

Festivals of Banjara Community

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ABSTRACT

This article is a study of festivals of the Banjara community in Maharashtra in the field of language and culture. The Banjaras are also known as Gor, a historically nomadic trading tribe having their origin in the Mewar region of Rajasthan. As Banjaras' are migrated from one state to another, their religious taste also changes according to regions/provinces and states. The present article also tries to examine the correlation of festivals with other communities. In addition, this article also focuses on borrowing of gods, accepting ways of lives of dominant castes in the respective states.

In the Banjara community, there are festivals like Teej(during the month of Shravan). In this festival, unmarried Banjara girls pray for a good life partner. Along with the Teej festival, Banjara also celebrates festivals like Dussehra, Diwali, Holi, Nagpanchmi, etc.

Keywords:- Banjara, Gor, Teej, Mewar, Shravan

INTRODUCTION

The produce of the Banjara tribe has been from India. If we look closely at Banjara culture, dialect, living style, costumes, and ornaments, it is concluded that this tribe has not come under the main influence since the early times, it has spent most of its life with the forest.

Not the language of the Banjaras but the dialect. Culture and religious practices are primitive, living habits, costumes, and ornaments are also primitive and associated with forest costumes.

In this way, this tribe has been wandering around Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan Sindhu Hindukush mountain Iran for grazing and maintenance. With the increase in their power over time, sometimes they have also got a secret. In the court of King Maharaja, even as a brave man, the sacrifice of the Banjaras has been sacrificed for this Bharatvarsh, there is no doubt about it.

While facing all ups and down, this tribe almost came and stayed in Rajasthan. Where after staying till about 1550,

gradually the Banjaras started leaving Rajasthan. There can be many reasons for leaving Rajasthan, Rajasthan was the field of war, as long as the Rajputs were brave, they were the guardians of the Banjaras, but when the Rajputs were defeated, then the life of the Banjaras became pathetic. Therefore, to keep themselves safe, they slowly started traveling again by staying in the forest.

It is also said that the Banjaras of Rajasthan gradually moved towards Deccan India. On the other hand, there was another very large community of Malwa and Banjaras that too gradually started moving towards North India. The Banjaras of North India have had to stay separate from their dialect and culture, but are still getting attracted towards their culture. The special thing is that today the Banjaras of India are meeting on the occasion of special festivals and are looking at their culture and customs very closely.

Thousands of nomadic tribes in India have been living their lives as indigenous people for thousands of years. Some of these have attained stability and some are still wandering state to state. The special thing is that these tribes are trying to preserve their own culture. Because for sustenance, these tribes have been working in a nomadic state for thousands of years. Some of these people believe that citizens

who are outside the currents of culture and formal education, who are illiterate, and who live in villages and hamlets. The nomadic tribes, despite being illiterate, welcome the festivals. Banjara celebrates festivals according to their culture and traditions with great gaiety. Celebrating festivals with great pomp while living life, so that they protect their valuable culture. In this way, the festivals of Banjara society are being studied in the present paper.

Banjara is one such tribe, which is coloured with songs and dances. Enjoying life with great gaiety in the festivals according to the season, forgetting the brittle life they enjoy every festival with great interest. Today, in the world of mobile and computers, many changes are taking place rapidly, but the songs which are sung in all the festivals of the Banjara tribe are soulful and meaningful. Every song goes along with the message of fraternity and universalization. Their special culture is introduced through these songs full of diversity. The valuable songs of the Banjaras get articulated with the themes of happiness, sorrow, life, and death. It seems that the expressions of human beings' sensitivities flow like a stream of music. Various types of 'rasas' are found in the folk songs of Banjaras. Such diversity is visible in Banjara society.

Banjara tribes, mainly celebrate festivals like Teej, Diwali, and Holi with great joy. These festivals reflect their own special culture and uniquely celebrate this festival with song and dance. Apart from these three special festivals, other festivals are also celebrated normally like Rakshabandhan, Dussehra, Pongal, Makar Sankranti, Mahashivratri and participate in the entire festivals according to region. Along with these festivals, Banjara also celebrates Hindu festivals as well.

TEEJ:-

As Banjara takes its origin in Rajasthan, Banjara celebrates Teej as one of the major festivals. Banjara festivals begin with Teej (Sowing of wheat seeds in bamboo bowl). Banjaras' festivals are full of songs and dance and so as life. They enjoy every moment with fervour and passion. Teej refers to the monsoon festivals, observed particularly in the western and northern states of India. Banjara people celebrate Teej festival on a grand scale and even in the 21st century, they continue to give a lot of importance to Teej festival. The festival, which is celebrated during August (Shravan), is generally considered a festival of unmarried girls who pray for a better groom. Girls sow seeds in bamboo bowls and water them twice a day for seven to nine days and if the sprouts grow thick and

high, it is considered as a good omen for future grooms. The bowls with seedlings are kept in a prominent place and girls sing and dance circling the bowl. Teej festival in Maharashtra is well known in all districts, it is celebrated with great zest and enthusiasm. The proposal of the Teej festival was put forth to the Nayak of the Tanda, he also gives permission to the festival taking into consideration traditional importance, after the consent, spinsters' joys have no bound and they thank the Nayak through the medium of songs. Girls go to the forest to get fertile soil from ant hills that time groups of boys try to stop their way, finally, girls win over the boys and manage to get soil from there. Then the second ceremony of bringing the bowl and sowing of seeds takes place. On this occasion, Nayak of the Tanda makes puja and announces the festival. Every day twice, once in the morning and once in the evening girls water the Teej and look after it very carefully. During these ten days, most of the girls observe fast in the name of Lord Krishna. On the last day, girls become more nervous with the thought of emersion and say goodbye with a heavy heart.

DIWALI:-

After Teej, Diwali is the most important festival of the Banjara community. It is the same as other communities

do with slight changes. Diwali is full of happiness and delight as Banjaras' life and costumes. Banjaras', who still are living in some Tandas, the festival of lights is a unique, two-day carnival, where convention, descendants, and friendship is the key. Diwali is a unique festival. All the women in the village go door to door. While it takes effort, this tradition is what brings Banjaras' together, and They want to pass it on to the coming generations. All the bachelors, and the spinsters of the community go to the fields and collect various kinds of flowers, and decorate the cow dung, in front of their houses before sunrise for Godhan Puja(Cow dung Puja) and then Puja perform at all houses for the good health and prosperity. On the same night girls go door to door to pray for the betterment and happiness of the concerned family, In return, they get some rupees as a token of love. On the second day, girls observe fast. Sister bathes her brother and prays for good health and prosperity in his life and return brother also gifts to sister something special occasion. After this bathing ritual, girls of villages gather at a particular place and march to bring some flowers and particular grass for the Godhan puja(puja of cow dung is a symbol of happiness and peace), and at

the setting of the sun girls conclude the Godhan puja and breaks the fast.

HOLI:-

Holi is considered an important festival in the Banjara community. On the morning of the second day of the full moon of the month of Falgun, the Banjara people light Holi and observe Holi. The Holi festival of the Banjara caste is characterized by the influence of the Rajasthani tradition and custom.

In the Banjara community, Holi is a festival that helps to promote love and brotherhood among the community. After Diwali, the Banjara people wait for Holi with great restlessness. As Holi comes near, Banjara people start trembling at their feet. Various fables related to the Holi festival. In this regard, it has been said that HolikaDahanis in the festival of Holi. It is done and Holi is lit, in this way, there are different aspects of burning Holi. About Holi, it is also said at other places that there was a demon named Dhunda. It used to hurt people and once in the evening they try to prevent its entry, a fire was set on the boundaries of the villages and since then people got freedom from the demon. As it is not possible every day, but in the year rain, Holi is lit with the spirit of driving the demon out of the village limits/boundary.

The derogatory words used to drive away this demonic have taken the form of abuses today. In this society, it is considered necessary to give a glimpse of Holi to the child after the birth, with the same purpose the 'searching ceremonies' are performed. It is known that as soon as the Holi festival is approaching, the men and women of Tanda gather in the courtyard of the house where the search ceremony is about to take place and dance in a special status, singing songs till midnight. Songs like this, with laughter and jokes, a series of songs go on while satire on each other till midnight.

In this Holi festival, heroism is seen in the songs, religious social exhortations, and obscene songs are also sung according to the context. In this society, it is considered that the child to visit Holi. Holi, which comes after the birth of a child, is performed especially, the birth of a child is a pretext to celebrate the festival. If there is no 'searching' (Dhund) ritual, holi doesn't have that kind of passion and enthusiasm. In the 'search' (Dhund) ceremony, they gather in the courtyard of the concerned and dance especially by singing songs till midnight. These series songs go on till midnight and sometimes till dawn breaking. In this Holi festival, diversity is seen in the

songs taken according to the philosophy of religion, social exhortation, and obscene songs are sung first of Holi.

Holi of other community societies is celebrated by lighting Holika on the full moon day. On the other hand, Banjara society's Holi is lit on the second day in the morning. On the second day of Holi, where the 'search ceremony' is people gather there and take the child to the place where Holika Dahan is to be done by singing songs. According to tradition, Holika is lit in the east direction in front of Tanda. After lighting the Holika, men and women go away, but the youths sing songs and dance near the Holika. When the men get tired of the song and dance, the women get up from the group and sing the Lengi song along with the dance. While dancing, women get lost in the devotion of their beloved Lord, Saint Sevalal.

By singing a song near Holika till noon, Geria (Youths) now comes out to uproot the sticks. This is a game of effort and bravery. It is kept to protect the pitcher. Banjara women are ready with sticks in their hands, coming from Holika to attack the Geria to fail and furiously steal the pitcher and attack. Youths (Geria) try their level best but all in vain and run away and for re-strategy.

Similarly, the festival is celebrated in Banjara society. All the Banjara brothers and sisters do not even know when the festival came and went as they are engrossed in dancing. In this case, Banjara people say that the festival we are looking forward to is Holi, it is a festival that gives us happiness and satisfaction so it is our favourite festival.

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Conclusion

In this way, in the festivals of Banjara community, Teej, Diwali, and Holi are considered to be very important and popular festivals in which there are

no festivals like Holi, which wait starts from the end of Diwali itself.

Through these festivals, girls go away by giving the message of universality to the whole world. In this way, Banjara loves Holi from the core of their heart and fulfill their passion for dancing and singing.

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