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Transformational Multicultural and Multilingual Impacts on the Tribal Folksongs

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Abstract

It is a challenging and equally exciting encounter itself to study tribal folksongs although scripted in Marathi dialect. An endeavour towards a study that has been unexplored for centuries introduces a space of bliss. In the first place, the tribal folklore continues as dormant further folksong in it is farther too difficult to obtain, decode and interpret and its study is another tougher task for any scholar. Since every tribal culture differs in many respects still shares some common links but surely cannot be treated to be same for any study like this. As mentioned earlier, the folklore is in a Marathi dialect but there are many linguistic varieties within the dialect depending upon the different tribes. Tribal folk literature witnesses the lingual

and cultural impacts in the course of language exchange, migration for employment and business or education etc. Hence the non-tribal culture unawares continues to impact and influence not only the ethnic users of folk language but also the rural community. Of several cultural festivals and celebrations and stages of human life, this piece attempts to explore a couple of them strewn in eight tribal folksongs.

Keywords: youths, marriage, festivity, culture, dialect, impacts.

Introduction

Folklore is widely known for its ethnic values and deep rooted customs and traditions of all cultures or societies. Regrettably nowadays it is succumbing to the modern lifestyle even in the rural regions too. In the transformational era, number of factors affect and influence to bettering life. So is even in all the tribal communities India or elsewhere. If compared with, better and progressive are the tribes of Africa against the feeble and inactive Indians. The former are more aggressive and herald of modernity for personal and social growth and further prove more radical against racism or any discrimination caused to them per contra the latter ones though indigenously aggressive found to be dormant and passive against their discriminations. This is why the world extensively reads and explores the African writing as one of the significant writings. Indian tribal folklore is even today mostly in oral form, just recently a few tribal writers

and others attempt to bring their folklore in writing and publishing it.

The tribal life is their folklore that reflects through daily lifestyle, language, food, clothing, festivals, celebrations, deities, their affinity with nature, animals and birds etc. Their interpersonal relations and bonding is major factor of their life exhibited in folk literature that mainly includes folkdance, folksongs, folktales and riddles etc. As mentioned earlier, the folk literature of Indian tribes is still inaccessible for the common people, efforts by some are fruiting in its realisation and exploration by themselves and other non-tribal scholars both foreign and Indians in a few numbers. This is a small attempt to study eight tribal folksongs collected from the Palghar District. It was too difficult to collect the songs from the tribal people since most of them were unapproachable, approachable ones were unacquainted of the songs. At present they sing these songs only during their festivals and celebrations. A very few know and can sing them that too partially and fragmented and may not essentially be aware of their reference and context. Hence attempt of this paper has been most challenging activity.

Discussion

The songs selected here depict various facets of their indigenous life. Here is a brief summary of the folksongs: *Daryan ga hodi machwa aayalay* (Fisher on the sea boat arrived) is a marriage song rendering prenuptial preparation. A market shown in the coastal area wherein

people purchase their goods on a market day. The writer of the song addressing the marriageable girls to buy bangles from bangle seller and gold from goldsmith. Needless to say it is a tradition of wearing new bangles and buying gold for marriage. Both tribal and non-tribal cultures preserve this tradition. *Aawalichi kaadi ashi dilamal* (Gooseberry leaf moved) is about state of mind of marriageable girls and boys that is compared with gooseberry straw which is delicate and tender. Eating betel nuts, their lips become colourful and attract boys and vice versa. Gooseberry straw represents their delicate mind and heart. *Ashi bhoor kaay bhendi na* (Dances like a ladyfinger), tune of flute moves women to dance. Women would dance using different postures listening to the flute. Their moving is compared with the tender white ladyfinger found in the deep forests and consumed by the tribals. *Kaal maazyaa daarawarun* (Yesterday along my door) the song narrates the imminence of Gokulashtami while women are still occupied in the daily household chores. *Paavivaalya dada paavi vaajude* (Flutist dude, let flute play) is a festival celebration of their deity Gaurai. All are cheerful welcoming the goddess, dancing and enjoying in flute's tune. They are invoking the flutist to continue playing flute or they would lose their energy if the flute stops. *Kaala nila paakharu* (Black blue bird) is a song sung and danced upon during the deity Gaurai festival which is their prime and ethnic festival. *Kore kaagadachi chitthi* (Blank paper) is a song about their contentment in life against any odds. They call upon enjoying life along with

the nature and its produces seasonally ripened in the forest. And *Saasu sunancha bhandan* (Mother in law and daughter in law brawl) – is the global social issue between two women in a house. Singer in the song is a married man expecting a normal and peaceful life from his wife.

Society undergoes various transformations regardless it joins or not in the diverse influences due to migration of people from one place to another. As part of the society, people happen to accept the changes for bettering the lifestyle. In that course of transformation, society accepts number of newer things and equally loses our conventions or practices and customs being preserved over the centuries impacting all geographical regions; rural or urban and tribal or non-tribal. In many cases, life changes from its core resulting incredibly in new image and identity. With liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) i.e. early 1990, transformation has been very rapid and narrowed the gaps and differences amongst the societies and cultures.

Major factor impacted their ethnicity is their dialect along with their lifestyle in number of forms. *Daryan ga hodi machwa ayalay* (Fisher in sea boat arrived) is one of the significant songs that brings forth the latest aspect of non-tribal tradition being adopted by the tribes. The song presents the existing tribal society of western coastal Palghar District region –

Daryan ga porino kaasar ayalay (Girls, bangle seller on sea boat arrived)

Baangdya ghya ga porino kaasar aayalay (Girls, buy bangles bangle seller arrived)

Daryan ga porino sonar aayalay (Girls, goldsmith in sea boat arrived)

Sona ghya ga porino sonar aayalay. (Girls, buy gold goldsmith arrived.) *Daryan ga hodi machwa aayalay*

In the case of bangles and gold, the tribals were distantly aware of them. Accessories as such were negligible since their women were mostly half clad which is even today in some tribes. So the question of wearing any accessories as bangles or gold was most unthoughtful. With the exchange of different cultures; tribal and non-tribal marks the entry of wearing accessories in their lifestyle as an additional and aesthetic part like the non-tribal women. Mostly their aesthetics would coincide with the nature rather than the external accessories like bangles and gold besides their economic part is another issue of unaffordability.

Folksong *Aawalichi kaadi ashee dilamal* (Gooseberry leaf moved) is a furtherance and advanced version of modernity of the earlier folksong *Daryan ga hodi machwa aayalay*. It brings the multiplicity within the earliest modernity with regard to the tribe –

Paana khatanago oth rangale, paana khatanago oth rangale. (Eating betel nut lips coloured.) *Aawalichi kaadi ashee dilamal*

Betel nuts and their eating is explicable and further coloured lips too. Though it refers to their culture of eating betel nuts and coloured lips but this straight refers today's lipstick that plays the most vital role in enhancing

beauty and looking attractive. The song refers to only one colour while there are innumerable colours and shades of lipstick today. Sure of their betel nut eating but symbolising coloured lips to attract the opposite sex is rather undiscernible in the tribal culture.

In the folk literature, their folksong accompanies folkdance too. Mostly they fusion their song with dance either in group or couples depending upon the occasion. In particular they sing a eulogy of their deity, festivals or wedding etc. Although they have occasional songs but sing and dance symbolising their mood too. *Ashee bhoor kaay bhendi na* (Moving like ladies finger) reflects and represents their connection with the Indian and European dance practises –

Ashee gudaghyavar haat thewun duheri naachate ga.
(Hands on knee, dances doubles.)

Ashee kamarewar haat thewun duheri naachate ga. (Hands on waist dances doubles.)

Ashee khandyavar haat thewun duheri naachate ga. (Hands on shoulders dances.) *Ashee bhoor kaay bhendi na* (Moving like ladies finger)

Since the folklore exhibits their diverse cultural reflections in different modes. Dance is one of their expressions; whether they celebrate or lament they have specific ethnic traditions of expressions as in celebration of marriage and dance forms. Their entire body involves in dance with significance of their own. Their dance would remind the non-tribal audience of many recent dance forms whether Indian or foreign, though theirs is very ethnic. Like their hands on knee, waist and shoulders while dancing and in

doubles i.e. girl and boy, it represents a fashion of the Christian culture. They may barely overlap their dance with other cultures but it cannot be denied that theirs would be ethnically original and primal.

*Kaal maazyaa daarawarun (Yesterday along my door) Kaal
maazyaa daarawarun (Yesterday along my door)*

Most surprisingly, the song shows door to their house which in fact wasn't in their lifestyle. Locking the doors is the influential fashion today than their customary way. Basically their houses were made of hatches and grass and safety was never their issue, one they barely had valuables to secure and two their culture did not involve any theft. At par, the economic status of entire clan was as good as the lower class. Hence door was a later entry in their life.

*Eh Ganapati naachat naachat aayalay, aayalay (Ganpati
coming to the tune of dance) Paavivaalya dada paavi vaajude (Flutist dude,
let flute play)*

*Aamcha Ganapati anganaat khel ki, rangaat khel. (Play in
colour, our Ganpati play in yard)*

*Khelata khelata gela makharat gela makharat (In temple
playing entered) Kaala neela pakharu (Black blue bird)*

In both the songs, non-tribal god Ganpati enters their life. Basically they worship their own forefathers as the gods and the most elderly people as the living gods. And their indigenous deity is goddess Gaurai. Whereas Ganpati was never their faith from the ancient times. Since mentioned earlier, external cultures have continued to influence their lifestyle along with the celebrations, festivals and deities. Ganpati is not the part of faith but celebration. Today's

generation gets to celebrate on the occasion of Ganpati festival only because of they too have begun installing Ganpati and celebrating but may be faithless.

Kore kaagadachi keli mi chitthi, kapali tikali ga. (Coloured blank paper, spangle on forehead) *Kore kaagadachi chitthi (Blank paper)*

Since detached from the normal society, no literacy amongst the tribal communities and abode in the deep forests so direct contacts with the changes in lifestyle in the ancient times was impossible. Migration for any purpose to outside was remotely difficult for them. Furthermore theirs being prehistoric culture, it is barely possible for them to have been in immediate contact with the arrival of papers in the world. Paper in their life may be traceable in the recent times that they began using for spangle in place of erstwhile kumkum; red coloured powder, both the tribal and non-tribal women used to put on the forehead. They began using a piece of paper cutting it in a round shape, colour it and put on the forehead unlike today's ready spangle.

The song 'Mother in law and daughter in law brawl' is a replica of contemporary life and unerringly like the non-tribal culture. Obviously it represents more of non-tribal society than their tribal ethnic one. The singers use metaphors to symbolise their expectation from wife and life with the use of several modern words. The song not only retains their ethnicity but also brings forth the impacts of recent routine on their life.

Gharat isto baayako disco nako mala paayaje (Fire in house wife disco I want not)

Gharat fadaki baayako hadaki nako mala paayaje (Rag in house slim wife I want not)

Gharat kobi baayako dobi nako mala paayaje. (Cabbage in house, crazy wife I want not.) Saasu sunancha bhandan (Mother in law and daughter in law brawl)

Fire refers to anger, quarrelling, violence etc which is generic with regard to any wife; rural urban or tribal or non-tribal. As disco, it refers to the late 20th century decades though it is not contemporary but it coincided with the LPG as mentioned earlier. Disco is a dance and music genre emerged in the United States and later popularised in the Indian Bollywood. Rag here represents poverty due to the poorliness of wife. Basically the tribe is major occupation is agriculture and woman should look after household chores for which she should be strong than slim. And the song referring to wife, continues about her physical build, the man would not want a cabbage like looking wife. To rhyme with 'kobi', (cabbage) the song, the song has a Gujarati word 'dobi' (crazy woman). In the concluding lines, the song expresses, not only a tribal man's expectation of his woman but any non-tribal too.

Conclusion

In the long transformational passage, cultures and languages are not just the tribal life of western region of India but tribes all over the world. In the recent days, the impact has been speedier over the earlier times. The present generations are more inclined to accepting the latest modern drifts of life rather than preserving their cultural affinities apart from their annual festivals. Bare

knowledge of their ethnic folk literature is its witness, as mentioned earlier, few in thousands have little knowledge of it while mostly folks are simply unaware and uninterested. The folksongs are the evidence of this very impact. Belief of the non-tribal people encounters jerks finding their folksongs with number of contemporary allusions as against their ethnic impressions. It is, in itself, a substantiation of volatility of cultures in the passage of time regardless of tribal or non-tribal.

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