

Exploring the Religious Songs and Cultural Practices of Tripura's Tribal Communities

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Abstract: *In Tripura there are quite a number of Tribal communities belonging to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups who have an indigenous traditional culture. The tribal rites rituals, beliefs and practices along with the tribal festivals constitute a rich cultural heritage which has survived as an integral component of the Indian culture without sacrificing its indigenous tradition. Our knowledge about religious songs of pujas and festivals of the tribal people of Tripura is still limited. The main aim of this paper is to find out a clear and comprehensive picture of religious songs of pujas and festivals of the tribal people of Tripura.*

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, religious Songs, festivals

Through the centuries many of the tribal people of Tripura were obliged to surrender to the religious and ideological dominance of Brahmanism and Buddhism but they were not ready to reject their traditional Goda and Goddesses. In the priestly Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheons, the tribal gods and goddesses were accepted and the traditional observances associated with them. A Hindu tribal or a Buddhist tribal is not a separate class of Hindu society or a Buddhist society, there is no differences between a caste Hindu and a tribal Hindu and the same is relevant to tribal Buddhist also. Tribal pujas and festivals in Tripura deal with the religious pujas and festivals of the Hindu and Buddhist tribals who were indeed indigenous to the land and they have managed to survive to this day by struggle.

Tripuri Tribes

Ggaria rwmani or mwtaí rwmani, ochaini hik: kasai lubia dong, thengui chhak - ya dong, aisri - sri nog - o ka - phai ba, chhamung homung de tong, nok phang: wandal engsa - ni sumui, nokha tolani chumui, khwna phung ai oi mwtaí rwnani, ochai wng phai - di kumul. Bari magdam cha - nai ba tokha naitok bokjaknai, khwna phung ai - oi mwtaí rwnani, barua wng phai - di kaka. Gaireng thokoma, makhu - mai bubuk, babui raichuima raibuk, kumui kotor bo, ochai onghwlaí, jogalya phaidi - bai - bo.

Meaning:

The wife of Ochai addressing the house holder enquires the reason of this arrival in the house of the Ochai early in the morning. The house holder replies that he has come to invite the Ochai to perform the Garia puja in his house. The house holder invites the assistant of the Ochai to act as Barua. He invites the wife of Ochai to work as a Jogali.

Song:

Garia mwtaí phai - o, chaitra thangkho lai, baisak phaiano, baisak mai kailai - nani, sena kwchar bai baisak kwchar - o, maiba chung barok nani.

Meaning:

Garia has arrived. The month of baishak will appear after the month of Chaitra. We shall sow the seed jointly in the month of Baishak.

Song:

Gom gom gom Garia, mwchha phai diba bariya, chheng kwrwng mwsa oy phai - kha do, bariya kharkhw - na do, tai chapak chapak tog chadi, tai - ni sikambuk khchadi kolok ta hindi kiting ta hindi phai - oy, ay khereng bai ay, tamo hinaí phaiya, chana hinoy bo phaiya, nung na hinoy bo phaia, babui gareya phiyo, atka hakor lupe, atka hakoor lupe, nai ba kamini sikla rokoni, Abuk chhe lupe lupe.

Meaning:

The youths are requesting the villagers to take part in the dance which is called "Kherengbai". In response to the question of the villagers the Garia dancers reply that they have not come to take and eat anything from the village, but they are looking the breasts of village girls which are ready for flying.

Koloi Tribes: (Garia Rwnai Rwchabmung)

Song:

O mayi, chitro thangka ba, baishak phai - dekha, bchhor son phirok phaika. O khonjon thangkha ba telia phaika, bochhor son phirao phaika, o mai yakni chhi da chhora, tokching Korong bai thanggoy chanani nang nai, o mai tinile salchha chhi, rongo tamosa khlale maichu chusa.

Meaning:

Addressing the God Garia the youths are singing that at the end of the year the Khanjan bird goes away and the tiliya birds come, similarly the month of Baishak will come after Chaitra. Likewise another year come after a year. Today is a very good day. The joy is for everybody for today only. Tomorrow, we are to go the Jhum field with a bundle of rice. Today will be lost on tomorrow. This means sorrow and happy revolves like a wheel.

Song:

"O sal bo thang rw rwk, mokal kai rw rwk, tini ton gwla k na du, o golojong tan phai oy, jakhwrai bodi, mama jak toloy twidi, Jan koli son"

Meaning:

The day is passing slowly. The night comes after the day. Garia is also sleeping. Garia is prepared for departure.

Farewell of Garia will be performed after the cutting of galjung trees and building a bridge. O my companions today Garia will be immersed.

Song:

“ Ailamre ailamre, garia raja desh berai, ghar grihasthi hojak koro, deshe deshe boite chai, tila tongkor bhaniya, sat chhora sukaiya, dhol bajailo ujir nam, khorgo hoichhe banaiya, garia aichhe banaiya, garia raja chinta nai., bhalore bhalore bhalo, theng tuliya nacho., ma chaiya phai maiya, ma nuiya phai maiya, garoyani phai michhe—gariyani chhokarak rag. Hata muiya cha hamiya, garia bai tang hamiya, , oi Garia oi, oi Garia oi, chini parani siklarog, sitottoi lope pei, atuka bohoro lope, atuka bohoro lope, chini parani siklarogoe, sitattoi pei.

Meaning:

The youths are addressing the house holder to sing the song after their arrival in front of the house and they request the house - holder to take necessary arrangement for the satisfaction of the Garia. It may be noted the erotic element seem to be found in the above mentioned song.

Song:

O jalay sao chadi, kheri bacha thun, o kangal mui kuthung man thun, thorai bacha thun, o kangal mui khuthung thun.

Meaning:

Here the singer is singing that low land is utilized for the cultivation of jhum. If the jhum field is burnt, the Kheri plant will grow quickly to provide the vegetables for the moneyless beggar.

Riang Tribes (Song of Garia)**Song:**

aiso gu Garia aiso gu Garia, kumar dhuti chhap koro, mather pagri chhap koro, jhama jhuma chhap koro., garia raja beraite chay, uthore garia desh desh beraite chay, desh desh nachte chay, chait porab shuniya, bari bari berate chay, tila - tangkor bhangiya, sat chhora sukhaiya., dhul bajaila ujir nam, khorgo haichhe banaiya, garia aichhe banaiya, garia raja chinta nai. tar banaichhe chhirang ghoti, chhirong ghoti hate laiya, hatir dater ganthiya, daker daker shariya, bari bari nachte chay, khala thola chhap koro.

Meaning:

Addressing God Garia it is sung that the God Garia wants to tour from place to place. He also likes to dance from door to door crossing the hilly regions. The God Garia wishes to sit on the courtyard of the house holder.

Song:

Din rat chaliya, jol ghoti anosna, garia raja biota chay, duyar meliya tamasa chay, manile biota chay, na manile cholte chay, aiso gu kherangbai, dim pile Garia de, murog paile Garia de, sunarupa bar bhariya, taka poisa bandhiya, garia raja ason bade baite chay, chati bade baite chay.

Meaning:

Addressing the house holder the youths sing that Garia raja wants to sit if the house holder respects him. He house

holder may offer the eggs and fowls to Garia for receiving blessings from him.

Chakma Tribes (Song of Biju)**Song:**

Biju dinnuy lungogi, udi udi bedebang, gei gei gei dei bonlak naksfulan pariye, o ful Biju din jarata gebang, ful tulibang ajal ajul nasktulitarumat.

Meaning:

Biju has come, so we should enjoy it in flying mood. Brother and sister, let us go to pluck the Nageswar flower from the deep forest with cupped palms.

Buddha Tabana (religious song)**Song:**

Namu Buddha aranat, namu dharma aranat, namu sangha aranat, ei tin nange bhajana samane, ei manei janamat. Kadhak pap garilung jani na jani, kadhak dhab sirelung tare na mani, sei pap theba jama, yani napelung khema, ei jibanat, lobhe pap pape khsy, ai kadha mija nay, abuj manhei ami na buji, sei karmabhale mor, yuge yuge janamhor, Anadare yare na puji. mukti pebatyei mui bare bar, janma mrityu dukha chelung arebar, dharmapath dhariney karma karma, shech gariney, yedung narbanata.

Meaning:

I remember the Lord Buddha, dharma and sanga. The life - long duty of the human being is to adore them. Knowingly or unknowingly I have committed sins and fulfilled many desires rejecting you, please forgive me and rescue from sins. A temptation creates sin and a sin causes destruction; but the ignorant man can not realize this truth. A man comes in the world again and again, the cause of which is that he denies to adore you. For the attainment of salvation I want to go beyond the sorrows and pleasures. I like to achieve Nirvana following the dharma path resignations all services of worldly life.

Song:

Echya amar biju din, achya amar biju mila marad baghe mili, biju dinat najibong, benya potya udinei, nuyou nuyou saj pinibong, adame adame bedabong, sang - samchya badinei, ghare ghare mad - jagara, bege mali khebange, mili marad sabha badi, ghila khara khabonge. ghare ghare berenei, buro - buri gadhebong, jage jage smar badi, gide renye berabong.

Meaning:

Today, all the men and women shall take part in the dance of Biju festival early. Rising early in the morning from the bed and wearing mew dresses we shall go round the village and dance. All men and women shall play Ghila collectively. We shall drink wine and jagara. We shall walk from door to door to bathe the aged men and women. We shall go round the village singing the harmonious song to express our joy.

The tribals of the state of Tripura were normally poor and illiterate but not uneducated nor lacking in wisdom. With their knowledge and wisdom the tribals of Tripura sought to accommodate and integrate a great deal of their own culture

as articulated through ritualistic folk songs and dances, agricultural rituals and ritualistic decorations around the bamboo poles, their emblems of deities which were shaped and formed by the raw bamboo poles. Their ritualistic songs, myths and legends were transmitted orally from generation to generation, each generation changing them. In fact, the tribals of Tripura have own forms and aesthetic standards.

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