THE NIMAR CULTURE:-THE SECRETS OF NIMADI OF MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role of Nimari culture. Nimar region famous for its rich regional culture which is a part of Madhya Pradesh tribal culture as well as a part of Indian rich cultural heritage. These people follow different customs and tradition of Indian tribal societies and make their culture very rich and prosperous in Indian society. Their culture and tradition, way of living style, work, art and craft, is as like as modern society. Their culture is the mixture of different religions such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains and Sikhs. These people are fond of music, dance and the variety of folk song “Hamu kaka baba naporiya” is one of the communities feeling song among these people, which unites together with the blends of love and affection. These people are very hard working as well as faithful. They believe other people as their own people with full spirit of faith, love and affection. Their lifestyle is very colorful and enjoyable and follows different customs and tradition of Indian culture.

KEYWORDS: Geographical Extent, Nimar Culture, Tribal Dance & Festivals

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1. INTRODUCTION

This region is called Nimar region. The people of this region speak different language, but the native people of this region speak Nimadi language. Barwani, Khargone, Khandwa and Burhanpur district is a part of this region. This region is the south western part of Madhya Pradesh. There are many references about these people in the great epics, such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. Prakash is a place in Maharashtra, at a distance of 100 km from this place related to Mahabharata. It mentions about the war between Bhim and Bakasur. The origin of these people belongs to Gonds and Bhil tribes. Various languages, religion, caste, communities and culture make India as a tree of rich cultural diversity. These people are mostly of warrior tribes. River Narmada flows in the heart of this region. People of this region have unity and integrity due to their peace loving and mutually co-operative nature. These people are expert in archery. Their lifestyle was completely primitive, but it changed suddenly due to the arrival of British in this region. By the 20th century, there was a great change in their lifestyle due to the rapid growth of urbanization. At present, this region is inhabited by the people of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT

Nimar is the southwestern region of western-central part of Madhya Pradesh. It is located south of the Vindhyas. Narmada and Tapi are the two important rivers of this region. This region falls under the range of Satpura. Burhanpur was one of the most important administrative centers under the Mughal King Aurangzeb. At present, Khandwa is one of the important places of this region, which connects good network of railway as well as roadways. Wheat, maize, jowar, bajra, sugarcane and cotton are the most important crops of this region. Wheat is the staple diet of the people. Cotton is the most commercial crop. Sendhwa of this region is one of the most important cities for ginning and pressing cotton manufacturing industries. Sendhwa, a small town of this region is
known for cotton or also known as White gold. This district contained extensive forests, and the government preserved it. It is home to forests of teak tree. Maheswhwar is the administrative center of Maratha ruler Holkar. After Indian independence, this region came to be known as Nimar region. Barwani, Khargone, Burhanpur and Khandwa became the district headquarters of modern Madhya Pradesh. Barwani district is one of the most backward tribal-dominated districts of India. This district receives special economic fund from the government of India. There are nine tehsils under the district of Barwani, such as Barwani, Warla, Niwali, Sendhwa, Pati, Rajpur, Anjad, Pansemal and Balwadi. Pansemal, Barwani, Sendhwa and Rajpur are the four legislative constituencies, which come under the jurisdiction of Khargone Lok Sabha Constituencies.

3. LANGUAGES

People of this region speak Hindi, Nimadi, Khandeshi, Gujarathi, Marathi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bareli language. Only the tribal people speak the Bareli language.

**Bawangaja**, at a distance of 6 km from Barwani town is a famous Jain religious center. There is the tallest statue of Bahubali or the first Jain Tirthankara Adinatha. Many Jain religious preachers and followers visit this religious city every year. **Beejasan** is a temple of Goddess Beejasani (Durga), located 16 km south of Sendhwa.

4. FESTIVALS

4.1 Kanbai Festival

Nimadis also celebrate Kanbai festival. It is a festival of Maharashtrians, as this region consists of (Sendhwa) many Khandesi Maharashtrians who live here and celebrate their religious culture. Goddess **Kanbai** is said to be the "avatar" of Goddess Durga. She is a well-worshiped Goddess in Maharashtra as well as the places where the Maharashtrians live. She is said to be the wife of Lord Shiva, as a "Kanher avatar" or known as Kanbai. Holkar queen built a temple for this goddess in Khandesh region of Maharashtra. Now-a-days, it is looked after by the local Khandesi people. Goddess Kanbai is worshiped by the Maharashtrian - Irani language speaking people (and a fusion of Marathi, Hindi and local tribal Khandesi). Goddesses Kanbai is the deity of many communities in this region. The festival of Kanbai is celebrated in the month of Shravan of Hindu calendar, the first Sunday after Nag Panchami. On the next day, on Monday, people go to nearby riverside and visarjan is done. The Kanbai festival is celebrated in the first or second week of Shravan month of Marathi panchang. On Sunday night, with the whole community with their clans play different games, follow religious prayers along with singing and dancing and show their gratitude towards the goddess to get her blessings.

4.2 Ganesh Chaturthi Festival

Ganesh Chaturthi festival is celebrated with great pomp and joy in this region. This festival is celebrated in honor of Lord Ganesha in the month of Bhadrapada. Hindu community believes that this festival is celebrated as the birth of Lord Ganesha, popularly known as Vighnaharta as well as Dukhaharta. People believe that this is the first religious festival of Hindus with the arrival of the monsoon. So, Lord Ganesha is known as Agra Pujya (first worshipper). Every one decorates the street and every evening people celebrate with rhythms of dhol, drums (locally known as taasen) and a lot of music. This festival extends up to 14 days and the next day is known as Anant Chaturdashi. People offer tilli-ki-laddu, dry coconut, flowers and laddu - the favorite sweets of Lord Ganesha. Every evening, arati and prayers are also offered by the community during this festival. Special events and prayers are also organized at the Lord Ganesha temple for the devotees. Many people install Ganesha idols at their home followed by the same process of prayer as well as Prana pratishta. On the
14th day of this celebration, the statue of idol Lord Ganesha is immersed in the water bodies, such as rivers, lakes, oceans, ponds, etc. It teaches us that everything is temporary in life, and it is necessary that sometimes we should let go the things which we love.

4.3 Bolbom/Shravan Sombar

Shravan month is one of the most important months in Nimar region. Every Monday or Somvar is an auspicious day for Hindu devotees. They gather on the banks of the nearest river. Devotees take holy bath and carry holy water from the river and pour this holy water on the head or mastak of Lord Shiva. These devotees are called “Bol Bom”. They offer holy prayers. Nowadays, some of these people arrange to take the holy water from the river Ganga to their nearby localities. Everyone visits the Shiva temple, offer flower, belpatra, etc. This month is one of the most important months for the Hindu devotees. Most of these people observe fast during the day of Shravan somvar to get the easy blessings of Lord Shiva. Women listen to Solah somvar vrat katha as well as they offer 16 somvar fast. During this month, devotees go to the temple early in the morning to decorate or shrungar Lord Shiva after abhishek performed by dousing milk mixed with pure water. People offer aarati of lord shiva with full devotion. The immediate surrounding is filled with recitation of shlokas such as “OM NAMAH SHIVAYA”.

4.4 Navratri Festival

Another important festival celebrated by Nimadi people is Navaratri. This festival is observed and celebrated by the Hindus for nine nights. The next day is Dussehra or SHARADA NAVARATRI. People pray to Goddesses Durga during this festival. This is the month of Ashvina, in which it is believed that Goddesses Durga killed demon king “MAHISHASURA” and restored dharma. The epic Ramayana describes that Lord Rama defeated and killed Ravana, the ruler of Lanka and rescued Sitamata from the custody of Ravana. Moral of this event is the victory of Good over Evil. During this festive season, people decorate their houses, shops, observe fast for nine days, recite the legendary story and chant from the Holy Scriptures.

4.5 Diwali/Dipawali

Nimadi people celebrate Diwali with great enthusiasm. Diwali is a festival of lights. Celebration of the Diwali festival by the Nimadi people is one of the good experiences. They decorate their houses, buildings and shops with various colorful lights and flowers. This festival is celebrated for five days with great enthusiasm. On the day of Dhanteras, people usually purchase new clothes, gold jewellery ornaments, metal utensils, diyas, etc. Every evening, women light diyas in their houses. Gayatri peeth of Sendhwa celebrates this day by offering pujan to God Dhanwantari, the supreme god of Ayurveda, receiving the blessings of god and express their best wishes to everyone of the Sendhwa city in order to be free from all types of disease and sorrow. On the Diwali day, people offer Laxmi puja and burn fire crackers. On this day, Raj Rajeshwar Mahadev temple authority decorates the temple in traditional ways, which is one of the most important feast for the eyes for everyone. The next day people celebrate Bhai Dooj.

4.6 Bhagoria Haat Festival

Bhagoria is one of the most unforgettable festivals of Nimadi people. This festival is celebrated before Holi, especially on a Sunday before the Holi festival, which is marked as a Bhagoriya festival in Nimadi region. It is a tribal community festival. During this festive season, the whole community purchases new clothes, jewellery and decorates their houses. Bhagoria is the festival of Bhil tribe people - inhabitants of Jhabua and Alirajpur district. All the tribes of India celebrate Bhagoria
festival, but every community have their own culture. The people of Nimadi believe it is the festival of selecting girls for young boys for marriage. During this time, a boy selects any girl of his choice and then both of them agree to get married and they run away to an unknown place, which can be a safe place for them. After that, they give message to their respect family members, and then both family members would sit together to accept this new couple. This marriage will be accepted by the community with a grand party that includes singing, dancing and drinking of madira with the rhythm of dhol and drum as per their tradition. All the community people attend the Bhagoria fair, dress up with new good clothes and jewellery. During the time of British rule, under Zamindari system, Bhagoriya Haat was also the meeting ground of moneylenders and farmers to collect money from the farmers, which one has taken as a loan. In the present days, it is celebrated as a festival of joy, happiness and enjoyment.

4.7. Holi

Holi is the festival of colors, which is celebrated in the month of March in Nimadi region. It is also known as Bhagoria Haat festival in West Nimar and Jhabua districts in Madhya Pradesh. This festival is celebrated for five days with enthusiasm and playing with colors. Rang Panchami is celebrated in the Nimad region after five days of the Holi festival. On this day, people visit their friends, relatives, kins and community members and exchanges colors and enjoy a lot. The Nimadi tribals call this holi as Bhagoriya Holi.

5. GANGAUR FESTIVAL OF NIMAR

The most important festival of Nimar region is Gangaur. It is a festival celebrated in the honor of Goddesses Gauri, the wife of Lord Shiva. Gangaur festival is a Rajasthani culture. Unmarried girls worship Goddesses Gauri to get a beautiful and good character husband while the married women pray to Goddesses Gauri for the longevity of their husband. It is one of the important festivals in Nimad region. During these days, people offer prayers to both Lord Shiva and Gauri. Every evening, devotees visit whole cities known as nagar parikrama with the idols of Lord Shiva and Parvati, especially in Nimar region, people celebrate in different ways. They dress up two children, may be own brother and sister, as a dulhan and dulhan and take procession of them through the whole village or city along with drum beats and singing various religious songs with the whole community or clan. In various places, Gangaur melas are arranged by the community.

6. SPECIAL FOOD

6.1 Dal Pania, Dal Bati

The special food items of the Nimad region are Dal Pania and Dal Bati. Madhya Pradesh has a culturally defined variety of food, which differs from region to region. The meals include both veg. and non-veg. dishes depending on the locality. The traditional dishes like Dal Pania and Dal Bati, jalebi, methiki paratha, besangata-ki-sabji, baflas, kebabs and biryani are one of the best in this region. These foods differ from season to season of the year. Bafla is one dish which is cooked with wheat, ghee and milk. The pure vegetarians could have a taste of Bhutte-ki-kees, which is prepared with milk and corn. These food dishes prove that various tribes and cultures have their own special importance.

7. CONCLUSIONS

No doubt this region is one of the tribal parts of Madhya Pradesh as well as the heart of India. This is the place of rich cotton-producing soil; especially Sendhwa as the center of cotton trade, which gives rise to a number of spinning as well as ginning industries. It does not matter whether you are an aesthete, food fanatic, dancing star or a jewellery junkie, this
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place is your dream pilgrim. This region apparently is a blend of all cultures and color in the state. Originally known as Malwa, the place has nurtured some epic rulers and warriors as well, like Emperor Ashoka, Chandragupta, Vikramaditya, Harsha Vardhan, Raja Bhoj, King Akbar and many others, who ruled this region. A long, revealing history contributed by these great men is preserved in the book form as well as in the hearts of numerous communities living in this region. The residents here are very generous as well as loving kind-natured people. The place has a subtropical climate, hot and dry. The state has an intact connectivity with railways and airways; tourists would not find travel distress of any sorts. Here, there is a brief education about the heart of India and its contribution to the overall Indian culture.

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