

Folk Tourism Elements in Rarh Bankura, West Bengal – A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

Bengal is a rich store house of living folk culture. On the basis of folk culture a most attractive tourism developed now a days. It is called Folk Tourism. This type of tourism develop have great opportunity in the western part of Bengal. Rarh Bankura has a large number of folk culture which play the important folk tourism elements in those area. The present study is an attempt to investigate the folk tourism elements and its present status and suggest how these elements can play an important tourism elements.

Key words: Folk culture, Folk Tourism, Elements, Status.

INTRODUCTION: Folk culture is the most important ancient culture which is not only original but also a kind of recreation help us to understand the socio-economic status of our primitive ancestors. It is associated with the culture of non-aryan sect of India. In ancient time people believed nature as a God and they prayed and worshipped the nature as a God, different types of activity like; song, dance are performed. These activities now a days known as folk culture. On the basis of these cultures a most attractive tourism developed called Folk Custom Festival. It is growing rapidly by attracting more and more tourist with its unique charm of folk custom culture. Its remarkable role in promoting development of local economy and culture has also drawn wide attention of academic circles.

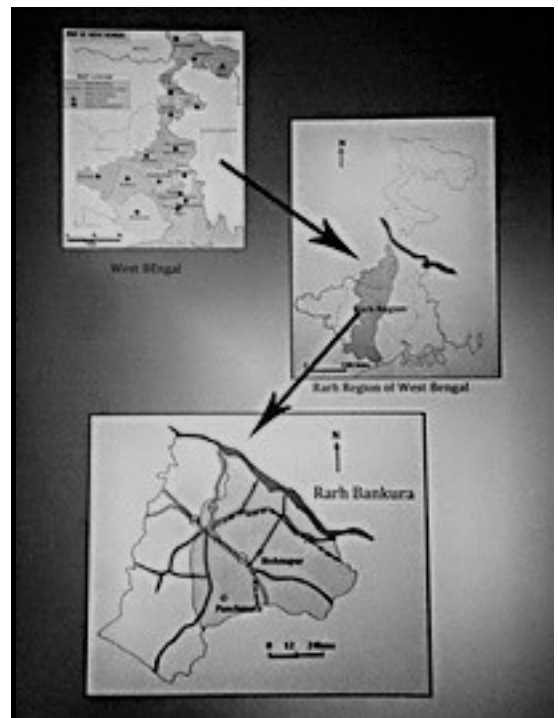
TWO MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLK TOURISM:

- 1 It pays more attention to local issues than the whole situation.
2. It lays more emphasis on product planning than analysis of cultural communication.

PEOPLE ENJOY FOLK FESTIVAL BECAUSE:

1. It has been exciting.
2. The key interest of the tourist participating in the tourism is to enjoy the experience of relaxation.
3. To know about the socio-economic status of our primitive ancestors.

LOCATION OF RARH BANKURA:



FOLK TOURISM ELEMENTS OF RARH BANKURA:

In the western most part of the Bengal the Bankura district is a rich store hours of living folk culture. In there the artisans are engaged in performing arts and paintings in almost all part of this region. In this district the folk culture, which have a great potentiality for the folk tourism festival element in Rarh Bankura are

I.Folk Song:- Bhadu, Tusu

II.Folk Dance:- Jhumur.

III. Folk Art:- Dasavatar Playing Cards, Pot Chitra, Pata Chitra, Miniature Chitrakala.

IV. Folk Literature:- Monasa Puja and Jhapan Festival.

BHADU SONG

Bhadu is a most popular Devi of Rarh as well as western most Bengal (Manbhum Region). It is a folk Goddess worshipped in the month of Bhadra (August-September). The main attraction of Bhadu Festival is Bhadu Song which is sung by rural Women. It is mainly an agricultural festival.

Origin of Bhadu Song: According to some renowned source it has origin from the house of Maharaja of kashipur, Puruliya for his daughter soul peace who was died from tough disease for denying her love marriage by her father.

The Rituals: There is no corrupt in 'Bhadu Song'. We may say that it was never influenced by Brahmin caste or the Arian Culture. Song are used as offering during puja inspite of corroup. Unmarried girls of bankura used to participate in it. The puja is completed through four phase-

- I) Recalling
- II) Establishment
- III) Wakefulness
- IV) Renouncing

Bhadu Jagaran (recalling) takes place during *Bhadra Sankranti* and *bisarjan* (renouncing) occurs in the first day of month of *Ashwin* (according to Bengali Calender). Throughout the whole month in each dusk, with flower the God is glorified. The grace of the puja is puffed rice.

Bhadu song and Contemporary Society: This song reveals the social, political, economic situation including labour movement, farmer's movement, land reform etc. of the respective region. Love – separation was the origin of this song but with the change in time and society, it is also changing.

Bhadu Song and Present Society: Due to enhancement of present education Bhadu Song mainly lost its importance and it is ceased to exist. But somewhere in some village it is still found to be performed by village girls.

TUSU SONG

Tusu is the Goddess of agriculture. She looks like a female doll. Her crown is made of tin – foil and cloth of blue or red paper. She is worshipped by singing song during the whole month of *Pouse* (December-January) in the Bankura district.

Origin of the name of Tusu:

Two view about the naming of 'Tusu' are –

- * The month of 'Poush' is related to Pushya stare. The other name of Pushya star is 'Tashya'. There from derive the name-

Tashya > Tushu > Tusu

- * It is thought that the name of 'Tusu' was deriving from a vow, which name is 'Usha' or 'Osha'. The derivation of the word 'Tusu' is from the pronunciation of the word 'Usha' or 'Osha'.

The Rituals: Group of girls from the district go to the river side every evening, in the 'Pousa' month, to sing and perform. On the day of *Makar Sankranti*, they gather together at the river side to worship the goddess Tusu. They sing and perform dance in front of the deity, asking for a good groom.

Element of Ritual – Ritual element of Tusu puja is very simple and available. These are- **Burnt earthen bowls, Husk, White rice, Paddy, Durba, Kori, Mustard, Marigold.**

Dancing style-

The entire Tusu dance has traditional folk asence attached to song. The dance is performed by men as well, when it is known as 'Bhaduriya Saila'. In Tusu dance man move in clock wise direction and women in anticlock wise direction.

Important ritual for Dance-

It is basically performed by unmarried girls and boys and at some places it is mandatory to be performed by virgin girls. It is customary for the dance to take a ceremonial bath in the river before this performance.

The dance is very elegend and graceful and creates a wonderful atmosphere, when accompanied by a melodious song from the rich collection of Tusu music. The dance is performed in group and in simple in nature, without any accompanying musical instrument.

Two types of Tusu puja are seen in the Rarh Bankura- in the western part of rarh region tusu crown is made of tin – foil with decorated different colour paper specially red or blue. In the eastern part burnt earthen pot worshipped with flower. In many cases it seen in the home.

JHUMUR SONG

A kind of Santhal Dance of forest life. It is a group dance. Men and Women both participate in it. It is well mentainoble folk song of Bankura. It is mainly the folk song of plateau region of Puruliya, thus it is said that the district of Puruliya is the ancient place of Jhumur Song.

Various Stories about the origin of Jhumur: In ancient time dancer perform the dance in the kings home and later in the Zamindar. With also abolishment of Zamindar the dancer are performing in the public to earn their lively hood.

The performers dance with 'Ghungru' on their feet. The sound which reciprocated through it created a strong impact on the mind of audience and hence the art get its name as '**Jhumur**'.

The people of Chhotonagpur gave vent to their emotion through songs, which were later known as 'Jhomur Song'.

During the **Jhum cultivation**, the tried farmers used to sing a song, in the evening for relaxation, hence named 'Jhamur Song'.

Time of Origin of Jhumur Song: Jhomur song has been originated during **70's – 80's**. Thus influence of Medieval period is highly observed over the song.

Theme of the Jhumur Song: In the past time jhumur was a troop based art, with a singer and musician. There are about 5-6 artist in a group. The theme was based on the eternal love stories of Radha and Krishna and the beauty of nature.

But now days songs are written of Ramayana, Mahabharata, and contemporary issues. The artists usually sing keeping in mind of socio-economic, geographical conditions of his or her locality and the tests of the people of his or her region.

Musical Instruments use in Jhumur Song: In past time Dhol, Madal, Nagra, Sanai are to be used but in recent time with the development of different kinds of musical instruments are use like- Harmonium, Tabla, Flute, Synthesizer.

Presently Jhumur song has become very famous and is converted to folk song. A number of researcher is going on Jhumur song. As an artist of this song Dharendra Nath Sardar is the pride of Bankura. Jhumur is famous for its heritage of verbal expression, simple music and simplicity.

DASHAVATAR PLYING CARDS

It is very much well known to the art and craft lover of the whole world. It is fully of Indian procedure and component. In a single '**shut**' or '**Jhaal**' of Dashavatara cards constitute 120 rounded cards. Among them 10 cards are 'Raja Gotra'. The name of the 10 Raja Gotra cards are –

1) Matsya (the Fish)	6) Parasurama
2) Kurma (the Turtle)	7) Rama
3) Varaha (the Hog)	8) Balarama
4) Nrisingha (the Lion Faced)	9) Juggernaut
5) Bamana (the Dwarf)	10) Kalki

Ancient and Its Sources: History of playing cards is almost thousand years old. According to Rudolph Von Lei-

This card may have originated in china and it was spread over Persia and Turkey and then to Europe. In India it was introduced first in the court of Mogul Empire Akbar from Persia.

From Mogul Court (Delhi) the game spread all over India, then from Orissa this game came to Bishnupur.

Processes of Card making:

- * Formation of Gum of Tamarind seeds.
- * Chalk powder is mixed with it.
- * The mixture gum is then poured over pieces of cloth (3 times) and dried properly (cloth pot)
- * With the help of special type of stone the pot is rubbed and it's made even.
- * With the help of rounded tin structure the pot is gradually cutted.
- * Polished by a hard stone.
- * Picture painted over it and kept for dried.
- * Then the card kept overnight on open space in contact with fog and dew.
- * After few time exposures to sun on the next morning it is collect.
- * Finally cards are prepared.

Whole process called 'Botor'.

About the Game:

- * Player must be five in number or more.
- * Each having 24th cards in hand.
- * Most preferable cards are Matsya, kurma, Baraha, Nrishna and Bamana.
- * When it is played in morning then starting cards will be Rama and if it night then it will be started by Matsya and if it dust the starting card will be Nrisinha.
- * The distribution of cards regards as '**Chillik**'.
- * At the end of the game the sides are counted and are evaluation of the winner takes place.

Decline and Present Conditions: Traditional playing cards centres dotted all over North and South India declined rapidly in the 19th century as the markets were flooded by inexpensive printed cards export from Europe and later from Japan. Today Orissa is the only living centre for traditional playing cards. In Bishnupur some artisans marking cards mainly for tourist, exporters and collectors, rather than for play the local people.

JHAPAN FESTIVAL

On the day of 'Shrabana Shankranti' jhapan festival takes place. In this festival small stages are formed on the carts. It is decorated by 8-10 snakes 'Hupri' or 'Jhupi'. Then the carts are moves throughout the whole village. At this time the local

snake charmers use to play with poisonous snakes by holding and wrapping it over their hands and necks. Snakes charmers of different region came and join this festival. To prove their skill they play with the snakes. Small charmers sitting on CHATURDOLA and show their skill, so its named as Jhapan

FOLK ART(Painting)

Bankura is very much huge and is enriched with its folk art (painting). Mention may be made of 'Potua-Pot' of Belyator, 'Fouzdar' of Bishnupur, 'Tasha chita' etc. an astonishing world of chitra accompanied by Baishnav Puthi, so called Ratna Prashabini now days.

Pata Chitra:

It's mainly the product of Bishnupur. It is an example of primitive Hindu art. Most probably this art was origin in the year of 1499. In between 7th and 11th century AD was the Golden Age of this art. Artists are use herbal colour for painting and themes are very simple, it constitutes Chaitanya Lilas and Krishna Lilas. The Pata chitra, that are well conserved in '**Bishnupur Sahitya Parisad**' can be classified under three deviation-

- * Highly influenced by Rajasthan.
- * In spite of Rajasthani influence dominance of folk culture prevails.
- * Fully folk cultured.

Present Conditions of Pata chitra: The painted scrolls now days portray contemporary realities like terrorism, the devastating tsunami of 2004, quakes, flood, inoculation, corruption and even the political turbulence. Early the figures were flat and one dimensional, but now they are shaded to give a 3-D look.

Pot Chitra:

Pot-Chitra of Belyator is well mentionable. This craft got eternity holding the hand of world famous artisan – Yamini Roy. It is two types-(I)Complicated pot (II) Square pot. It is famous since several decades till now. Most of these are of not more than 150years. The artisans of Bankura used to preferred red colour as base colour.

Miniature Chitra Kala:

It flourished during the time of Malla Raja Birhambir, in Bishnupur. It has great influence on the enhancement of Baishanava Culture. It is the newly form of Chitra Shaili of west India influenced by Mughals.

SUGGESTION FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BANKURA BY USING THESE ELEMENTS:

Suggestion for Folk music and dance-

- * The existence of these kinds of songs and dance should be kept alive.

- * The villagers must be insisted to promote these cultural events frequently rather than doing it only on a specific occasion.
- * Bankura town may be used as a cultural hub gathering various types of folk culture of the district.
- * For this purpose Rabindra Bhawan and Bankura zila Parshad Auditorium can be used.
- * Music and dance festival should be arranged in regular interval.
- * Music and dance of this district should be advertisement as tourism resources.

Suggestion for Dasavatar playing Cards-

- * People who are interested in playing cards should be informed about the significance of this game.
- * Different competitive games and attractive prizes for the winner should be introduced.
- * The Government should look forward to arrange workshops over different areas in order to make this very traditional game more and more popular.
- * The card making process should spread over different areas so that people associated with handicraft industry may become interested in it and go to watch the procedure.

Suggestion for Jhapan festival-

- * It is a seasonal tourism element of Bankura.
- * Light and sound programme should be arranged to show the Jhapan different other times in the year.

Suggestion for painting-

Open a museum specially for painting.

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