



Cover Page



TUSU FESTIVAL- A PART OF FOLK CULTURE: A REVIEW

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Abstract: Paddy and rice are the key ingredients of the harvest celebration known as Tusu. Tusu is comparable to single females in Kurmi rites. The family that worships Tusu takes care of the grains and a seed as the girl develops in her household. Tusu's submersion in the sea is analogous to a newlywed girl departing for her new family. A significant component of the intangible cultural legacy, which is strongly linked to human culture and is passed down from generation to generation, is this event. As a result, the researcher has made an effort to explore the many rituals performed during the Tusu festival as well as how it is now observed.

Keywords: Festival, Tusu, Unmarried Girls, Family, Human Culture.

Introduction: One of the three main celebrations of the Kurmi people in West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha is the harvest festival known as Tusu. The other two celebrations are Bandna and Karam. These are all yearly celebrations that follow one another. Tusu is observed in Jharkhand, the Rh region of West Bengal, and in some areas of Odisha from the middle of November to the middle of December (according to the Bengali calendar, from the last day of Aghrahyana to the last day of Poush). Numerous other groups, in addition to the Kurmis, also observe Tusu. The Bengali poet Nirmal Halder claims, in a one-on-one conversation with the author, that "In my youth, in our household, we used to sing Tusu songs and worshipped Tusu for a full month." Tusu is not a religious holiday, in the words of Sadhan Mahato, a poet and cultural activist from Purulia, and is observed by people of all castes and faiths, including Christians, Muslims, Hindus, non-Hindus, Adivasis, and everyone.

The event is mostly known for the collection of songs performed by single females at nighttime during the month of Poush. According to Sadhan Mahato, who was interviewed for the project, "the Tusu is cooked and worshipped at houses by chaste virgin females. Every day the ladies start adoring the goddess by singing Tusu songs. Married ladies don't venerate Tusu.

Historical Background: The Tusu festival has been the subject of historical analysis by historians. They assert that the Kudums' Tusu celebration has a long history. Here, I'd like to provide a few quotes from eminent historians who have addressed the Muslim invasion on the defenseless people of Orissa and the surrounding areas. Das (1997: 59) cited the passage from Sarangi (1978: 47) and said,

"But there might be a historicity of the evolution of Tusu worship in Mayurbhanj also. The history gives evidence that this region was facing frequent foreign invasion. We may refer to the invasion of Firoz Shah Tughluq to Jajnagar (the modern Jajpur) in 1361 and on his way he invaded Khiching."

Panigrahi (1981: 176) has also mentioned about the Tughluq's attack on Orissa as,

"He marched towards Orissa with a large cavalry. He marched through Bihar, modern Pachet and Sikhar in the Manbhum district. He then pushed forward through the defiles of Manbhum and Singhbhum then he reached Tinanagar which has been identified with modern Khiching, the ancient capital of Bhanja rulers of Mayurbhanj."

During the attack there were plunders and rapes which is clear from the following statement of Panigrahi (1981:180), where he has mentioned, "The massacre of innocent men, women and children ordered by the Sultan also present a woeful story. Even making allowances for exaggeration of the Muslim accounts, one has to admit that the lurid pressure of the massacre described by them constitutes a blot on the Sultan's character, which no amount of white washing can efface".

These facts make it very evident that Muslims assaulted the way of life and culture of the defenceless people of Orissa and the surrounding areas. The mythology around "Tusu" is one of the clearest instances of folklore that exists today that provides proof of Muslim attacks on local commoners. Numerous legends about "Tusu" and "Muslim" invading exist. Although there are minor differences in name, setting, and character from one folktale to the next, they always come to a close with "Tusu" taking his own life to save chastity and purity from a Muslim monarch. The historical genesis of the Tusu festival is again separated into four sorts based on the nature of this explanation. Despite the fact that different sorts of persons are associated with Tusu in each of these perspectives and are portrayed in various ways, each of these perspectives comes to an end with the suicide of a beautiful girl.



Cover Page



Objectives: This study has been carried out with the following objectives-

- ✓ To study the different rituals practiced in Tusu festival.
- ✓ To study how Tusu festival is celebrated in present time.

Rituals of Tusu

Each farmer leaves the last cluster of rice plants in the field during the final round of harvesting during the winter harvest season. The ladies of the family venerate this clump, which is uprooted and planted in the courtyard of the home rather than being harvested. This group is revered as a Goddess and is known by the names Dini Budhi, Dini Giran, or Thakrain. It's interesting to note that before the next planting season, the dirt surrounding this cluster is dispersed around the fields. The event officially kicks off at this time.

The four phases of formal Tusu worship are typically installation and invitation, care and nurturing, awakening, and ultimately immersion. The first phase involves inviting Goddess Tusu to a party and placing her idol on Aghan Sankranti. The second phase involves the family of worshippers taking care of and nurturing the Goddess for a whole month at their residence. The adoration of the Goddess at night from Aghan Sankranti to the day before Poush Sankranti is part of the third phase, waking. The Goddess is submerged in a river on the day of Makar or Poush Sankranti, which marks the completion of the ritual.

An idol of Tusu, often constructed out of mud and straw, is placed in each home on the final day of Aghan. Some families represent the freshly constructed Tusu with a ball of cow dung and a ball of rice flour, both of which have three vermilion markings on them. Every day, flowers, particularly marigold flowers, and atapchal or arwa chawal (rice that has been husked without parboiling) are brought to the Goddess. Jaggery (raw cane sugar), puffed rice, milk, ghee, and water are also provided to the woman. Every evening at dark, clay lights called diyas and incense sticks are burned in her honour. She is also awoken every morning by the lighting of an earthen lamp. Every evening, ladies gather to perform Tusu songs. Tusu is said to listen to these tunes before going to sleep.

Poush Mas, the post-harvest period when food is in plentiful supply in every family, is when Tusu comes. Just like they wait for their married daughters to return home, housewives anticipate Tusu's arrival. Sometimes a daughter's requests are not granted at the husband's home, but they are always granted in the mother's home. Tusu is therefore presented with a variety of foods. The most significant days of the Tusu celebration are the last five days, which are Aundi, Chaundi, Baundi, Makar, and Akhan Yatra. Rice is cleaned and given a water soak on Aundi. Rice flour is made for Chaundi. Pithas, a kind of rice cake, are produced on Baundi. Examples include gudpitha and undhhi pitha. On that day and the next, they are made available to Makar and Tusu. The Baundi night is a jagran night (everyone keeps awake and celebrates the night by singing the Tusu songs). Tusu is eventually submerged in water on Makar. On the first of Makar, special offerings are presented to the Goddess. The Goddess receives eight different kinds of grains. Farmers see Akhan Yatra, the first day of Magh Mas, as a lucky day. To signal the start of planting season, cow dung is scattered throughout the fields, and the fields are ceremoniously ploughed.

On the banks of rivers, tusu fairs are conducted during Makar Sankranti. On the banks of the Damodar, Kangsabati, Subarnarekha, Kharkai, Kanchi, Ajay, and other tributaries of these rivers, certain well-known Tusu fairs are conducted.

Tusu in the Present time: In contrast to now, the Tusu celebration and songs of our youth were radically different. The modernity, urbanization, and technological advancements, however, are making all of these celebrations gradually less relevant. In addition, as I become older, it seems like the folk festivals are progressively making their way to the villages. despite connecting ourselves with modernity, we claim that we are neither a part of or related to these festivities. But whether they are Brahmin, Baidya, Kayastha, Haari, Muchi, or Bauri, they are always associated with the people of Purulia (castes). Everyone who could was involved. We are allowing ourselves to wander more away from these gatherings as the days go by. Another issue is that corporate organizations increasingly host folk festivals, which is unattractive. We can observe that city dwellers are now visiting to appreciate Tusu. People come to Tusu because it is a festival and for enjoyment. All they do is sing, dance, and have a party. They are unaware of the importance of Tusu, which we all consider important. Tusu is celebrated by the rural population as a fun event, while the urban population does not know its history.

Conclusion: These new age songs, which emulate the conventional singing styles, are how Tusu songs are still performed today. The brand-new tunes will eventually merge with the custom. Tusu continues to play a significant role in folk culture and everyday life in this way. Tusu remains a cause of joy, celebration, and festivity despite the fact that the festival's structure, the songs' substance,



Cover Page



and corporate takeovers of these aspects of culture have altered throughout time. Tusu songs continue to play a significant role in modern culture, and new ones are always being composed. Mythological tales, current political concerns, regional issues, etc. are all covered in these songs.

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