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Social and Cultural Aspects of Tribes in Gopinath Mohanty's Novel 'Paraja': A Study

Prof. Vijay. F. Nagannawar
Research Guide,
Dean, Faculty of Arts
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi.

Manjappa Mudakammanavar
Research Scholar
Department of Studies in English
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi

Abstract:

The present Article deals with the social and cultural aspects of tribes from various perspectives. If we want to comprehend of the India's social and cultural history. It is essential to read and understand the history of the tribals. The social and cultural aspects or identity not the identity of individual experience, but it connects the whole community. Tribals are the aboriginal people first countrymen among the others. They usually live in communities. Tribals have their own set of beliefs, myths, superstitions, traditions, customs, rituals and culture. Every Indian tribal have the sublime culture and tradition. Gopinath Mohanty describes culture differences like settlement pattern, dress, ornaments, economic life, believes, and worship manners, customs and folk traditions. Mohanty presented tribal exploitation, miserable condition, Mohanty wants to give voice to this Paraja people.

Key words: Paraja, Mahua, Dormitory, Dishari, Dungudunga, Kangu, Goti, Bride-price, oppressed, Feast, Exploitation, Naika

Introduction:

Gopinath Mohanty wrote Paraja in 1945. This is translated into English by Bikram k Das. In Paraja, Gopinath Mohanty sketches social, religious and cultural aspects of the Paraja tribes. Mohanty illustrates tribal customs, traditions, superstitions, and their condition. He tries to create awareness against the inhuman, ruthless, exploitation and sufferings among Paraja people. He tries to create awareness of the social, cultural, and traditional aspects of Paraja tribes. He presented tribals are the victims of the historical process but the same time resistance against socio cultural oppression.

Mohanty depicts Paraja is a story of prime attachment to land, water, and forest with happiness. Life is nothing but full of happiness without expecting too much leading in a simple life. Mohanty depicts the exploitation of Man by man cause for tragedy of ruined happiness and shattered dreams. Tribal people always follow all the ancient customs of marriage, festivals, hunting, rituals, until they were exploited by the outsider and the money lenders. Historical document that shows the reality of tribal life. Mohanty depicts Paraja is a social novel, he portrays both the decay and destruction of the family of tribal. Gopinath Mohanty succeeded woven the fate of the Paraja's around their struggle for existence. Gopinath Mohanty depicts oral tales, stories, with lessons and their social and cultural customs this research also attempts to study the social and cultural aspects of the Paraja tribal community. Mohanty depicted that the optimistic dreams of Sukru Jani's come down from Owner to Goti.

Paraja and Rajas lived like brothers. This shows the status of the Paraja tribal. Gopinath Mohanty depicts Paraja's are basically hill cultivator. He uses the traditional technique and primitive methods to cultivate the land. He uses very simple agriculture tools such as plough, spade, etc. Paraja lived away from the mainstream society so they are not aware of the new technology's, hence they got low yield crops. Sukru Jani works hard on the field with Mandia and Tikra to get good yield. They are very poor which cannot offer them to have three times meal a day. Gopinath Mohanty depicts Paraja with the exploitation of the modern cunning world. The tribal world inevitably confronted with the modern in all aspects. SukruJani is the protagonist of this novel. He was represented whole tribal community which is defeated by exploiter and the landlords. Tribals customs, Rituals, and traditions are being tortured by the forest Guard and money lenders. Torture in the name of traditions. One who has more land is given lot of respect in the tribal community he had a lot of attachment, intimation with land. He also told to his children that the Earth is your mother, we are here today or tomorrow, but the land will remain. Let us have a vivid glance at their culture.

Food Culture:

Paraja tribal community have the common food culture. For instance, Sukru Jani, protagonist of the novel, he is very much fond of eating meat and drinking liquor. Sukru Jani drank lot of liquor when he got tired. Tikra and Mandia are well versed in hunting the small animals, fishing and other. Jili and Bili are enjoying eating meat with their father and brother but they didn't eat beef that is a taboo in tribal community. The eventually eat minor millets such as Kangu, Khosla, Khetjanna, Maize, Mango, Kernal and Tamarind powder. Sukru Jani and his family members went to forest for collecting the forest product for their lovely hood. Tribals completely defended upon the forest product, farming, hunting, fishing and rearing.

For instance, Paraja people rearing animals like cow, buffaloes, goats, Sheep's, pigs and flowers. In Paraja society small boys and girl are not assign any works. For instance, Mandia, Tikra helps Sukru Jani in indoor as well as outdoor activities. Jili and Bili are not allowed to hard work like ploughing, digging, but they take care of household activities.

Dress Code:

Gopinath Mohanty depicts dress code of Paraja tribals, for example Sukru Jani wore a langoti, Jili and Bili wore sarees which cover up to the knees and tide in a not in the left shoulder wearing saree style is convenient to work in face along with other participations like dancing. Tribals wore new dresses in special occasion and visiting new places, pairs, friends and relatives' homes. Tribals dress code is half naked that too very simple pattern, when children attain 7 to 8 years, they wear a small piece of rags which covered half naked body only. Paraja people are easy recognized through their dress code because modern culture is different from Paraja's cultural.

Ornaments:

Gopinath Mohanty describing Paraja tribal peoples passionate of decorating varieties of ornaments. Paraja's ornaments are very simple and made up of silver, aluminum, brass and other metals. Some Paraja tribals are well enough to buy gold. Jili alwas dreams to wear gold ornaments like colored necklace, and her colored bangles, varieties of finger rings, and chain. Tribal women are fond of tattooing to enhance their beauty and Charm. They aware of the beauty consciousness, they wear different kinds of ornaments on head, ear and nose, for instance Somberi wife of SukruJani wore nose and ear rings. It indicates the customary practice for married women. Married women put silver rings around the fingers on the toys. The special feature of Paraja society is that run the Institution of youth dormitory in conventional society.

Dormitory System:

Gopinath Mohanty portrays in tribal society elders are set up the separate dormitories for young girls and young boys they have to stay their respective dormitories in the center of the village. There they should share their feelings, talents like singing, dancing and ideas of their future life. They try to express their love through the songs. for instance, Jili loves Bagla. He always flirts to Jili and convey his love through the song. Kajodi loves Mandia. This is the very specific future in Paraja community

Another unique custom is that in Paraja community, Mandia and Tikira are not allowed to sleep their parents' home as they are unmarried, they went to the boys' dormitories which is located in the center of the village. Jili and Bili also joined their dormitories. They have to spend a night with their friends knowing very intimately, even though they are far away with their parents' houses. They never cross their limits. Mandia, Tikra, Jili, Bili aware of the punishment, if committed such kind of mistake. If happened any kind of incidence the villagers sit together, they have penalized of four Annas worth of liquor to all the villagers, later they should drink liquor, then they dance and sing in front of the Earth Goddess this is very unique system in Paraja Community.

Festival Beginning Culture:

The book entitled "Tribal Culture of India" Vidyarthi L.P and Rai B. K. told that 'folk songs, music, and dance of the tribals are a composite whole, which is one of the dominant characteristics of their culture'. Paraja's live like a family. Everyone shares firewood, to lit the festival bonfire. They believe that light will pierce away the darkness and miseries in their life. For instance, at the night, they heard loud cries of 'thief! Thief! This was the actual signal for the festival beginning some young men breaking neighbor house and steal whatever they want like basket of vegetables, pots, and other. This was happening during the night. Next day the young men return what they stole they have to sell for the minimum price to the owner. All villagers gather one particular place to witness the celebration of festival and dance, Kajodi, Jili, Bili all unmarried girls are ready with bangles, flowers and ornaments to participate in the dance. But married are not allow to participate in the dance, they only watch the dance drinking liquor throughout the night. The young boys and girls started dance, singing songs with their musical instruments.

Paraja's describe their miseries and happiness in the form of songs. They sing their origin, tradition, culture, and ancestral life stories. This indicates songs, oral tales, rituals are the rich source of information to know about the tribes. There is mutual understanding among the head Man of the different villages. For example, Naika tribal head arranged meeting of community with help of village heads. They decide auspicious day and time for every village to celebrate the festival of spring. So, the spring festival continuous one after others in a different part of the villages. People celebrates the festivals with the songs, dance to the beating of drums, then the priest chants the spells to the god of spring. Parajas' celebrate the spring festivals in the month of March. Jili, Bili, Tikra, Mandia prepared for the festival in advance. During festival no works, no miseries, no worries, and

problems. Only enjoy the festival. Sukru Jani stored everything for the festival like paddy, rice, grams etc. All the people gather a place to eat drink and celebrate the festival.

The very important, they celebrate the hunting competition during the spring festival. Young boys of Paraja's love to hunting for two to three days. The men went to the forest, they have to return with hunting, otherwise they prepared for facing taunting of their women. The women tied their clothes and hang them upon a rope. If anyone fail to kill, that would be made to crawl under the garment. He would be pelted with dung balls and other filth. If they get back something they would be greeted with the garlands, dancing and rejoicing. For instance Mandia and Bagla went to forest for hunting this is never-ending programme. In Paraja community every festival accompanied with singing, dancing, and drinking. Men drink "Mahaua" wine and womrn drink Mandiya beer. Specially in Paraja tribals have unique traditions and rituals, for instances in Banjara tribal community Holy is the famous festival. They clean the house, wear the new cloths on the festival day.

Marriage System:

Gopinath Mohanty describe in Paraja tribal community marriages are so important to increase their number. Hence, they allowed to adult marriage as well as the monogamy marriages. Marriages are arranged by the negotiation. They also practiced capturing marriage, by servicing, by consent, by elopement and by exchange etc. In Paraja tribal community the elder daughter preferred to younger daughter for marriage. In some cases, they do not practice this ritual.

Cross Cousin Marriage System:

In Paraja tribal community they prepared cross cousin marriages. They claim uncle or aunt's daughters to marry. In Paraja community a man can marry a widow. In Paraja community widows, widower marriages and divorce are allowed. Generally, we have dowry system. But in this community practiced bride price. That is the form of cash or gifts like clothes, rice, goat, fowl, and liquor. Divorce is permitted on the grounds of extra marital relationship, misconduct, cruelty personal conflicts. Divorce cases are handling traditional community heads. If the case is not settled, they approved to divorce. After divorce seeking permission gives a copper coin. Paraja tribals accepted all methods of marriages. if they decided to arrange marriage, the groom has to pay the bride price. If bride is eloping with the groom, there is no question of bride price. Then community accepts that kind of marriage also. These are unique rituals and Customs of Paraja tribes.

Gopinath Mohanty describes- Sukru Jani had lot of hopes on Jili and Bili. Because they will bring lot of bride price that would change his fate. It indicates girl child is the source of tribal community. They are not burden for the family. If groom is unable to pay the bride price in the right time, he becomes a Goti for lifetime. This indicates unmarried girls are asset to their families.

Gopinath Mohanty portrays Sukru Jani's present condition. He had a lot of hopes on his daughters to bring bride price. Later all his debts paid. Later his land would be redeemed. After some time, his sons also released. Sukru Jani always encourages to Jili and Bili to sleep in the young woman dormitory and join the singing and dancing. He advised them to dress well and be active.

In Paraja community child marriages are common. They believed when girls reached 11 years, they should marry otherwise teenage girls that to unmarried girls are unsafe in the tribal family. Another reason is poverty. For instance, Sukru Jani leads a simple life. He gets rid of that poverty. He dreamt that his daughter got married and getting bride price, that would vanish his problems. It shows girls always asset for the tribal community. But they are unaware of the health and hygiene of the girls.

Goti System:

Gopinath Mohanty depicts another condition that is if a groom unable to pay the bride price he became Goti to the family. For instance, Nandibali wants to marry Bili but he unable to pay the bride price. He wants to become Goti to Sukru Jani. Later Bili engaged with him. Another incident is Mandia wants to marry Kajodi but Mandia suffers from the poverty. If he delays pay the bride price, he must lose the Kajodi. So, he must earn the money in short term like brewed the Mahua liquor illegally and get the money as early as possible.

Another similar case happened in Bagla and Jili's life. Both wanted to marry but Bagla feared about the bride price. Jili insist to marry to Bagla in the month of February, March, April otherwise they have to wait another year for marriage this is the condition in tribal community. The unique system is that they married only in the month of February, March, April, May. Bagla fear about Goti. If he wants to Goti in father in laws house, that to bride price paid in the form of Goti. Then he able to marry Jili. So, he eloped with Jili. In tribal community eloped, capture marriages are accepted. that reduces the bride price. Finally, they give the feast to the village people. This is also another kind of tradition. If they decided to give the bride price, they borrowed money from landlords. Later they married. After marriage they work hard for repay the debt. This is the condition in the Paraja community.

If he or she eloped with someone they have to penalized 40 rupees to the girl's father as the customary bride price. This is a one kind of tradition. Kajodi who help to meet Bagla at night. Bagla capture the Kajodi at the hunting time. He spends night with sharing their feelings, views and ideas. That is called capture marriage.

The young girls become victim of other lecherous persons. If they are unable to marry the right time. For instance, forest guard tries to seduce the Jili. He sends Kau- Paraj, village headman to negotiate with Jili for fulfilling his carnal desire. Sukru Jani rejected his offer. There after forest guard had an eye on Jili. This causes early marriages in tribal community. Sukru Jani and his illiterate son Tikra wanted to loan from Sahukar. He barrowed 50 rupees. He waved 5% compound interest per annum even though Sukru Jani and Tikra rendered service only 5 rupees waved off for the service.

Gopinath Mohanty described-in Paraja community they always worked in exchange of money to get their needs. This indicates that entire generations would be required to pay back the loan borrowed from the Sahukar. If tribals are unable to pay the loan they have to sell their land to Suhukar. He became the owner of that land, their body and souls too. This is the worst condition of tribals

God worship:

Gopinath Mohanty portrays Paraja tribal community worships number of Gods and Goddesses for their family betterment. For example, they worship dead ancestors. For them they sacrifice hen, goat, sheep and birds. The Dishari is the local astrologer. He chants mantras observes the sky and determines the auspicious dates, moments for marriages, festivals, rituals. Parajas begin their festivals invoking the god with song. [God of joy, God of dance and song, God of the hunt. come makers gay, be our guest.]

Gopinath Mohanty gives various description of tribal worship. They worship Durga Puja in the month of Ashwina. Dishari is a soothsayer of Paraja community. that comes naturally by ancestral spirit, tribal God, or Goddesses. He uses the Beju language. Tribal sacrifice the buffaloes during festival. Flags, Sword's battle-axes and Spears always display in the processions. Paraja's believe that Sacrifice of the blood for deities is good for them.

Work Culture:

Sukru Jani lives near perineal hill, he uses the spring water to irrigate, his fields on hill slopes and valleys. Many tribal people live in the village believe that settled cultivation as well as shifting cultivation will get more crops, Parajas' cultivate different crops, variety crops like vegetable, especially in the month of January they are busy with agriculture work like harvest the rice, Mandia etc. Later they would be cut and gather. Cultivation of land, manuring, sowing, weeding, reaping, harvesting is done carefully and systematically. During the time of harvesting the villagers live like a family member and co-operate each other on the fields. Sukru Jani defended on the land to fulfill his dreams. Sukru Jani practiced eco-friendly system to expand the land. He cuts shrubs, bushes, and thorns for expanding his land. He got conflict with forest Guard for extending land.

Tribals customs, Rituals, and traditions are being tortured by the forest Guard and money lenders. Torture in the name of traditions. One who has more land is given lot of respect in the tribal community. He had a lot of attachment, intimation with land. He also told to his children that the Earth is your mother, we are here today or tomorrow, but the land will remain. They never allow to work outside for women. When modern community enter into the Paraja community, they started to migrate to cities. Sukru Jani, Mandiya, Tikra became Goties of Sahukar. Jili and Bili sacrifice their dream, because of poverty and hunger. They decided to work under contractor for leading their life. The women are the worst sufferer. They work hard to meet their fuel, food, and fodder. Modernity deprived their traditional livelihoods.

When Jili and Bili worked under contractor then realized the importance of family members. They remembered their happy days. Jili and Bili are victimized by the supervisor. Rami and Moti trap young girls and supply to him. When Sukru Jani heard, Jili and Bili went to work as labor his dreams and hopes are comedown. He thought that his family was broken. Later SukruJani reluctantly decided to mortgaged his land. Because he thought that land is the symbol of ancestor's belief strength, and identity. That land gave name and fame of the family. Otherwise, nobody gives the respect. SukruJani requested to supervisor that, let his daughter free from the work, let them return to home. Instead of them I worked that to only for 2 rupees. Jili and Bili adapted the modern lifestyle like food, dress, and others. They try to become beautiful but they reluctantly agree to return to home. Because in Paraja community girls works only for their father or their husbands not for others. Sukru Jani works very hard to build his home. Bili works with Nandibali in the field. Jili experiences loneliness. She often remembered young supervisor and modern life style. Sukru Jani tries to brings his legacy once again.

Land the symbol of 'spirit and strength'

They have lot of attachment towards the land, forest and water. Because their ancestors stay and protect the land. If they lose that land, their ancestors are furious on them. So, they try to keep their land safe with lot of hopes and aspirations. Mandia and Tikra worked hard for regaining his ancestral land. Tikra brewed the Liquor. Mandia also worked hard with his brother. Sahukar wants to grow Orange in Sukru Jani field. SukruJani objected to grow orange for land became barren. It sucks the all the underground water. They wanted to get back their land. But Sahukar cheats them and abused them. Because they have the oral agreement, which land has been mortgaged for 30 years. Hence, they decided to go to court. There also he defeated by the lack of evidence. Because Sahukar threatened everyone. Hence no tribal man stands by Sukru Jani. At the end Sukru Jani, Mandia, Tikra and Nandi Bali went to speak with Sahukar. He kicked out of them and abuse them. Mandia got furious. He cuts Sahukar's head with his sharp axe. Then all surrender before the police. The novel with disaster of SukruJani family and Sahukar. No one wins. Everyone defeated

Conclusion:

Overall, this Article focuses on Paraja's festivals, rituals, traditions, customs, are different from main stream society. Marriage customs, funeral rites, rituals, hunting approaches, marriages code of conducts, bride price system, feast system, penalty system, are very unique and sublime. There is no gender disparity. Equality, fraternity are basic concept. Mother and father had equal responsibility in the family. Parajas' try to protect the respect of women. Moreover, this Article focuses on vulnerability, ignorance, illiterate, poverty, of Parajas'. These are the weapons to the Sahukars. The destiny of the author is that create aware among the Paraja community against oppression, suppression, humiliation, exploitation, molestation, degradation of cultural, social moral and ethical values. The protagonist character Sukru Jani is the victim of the modernity. Cultural transmission, poverty, illiterate, and lack of knowledge are root cause of degradation of the Sukru Jani family. Mandia, Tikra, Jili, Bili Kajodi, Bagla Nandi Bali of all of have their own approach to leading their life. Paraja

culture is sublime. There is no gender discrimination, class discrimination, social discrimination. They live together, struggle together and enjoyed together. Tribals culture is nothing but whole and universe.

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