

Everyday Life of Ancient Bengal People: Food Habits and Dress-up

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Abstract

Food and clothing are two of the basic human needs. From cavemen to the modern age of mechanized civilization, people love to taste new foods. The number of foodies in today's society is not very small. Similarly, it is not an exception in the case of clothing. The market is now flooded with new designs and styles of clothing. My current research is based on my interest to know about the food habits and clothing styles of the people of Ancient Bengal. Starting from knowing what kind of food the people of Ancient Bengal liked to eat, what kind of food they kept in their daily bill of fare, what kind of food was customary to eat at weddings or any festival, whether there was any difference in the diet of the rich society and the poor society, a clear idea of the human food chart can be obtained from this study. Besides, what kind of clothes did the people of Ancient Bengal wear, what was the style of clothing of men and women, whether there was any different in the style of clothing of upper class and lower-class family members, what kind of clothes were worn during festivals, many knowledge seekers are interested in knowing about these issues. But due to the lack of adequate and detailed research on Ancient Bengal, there is less scope to know about these issues. It was mainly with this goal in mind that I conducted my research.

Keywords: Bill of fare, Cloves, Janapada, Saree, Dhuti.

Introduction

From the immemorial, food and clothing have been associated with the daily life of the people. My present research will be conducted in an attempt to discuss the daily life of the people of ancient Bengal, especially about their food and clothing. Food and clothing are among the basic human needs. The present study is aimed at finding out what was the type of food and clothing in ancient Bengal, how much people were fond of food, what kind of dishes were cooked, what was the difference between the daily dress and eating habits of rich and ordinary families. Through this research it will be possible to know a lot about the normal activities of daily life in ancient Bengal. There has always been a dearth of sources for learning about ancient Bengal. I will try to complete this research work keeping in mind the limitations of sources.

Methodology

Very little information is available to know the history of Ancient Bengal. Much of what has been found has not yet been deciphered. That is why I have used the information from the secondary sources in conducting this research. In this case, I have used to complete my research work by collecting necessary

information from books written by different authors at different times and articles. The necessary information from them has been collected and analyzed and used in this research. In this case, the work has to be done very carefully.

Food habits of Ancient Bengal people

Bengali culture did not develop in a day. The culture of the Bengali nation formed by the amalgamation of different ethnic groups at different times, is therefore very diverse. That diversity can be seen in Bengali food habits as well. The diet of Ancient Bengal was rich in various types of food. The type of food that Bengalis eat nowadays is basically a reflection of the food habits of the people of Ancient Bengal.

Rice

When talking about the food habits of Bengali people, the first sentence that comes to mind is “Bengali with fish and rice” (Manche vate Bangali). It is known that paddy was the first and main crop of ancient times. As such, it is not surprising that rice was the main food of Ancient Bengal.

Figure 1 Harvesting.



The rice-eating habits of the Bengali nation are mainly derived from the civilization and culture of the Austric-speaking Aboriginal people. Rice was the staple food of everyone from high class families to low class families. There is no doubt that people ate rice daily at that time. The rules for cooking rice may have been similar to the present day. But on evidence has been found in this regard. However, some details of the manner in which food was served at weddings or festivals can be found in “Naishadha Charita’s description of the food served at Damayanti’s wedding. Some general descriptions of eating rice are also mentioned in that book remarkably. At that time steamed hot rice was eaten with ghee and that was the common practice of eating rice. Some descriptions of the food habits of the Bengali people are also found in “Prakrita Paingal” texts. The book also describes the consumption of ghee with hot rice. Besides, this book also mentions the custom of eating rice in a banana leaf. However, there is some extensive detail in “Naishadha Charita” on this subject. It mentions that the food served was smokey and the rice was cooked very well. The description of this book also suggests that people from upper class

families may have used fragrant rice in cooking rice for weddings or festivals. Besides, people of high-class families used to keep milk and Paesh (rice cooked in milk) in their menu during festivals.

Curries and Vegetables The daily diet of Bengalis in Ancient Bengal included rice along with other vegetables and various types of curries. Basically, the staple food of the poor and rural people was most probably vegetables and curries. However, there is no mention of pulse or pulse-like food in the diet of the people of Ancient Bengal. Different types of vegetables were available at that time. Among these, Nalita Shaka (pat shaka) is mentioned the most.

Like the present time, the people of Ancient Bengal also ate different types of vegetables. The vegetables found in Bengal, such as brinjal, gourd, pumpkin, shrimp, cockle, kachu etc. were mainly from the native Australian speaking people. However, later on, especially in the Medieval period, many other ethnic groups came to Bengal. Due to which several more vegetables and curries have been added to our food list. Potatoes are one of them. Potatoes did not exist in Ancient Bengal. However, apart from potatoes the Bengalis ate various kinds of vegetables, which can be known from many documents.

The Fish

Bengal has been a rainy country since ancient times. The number of rivers and canals in Bengal was much more than the present time. Besides, Bengali was influenced by Pacific civilization and of proto-Australian origin.

Figure 2 Fish in Terracotta Plaque.



That is why there is no room for doubt that fish is one of the main foods of the people of Bengal. So, rice and fish were the main foods in the diet of the people of Bengal. The identity of the fish that Bengalis loved to eat can be known from the terracotta plaques found in Paharpur and Mainamati. These plaques depict the actual scene of cutting fish and carrying the fish to market in baskets.

People of Ancient Bengal used to eat fish oil as well. In this regard, Jeemutvahan mainly talked about hilsa fish oil. From this mention of Jeemutvahan, it seems that hilsa fish was a favorite food of Bengalis in Ancient Bengal as well as at present and at that time hilsa fish oil was used for various purposes. However, not all types of fish could be eaten by Brahmins. Brahmins were prohibited from eating certain types of fish. In particular, fish that live in holes or burrows, fish with a snake-like face and head (like- Bine fish), fish with a distorted appearance and fish without scales were forbidden to Brahmins. Besides, Brahmins also prohibited from eating rotten fish and dried fish. However, it is known from Sarbananda's "Tikka Sarvasva" book that the people of Bengal loved to eat Sihuli or dried fish. Even in

the present time, dried fish is in the favorite food list of many people of Bengal. It is known from “Brihad Dharma Purana” that Brahmins used to eat Rohit (salmon fish), Shafar (Small Fry fish), Sakula (Shol fish) and many fish with white color and scales. That time, tribals used to ate various types of fish without scales, snake-like baim fish, burrowing fish etc.

The Meat

Meat has always been present in the foods of Bengalis. Deer meat was very popular among the hunter-gatherers and elites of Ancient Bengal like Shabar, Pulinda etc. The actual depiction of deer hunting is revealed in the terracotta plaques of Paharpur and Mainamati. The scenes of deer hunting and returning home on the shoulders are very accurately depicted in the plaques.

Figure 3 Tribals Foods.



Multiple descriptions of deer hunting are found in several verses of “Charyagita”. At that time the main occupation of Shabar, Pulinda, Nishad etc. was to hunt deer and other animals and birds. That is, it is understood that the practice of eating deer meat was very common among the people of Ancient Bengal. Besides, people of almost all levels of society ate goat meat. In some areas or communities of Ancient Bengal, especially among the tribals, there was a practice of eating dried meat. However, there is no evidence in this regard. Bhavadeva Bhatta called the eating of dried meat a kind of taboo. However, the meat that was cooked with various spices is described very clearly in many documents. This is known from the details of the feast mentioned in “Naishadha Charita”.

Bengalis have never had and still do not have any aversion to meat. But in Arya-Brahmin India especially from the 6th-5th centuries onwards there was objection to killing animals for food in Brahmanism and even in Buddhism and Jainism. And as that objection grew day by day, India’s trend towards vegetarian food increased. But the interest in vegetarian food or the practice did not last long. At one point it was customary to eat vegetarian food only on special days or festivals. Eating meat on other days was not a taboo subject. Bhavadeva Bhatta, one of the leading historians of Ancient Bengal, also supported the food habits of Bengalis. There is support for the fact that meat was eaten in Bengal since Ancient times. Srinathacharya, another famous writer of Ancient Bengal, also spoke about that and gave the example of two verses from the “Vishnu Purana”. According to him, eating meat is not a taboo subject except on certain special days.

Brahmins did not eat meat like snails, crabs, cocks, cranes, bucks, small birds, camels, cows, pigs etc. But common and low caste people and tribes used to eat meat like snails, crabs, cocks etc. In addition,

they ate various types of bird meat. However, from Bhavadeva Bhatta's "Prayaschitta Prakarana", it is known that there was no restriction on eating the meat of donkey, porpoise, porcupine and tortoise.

Wedding Feast

In Ancient Bengal, more and more variety of food was served at a wedding or a social function than the daily menu. Starting from meat, various types of food were eaten in the wedding ceremony. Even though there were vegetables in the general food list, the bridegroom's party did not like vegetables in the wedding ceremony. This information is known from the description of Damayanti's marriage in "Naishadha Charita". At Damayanti's wedding, food was served in green color plates, so the bridegroom's party thought vegetables were served in front of them. That is why at first, they expressed some displeasure at the food. Then the people from the bride's side saw their disturbing attitude and said that the food is served in green color plates in front you and that is why the color of the food looks green. The food served at Damayanti's wedding consisted of a variety of dishes. In Ancient Bengal, in any wedding ceremony so much food was cooked that the invited guests could not finish the food. In addition, the number of various types of food that was served could not even be counted. Tsing, considered such arrangements a waste of food. However, even in modern society many types of food are served at weddings of upper-class families, which have many similarities with Ancient Bengal.

That food list mentions a type of food which was prepared with curd and rye mustard. Which was slightly white in color and too spicy to eat. There was so much spices that people ate that food and they used to hid their head because of so much spices. Besides, there were various kinds of venison, goat and fowl curries, fish curries and various other aromatic foods, highly spiced food, various kinds of sweet cakes, and curds. Water mixed with camphor was given for drinking. Also, after the meal, many types of spiced betel leaves (Paner khili) were also given. It was also customary to eat betel leaves during puja. Not only in Ancient Bengal but in the entire Pacific countries, the custom of eating betel leaves was prevalent. Later, the custom of serving betel leaves as khili was most likely Aryan-Indian and among the upper-classes. Evidence from Buddhist hymns and Doha shows that camphor was used as a spice along with betel leaves. Apart from this, there is a lot of mention of dairy food like curd, payes, khir (rice cooked in milk) etc. in marriage or any festival. These dishes have always been favorite dishes among Bengalis, just like today. Bhavadeva Vatta's "Prayaschitta Prakarana" reveals that some people were forbidden to eat food cooked with milk. However, it was strictly for health reasons.

Ghee

Ghee consumption was common among the people of Ancient Bengal. Vidyapati in his book "Kriti Kaumudi" specialized Gauda Janapada as Ajyasara Gauda. Ajya literally means ghrhit or ghee. Ajya or ghrhit was the best food of Gauda Janapada, and that Gauda Janapada was called Ajyasara Gauda. So, ghee was one of the main needs in the food list of the people of Bengal. In those days ghee was found in more or less every house. Many other texts also provide evidence of Bengalis consumption of ghee. Among them, a portion of the 14th-century Prakrita Paingal written in Apabhramsa language, which describes the food of the Bengalis, mentions that in banana leaves people eat hot rice, nalita shak (Pat shak) and mourola fish with ghee and milk. As in the present day, the main and favorite food of the people of Ancient Bengal was rice, vegetables and fish and they used to eat ghee with it.

Fruits

The various fruits of Ancient Bengal are known from various sources. Among these, banana, date palm, mango, jackfruit, coconut and sugarcane are mentioned the most. However, the most prominent fruit in Ancient Bengal paintings and sculptures is the banana. In particular, the use of banana trees in rituals like puja, marriage, mangal yatra etc. is also known from various contemporary literatures. Apart from this, sugarcane juice was consumed in Ancient Bengal like today. Sugarcane juice was also burnt to make molasses and a form of granulated sugar. Especially in Late Autumn, the village of Bengal is fragrant with the aroma of new jaggery. The proof of which is available from the “Shadukti Karnamrita”. Besides, tamarind is mentioned among various fruits in “Charyagita”.

Sweets

People of Ancient Bengal used to eat different types of sweet food. From the books “Kalviveka” and “Kriyatattvarnava” several information about the food habits of the people of Ancient Bengal are available. At that time Kojgar puja was performed in the month of Ashwin. On the night of Kojgar Purnima in the month of Ashwin, relatives and family members used to prepare a kind of swadesh (one kind of sweet) by mixing chira (flattened and fried rice) and coconut. At that time, everyone used to stay up all night. They used to talk together, prepare different kinds of food and spend the whole night playing dice. From that time, it was common to eat food like khai (fried grain), muri etc. Along with eating, the practice of sprinkling khai (fried grain) during marriage festivals was also maintained in Ancient Bengal.

Drinks

In Ancient Bengal, besides milk, coconut water, palm juice, there were various types of drinks like alcohol. At that time, a type of liquor was made from molasses, which was called “Gaudiya alcohol”. The popularity of that liquor was sustained all over India.

Figure 4 Selling Alcohol to a Customer.



Liquor was prepared from rice, wheat, molasses, honey, sugarcane and palm juice through fermentation process. Bhavadeva Bhatta mentions various types of alcohol in “Prayashchit Upakarana”. At the same time, he also mentioned that drinking alcohol was prohibited for Brahmins and Brahmin families. But it is difficult to say whether these rules were properly followed by the Brahmins or not. According to the “Brihad Dharma Purana”, the worship of Shiva by gold, wine, blood, fish and meat and human sacrifice was prohibited for Brahmins during the period considered forbidden in the scriptures. This suggests that while the ban on drinking alcohol was most probably maintained in Shiva worship, it was not prohibited

in Shakti worship and there does not seem to have been any prohibition against the drinking of alcohol in any worship other than the prohibited times mentioned in the scriptures.

From the references to taverns in several hymns of the “Charyagita”, it seems that drinking alcohol was not a taboo among the Buddhist Shiddhacharyas. Buddhist Shiddhacharyas used to sit and drink in taverns. Tavern-keeper’s wives used to sell alcohol sitting in taverns and from there the customers drink alcohol. It is believed that there was a sign of something painted on the door of the inn. By which the drunkards find their destination. At that time the thin bark or roots of a tree were dried in the sun and ground into powder and alcohol was prepared from that powder. Apart from this, there is also a mention of pouring alcohol in “Charyagita”. A verse of the “Shaduktikarnamrita” also mentions the drinking alcohol of the people of Ancient Bengal.

Spices

It is known from Sandhayakar Nandi’s “Ramacharita” that there was extensive cultivation of cardamom in Varendra janapada. Very good quality cardamom was produced there. Apart from cardamom, priyangulata (one kind of spice) was also grown in abundance. Cloves were also cultivated in Varendra janapada. Mustard had a place in the food list of the Ancient Bengal people. However, little information is known about the commercial demand for mustard. Periplus of the Erythraean Sea and Ptolemy’s Indica refer to the abundance of cardamom and cloves along with other spices were exported in large quantities from the Indian Subcontinent to Asia, Egypt and eastern and southern Europe. The abundance and use of spices in Ancient Bengal to make the food delicious proves that the people of Ancient Bengal were gourmets.

Poet Rajshekhar Basu mentions 16 Janapadas of East Bengal in his book “Kavyamimamsa”. They were- Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Kosala, Toshala, Utkal, Magadha or Munger, Videh, Nepal, Pundru, Praga-Jyotish, Tamraliptaka, Malad, Mallavartaka, Suhma and Brahmottara. He also gave a short list of products produced in these 16 Janapadas. Lobali (Otaheite gooseberry), Granthilarnak, Aguru (a kind of fragrant wood), Draksha (Grape), Kasturika (Musk) was among those. Although it is not clear what purpose the poet Rajshekhar Basu intended for the list, but there is no room for doubt that basically he was listing fragrant or aromatic and ayurvedic ingredients. The item named Draksha (grapes) mentioned in that list is doubtful. Because in some of the janapadas mentioned by Rajshekhar Draksha were not grown anywhere. However, it would not be incongruous to think that the product might be worth Laksha. Because, although Draksha were not produced in those areas, Laksha (Shellac) was cultivated in many parts of eastern India. Among the mentioned 16 janapadas, Laksha is still grown in some places in North Bengal or Varendra janapada. However, there is considerable doubt as to whether, Aguru is cultivated anywhere in Bangladesh. The possibility of not being cultivated is high. However, Kautilya’s “Arthashastra” suggests that Aguru probably originated in many places in Kamarupa. According to Ibn Khurdadbi’ travelogue, sandalwood grown in Arakan. Besides, musk (it is a type of herb) was earlier found in the foothills of the Himalayas. And Labali may have grown in abundance in Varendra janapada. An indication of this is found in Sandhyakar’s “Ramcharita”. Besides, it is known that Varendra janapada used to produce large Lakuch (Artocarpus lacucha), Shrifal (commonly known as bael) and edible tubers.

Clothing of the people of Ancient Bengal

Since the beginning of creation, humans have been using clothing to protect themselves from shame and cold. There have been many changes in the style of clothing since ancient times to the present day. With the passage of time people's tastes have changed and so have the styles of clothing. Nowadays, clothes are not only used to hide shame but are considered as the main criteria of a person's taste and personality. Ancient Bengal was not much of an exception. Even at that time there was some difference between the clothes of the members of the common and upper-class families, by which one could easily distinguish between the members of the common and upper-class families.

Men's clothing

Dhoti was the common dress of men in Ancient Bengal. However, people of lesser descent wore veil-like robes and used a piece of unstitched cloth, which was called dupatta. The Dhoti of those days were very short in length and width. In Ancient Bengal, wearing cloths below the knee was an exception to the rule. Generally, the width of the cloth was above the knee. The middle part of the Dhoti was wrapped around the waist and the other two ends were pulled and worn behind. Just below the navel, two-three patches of cloth were tied around the waist with the help of kotibandha. The knot of kotibandha used to swing just below the navel.

Figure 5 Men and Children's Clothing.



Some people would pull one end and hang it in the front. Many contemporary manuscripts provide information about the Dhoti worn by men. It is known that, at that time cloths were made with various types of leaves, flowers and geometric designs. India was introduced to that type of design printed clothing around 7th-8th century. And later Sindh, Saurashtra and Gujarat became major centers of garment industry. Gradually it spread to other parts of India. Remnants of that tradition still exist in Indonesia and a few other pacific islands. There were special dress codes for meetings and special occasions. Jeemutvahan in his "Dayabhaga" mentions separate dress for meetings and occasions. Monks and ascetics and laborers of the poorer communities wore the Nengti (a small piece of cloth). Soldiers and Mallavirs wore thigh-length pajamas. Common laborers also sometimes wore such clothes. This evidence is available from Paharpur plaques. Children wore knee-length Dhoti or pajamas.

Figure 6 Man Wearing Dhoti.



Footwear

The people of Ancient Bengal also used shoes like the people of today. But that use of shoes was not universal. Warriors and guards of Ancient Bengal used paduka (one kind of shoes). This is known from the terracotta plaques found in Mainamati and Paharpur. That time, shoes were made of leather.

Figure 7 Wooden Footwear.



The shoes were made in such a way that the toes were covered. Those shoes had no laces. However, common people did not wear leather shoes. Most of the time they used to walk barefoot. In Ancient Bengal leather shoes as well as wooden shoes were in vogue. Information on this is available from “Karmanushthan-Paddhati” and “Pitridayit texts”. Wooden shoes were very popular among the people of lesser status. Different designs of shoes were common in Ancient Bengal. Evidence of this is found in the writings of the literary Kshemendra. He said, “Gaudiya students walk slowly and sway their heads while walking. Their peacock shoes squeak while walking.”

Women's clothing

Saree was one of the favorite cloths of Ancient Bengal women like the women of today. In Ancient Bengal the main wear of women was Saree. Women from all walks of life wore Saree. However, women with a slightly higher taste used to wear a piece of cloth with a Saree which was similar to the modern days Dupatta. This Dupatta was again used as a Veil as required. The women of poor and middle-class families used to wear only one garment and with that they would give the Veil again. Like the present time, the women of ancient Bengal also wore Saree with one or more Kuchiat the waist. However, in most cases they did not wear blouses or undergarment, rather some parts of their upper body were exposed. In some cases, women from affluent families and urban areas used to cover some parts of their body with a Veil or use a bodice or breastplate to cover their breasts. However, its use was limited to aristocratic families and urban women. Various types of herbs, flowers, geometric designs etc. were used in the Sarees worn by women. Evidence of which is found in various manuscripts. It was customary for women to keep some part of their body uncovered, not only in ancient Bengal but also in the entire ancient Australian, Polynesia, Melanesian ethnic groups. There were special costumes for meetings and special occasions. Some information about this can be found in Jimutbahana's "Day Bag" book. Those who were dancers wore tight-fitting dresses up to the ankles, with a *Dupatta* hanging over their shoulders. The edge of the Dupatta used to fly in the air while dancing.

Figure 8 Woman Wearing Saree.



Hairstyles and makeup

The women of Ancient Bengal used to have long hair. They tied their hair in different ways. Most of the time they wore high bangs and sometimes they preferred to have open hair. Among the women whose husbands were alive, they used to put a Tip of Kajal on their forehead and wear vermilion on the scalp. Women also used to put Alta on their feet. To make the lips attractive, the women of Ancient Bengal used color on their lips like the lipstick of today. The women of ancient Bengal used to practice beauty regularly to maintain their beauty. In this case they used sandalwood powder, saffron, mriganavi (one kind of fragrant) etc. It is known from Damodardev's Chhattagram script that kajal was applied in the eyes of women of ancient Bengal. In addition, women used camphor as a cosmetic, which is known

from Madanpala's Manahil script. Women used to put different types of flowers on the head and used lacquer to dye their lips. These issues have come up in the writings of Bengali poets at various times.

Figure 9 Women's Hairstyle.



It can be said that there was no such thing as Bengali head covering in Ancient Bengal as in present time. Keeping hair in different ways was their crowning glory. At that time, men preferred to have long hair. Because their hair was a bit long, it would spread over their shoulders. Some of them used to tie their long hair. And the hair on the front of the forehead was kept twisted. Men believed that it would increase their beauty manifold. Monks and ascetics were long braids on their heads. Their long braids were tied over the head in two steps. Children's hair was tied on the head in three raven buns. Vatsyayana in his "Kamasutra" states that, Gaudiya men kept long nails and colored them to enhance the beauty of their hands. Most likely, men were interested in enhancing the beauty of their nails in order to be attractive to women.

Figure 10 Men's Hairstyle.

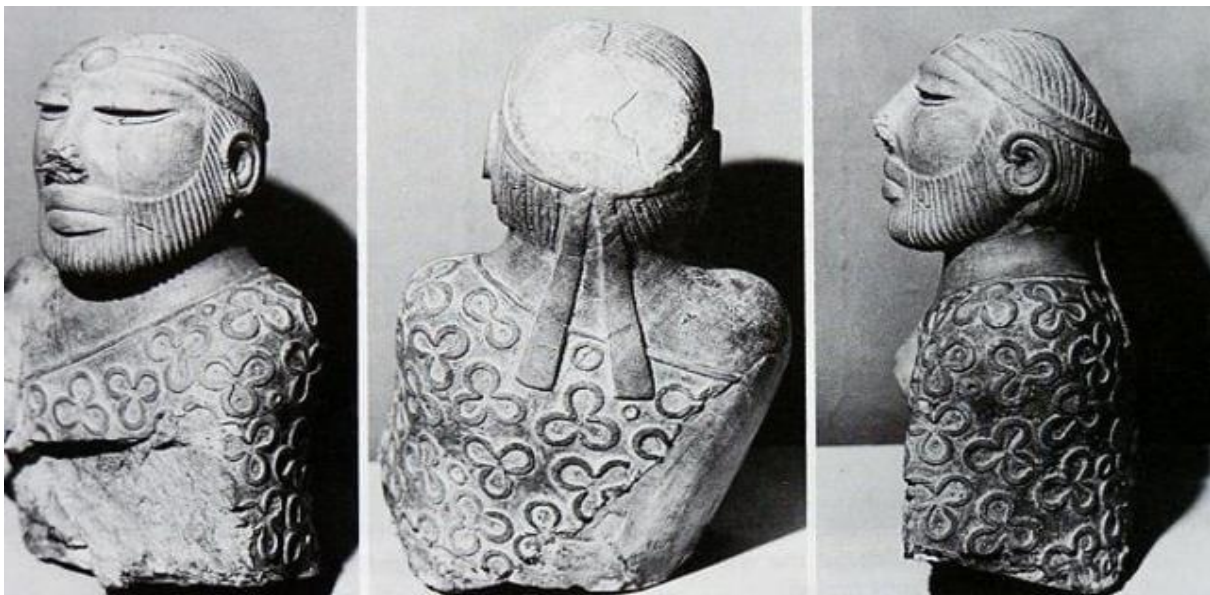


Figure 11 Woman Doing Her Makeup.



In the case of widows there was no issue of adornment. As soon as they became widows, vermilion was removed from their scalp. Widows spent the rest of their lives unadorned and dressed white Saree. It is known from Narayanpala's Bhagalpur inscription that women used to wear garlands around their necks and put flowers on their heads. The inscription further reveals that if for some reason the clothes were removed from the women's chest, they would cover her chest with a garland of flowers. These were confined to the affluent families of the city. The Sahitya Parishad script of Biswarup Sen and other contemporary scripts testify that the women of the society, especially the married women, used to adorn

themselves with cosmetics and ornaments after bathing in the river every evening. They used camphor for perfume. From kings to feudal lords even women of royal status used to show their taste in the use of cosmetics and ornaments. The details of women's adornment have appeared in various texts of ancient Bengal. Poet Rajshekhar is one of them. He describes women's cosmetics and hairstyles in his text "KabbYamimash". The women of ancient Bengal used sandalwood powder to enhance the beauty of their face. They wore a necklace of yarn around their necks, a long *Saree* up to their feet and their arms were open.

Ornaments

Both men and women in Ancient Bengal used somewhat similar ornaments. Men and women used to wear ornaments like Karnakundal, Karnanguri, Kanthahar, Mekhla, Rings etc.

Figure 12 Woman Wearing Ornaments.



Married women used to wear chains. At that time the wives of the royal servants also wore necklaces, Karnanguri, garlands etc. and they also wore nose pins made of precious stones. The daughters of the royal family wore precious pearl necklaces. From Shandhakar Nandi's "Ramcharitam", information is available about various types of beautiful ornaments with diamonds, jeweled anklets, sapphires etc. Needless to say, there were jewels made of gold and silver. Such precious ornaments were beyond the reach of the ordinary middle class and the poor families. Ordinary middle class and poor women would have been content to use conch shells, young palm leaf earrings and flower garlands.

There are some descriptions of what kind of ornaments were used on the occasion of the marriage of the daughters of aristocratic families from the “Naishadha Charita”. Even the lower-class people of Ancient Bengal used to wear jewelry. Some information about this is available from “Charyagiti”. It is said there, Shabar-Shabari used to live in the high mountains far away from the settlements. Shabari used to wear gunja mala around her neck. Peacock feathers were attached to their lions. And they wore kundals in their ears.

In ancient times, according to the caste system, those who had a husband and those who were the mother of a son, used to bathe the bride while singing the Mangalgita. After bathing, the bride was dressed in a white clith made of jute. Then the bride’s friends would put Tilak on the forehead of the bride. The bride was given a gold Tip according to her family’s ability. Kajal was put on the bride’s eyes during the wedding, then two Monikundals were put on the ears of the bride. Alta was given to dye the lips of the bride, and a necklace of seven layers was worn around the neck. The bride used to wear conch shells on both hands and the bride’s feet used to wear Alta. The housewives used to arrange the bride at the time of marriage. And the male members of the family and the Brahmmins used to do the outside work starting from reciting mantras. The women used to draw Alpanaat the place where the marriage would be performed.

Conclusion

Bengali culture is not for one or two days. Bengali culture has developed over a long period of time with the arrival of different rulers and different ethnic groups. The history of this Bengali nation, formed by the amalgamation of various nations which is very old. This study was conducted in an attempt to know this ancient history. The clothes the food habits of the people of Ancient Bengal are similar to the people of the present day and many innovations have been added with the passage of time. Bengalis still love to eat rice, eat fish to fulfill their non-vegetarian needs, meat and sweets are also not left out of their food chart. There is no doubt that Bengalis love to eat. Apart from that, on special days the arrangement of food was a sight to behold. There were other types of food added to the daily food list. However, some religious restrictions remained in that regard. But those were only for a few days or a period of time. Such information is available from various books and literature. Again, many things are known in that regard from the testimony of terracotta plaques of different periods. In terms of clothing many differences can be observed between the people of Ancient Bengal and the people of the present day. Dhuti was the common dress of men in Ancient Bengal. Which has now become more of a festival wear than everyday wear. Again, the common dress of women was saree. Whereas now in most cases sarees are worn on special days or festivals. The women of Ancient Bengal wore many types of ornaments. With which the women of today have many similarities. However, in the earliest days, women used to wear many types of ornaments in their hair. Instead, women are more comfortable with open hair. And if not, tie the hair in a very simple way. In this case, they use some hair clips as ornaments. Not much difference is observed in men. However, whatever the culture that Bengalis are following today, it is the contribution of the people of Ancient Bengal.

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