

Sohri Traditional Culture of the Tribal People

Sheuli Kumar

Assistant Teacher, Kalna Ambika Mahirmardini High School Purba Bardhaman

ABSTRACT:

In India Santals are one of the longest tribal communities who have kept their heritage and identities almost unchanged which reflects in their different festivals. They celebrate their festivals and rituals throughout the year wearing their traditional dresses. These celebrations are made with tribal songs and dances in the open courtyard and of the village. The main community festivals of the Santals are Sohrai (harvest festival) during the month October- November. This paper mainly concentrates on the Sohrai festivals among the Santals of West Bengal, Jharkhand area and their impact on their day to day life and the effect of their unique tradition of these festivals.

KEYWORD: Santal, Festival, Tribe, Celebration, West Bengal, Jharkhand

INTRODUCTION:

Tribes have rich and unique cultural traditions, including their own language, music, stories and paintings. They also have their own Gods and Goddesses.

Tribals have developed practices to protect and promote diversity which includes traditional methods of agriculture, such as intercropping and seed – saving, as well as the protection of sacred sites that are important for the preservation of biodiversity.

In the tribal villages of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Bihar happiness blooms as they get ready to celebrate the hard earned harvest of their efforts. These nearly secluded regions from the rest of the country are preserved in their own beautiful ways. They take immense pride in their culture and it is well preserved from the influence of the outside world. The tribes lead an entirely different social life in comparison to what you would see in a metropolitan city in the country. With limited interaction away from their own community, the people in these remote regions of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar indulge in cattle farming and agriculture. As a result, harvests are celebrated widely as a joyous event.

The name Sohrai comes from the tribal Sohrai paintings that have evolved over thousands of years from cave paintings to now houses with mud walls. Natural pigments adorn the walls of houses with motifs that are symbolic of the various values that the tribe abides by along with abundance and fertility.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of this study are given below

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To know the different festivals among the Santals of West Bengal and Jharkhand and their impact upon their life.

METHOD OF THE STUDY:

The primary data were collected by 1) participant observation 2) participatory Rural appraisal. A purposive sampling technique has been used to select the villagers, At the stage of data analysis, qualitative analysis methods were carried out.

SOHARAI FESTIVALS AMONG THE SANTAL IN WEST BENGAL, JHARKHAND:

Sohrai is a harvest festival of the Indian states of Jharkhand, West Bengal etc. It also called cattle festival. It is celebrated after harvest and coincide with Govardhan puja of Diwali festival. It's celebrated by Santals, Ho, Munda, Kudmi among others. This festival related to paintings. Santal folk paintings are the historic art of India. This art is not done only for the profession but also art is for enjoying and celebration. The main themes of this art are basically wedding, dancing, family life, rituals, harvest, music, nature, daily activities and creature. Sohrai is the biggest festival of santal community. Besides that Baha, Karam are important festivals. They Traditionally accompany many of their dances during these festivals with too drums : The Tamak and the Tumdak.

TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS AND IT'S EFFECT:

This sohrai festival celebrates the five day long every winter. The villagers express gratitude to the Bongas, or the good spirits of the families of the village, for best owing them with necessary food and requirements throughout the year.

The word ' Sohrai' comes from sarhao, which means thanksgiving. This festival is celebrated with very interesting rituals, dance, music and food.

DAY1 : UM HILOK - The day of cleaning th villagers clean their houses and get ready for the grand celebration. Women decorate the walls of their houses with sohrai art. A place of worship is built in the field out side the village where offerings are made and a ceremonial prayer is performed,

DAY2 : BONGAN HILOK - The day of devotion the families spend their day at home remembering departed souls. The head of family observes a day long fast. The whole family then whorships good spirits by offering dalicacies.

DAY3 : KHUNTAO - The day dedicated to domestic animals. In the morning agricultural tools are cleaned and oiled. The cattle are given a good bath, oiled, decorated. The villagers express gratitude to their live stock by worshipping and offering garlands and food.

DAY4 : JALEY – The day for strengthening relationships, the santal visit each other on the fourth day of sohrai. They greet their neighbours with rice, beer, and delicious food. All through the day, strengthening their bonds and letting go of discors from the past.

DAY5 : SAKRAT - The day of departure of the spirits, the last day is reserved to send the Bongas back to their place of rest. The villagers also perform certain ceremonies to word off evil spirits that, they believe must have made their way into the village along with the Bongas. Children display their artistic and acrobatic skills at night and the festival ends with great fun and food.

This festival is celebrated on Amavasya of the Hindu month Kartik in the month of October – November. Sohrai art form has been practiced for centuries by the tribes of Hazaribagh, Jharkhand and its surrounding area. Sohrai painting usually either monochromatic or colourful paintings are done totally by using natural pigments mixed in mud- Kalimatti(manganese black), Duddhimatti(white mud), Lalmatti(Red oxide) and pillamatti(yellow ochre).

Sohrai is not only a festival of joy and gratitude, but also a way of preserving and promoting a rich artistic tradition that showcases the creativity and skill of the tribal women. It's good to see that Jharkhand Government has taken initiatives and have painted the government boundary walls in the capital city of Ranchi with sohrai art to give encouragement and publicity to this ancient tribal art form.

Sohrai is a festival that celebrates the harmony between humans, animals and nature. It reflects the unique identity and culture of the tribal people, who have preserved their traditions and customs for generations. It is a festival that showcases their creativity, spirituality and resilience. It is a festival that celebrates the bond between humans and nature. It is a time to express gratitude, joy and hope for the future it is also a time to appreciate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the tribal communities.

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CONCLUSIONS:

The main highlight of this paper is to look at the festival and its various aspects through a cybernetic approach while understanding and analysing the various motivational factors and behavioural patterns of different users. Festival celebration helps in spreading happiness, joy, and helps build bonds between people. Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture and tradition.

The Santal society accepted inflow of certain socio – cultural elements from their neighbours and thus their culture and festivals have already undergone certain changes and in this changing scenario in the festival.

In conclusion it may be stated that the Santals in spite of various obstacles and their long interaction with Hindus and various other modern forces, they have been able to retain their own tribal identity and entity unaffected to a great extent in their culture, festivals, and their customs. Long live Sohrai festivals and brings happiness and harmony between traditions and rituals.