

Prospect of tourism in folk fair and traditional culture of Purulia District

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Abstract

Folk fair is the soul of village people for various purposes like enjoyment, income purpose, interaction with each other, etc. various folk fairs are held in the Purulia district for a long time. There are various types of folk fairs like Tusu, Chhata, Ind, etc. in the Purulia district; those have cultural importance as well as tourism. For this study descriptive method has been used. Purulia's folk fairs have a unique identity, which differs from others as cultural, habit, practice, etc. these folk fairs have tourism prospects for Purulia district which are described.

Key word: Folk fair, Tourism, Culture, Purulia

Introduction

Folk culture or *Loko Sanskrit* is part of man's activity like customs, tradition, fair, culture, myth, festivals, music, etc. which come ancestors with their regular practice (Dey, F). Folklore is very important for rustic of any place which is the heritage of that particular area's culture, drama, music, etc. Folk culture or Folklore is a reflection of community activity which is a reality in life (Duc, C.X., 2020). Folk music is part of folk culture, which represents human behavior and the importance of anthropologically as well as geographically (Revill, G., 2013). Holi is one of the best festivals in North India. It is celebrated every year and various types of holi songs are sung by women at that time but it is impacted by technology in modern times (Jassal, S.T., 2007). Baul song is one of the best folk songs of West Bengal and this song is sung at Birbhum District mostly. It is the oldest folk culture of West Bengal which represents the rural people daily round (Kuckertz, J., 1975). Anthropologist 'Redfield' logically used the term 'folk culture' and described the scientific importance of societies. The folk culture evolved after the urban revolution (Foster, G.M., 1953).

Tourism is a way for people to enjoy happiness for a while from the monotony of everyday life. A person or a group goes to natural and cultural places for some time to enjoy or learn about the place (Mousavi et al 2016, Sangeetha 2012). Small community's music, drama is suitable for tourism attraction as like Eldon, Mason city, Dyersville communities (Hajdik, A.T., 2009). Folk crafts, folk medicine, folktales, folk game, folk song, etc. cultural practices lead the Indian tourism industry (Hajra, V., 2015). That's why ethnic attraction is attracted by the tourist because various ethnic means

various ethnic cultures or folk activity and its increase ethnic tourism (Yang, L., 2009). Folk group dancers activity Leeds festival tourism around the world because artistic trips of folk groups spread their culture all over the world with folk dance (Bochenek, M., 2013). Event tourism management is useful for folk culture description and utilization (Getz, D., 2007). Another side, dark tourist place is useful for folk culture development as well as tourism development (Mionel, V., 2020). The local dance festival has a significant role for local people and these dance festivals have been declared heritage sites by UNESCO as like Khajuraho (Som, J. et al, 2020). Modernization leads to tourism, that's why ancient culture, the place becomes the heritage of the place and these heritage sites become modern tourism attraction (Nuryanti, W., 1996).

Regional festivals and fairs are part of folk culture. Pushkar is a holy place and there celebrate cattle fair for sale livestock, which defined the cultural importance of Rajasthan (Sing, M., 2016). There are various types of folk culture are seen in West Bengal like Baul, Jhumur, Bhatiwali, Chhau, etc. Purulia is part of West Bengal and here seen various folk cultures, which have various importance (Dey, F. and Bandhyopadhyaya, S., 2015). Manasa Mangal, Jhapan are the folk performance of Purulia and Bankura districts, which are important for these two district cultures (Ali, M.A., 2015). Chhau is one of the best folk dances of the Purulia district and its spread all over the world in modern times with dignity (Podder, R., 2021). A sacred grove is a holy place worshiped by tribal people mostly from ancient times. There are various sacred groves are situated in the Purulia district, which has a local cultural heritage for Purulia residents (Podder, R. et al., 2018).

Objectives:

Folk culture is the soul of local people. Various research works regarding folk culture have been done by research people. There are some gaps regarding folk culture. For this work objectives are:

1. to find out the community interaction in the folk fair of Purulia district
2. to reconstruct the history of folk fairs and determination their cultural value
3. to find out the prospect of the folk fair in the tourism

Study area

Purulia is a rough district in the west of West Bengal. Latitude and longitude are respectively 22°42'35"N to 23°42'0"N and 85°49'25"E to 86°54'37"E. The history of the origin of this district is very ancient and the multi-ethnic people of this district have been living there for a long time. The current area of the district is about 6,259 sq. km and the climate is semi-arid due to the Cancer crossing over the district. Purulia district is situated at the extreme east end of the Chhotanagpur Plateau and is surrounded by various hills, jungles, rivers, and other natural environments. Cultivation is less in different parts of the district due to excess granite and barren soils. Since the rice harvest, various fairs have been organized in the area, mainly in the style of local culture. There are myths about the origins of fairs in

different places and they introduce their own culture in these fairs. Folk fairs are held in different places of Purulia and the folk culture of Purulia is expressed through these fairs. Information about some loco fairs in the Purulia district is given in Table 1.

Methodology

Various methods have been used for folk culture description by researchers. To identify various folk cultures, qualitative analysis is good for identifying cultural variation (Dey, F). Cross case analysis is good for event tourism for stakeholders' input (Getz, D., 2007). To identify folk culture, triangulation, qualitative, quantitative, structured, interview, etc. methods are important (Yang, L., 2010). The sampling method used for classification folk culture tourism is basically purposive sampling (Som, J., 2020). GIS technique is suitable for sustainable tourism planning (Boers, B., 2007).

For this study domain, literature has been read for identification folk culture characteristics (Mionel, V., 2020). Regional Bengali language books have been written by various persons of Purulia and some of the books have been read for local cultural knowledge. Primary and secondary data have been used for this study. The descriptive method has been used.

Result and Discussion

Lokomela's of Purulia district is usually held in remote villages. These fairs have been celebrated by people of different communities for many ages and the fairs are village-centric and their various activities take place during this fair to enjoy. Since these fairs are centered around the village, fairs are held according to their culture. Although the folk cultures of Purulia are different, they give dignity to each other's culture and this can be noticed during the fair. Folk dance is one of the best folk cultures of Purulia. Folk dances of Purulia are organized in different fairs and many fairs are organized with these folk dances. Purulia's folk dances are Chhau dance, Pata dance, Jhumur dance, Kathi dance, Vadu dance, Tusu dance, Natua dance, Nachni dance, Banda dance, etc. In addition to folk dances, folk songs are also widely known. The folk songs are respectively Jhumur song, Tusu song, Vadu song, etc. Folk art is the making of Chhau masks, various musical instruments (dhamsa,) bamboo crafts (baskets, jar decorating tools, etc.), the Lakha industry, etc. The people of some villages and towns of Purulia earn their livelihood through this folk art. The folk fairs of Purulia have developed on the topics of local culture, local deities, folk dance, folk music, folk art, etc. Most of the folk fairs are held from the month of Agrahayan i.e. October. After farming, there is not much work in Purulia, so some of them enjoy the fair; some of them do it to earn money. The details of the Purulia Loco Fair are as follows:

- 1) Ind folk fair:** The fair which is held on the occasion of the Ind festival is called Ind Mela. Ind is happening in different places of Purulia. The importance of this festival can be felt especially in Purulia's Barabazar. However, these fairs are also held in other places like - Manbazar, Indukuri,

Matha, Kaluhar of Para block, etc. Ind festival is Indra puja or rain puja. Ind puja is performed on the twelfth of the white wing of Bhadramas (September). The festival was started by the local Landlord so that there would be no over-creation and also for the kings to show their dominance or dominance. Nowadays people of Santal and other communities celebrate this festival. A few days before the puja, sal tree (Shore Robusta) is picked which is called 'Ind Dang'. After the tree is cut down, a bamboo umbrella is made over it and it is covered with a white cloth. After performing the puja in a pit, everyone gathers and straightens it and some part is planted in the ground.

This festival is one day but somewhere it is more than one day fair. The fair is large for the festival and has a variety of shops. At this fair, there is a competition for Chhau dance. People from different communities join this fair to enjoy.

Table-1 Folk fair of Purulia district

Sl. No.	Folk fair name	Place	No of days
1	Ind Mela	Barabazar, Indkuri, Matha, Kaluhar etc.	1 day
2	Tusu Mela	Various rivers bank'sside of Purulia district	1 or 2 days
3	Khelaichandi Mela	Bero, Jaychandi, Ghonga etc.	1 or 2 days
4	Chhata Mela	Chakoltor, Bandwan, Balarampur, Manbazar etc.	1 day
5	Rash Mela	Purulia town (Zilla para)	11 Days

2) Tusu mela (folk fair): On the last day of Poush Sankranti, Tusu Mela is held in different parts of Purulia centering on the Tusu festival. This fair is held on the banks of different rivers of Purulia like the Kansai River, Shilabati, Dwarkeshar, etc. Usually, this fair is held for one day but somewhere it lasts for two or three days. The Tusu festival begins from the Sankranti of Agrahayan to the Poush Sankranti. The Tusu song reveals the life story of the girls and with it the culture of Purulia. 'Choudala' is a replica of Tusu and is floated in the river water through Tusu songs on the last day.

The Tusu Fair sits on the Kasai River on the Shimulia Bridge nearby Purulia town. On this day the people of the city and the people from the surrounding villages gather and enjoy. Tusu songs and dances are organized here on behalf of the government of West Bengal and there are many shops. On the other hand, on the banks of the river Kansai River in Deulghata, on the banks of the river Shilabati, huge fairs are held. The people of Purulia enjoy this Tusu festival with great joy. Tusu festival and fair are one of the aspects of Purulia's culture which is the identity of Purulia's folk culture.

3) Khelaichandi Mela (folk fair): Chandima is worshiped in different places of the district. The fair centered on this Chandi Puja is called Khelaichandir Mela. This puja is performed in the month of Magh (Jan - Feb). Apart from these two places, Chilla of Bandowan police station, Dandahita of Santuri police station, Dhabghata Jaltanki of Purulia municipality, etc.

Bero's Chandimela lasts for three days. Chandi Puja is performed in the newly built temple here. There is a pond next to this Chandi mandir where the soil is cut by the vows. When the desires of the persons are fulfilled, the soil is cut off and pigeons are flown. Lots of people come from far and wide to see this fair. On the other hand, many old Chandi fairs are held in Ghonga village of the Lagda gram panchayat. This one-day fair attracts a lot of people. Here everyone swears by the earthen horse. When the vow is fulfilled, he/she worships the next year.

4) Chhata mela (folk Fair): Chhata Fair is the famous loco fair of Purulia. This fair is held on the Sankranti of Bhadramas (October). The fair is held in different places of Purulia such as Chakaltor, Bandoyan, Balrampur, and Manbazar. However, the most famous is the Chhata fair of Chakaltar. A huge fair is held at Chakaltar centered on the Chhata festival. People from the Santal community gather in large numbers and people from other communities also participate in this fair.

'Suryanarayan Lal Singh Deo' (King of Panchkot) has been started the Chhata festival since his reign. The present descendant Amit Nal Singh Deo is also instructed to lift the 'Chhata Danda' during the festival and then the Chhata is lifted by local people. This festival was started to please Indradev so that the rain would be like time and not too much rain. At this fair, the people of the Santal community dance and sing all night long. Also, wrestling, sports, etc. are done in this fair. Musical instruments like Dhamsa, Madal, Tabla, etc. are sold at this fair. One of the features of this fair is that 'Ful patano' is seen here which means kinship is created. There is a tradition in Purulia that if any person likes someone, they started to build a relationship with him/her like as sister, brother, grandfather, uncle, daughter, and son. This custom has been going on in Purulia for life. This ful patano (build relationship) custom is done in this fair.

5) Rash Mela: The famous fair in Purulia district and Purulia town is 'Rash Mela'. In 1946, Rash Mela was started on the initiative of 65 fisher families in Rasmaydan of Zilapara. In this fair, Krishna and Radha are worshiped. At present, a temple of Radhakrishna has been built. This fair starts 5 days after Raspujima of Agrahayan every year. The fair lasts for 11 days but lasts for about 37-40 days. During the 11 days, the fair authorities organize various programs and folk music of Purulia is arranged in it. Merchants from outside come to this fair and give more shops. The fair, which lasts for about 40 days, sells for crores of rupees. There are about 300 shops at this fair. Since the fair is held after the harvest of paddy, the people of the village come to the town at this time to enjoy the fair. This fair is as much a meeting place of culture as it is economically important.

Conclusion

There are various folk fairs in the Purulia district and these folk fairs can lead to tourism of Purulia. Purulia cultural varieties are seen in these folk fairs and natural things are also seen beside folk fairs such as hills, forests, rivers, etc. Ind, Tusu, Chaata, Khelaichandi, Rash, etc. cultural festival of Purulia becomes folk fair and folk fair leads attraction of cultural tourism. Chhau dance is celebrated in every folk fair which is the heritage of the Purulia district and this dance play a mythological event. Tusu song and Tusu dance are seen in various folk fairs and these traditional cultures are the symbol of women's life. Chhata and Ind fair is historical fair because these fair ware started by the local king and landlord as Panchakot raja. So, this cultural folk fair is very much important for local people's emotions that are why Purulia's folk fair has the chance to tourism prospect.

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