



Evolution And Changes Of Cultural Practices Of Toto Tribes In Eastern India At The Base Of Their Indigenous Festival (20th To 21st Century)

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Abstract : The human race is considered by nature to be the best living organism in the world, and human society is born on the basis of the basic life of this human race. An integral part of this human society is the culture, which is the source of inspiration for the daily life of every human race. This culture promotes the inherent ideology of humanity in the development of civilization. Individuals living in apartheid communities each have their own cultures and these cultures are based on regional, religious and social festivals.

In eastern India there are many different types of tribal groups are living. From the earliest time of creation to the present period, each of these tribes has continued to develop their civilization and culture which constantly involved in their own thinking. Toto is one of the rarest tribes of the Mongolian community. Based on the ethnographic and sociological data it is known that, these tribes are considered the smallest and most recently discovered tribe in the world.

The people belonging to the Toto tribe live in a small area in the village called Totopara, in the Madarihata block of Alipurduar district, in the Indian state of West Bengal; Located at the foot hills Himalayas. This small region is the most populated village lies between the south border of Bhutan and northern part West Bengal. Basically these tribes are filled with huge cultural treasures which are intimately connected with their daily living. Generally this culture is completely surrounded by their festivals. Various dance-songs have been emerged in toto society, focusing on social customs and festivals such as birth, marriage, social background, livelihood, worship, etc. this cultural activity evolved from the very beginning of creation as a container and carrier in Toto society. As, this people lives in a relatively isolated place from human society, they have incorporated dance and song in their everyday activities in their own way. Omchu and Nayangu are among the religious festivals of the Toto community. The festival is usually held in July-August. According of their tradition, through almost a month men and women celebrate the festivities with their traditional food, drink and various dance-songs. Individuals living in different societies have their own cultures, which is changing and also evolving from generation to generation after generation. Similarly, the youth generation of Toto society is constantly trying to establish their cultural wealth in the court of the world. The main theme and purpose of this article is to comparative discussion of the current generations cultural with the older generations. And the

evolution of the cultural ideology of these tribal groups in the 20th to the 21st century through proper additions and refinements.

Key words: Tribe, Culture, Festival, Dance, Music

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In eastern India there are many different types of tribal groups are living. From the earliest time of creation to the present period, each of these tribes has continued to develop their civilization and culture which constantly involved in their own thinking. Toto is one of the rarest tribes of the Mongolian community. Based on the ethnographic and sociological data it is known that, these tribes are considered the smallest and most recently discovered tribe in the world. For the past several years, there has been a keen interest and enthusiasm among various educators, observers and researchers regarding the culture, environment, lifestyle of this tribal population, which is due to the self-esteem and the establishment of separate entities in the society depending on their own cultural medium in search of their own roots of this primitive tribe. This is also a striking example of the unity of the people as a result. The Toto tribe is the only settled in the area called Totopara, about 20 km from Madariat in Alipurduar district of the state of West Bengal, India. The Torsa River on the east, the Jaldapara Forest on the south, Padua Hill on the west and the Hipsa Hills on the north cover the entire region. Before analyzing the evolution of culture on the basis of their cultural and religious festivals in the eastern India, it is important to first focus on the origin, history and lifestyle, the religious and social customs of this tribe, which are closely related to the culture and ideology of this tribe.

History of Migration

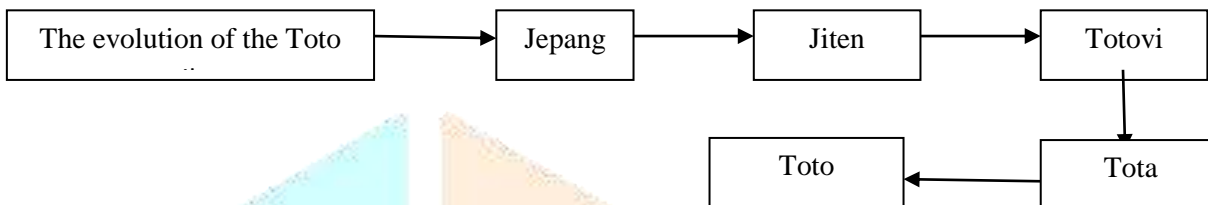
There are various opinions about the source and migration of this tribe. According to the prevailing information, the people of this tribe have heard their history through their ancestors. According to the story, under the rule of the Koch king, once they went hunting but at the end of the day, they did not get any hunting object. Eventually they got only one deer, and killed it. But due to the darkness coming down, they spend the night in the forest, and the next morning they see a head of the cow instead of a deer's head. They dropped the cow's head into the forest, and shortly afterwards the incident came to the king's ear. According to the rules of that day, the head of the victim's animal was given as a gift to the ruler of the society. As a result, he expelled the Toto people from his kingdom that lived under his monarchy. Then the people of Toto tribe crossed the fortified mountains, jungles and rivers and finally took refuge at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. In the contemporary period, there was another tribe called "Doa" in the region, which disputed with Toto about land issues. As a result of this dispute, the Toto tribe gradually moved to south and finally settled in the village called Totopara.

On the basis of ethnographic sociological data, it is known that Totopara village was first identified by the British administration in India during the second half of the nineteenth century. According to history, the region was first included in Bhutan. Later, in 1865 after the war in Bhutan, the British government included the area under the Indian map. The Bhutan Dooars Act took full control of the area in the subsequent period. The two British administrators of that time, Mr. Daniel and Mr. Hudson, for the first time announced the total size of Totopara as 124.5 acres. In 1889-94, the Settlement Officer Mr. D. O. Sundar of Jalpaiguri district operated the Totopara area. And he recorded the total volume of Totopara village as 1.5 acres for the second time. Mr. D. O. Sundar then gave the entire land to the Dhanapati Toto who was the head of the group called

'Mondal' (according to local language), and declared Totopara Mouza as a reserved and restricted place for the Toto tribe. The third survey of the Totopara region was completed by Mr. Milligan in 1916. At that time, a total of 235 Toto peoples lived in sixty dwellings in 20 acres land in Totopara. During the post-independence census, the number of these tribes stood at 325.

Physical and structural properties:

According to researchers, this tribe is of Mongolian descent. People usually have flat nose, narrow eyes, wide square cheeks and in most cases, black-brown-colored skin. According to Dhaniram Toto, a prominent expert of this tribe, the nomenclature of the Toto has progressed according to a particular evolution, which is described in the following table.



Spatial variation

According to the geographical features, this tribal area was divided into six separate zones based on their location characteristics. These are Dhumchi Gaon Mitra Gao, Puja Gaon, Subba Gaon, Mandal Gaon and Panchayat Gaon respectively. In local language 'Gaon' means village. These areas are briefly discussed below.

Dhumchi Gaon - According to the geographical map, the location of Dhumchi Gaon (village) is located on the slopes of the hills of north Totopara. This region is located at the highest altitude compared to the other five splits. Populations of this region are rare due to its relative height and distance from the rest of the five other areas. And the access road is extremely inaccessible.

Mitra Gaon - The area under Totopara is located on about 200 acres of land on the western edge of the geographical boundary. The houses in this area built in a step by step on the slopes of the mountain. And just like Dhumchi Gaon this area also much uninhabited.

Puja Gaon - Puja Gao is located in the northeastern part of Totopara. This area is situated on an area of approximately 100 acres, identified as a religious site. The religious place of this tribe is located in this area; this holly place is called Demsa. Various religious ceremonies are held in this sacred place of Demsa (Toto language temple).

Mandal Gaon - The Mandal gaon is located on the south side of the boundary on 5 acres of land in Totopara. The houses in this area are well-structured on a particular design on both sides of the street.

Panchayet Gaon - This part is located in the center of village Totopara. This section comprises about 120 acres of land. Like the Mandalay Gao, the homes in the area are well-formed in certain parallel designs.

Social structure and social system

Like some of other primitive tribes, Toto's society is largely matriarchal. Women perform various social rituals such as worship and religious rituals. Women generally play a leading role in controlling the infrastructure of society. Although it is a matriarchal society, men always play an important role in discipline and preventing external attacks. The community of Toto is divided into 13 separate groups. There are currently ten subgroups of these thirteen core groups. These ten subgroups, respectively, 1. Bangabe 2. Budube 3. Dhiring Chan 4. Nurin Chan Kobe 5. Mangtroche 6. Manchingche 7. Boudube 8. Dantrobe 9. Nubibe 10. Rekanchibe 11. Nishchankobe 12. Digobe 13. Jangkobe. Of these thirteen subgroups, it has been possible to retrieve the names of four families. These are, respectively, 1) Maipa 2) Japa 3) Sachapa 4) Thapa. The Toto tribe has some deities in thirteen sub-groups.

They are:

- The god of the Dantrobe group is - The elephant.
- The god of the Rekanjibe group is - The Pig.
- The god of the Bangabe group is - The Hornbill Bird.
- The god of the Digobe group is - The Horse.

In Toto tribes people from thirteen separate groups live in these six areas of Totopara, depending on the location of their houses. These structures are summarized below according to their groups and regions.

- Generally, people from Dhirung-cha, Nurin-cha Kobe and Baudub group's lives in the Dhumchi gaon area along the northern boundary of the border.
- Pooja villages are usually inhabited with bodhube and Bangabe group of people.
- The Mandal gaon area is generally inhabited by the Digobe and the Dantrobe group of people.
- The Noubibe, Mangtroche, and Manchingche peoples are lives in the Panchayat Gaon area.
- Located in the center of Totopara, in the Subba Gao region, there are people from Rikanjebay, Nishankobe and Jangkobe.

There are five respected designations for managing the Toto society. Namely –

- Kaizi or priest - one of the most respected and responsible positions of the people included in the Toto tribe. The moment of any auspicious occasion entirely depends on the decision of the kaizi.
- Gappu or the head of the group - Gappu took the seat of the judges when anyone asked for justice in relation to regarding land dispute.
- Namopon or news dispatcher - The duty of this post is to inform the people if there is any good news.
- Pao or Shaman - The ceremony of naming after the birth of a newborn in Toto society is accomplished by Pao.

Now, let's come to the original context of this article. That is, the evolution of the cultural practices of the Toto tribe on the basis of their indomitable religious festival with the ages and how these changes are gradually enriching this group culture.

Religious festival

From the earliest times of creation, the human race was not bound by any specific religious boundary. Regardless of place-time, everyone was a believer in the sonatan human religion. Subsequently, the human race came to Europe, Arabia and the Indus Valley of India and was divided into three groups - Judaism, Ibrahim and Hinduism respectively. The people belonging to the Toto tribe are mainly Hindu religious people. In the Vedic period, like the Aryans, Toto people also worshiped different types of gods in the knowledge of deities. The main deity of this tribe is Ishpa. The people of the toto tribes, including thirteen sub divisions always worship to Ishpa as their first and foremost deity.

Throughout the year, people of Toto tribe gather together to celebrate the religious rituals through food and drink with dance-song-music. The main two festivals of the Toto tribe are the Ongchu and Nangyu festivals. The Ongchoo festival is celebrated for eight days at the end of the monsoon season in July of every year. Currently, the festival is celebrated for four days. after Twenty-one to twenty two days of Ongchu, another festival of the Toto nation is celebrated. This is called Nangyu Puja or Nangyu Festival. Every religious ceremony and worship of the Toto tribe is performed under the supervision of a certain priest. These supervisor priests are called ambassadors of the gods or Kaiji and Gopu . from the beginning of the festival, Kaiji completed the program through various rules. The Holy place of Toto is known as Demsa. The festival is celebrated in this pavilion (Demsa). On the first day of the festival, the ritual begins with worship of Garoa. During This time the hill god Ishpa and river god Dangti and Dipti are worshiped. One member from each family contributes to the red roosters and pigeon as prasad. These pigeons and roosters are sacrificed by reciting mantras. This is done only by the priest or kaiji. After the sacrifice, the limbs (wings, legs, etc.) of the roosters are served as prasad, and a representative from each family takes prasad for the other members of their family. After that this prasad is cooked and eaten. A representative from each family pays home-made wine (in Toto, known as Yu) and 20 rupees to celebrate the festival. At the top of the house of Demsha there are two drums hanging under the roof. These drums are thought to be two different forms of the god Ishpa. The drum that hangs to the left is called Chigaimau and the drum on the right is called Mugaimau. During the festival, Kaiji brought these drums down from the top, and as this drum dropped, religion music is beginning. Worship of Manaka is held just two days after the worship of Garoa. The festival ends with this Manaka Puja (worship). Naingu, another popular festival of the Toto tribe, are celebrating at the beginning of winter, after the twenty one two twenty two days of Ongchu. The festival usually celebrated, imagining the river as God for the deficiency of water and fish in the winter. In this festival two pigs are dedicated to the deity as one of the sacrificial elements of worship. On the evening of the festival, all the locals of the village gather in the holy place Demasa, there are two small houses in Demasa, one new and the other known as the old house. At least one representative from each family is obliged to attend the festival. The people present in Demasa are divided into two groups. These two groups are known as Daisy and Maisie, respectively. One party was followed by the Kaizis presidency, and the other group followed the Gappus presidency. People of both groups sacrifice pigs for the purpose of the deity. Traditional hymns are sung during the sacrificial offering. After the sacrifice, two priests or Kaisi chant mantras in platform of Demsa with local wine (yu) and pork legs. After this the traditional Toto dances and songs started.

Dance and Music

Focusing on various religious events, these tribes celebrate festivals through various dance songs. In Toto dances, Men participate more than women; girls have only one dance in the language called "Chi Chi Paoa". The main object of each dance is to acknowledge allegiance to nature. Changro, Lei Kaimu, Tuntun Gamu, Tasi Tawa Itadi are also popular among other dances. At present both men and women participate equally in dance. Dhammasa madal, leaf flutes, kaal banshee (fluit), chinchatals, etc. are also used as musical

instruments. During the festival, people of Toto tribe wear their traditional dress gappo and women wear jatring and iring made of copper coins as dance ornaments.

Analytical view

Let us come to the end of the discussion this time, with the movement of time, the change in cultural practices under the religious festivals of this primitive tribe, and how with the new refinements and additions, this changing form is gradually moving to the external. The team that is currently working under the cultural management of the Toto tribe, known as the Toto Young Generation, is now constantly striving to make their own culture a place in the court of the world by combining new ideas, new musicals, new clothing and jewelry. In this regard, Dhaniram Toto, the elderly man of the community, explains, "The content of the songs and dances that were prevalent in the cultural events at our religious festival was mainly nature and seasonal, and these songs were composed by our ancestors in the ancient Toto language. At present, language is interrupted at some point in connection with the outside world, so the present generation is now moving our culture forward with new musical instruments in the current Toto language.

The changing form of cultural practice is explained through the table below in the context of the religious festival of the Toto tribe:

Topic	Ancient form	Current Evolution	Causes of evolution
Dance	Previously, only men from the group participated in this cultural event. The girls had only one dance, called "Chi Chi Paoa"	At present Both men and women participate in this dance together.	Due to women's participation in dance, cultural attraction is currently increasing.
Music	The contents of the traditional songs and dances held at the cultural event were originally composed by ancestors in the ancient old toto language, which is extremely difficult and sometimes it was very difficult to understand	At present, the new generation of the tribe is trying to advance its own culture by adopting new compositions in the current Toto language.	This attempt is due to the fact that it is an external obstacle to the difficult language.
Collaborative musical instruments	The dhamsa madal. Leaf fluits, traditional drums, chinchatal are used by the people of old generation as musical instruments.	The present generation is constantly striving to reach the doorsteps of the world through the addition of new musical instruments such as electric guitars, drums, octopad etc.	This kind of change is gaining a different level of attraction to the current generation.

Costume and jewelry used in dance	Earlier, traditional dress gappo and women wear jatring and iring made of copper coins as dance ornaments.	At present, modern jewelry and cotton cloths of modern designs purchased from the market are used in dance.	The clothing and jewelry used in the past were given to the deceased at the time of the death of the previous generation, so proper preservation could not be made, and the people of the present generation did not take immediate care in making those garments.
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Conclusion:

Individuals living in different societies have their own culture, which is intimately related to their daily living. In most of the cases this culture is surrounded by festivals and continues to move from generation to generation throughout the ages. Likewise, the cultural thoughts of the Toto tribe, depending on their festivals, have been steadily advancing to the new world with new generations which is a prime example of the overall development of a tribe.

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