

Fostering Unity: Harmony and Solidarity in Tripura in the Light of Folk Culture: A Study of Indigenous Culture in Tripura

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Abstract

Tripura, a north-eastern state of India, is a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, each contributing to a rich and vibrant folk culture. This cultural heritage, deeply rooted in traditional music, dance, rituals, and festivals, has played a crucial role in fostering harmony and solidarity among various communities. Folk culture serves as a bridge between different ethnic groups, preserving indigenous traditions while promoting collective identity and social cohesion. Festivals such as Kharchi Puja, Garia Puja, and Ker Puja, among others, have evolved over time, reflecting both historical continuity and cultural adaptation. These festivities not only celebrate spiritual and religious beliefs but also act as unifying forces, bringing together people from different backgrounds in shared experiences of joy and devotion.

This research aims to examine the significance of folk culture in promoting solidarity in Tripura, highlighting its role in preserving ancestral traditions and reinforcing a sense of belonging. Additionally, the paper delves into the historical evolution of these cultural practices, exploring how they have been passed down through generations and adapted to contemporary society. By analysing the interplay between tradition and modernity, this study underscores the enduring impact of folk culture in strengthening social ties and ensuring cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Folk culture, solidarity, harmony, Tripura, festivals, tradition, cultural heritage, social cohesion, ethnic unity, indigenous practices

Introduction

Our earth planet is as huge as its problem is not too short. We are living in the state of Tripura- its various problems are constantly stirring the world of our thoughts. In this state, those who think about the problems of the people, they are very worried about the current turbulent situation in the state. In the state, they will be truly in need of harmony and solidarity in the people. When people's progress in science and technology is about to touch the imagination, the distance between people is increasing in this state. One man is becoming a isolated island. The tendency of this isolation has gained severe speed. Besides, the consciousness of humanitarian people is gradually gaining as a matter. They want to say that the harmony should be maintained at any cost to protect the normalcy of solidarity. Solidarity is not a matter of fact, which we can get when we raise our hands. We are surprised to look at our ancestors, leaving the new century by the long path of pre-history and history. Our primitive lovers were wild or barbaric, but were bound to an invisible bond of solidarity. Their solidarity was that the state of the state

was not going to be in any geographical area. They were natives of folk life. However, they were embroiled in the worldwide relations and similar culture. Social scientists, anthropologists, and folk culture scholars have pondered a lot about the type of society our primitive, wild, and barbaric great-grandparents lived in, and how they instilled cultural ideas in them. The number of manuscripts in which they have recorded the fruits of their thinking is also innumerable. Folk culture scholars have recorded the picture of the culturally rich lifestyle of those people there. In those days, man fought against nature; he adopted various methods and techniques to please nature. The similarity of the cultural ideas of one group with the cultural ideas of another group, even if they are not related to each other, is a matter of great surprise.

Understanding primitive social culture: There is a good reason for the need to understand the primitive social structure, the struggle against nature, and the nature of cultural ideas. This is the fact that man succeeded in the struggle to conquer nature. The day this dominance was achieved, human civilization also began. Humans began to advance through hunting. Then, animal husbandry, agriculture, spinning, weaving, metallurgy, the expansion of pottery, etc., gradually advanced, just advancing. This folk culture is never the result of a single effort or achievement. The literature that is created spontaneously through the collective effort of the group can be called folk culture. In accepting that creation, folk life has always is ready. This tendency has been observed since the past. The culture that is naturally created in the same group circle, that culture, the nearby group circle sometimes adopts it in some way or the other. Again, during the adoption, that group of people may change some 'events'. But the similarity in the content of cultural practice often remains. This process of cultural exchange, adoption-rejection by one group with another group began from time immemorial. Researchers have also discovered some sources for how this process was going on. Whatever it is, the real point is that the culture of collective life, that is, the process of adopting and rejecting various elements of folk culture, was spread everywhere, knowingly or unknowingly. This process was going on in Tripura too. A cultural fusion was going on in this state for a long time, knowingly or unknowingly. Before going into the main topic, it is necessary to bring some relevant important theories into discussion.

Morgan's Theory: Anthropologist and sociologist Louis Henry Morgan has gained respect for his research. There was a time when our ancestors were busy finding ways to survive by fighting or compromising with nature. At that time, people felt the need to live in groups, and their living was not limited to any specific boundaries. Only students of social science are aware of this theory of Henry Morgan. Human civilizations of all countries and societies have always evolved. The pace of this evolution continues. This evolutionary process is happening by moving from one level to another. Henry Morgan spoke of six levels of civilization. Some ethnic groups may not have been able to pass some stages of evolution due to environment, economic development or any other reason. On the other hand, some other ethnic groups have passed that level long ago. Again, some third groups could not pass that level due to lack of suitable environmental and economic opportunities. Those who have not been able to reach the last stage of civilization are identified as 'indigenous' in census records, newspapers or in the language of anthropology.

Methodology: This research employs a qualitative methodology grounded in ethnographic and historical approaches to explore the role of folk culture in fostering solidarity and harmony in Tripura. Primary data will be collected through field observations of key festivals such as Kharchi Puja, Garia Puja, and Ker Puja, alongside interviews with community elders, cultural practitioners, and festival

organizers. These firsthand narratives will be instrumental in understanding the lived experiences and communal values embedded in these practices.

Secondary data will include scholarly literature, archival documents, and visual ethnographies focusing on the folk traditions of Tripura and the broader Northeast India. Content analysis will be used to identify recurring cultural motifs, symbolic practices, and their evolution in the context of socio-political changes. Comparative analysis with similar folk traditions across different ethnic groups will further highlight patterns of shared identity and inter-community bonding.

Furthermore, the research integrates theories of cultural continuity, social cohesion, and identity formation to interpret the impact of these traditions in contemporary Tripura. The interdisciplinary nature of this study, drawing from cultural anthropology, history, and folklore studies, enables a holistic understanding of how indigenous practices contribute to the preservation of communal harmony and cultural resilience in a diverse society.

Stage of culture: The word 'culture' has a wide range and deep significance. The common idea is that dance-song-acting-reciting etc. are practical arts. And if you think a little further, literature, art, sculpture-architecture etc. are associated with it. Above all, various practical arts are associated with it. The word 'culture' is a word. It means. One is a spontaneously created belief or idea which develops in the absence of family and social environment, the other is sophisticated, refined and well-organized. Henry Morgan has arranged the stars of progress. He says that agriculture was established at the end of the barbaric era. During this time, the religious beliefs, concepts of gods, social rules, and customs of the people changed. He stood on his face. It continued to be achieved both in practical culture and mental culture. Following is a chart helpful in tracing the course of cultural evolution:

Invisible Power: People have come to regard invisible power as the organizer of good and evil a long time Storm, rain, earthquake, flood, drought, the extraordinary role of the invisible force behind all the natural phenomena was active in the thinking of the early man on earth. Imagination of invisible power e. B. Tylor said, animism or animism. Or later on. And. Maret called it animatism or animism. Animism can be explained as:

1. Beliefs in the various forces inherent in material and natural affairs,
2. Belief in the existence of one/more beings or spirits in the living and dead of man and other animals.
3. Belief in the miraculous power of the unpredictable.

Everywhere animism is founded on the doctrine of the perception of the soul. According to this theory, primitive people believed that all the animals, plants, rivers, etc. of the earth have life.

Magic: Belief in magic from primitive man to present man did not withdraw from the thought. However, it is not that the change in thinking is not observed. The consequences (direct or indirect) of magical belief are religious beliefs, rituals, reforms, customs, etc. If the scientific cause of objects and events is not known, it is called magic. When events are beyond the reach of human knowledge and intellect, attempts to appease invisible forces are observed. This is the origin of the belief in magic. Acting out or simulating something in anticipation of something that might or might actually happen is believed to actually happen. Chants aka songs, postures aka dances, these are imitative rituals, the result of which is magic. Paddy fields, ponds, fish, houses, etc. are being painted while performing the vow. If the vow is fulfilled, the imitative objects will become reality.

Totems and Taboos: The primitive peoples of the world believed that they were all one An attempt to make an animal or a natural object or thing stand up to a human being is called a totem belief. A group of human beings was known by the name of each superhuman animal or natural object or subject.

Human groups have been identified under a large number of 'totems' all over the world. For example, bear, pig, wolf, snake, some bird, thunder, red (colour), buffalo, deer, eagle, owl, turtle, crow, sea, sun, rabbit etc.

'Taboo' refers to a cautionary prohibition or objection. It cannot be prohibited or offensive. Men and women, non-human beings, names of objects, actions, planets, stars, moments, dates, times, months, etc. But any forbidden ritual is not considered to belong to the taboo. An act or a person or an object which is in any way imbued with some supernatural power, is taboo only if there is some prohibition against it. alone; But on the day of the fair people are great, on that day together with people they are great, on that day they feel the power of all humanity. (Festivals/Rabindranath Tagore).

Role of festivals in fostering unity:

Kharchipuja is not limited to the Kakbarak speaking people of the state. Bengali speakers as well as other language groups of the state have also accepted it as their own. This process has been going on for centuries. And now the Kharchi Puja premises has been established as a meeting place for people. It is rare in the bazaar, it is not possible in its own way, the way people and people exchange ideas, it has been happening here for a long time. The entertainment includes Ramayan songs, Krishna Katha, Kabygan, Mangalkavya readings, Baul songs, Yatra Vinay, Garian dance, Lebang Bumani dance, Jaduklija, folklore-based drama etc. and the folk culture genre is being nurtured. This process of retaining and somehow protecting and enriching the cultivated culture of the larger population has become helpful in maintaining regional harmony and solidarity in a larger sense.

The festival of Navanna, the beginning of the New Year, is celebrated in one form or another not only in the tribal life of Tripura, but almost everywhere in India beyond the borders of Greater-Bangladesh. Dr. Pallab Sengupta said, the main economic basis of agricultural civilization, when the crops are new, the position of the moon and the sun at that time was calculated according to tithi. The New Year festival is similar to the kind of enthusiasm we see among the tribals on the occasion of bringing home the crops. This is the result of fertility-centered culture. From primitive to ancient times, to the Middle Ages—even to the Ekals—the belief in magic was and still is active in the minds of people, and various ceremonies as part of the festival reflect this. Be it burning paper dragons that once symbolized the old year in China to burn away the 'tired night of the old year', be it the worship of our Bighna Binashan (a Bighnaraj) Ganapati, and be it the union of men and women in the fields to wish for the new harvest, the good fortune of the new year among some tribes in West Africa - behind all this is the belief of magic." A bamboo is chosen as the deity. "Raghuvir Sinha says in his book Religion and culture of North Eastern India that the deity is worshiped as a bamboo symbol.....I would like to give a faithful example from West Bengal, like the Garia Puja, a slender bamboo pole with the branches and the leaves are also adored in the gambhira festival."

We are amazed at the amazing similarity in the various fields of the adjacent culture with the cultural thought that is intertwined in every field of religion, starting from the deification of Gariya Puja. by doing Such an open party of drinking centered around the Garia deity may not be held elsewhere.' But getting drunk on 'new rice juice', 'dancing in the fields on moonlit nights' and being infatuated with the scent of Nabanna is not something that is not seen even in Bengali society. The dance-song centered on Gariya has got the chance to come out today. The practice of welcoming the deity, resorting to song to praise him, is practiced everywhere. Some say that the Dhamail dance is similar in structure to the Garia dance. Gariya is an agricultural deity. Therefore, the image of agricultural life has been captured in the infrastructure of this folk dance. Man first imposed divinity in trees, stones, etc. The worship of the

Gariya deity is influenced by pantheism, where bamboo is considered as a symbol of God. Again, though not so, Gariya is also called Ganesha Puja. A piece of information has recently come to hand. Then, the image of Garia has also been imagined. Initially, Gariya's appearance was done by drawing pictures. Not only that, but Chantai followed the 'custom' and gave money to Gariya Pratika images (to the 'murti', one assumes). Again, young women in pants and shirts danced in the Anand Asar of Garia. Here the amalgamation of cultures has attained multiplicity.

Turning the discussion in a different direction, the theoretical class division of Bengali folk culture has to be mentioned. In the division made by Dr. Dulal Chowdhury, twenty-four episodes of folk culture of Bengal have been mentioned. Without going into the complexities of morphologically similar divisions of Tripura's tribal folklore, the world of Tripuri folklore can also be divided into similar categories. A prominent and rich branch of it is folklore. The collection of tribal folklore of Tripura is not so rich. However, the collection as it exists today is also of immense value. Again, it is noteworthy that these are not outside the list of international motifs (Type and Font Index). That is, the texts of Tripuri tribal folklore are also found elsewhere. E.g., a folk tale is "monkey". A similar story is mentioned by Dr. Dinendra Kumar Sarkar in his book "Kumarivali of Mankind". The story of 'Kumari Banar Swami' or 'The girl who married a monkey' is mentioned in his book about Lakh people in Assam. This story is popular among the people living in Lusai Hills. There is no denying the importance of inter-relationships in the context of the world of folk culture.

Since time immemorial this trend of telling folk tales, which is prevalent among people of every caste group, has in one way or another merged with each other either in whole or in part. People of different ethnic groups think alike or are transmitted by word of mouth or through some other means, and folktales have spread everywhere in different guises. The structural similarity of these folktales can be illustrated with the help of an example.

Conclusion

There are many other elements of folk culture, with the help of which it is not difficult to discover the mutual relationship between the two communities. The coexistence of the two communities in this state for a long time resulted in the cultural similarity of the majority of the people. And because of that no obstacle was created in the coexistence. It is only natural that folk culture will proceed at its normal pace. Due to the influence of knowledge, science and technology as well as the influence of globalization, there has been a wave in the world of culture in the course of social change. With rapid changes in the environment, changes in traditional culture have also become inevitable. Under the influence of new times, discarding old meanings and adopting new meanings is gradually changing the world of folk culture.

And when there is some sort of disturbance in the social life, then any kind of cultural practice is disrupted. Spontaneous conversion is far from over, and it becomes difficult to protect it. Yet there is a tendency to collect elements of folk culture 'folk jewels' It is being noticed lately. There was a tide in Tripura too - collecting folk artefacts and practicing folk culture gained importance. The country named Philand has been proved by further research by collecting such folk material, there are no ethnic groups isolated, there is an undercurrent of mutual harmony in thought and culture.

For the sake of maintaining mutual love, the initiatives of the current government and private institutions are very promising. Folk culture can play a valuable and important role in this. But the right people should be used here. Otherwise, it will be fakelore. The heart-to-heart relationship of people all over the

world, the culture that has been carrying on since time immemorial is folk culture. Therefore, it is necessary to think how this huge potential aspect can be utilized to preserve harmony. Only where the preservation of the integrity of a state has become a difficult problem can folk culture play an effective role as a force for international.

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