kharchi puja, the fourteen head-images are worshipped at the time of Kharchi puja.

Different Religious Sects of Tripura:-

The religious history of Tripura is infect, the religious history at the Prachyadasa or the eastern India. Of course, regional variances are there, still its iverall history and development prior to the 12th century AD is inextricable mixed up with the religious history of ancient sylhetsamatata, Noakhali and chittagong. Paucity of archaeological evidence from Tripura makes it difficult to ascertain the introduction to the Brahmanical religious pattern in Tripura. It is also not known exactly when the Aryans penetrated to the domain of religion in Tripura. The fact that Buddhism flourished in different part of Tripura from the early times has been attested by the discovery of various archaeological material. A copper plate inscription from Gunaighar proves and Buddhism flourished here sometimes before 507-508 A.D. similarly different forms of Brahmanical religion. Viz, Vaisnavism, saivism and saktism were prevalent as early as 7th century A.D. A good number of surya images. some of which measure about 11 feet high, have been recovered from the pilak, Jolaibari are of south Tripura and these objects belonged to a considerably early period. Such colossal figure of surya from eastern Indian has not come to our notice yet. Ganesa was also a popular deity among the people of southern. Perhaps north Tripura was the seat of saivism and orthodox Bramanical preachers selected Unakoti hills of the region which was largely populated by the tribal people. Different tribes of shiva images are found scattered over the Unakoti hills.

The Impact of the Pujas & Festivals on the Society of “Tripuri Community”

The Tripuri culture has evolve through ages in its own soil a contact with the neighbouring Bangladesh an assimilation of the two coincide the extent took place. The acculturation is occurring is with the urbanized Tripuris in comparison with the Tripuriresiding in the interior places. Somehow the Tripuris of the remote area are to this day in a poison to sustain traditional culture. Their dress, food habit, performance or dance, folksongs and observed of festival little's till date their own. But it needs to be mentioned to be mentioned here that a little bit impact of the neighbour's culture is also penetrating in it. As for the traditional ladies garment it deserves mentioning here that the female folk wear 'pachra' and 'Richa' all the time. In this case a changes is noted to certain extent among the young girls, especially at the time of visiting certain a village market or a town area many of them wear shari and blous. The young boys have also been accustomed to wear trousers whenever they come to any urban area. Even at the time of weaving their garments some of them are observed on now a days to used woollen thread with modern design. The Tripuri folk songs are richin compassion and expression. These are me in tune and bear the great significance young generation shows great interest in Bengali and Hindi song. Sometimes they composed their songs imitating the tune of Bengali and Hindi song .The musical instruments 'Tuitreng' 'Lebangti' etc are played some of dances like Gorria, Mamita&Lebangbumanietc in this dance. Now a day in the month of Jaistha (Bengali Month) they usually perform this dance. Lebangbumani dance is also one of the most colorful dances of Tripuri community. The male and the female take part in this dance collectively. The Gorria dance take place at the time of Gorria puja in the month of Baisakha(Bengali Month). Like the Tripuri community this dance is also popular in other communities such as Jamatia, Nuatia, Reang etc. to have a happy and prosperous life and for bumper crop in Jum cultivation they propitiate the God Gorria and dance on the occasion the new year both man and woman take part in this dance. The drum and flute etc are played in this dance. In the months October-November Momita dance is performed. Momita dance is one of the most favorite dances of Tripuri community. After the observance of worship of the God and Goddess of "Duapathar" this dance take place with a community feast by inviting persons from neighbouring village to make merriment. The invitees perform the dance with the host villagers. The musical instrument likes 'Wathop' 'Chompreng' 'Sarinda' Tuitrengetc are played in this dance.

Analysis

The festivals and religion of Tripura Tribal people had a social dimension which prescribed Man's life and role in the society. It also had a unique and interesting mythological form and the celebration of festivals and puja had a special connectivity among the people of a society as during the festival season people visit each other house, gathered in one place and celebrate. It also shows a different cultural form such as dressing, customs, language, etc. Pujas and festivals of Tripuri people constitute the major part of their tribal religious life. Pujas are regulated the ways of devotion showing towards gods and goddesses, spirits, and ancestors to satisfy their anger or to achieve material gain. The

festivals of Tripuri tribal people are celebrated in different season and characteristically these festivals are mostly related to agriculture. Most of the festivals are accompanied with pujas, prayers, music and dance at the time of celebration, as mention in the earlier chapter Garia puja is one among its which is remarkable for its Folk songs and Rhythmic dance. The tribal culture of Tripura most find a new hope by criticizing social reality, showing the social backwardness and developing a form of culture, art, music and literature.

III. CONCLUSION

Tripura is a beautiful North-Eastern State whose culture is mixed both by the native Tribes as well as The Bengalis living their through generations. Lastly, We Conclude to say that the culture of the “Tripuri Community” Is considered to be one of the richest cultures in Tripura. Tripura is justly proud of its reach cultural Heritage and Tribal peoples play an important role for this. Although the culture of the “Tripuri Community” is quite different from the other communities, yet they have merged well with the People of other faith. It is believed that the Indigenous Peoples are one of those communities that have existed in the state peacefully along with many other groups from several past Centuries

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