



ROLE OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY FESTIVALS OF THE ORAON IN MAINTENANCE OF ECOLOGICAL BALANCE AND THE MITIGATE THE EFFECT OF GLOBAL WARMING

Dr. Jagdeep Oraon

Assistant Professor

Department of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University
Purulia, West Bengal

Introduction

The environment is changing day by day due to climatic change. So now Climate change and Global warming are burning issues for the world and we have a very short history as its institutional and formal curriculum. Only Humans is not responsible for the environmental changes, since in the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and the Neolithic period humans existed on the earth, at that time the environmental changes were observed. Natural reason is also embedded in climate change. So we can say that the anthropogenic activities and some natural phenomenon cause of environmental degradation after the industrial revolution breach the sustainable relationship between Earth and its creatures.

The human gets achieve an enormous means by their inventions and discoveries capable to change the effects of nature in course of safety and comfort living from the Neolithic cultural periods. Then they become regulators of nature and gradually by increasing population density bring forth a boost to breach the harmony of the man-Nature-Earth relationship. People, from their pristine period, keep proximity with nature which starts to decay as a degree of technological advancement. Indigenous people remain at a less advanced phase of exploitation of existing natural resources. In the same way, the intermingled socio-cultural life of these people makes a recurring effort to keep harmonious relations between man and nature. Cultural sanction of Tribal people (i.e., Indigenous in the case of India) empowered through rituals, taboo and customs regulate the culturally affiliated regular and occasional behaviour. The majority of Tribal religions advocate nature as a messiah, mother, protector, or host for their people. Nature is the abode of their ancestral spirits. Reminiscence of the bygone days reflects these ethical matters by their beliefs and worldview of the Tribal people.

Ancestors of the Tribal communities go through enumerable trial and error interaction with the natural phenomenon in course of collection and cultivation of food and other commodities like medicine, house material safety, etc. these invaluable experiences were included in the realm of religious thinking and beliefs. Trial and error interactions some time get scientific base also, for these potentialities scientists, policy makers; academicians give importance to this indigenous knowledge in searching the means for a sustainable environment as well as the advancement of human civilization. Fair and festival s among the tribal people is enriched with a vast body of indigenous knowledge to serve their community in region-specific and universal problems. The Oraon community with an enriched cultural heritage are known to the literal by a series of research investigation from the study of colonial administrators, native amateur and other. They are the most numerable tribal community in Jharkhand and make domination throughout eastern India.

Review of literature

Jones (2012) there is several conventions and conferences in quest of sustainable environment. Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires parties to “respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.”

Ntiamoa-Baidu (1990), Indigenous communities generally have concepts of origin of their land and nature through god's creations and is as an integral part of many traditional indigenous religious belief systems.

World Bank, (1997) Indigenous knowledge is the local knowledge which is unique to a given culture or society.

UNGA (2009) Indigenous Knowledge is the information base for a society, and facilitate in communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are not static and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation along with contact with external systems. The religious belief serves a UNGA report advocates frequency of participation of indigenous women experts in mitigate climate Change through planning and decision-making processes.

CA (2007) Indigenous Protected Area under Australian Government understand great cultural significance to the people as a, traditional tribal territory which place patronize as mythologically important sites.



Charles Winick (1956) in the dictionary of anthropology defines festival as collective rituals, often centering on magical operations, a festival may also be a period which is especially marked for public religious observances. They are social in nature and symbolize the feeling of a whole community.

Prof. Vidyarthi (1961) the sacred aspect of a festival may be understood in terms of three analytic concepts- Sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialists. Festivals provide the people with occasions for eating, drinking, singing, dancing, merry making, social visits and enjoying visits to fairs.

Pandey (2003), as an active force in protection of rare forest species.

Kalam (1996) Participatory mode of preservation utilized in want of rains, good health of livestock and for fending off possible natural hazards. In purpose of wellbeing of domestic cattle, people from some parts of Karnataka, offer miniature images of cattle's.

Deb and Malhotra (1997) In case of Tribal of West Bengal, social gathering takes place in the vicinity of Sacred Groves on the eve of Salui and Karam festivals.

Sarat Chandra Roy (1928) this was the first instance of a monographic study on the religious aspect of a tribe. Here typological classification of the different festivals of the Oraon. This book also delineates the extensive, intensive and comprehensive account of each Oraon festival.

W.G. Archer (1942) had written nine Sarhul and Karama poems together with several poems on marriages of Oraon's in Man in India.

Ajit Kumar Singh (1982) Tribal festivals are unique, they perform the festivals in several occasion as per the Hindi month calendars, at different places

Karma Oraon (1988), The continuity and changing factors in the religion in Oraon tribe of chotanagpur region, etc.

Objectives

The present research work is focused on the following Objectives:

1. Find out the sustainable environment to mitigate Global Warming through the basic nature and purpose of the fair and festival of the Oraon community of Jharkhand.
2. Analyse the concerning beliefs and worldviews in searching for environmental protection.
3. Examine the relation of seasonal natural changes and occurrences of festivals in the relation of regional climatic sustainability.

Research Methodology

The data for this research was gathered with a preliminary survey, among the elderly folks of the Oraon community from villages under the Kanke and Sadar block of Ranchi district. Structured Schedules are collected from the potential informants found from the preliminary survey. Queries that emerge from the literature survey are helpful to frame these Schedules. With the help of schedule qualitative data was collected for the Sadar and Kanke Block of Ranchi District, Jharkhand. Four villages were taken for the fieldwork Patangai and banhara of Kanke block and Purani Ranchi and Argora. Some case studies are also taken for special rituals and procedures of the festival.

Here researcher attempt to present the research work by an analytical and experimental discourse of the continuously dynamic experiences as well as through the Emic approach. The Oraon's has a number over two million in India, have been enumerated in Jharkhand. According to the 2011 census, 8,645,042 Oraon populations reside in Jharkhand. This tribe habitation is mainly in the states of, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam. They also found in Nepal, Bhutan Bangladesh in a good number.

Oraon traditionally speaks Kurukh language which belongs to the Dravidian family but the racially proto-Australoid stock. They are divided into many clans like animals, birds, fish plants, and the non- plants also. Some are like kujur, toppo, lakra, dhan, minz, kachhap, ekka, etc.

Oraon follow the Sarna religion (Natural Worshiper). Their God and Goddess are Dharmes the creators of the Universe, Spirits of dead ancestors known as the Pachbalar and Chala Aayo (Environmental goddess). The most amazing fact about Oraons is that they pay respect to the ghosts and spirits like Darha & desauli, Mahadania, Surjahi, Barpahari, few spirits like Chandi, Achrael, Khunt bhuts, etc. In the Oraon tribe, all the religious rituals from birth to death are carried out by the Pahan or Nayke (Priest).



Oraon festivals are divided into a different type like:

- i). Food gathering festival,
- ii). Hunting festival,
- iii). Concern to cattle, and
- iv). Related to occupation or Agriculture.

Tribal societies observed the different festivals, which are not only to the individual but also for the entire universe. There are two major festivals celebrated by the Oraons are Khaddi and the second one Karam. Khaddi/Sarhual festival is celebrated in the month of Chait (March and April). This is very important that it resembles like food gathering festival, but its greater value to understanding the tribal worldview regarding the environment and pay homage to their ancestors. The second major festival is the Karam festival which falls in the month of Bhadra (September and October). They celebrate this festival to please God to increase their wealth and free them from all the enemies. Here not only the Other festivals of the Oraons community include Phagu, dhanbuni, bangari, kadleta, Kharihani, and soharai. They also celebrate a hunting festival called Phagu Sendra on the eve of Falgun Purnima and Bishu sendra in the summer season. These two festivals show that Oraons believe that, these seasons are favourable for the hunting because after that most of the animals start breeding, so they can't hunt them. Through hunting festivals, they try to control the eco-balance but now due to so many laws and the act passes so today they celebrate these two festivals only in a symbolic manner.

Festivals of the Oraon

Round the year the `Oraons' engage themselves in the worship of nature in some way or other. They have been worshipping for generations the tree, stone, water, Sun, land, fire, or rather the so-called Panchabhutas' that constitute the cosmos.

Traditionally, the year for the `Oraon' begins from the Hindi month `Magh' that corresponds to February in the English calendar. Of all the festivals they have, mention may be made of

1. Fagu : this festival celebrates getting a good crop on the full day of the month of Phagun (Mar.-April).
2. `Khaddi (Sarhul)'-a festival of flower (Spring) in the Hindi month Phalgun' and Chaitra.
3. `Dhanbuni -a religious festival for paddy occur at the Hindi month `Baisakh'.
4. Bangari - a festival of the plantation (agriculture) in the Hindi month `Baisakh' & `Jaistha'.
5. Hariyari -a festival for Agriculture related to the month of `Asarh'.
6. Asari-a festival of plantation in the Hindi month Asar.
7. Karam'-a festival of work and plantation related to the Hindi month 'Bhadra'.
8. Soharai- festival for cattle in the Hindi month `Kartick'.
9. Bishu Sendra'-festival of hunting in the Hindi month Pous'.

However, and ` have no direct impact on environmental association for which they have not been discussed here.

We can go through major festivals of Oraon community-

(1) Faggu : The Oraons of this festival celebrate to get a good crop on the full day of the month of Phagun (Mar.-April). Before this day young boys and the other members of the village collect the firewood, some hay, and dry leaves at one place in the village. Two important things are kept there, that are branches of castor plant and the branch of the semar tree. In the centre, they keep a branch of castor plan and the branch of semar tree, and around that the put firewood, dry leaves, and some hay. A full day of Phagun they gathered and the village priest (Pahan) worship God then sets fire to hay. When fire burns at its full swings then the young castor shrub is cut into pieces with an axe. Immediately they young boys of the village light torches from the bonfire and throw a beam of torches at the fruit of trees, saying; be loaded with good fruit.

(2) Khaddi (Sarhul):- The Oraons observe this festival in the month of Chaitra. They worship in this month three gods represented respectively by Dharmesh (Sun), Dhartimata, and Chala Aayo (the lady of Environment). The Kurukh word Khaddi relates to the word khadd, this means a newborn baby of human beings, of animals, of birds and even of plants. The whole nature is abounding with new offspring, of an animal, as well as in vegetation.

Khaddi song:

Ender pupan menjherki daia
Ban garha beshe lawkarki baraa lagdi,
Naur pudp menjherki daia
Ban garha beshe lawkarki baraa lagdi.



The Word itself is a flower, and therefore this festival religiously suggests that the people will be forbidden to enter the forest till the flowers begin to sprout in the 'Sal' trees, this religious injunction has an explicit motive. These people want to see nature in her fullest form and the most spontaneous manifestation without any human intervention. In this time nobody is allowed to kill wild animals. If someone breaks the custom, then the financial punishments imposed as per the rules.

The popular folklore is a story of Bindi, daughter of Mother Earth.

Bindi, the only daughter of Mother Earth, one day didn't return home from bathing in the pond. Mother Earth sent her messengers all around in search of Bindi, but she couldn't be found anywhere. Distressed and in grief, she started crying. She was gravely saddened. Leaves started falling off in empathy. It was gloomy everywhere.

After a long search, news came that Bindi is with the God of Death in the underworld. The messengers informed the God of Death that Bindi is the only daughter of Mother Earth and they appealed for her return. But the God of Death was not willing to listen he argued that nobody can return once they reach there.

However, when the messengers lamented that Mother Earth would die if Bindi didn't return to her and the whole creation would come to an end. The God of Death was in a dilemma then. He then agreed for a compromise to save the creation and Mother Earth. He said that Bindi would spend the first half of her time on Earth and the other half in the underworld. Ever since then, when Bindi comes back, Mother Earth is full of happiness and there is greenery everywhere. Sarhul is celebrated for Bindi's return.

As a fact, efforts are being made through these religious rights to preserve nature and wildlife. Despite their abysmal darkness of ignorance, their environmental awareness is praiseworthy. It is not denying the fact that 'poverty and greenery are the same things; indeed they are synonymous.

(3) Dhan Buni: Oraons are farmers so when the showing seeds than this festival are celebrated. The village pahan with villager go to the field and scrap some space and cow dung that area. Then the pahan facing in the east and pray to the god after that separates the heads of five fowls with a sharp knife. Then he sprinkles the blood of the fowls on the five kuris of arwa rice. This scarifies is made in the name of the village gods and the deities. In some of the Oraon communities, before sowing the seeds the head of the family sacrifices a goat or a fowl or a pigeon to please the Gosain.

(4) Bangari: When paddy seedling is ready for the transplantation that time Oraon communities they celebrate Bangari. Villagers invite the pahan and the others at the paddy field. They taking a pot of rice- bear, arwa rice, sal leaves sindoor (Vermillion), etc. Pahan took five paddy seedlings and keep it at the scraped someplace with cow dung. He pours rice- bear, sindoor, and the fowl with some mantras pray to Dharmata for a good crop. After worship, he planted the paddy seedlings on the spot where rice beer was poured. The person who was participated in those places drinks the rice-beer. Then transplantation starts by the women in the field. The women sing the song and with enjoying to transplantation. After transplantation, they return to the cultivator's house after taking the bath. There are foods, rice- beers available for everyone, they eat, drink, and enjoyed by sing and dancing.

(5) Asari: - The festival is observed in the shade of such huge plants and the area that surrounds it. With this festival, the Oraons go for planting after the seeds germinate and become standard saplings. During this festival, generally, it is seen that plantation is a routine program. Everybody participates in this plantation business. Trees are planted not only near the place of puja but also in the area surrounding it. The present a forestation agenda owes much to them. It had already been a part of their religious activities.

(6) Hariyari : this festival is celebrated on the eve of when the paddy gondli, marua, and kapas crop is in full swing of greenery. It is celebrated in the month of Ashar at the individual level or the community level too. Here the head of the family worship at the house where he sacrifices the fowl to their khunt spirit before begins to transplant the paddy seedlings in their respective field. The community level pahan worship on the behalf of the villagers and offer fowls and the other things.

(7) Karam: the Oraon of Chotanagpur celebrates Karam on the eleventh day of the moon in the month of Bhadra. The word 'Karam' means work. This festival is observed in the centre place of the village which known as 'Akhra. The 'Karam dal' i.e. a branch of the Karam tree is brought and put at the Akhara. The 'Karam dal' is covered by a new cloth. The Pahan worship the Karam raja and the head of every family gives a true account of his own family, touching the 'Karam dal'. One song at this festival is: -

Sato bhaiya sato karam garai
Sato gotani sewa karai,
Chot bhai Mandar tange,
bad bhaiya chawar dhuke.....



Seven days before the festival, 'Jawa' i.e., the festival of germination of seeds starts. This festival is rigorously observed. This germination is the symbol of the production of corn. The Oraons vow to do away with evil deeds and to dedicate themselves to the noble mission. They also vow to withhold famine, produce corn, and worship tree as the deity. These, no doubt, testify to the Oraons' consciousness of nature.

When Karam raja comes at the Akhra, all the unmarried girls come to worship the Karam God and whole process of worship is done by the pahan. One store is spoken by the pahan about the seven brothers of Karma and Dharma, to the villagers and after that all are singing and dance and enjoy.

The Oraon beliefs that by observing ceremonial fast at the Karam festival and joining in the Puja their women and maidens secure the wellbeing of their brother in particular

The Karam branches are then carried in procession with music, song and dances. Three women carry the three Karam branches. They proceed first to the Pahan house and then to each house of the village. The mistress of the house anoints the Karam branches with oil and vermilion and offers three pieces of bread. Finally, the Karam branches are drowned in some stream or water body.

The importance of the post Karam day the all villagers put the branches of bhelwa, into the paddy field for the betterment of the paddy.

The second festival related to the month of Bhadra' is popularly known as 'Hariyari. This festival has a special significance for them. As the name suggests, this goes with the sacrifice of the cocks at the after of deities for overwhelming joy for a bumper harvest and greenwood atmosphere. In this time, to protect the growing plants and the crops especially the paddy plant from insects. They spread leaves of various trees that act as insecticides.

(8) Soharai: this festival is celebrated for the cattle in the evening of the amawas or new moon day in the month of Kartik, several newly made earthen lamps fed with karanj oil, are lighted in the all the rooms, cattle sheds, gobar garha, and kitchen garden. This day a special meal is prepared for the cattle by boiling together urad, marua, and bodi.

In the morning time the cattle were bathed in nearby the water body and the evening time the cooked meal is given for the feed. The horns, forehead, and hoofs of the cattle are then anointed with vermilion diluted in oil. Some families also scarily the fowl to offer the gobar deota.

Festivals and Caring Objectives among the Oraon

S.No	Important Months	Festivals	Caring and worshipping objects
1	Falgun	Faggu/ Phaggu	for the good crop
2	Chait	Khaddi/ Sarhul	Sal and other trees, conservation for entire universe,
3	Baisakh	Dhanbuni	Things responsible for better Agricultural production
4	Asar	Bangari, Asari, Hariyari	Seedlings, plants of tree
5	Bhadra	Karam,	Germinations of seeds of crops
6	Kartik	Soharai	for the cattle wealth



Natural specimens are surviving, contribute, and maintain regional biodiversity to absorb the excess heat of the earth and the environment. The above-mentioned table expresses the major festivals of the Oraon tribe commence and celebrated with the great harmony of seasonal change. Their festival month starts with falgun (February-March) when flowers of Sal tree blossom their ancestors were hunter's gatherers, so hunting festivals also present now. The productivity of animals and plants in the forest is also subject to their festival activates. Annual and bi-annually medicinal herbs die after the winter season in the relation they preserve and discuss these herbs. Now, their main occupation is agriculture, and agricultural activities are endorsed with their religious and festive life.

Discussion

Tribals are the protectors of nature which we can see on several occasions. Tribal worldview says that live yourself and lets the entire creature live. Natural specimens are surviving, contribute, and maintain regional biodiversity to absorb the excess heat of the earth and the environment. Plants have their mechanism to maintain the water cycle through their various rate of evaporation through total body area. The seasonal festival and economic cycle maintains a good rhythm to perennial heat transmission with respect to soil and soil contents. Among the Oraon tribal's religious life-oriented to festivals and fairs are closely attached to seasonal changes of surrounding to their flora and fauna, climatic conditions. The essential things in their day-to-day life especially in occupation, subsistence get importance as ingredients in the processes of these festivals. Seasonal rhythm and harmony extent their influence in the socio-cultural life of the inhabitants and create a web in the mind of these people. Performances strongly advocate preserving, nurturing, and remaining un-interrupted in the natural course of life support phenomenon. By their activity they directly or indirectly are helping to the environment to mitigate the effects of global warming. Oraons traditional beliefs and ethics exist as latent to socio-cultural life. These factors regulate the daily activities and thinking of a particular community. Through these concepts help them take care of the elements of nature on the way to a sustainable earth. Discussions, performances, and hearing about the glory of stewardship of their renowned ancestors. Interactions of ancestors with Devine objects and personalities also act as regulating guidelines in religious performances. The folk story, lore, ballads, song also gear up the devotion and pleasure of these festivals. People get motifs and cognitions to interact with these natural plants and animals over contribute to their personalities. During the observance of these festivals on several occasions, also establish a close relation with the nature-man- spirit. How they interact with each other and help to mitigate global warming at the regional level.

Conclusion

We can see the reflections from the festival to prove their mentality as equity among the natural members both flora and fauna. In this ground, they respect these elements and remain interruptions in reproduction, propagation, and survival of plants and animals. The Oraon generally live in hilly and forest areas and abstain from a well communicable civilized area in proximity of nature generally less educated. Printed and communicable media to the protection of the environment are not available and intelligible to them. But the traditional system of regulating environment protection is more effective to them because it is not develop in a single day. Through their everyday practice since they live in their natural environment. Government of Australia, Africa, and New Zealand take initiatives in policy, research, and implementation level to utilise indigenous knowledge on way to sustainable Earth. In India, more than 8% of its inhabitants belong to the Indigenous group. Many committees are formed from indigenous people in a cope of problems of Global warming. It is difficult and almost impossible to apply the same method in different climatic zones in this connection expertise in regional traditional knowledge preserved from ritualistic life along with their festivals. Except for participatory actions in preservation, there are very few initiatives present here. In the coming days, we have to make more and more unique research to live in a sustainable Earth.

References

- 1 Anthwal A, et.al. 2010 Conserving biodiversity through traditional beliefs in sacred groves in Uttarakhand Himalaya, India. *Resour Conserv Recy* 54:962–997
- 2 Bodding P O 2013(reprint) *Traditions of Institutions of the Santal*; Gian Publishing, Delhi
- 3 Commonwealth of Australia 2007 *Growing up Strong;The first 10 years of Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia*, Australia
- 4 Culsaw C J 1949(2013) *Tribal Heritage; a study of the Santal*, Gian Publishing, New Delhi
- 5 Deb D, Malhotra KC 1997 Interface between biodiversity and tribal culturalheritage: an exploratory study. *J Hum Ecol* 8:157–163
- 6 Jones, G 2012 Special Report, March 2012; *The Importance of Indigenous Knowledge and Good Governance to; Ensuring Effective Public Participation in Environmental Impact*; ISTF NEWS, Maryland 20814, USA
- 7 Kalam MA 1996 *Sacred Groves in Kodagu District of Karnataka (South India): ASocio-Historical Study*. Institute Francais de Pondicherry, Pondicherry, India
- 8 Mahapatra P M and P C Mahapatra 1997 *Forest Management in Tribal Area*; Concept Publishing,New Delhi
- 9 McNeely, J. and D. Pitt. 1985. *Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension in EnvironmentalPlanning*. (eds.): Croom Helm Press, Dover, New Hampshire.
- 10 Menon V 2012 *Environment and Tribes in Indian Context*; concept (ed.), New Delhi



-
- 11 tirkey mahli livens 2005, Sarhul, L. Tirkey, BA/11-D, Munirika, DDA, New Delhi- 110067, Page 62
 - 12 Rappaport. R. 1979. Ecology, Meaning and Religion. Berkeley, North Atlantic Books; California.
 - 13 Rappaport. R. 1968. Pigs for the Ancestors. Yale University Press: New Haven
 - 14 Roy. S.C. 1915 (2012- reprinted) Oraon Religion and Customs, Gyan Publishing House New Delhi – 11002
 - 15 Roy. S.C. 1912 (2004- reprinted) The Oraon of Chotanagpur, Crown Publishing, Ranchi- 834008
 - 16 Singh, A.K. Tribal Festivals of Bihar
 - 17 Sumner, J 2006 protecting farmers' indigenous knowledge: organic agriculture and environmental adult education; Adult Education and Community Development Program, University of Toronto, Toronto.
 - 18 United Nations General Assembly 2009 Report of the Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change ,20 – 24 April 2009, Anchorage, Alaska
 - 19 World Bank. 1987. Ghana Forestry Sector Review. Report No. 6817-GH. World Bank., Washington, D.C.