

Awakening Folk Gods from Their Dormant Stage in the Central Himalayas JAGAR, Praise of Naagraja the Serpent King with Mantras.

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ABSTRACT

There are more than two hundred folk gods and goddesses in the mountains. Among these Naagraja, Nanda Devi, Raj Rajeshwari, Jhali-Bali Devi, Jwalpa, Surkanda, Bhadrakali, Barahi are prominent. Similarly, there are many temples of Golu Devta, Eddi Devta, Bhairav, Narasimha deities

In the present time we give more value on the physical and external world and development but very less emphasis on our internal feelings. As we all know that for the betterment of our body, mind and soul the development of our internal feelings and energy must be there. The present paper is regarding the jagar, which is related to Garhwal and Kumayun regions and it is associated with the imotions and feelings of the local people in terms of their deities. The purpose of jagar is to awaken the local deities for the well-being and get their blessings ..Jagar is a holy ritual carried out in rural areas of entire Uttarakhand and aims to awaken and liberate the deeply ingrained psyche of people. The current study is about how jagar is deeply associated with the local people in the central Himalayas of India.

Jagar is a well-known form of Indian folklore from the heart of the Himalayas that has long coexisted with traditional Hinduism. It is traditionally practised as a ceremony to awaken the supernatural abilities of God, local deities, and deceased spirits. 'Jaga', which means to awaken in the ancient Sanskrit language of India, is where the word "Jagar" first appeared. The story's narrator, known as Jagariya, is an indigenous. The Jagariya used to awaken the local deities with singing of various mantras and ballads and with the help of some musical instruments like daunr and thali.

Stefan Fiol describes the relevance of jagar as "an important marker of regional belonging and devotional expression for many migrants living far from home". in his book Recasting Folk in the Himalayas. The study's conclusions are based on Jagar's performance in the Pujargaun, a beautiful village of Uttarakhand's Tehri region. from June 15 to June 17th 2023; villagers and migrants from different Indian states have congregated to take part in a 3 days jagar event of the Nagaraj the serpent God. The jagar and the public's reaction to it as participants and attendees have been observed in the current paper and analysed as an emotional discourse

Keywords: Folk Gods, Jagar, Nagaraj, Serpent God, emotional discourse

INTRODUCTION

In Uttarakhand the popular folklore known as jagar is not just something people do for enjoyment and fun; it is also regarded as a major religious practice in the heart of the Himalayas. The Sam Veda, a prehistoric Vedic Sanskrit collection of melodies and chants, which was composed between 1500 and

1000 BCE, also makes reference to jagar. Jagar has been used to invoke gods since ancient times by chanting their psalms. It is still used in rural Uttarakhand in the twenty-first century to invoke gods, spirits, and supernatural power, to express feelings, to obtain healing, and to seek retribution.

In the process of Jagar, first of all there is a person who is called Jagriya, and he is the most important part of the whole ritual. He is the story's narrator, a member of the historically small group of hereditary communities with poor social rank and is traditionally from the Shilpkar or artisan community. Jagariya conducts the rituals by singing ballads of the local deities from the mythologies related to pauranik and laukik.

The jagar plays a significant role in Uttarakhandi folk music. It plays a significant role in mountain culture. It is fundamentally about singing the gods' and goddesses' melodies and winning their favor. Jagar singing is traditionally seen as a component of the worship of folk deities. Most often, jagars and songs are used to worship people's deities rather than Vedic or Sanskrit mantras. Puja can be performed by anyone in the community, and anyone can serve as a priest. The heads of the jagriya community play a significant role in worship. Jagaria performs long stretches of Jagar singing during the worship rituals of folk deities. Important components of Jagar singing include the birth of the universe, the description of nature, the description of the evening, certain avant-garde stories, incidents, etc.

The singing style of Jagars is its specialty. Usually, it is sung in groups. Jagaria, the chief, is in charge. The whole jagriya community sings the jagar in a group. Jagars are also traditionally sung without any instruments, as well as with Daur, Thali, and Hudke. Jagaria is a talented composer in addition to being a performer. Although Vahik and Shruti passed down the majority of the Jagaras to the younger generation, the Jagaryas occasionally add new verses depending on the occasion.

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The most important part of jagar is music because without music it is not performed in a proper manner it serves as the conduit through which the serpent god Naagraja is summoned the Jaagariya sings different types of ballads that extol the accomplishments of the deity to be invoked frequently alluding to classic Indian epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Hurka, dhol, damru, muryo, flute, and thali are the principal musical instruments utilized. The significance of these percussion musical instruments might be gauged by the fact that as previously stated several of the Jaagars are named after them.

Naagraja is the main local deity of Uttarakhand mainly in the Garhwal region it is worshipped in each and every village. There are two main temples of Naagraja in Garhwal region, the first one is Sem Mukhem in Tehri district and the second one is Danda Nagraja in Pauri Garhwal. These two holy temples are the centre of devotion of many people in Garhwal. Sem Naagraja temple is situated at an altitude of 2903 meters above sea level. It is a 7 km uphill trek from Khamba Khal in Tehri. In Garhwal region Shri Krishna is worshipped as Naagraja.

Background Information for the Field Pujargaun Village, Uttarakhand



Naagraja Temple at Pujargaun Village, Tehri Garhwal

The study is based on the fieldwork conducted in the village of Pujargaun in the Tehri district of Uttarakhand's Central Himalayas. The village is about 155 km from Dehradun, the state of Uttarakhand's capital. This journey takes nearly 6 hours. The transit points are Rishikesh, Byasi Devprayag, Hindolakhil and Jannikhil in between. In this village maximum people are well educated and work in the public sector as well as in the private sector. The remaining part of the local community engaged in agriculture and other household works. The Bhatt community of the village is the pujaris of Ma Chandrabadni temple, one of the famous Siddapith of Tehri district.,The village is surrounded by a thick forest with a rich biodiversity. The present condition of the village is that the 70% population is already migrated to the different areas. Every year they come to join the family puja or other rituals because as per the guidance of the local deity there should be one person from each family in the puja rituals for the honour of their local deity the serpent king Naagraja.. This time, the event was more significant because it was a 3 -days ritual called Yajana of their local deity and Kuldevta the Naagraja. (from June 15 to June 17, 2023)



Villegers at Naagraja Temple, Pujargaun during the Jagar

EMOTIONAL DISCOURSE IN JAGAR

The famous psychologist D. Edward states in his work Emotion Discourse that "Discursive psychology is defined and illustrated in terms of how people describe and invoke emotions in everyday talk and text". The community might experience deep-seated emotions through participating in jagar because they are deeply associated with Nagraja the serpent king. Through the singing of ballads and the beating of thali .Daunr, drums the dangriya and dass, Auji or Bajgi summons the serpent king.. The dev jagar is the place

where the gods are invoked. The villagers' love for the Naagraja is so strong that they want to communicate with him physically so they can get his benefits. Jagar is a way for them to physically encounter their God. The community's belief is that any of the following actions during the ritual could invoke their deities. There are different jagar to awakening of different folk gods in central Himalayas, through which the auji or the silpkar community do the practice of awakening for the folk deities from their dormant stage.



Hawan after the Naagraja Jagar at the temple

The jagar ceremony began on June 15th June 2023, at 09:00 AM in the location of the Naagraja temple of the Village. The pujari ji of the village started the Yajna rituals after that the Auji begun the dhol and damaun. After jagriya had been singing and playing the musical instruments for jagar like the thali and damru with hudki for 10 to 20 minutes, a woman from the crowd started dancing. She was followed by an elderly woman who was thought to be Naagraja's dagariya. She spread tilak & Jundaal on their foreheads as a sign of blessing while grinning at them. She is the Pashwa of Naagraja. Few minutes later there were so many local people, men & women started dancing on the beats. At that time they all were directed by the supernatural energies of the local deities. The villagers showed their adoration for the folk Gods. Finally the deities blessed the villagers for their good health, for their cattle's, children, their crops and wellbeing. The jagar rite creates a channel of communication with an impersonal force and gives worshippers the satisfaction of finally meeting their cherished deity. This same practice will be held again after 3 months and that is the opening of barrier of Naagraja. In local language it is called "Naagraja ki Badha kholna".



Pujargaun is also famous for Maa Chandrabadni Siddapitha, which is situated at the top of Chandrakut mountain in between Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers. It is a famous pilgrimage place of Hindus. Every year thousands of devotees come here to get the blessings of Maa Chandrabadni. The pauranik name of

the Goddess is Maa Bhuvneshwari .The most important thing is that the pujaris of Chandrabadni temple are from pujargaun village from the ancient time. The Bhatt Brahmins are the main pujaris of Maa Chandrabadni They are deeply associated with the puja and rituals of Naagraja and Maa Chandrabadni. According to the head priest of Chandrabadni temple ,Shree Dataram Bhatt , the idol of maa Bhagwati is not worshiped here but shreeyantra of bhagwati is worshiped . Who and when established shriyanta here or is it a self-manifested yantra,it is a matter of research for many researchers yet. That is why this village is so important in the Tehri district.

CONCLUSION

This religious event of 3 days was definitely successful and such religious events should continue to happen because it is not only an event but the collective participation of the people of the village is also seen somewhere in it. Before the worship of Lord Nagaraja, the elders of the village first hold a meeting and all the issues related to this event are discussed in which every family gives its participation. Everyone also contributed some amount as per their capacity to make this event of Nagaraja a success. This event also shows a collective participation and on the other hand our family deity is also worshipped. If we look at it from another perspective, then it is very important from the point of view of tourism. Such types of holy events are very important for the betterment of tourism as well as it unites the people for a better purpose.

Today jaagars are considered as a valuable treasure which must be preserved rather than a religious rite however it is still held in high regard particularly in rural regions jaagar singing has evolved over the years into a highly prized art form with its practitioners being hailed as living treasures references

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