

# Socio-Cultural Values and its Influence on Education of Jangal Mahal in West Bengal

Uttam Mandal

Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Kalyani, West Bengal, India

**Abstract:** *Today the youngsters are confused because of the change in value system in the society which lead them to many dilemmas. Due to liberalization, industrialization and globalization, rapid changes are occurring in almost all social sciences. The so-called philosophical foundations of India are declining day to day with the country in a state of social turbulence, the goals and functions of formal education need to be reassessed and updated. The youth need to understand the importance of the “value education” holds and how does it impact the society and its socio-cultural aspects.*

**Keywords:** Jangal Mahal, Folk Culture, Value education

## 1. Introduction

Jangal Mahal of West Bengal is comprised of five districts, namely Jhargram, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia are unitedly named as Jangal Mahal. Once, during British rule there was a district, Jungle Terry & then Junglemahal or simply Mahal. At that time, it was a larger district, comprised of parts of present Bihar, Orissa, Birbhum and Burdwan. Historically it has been isolated from mainstream Bengal. These five districts bear some special character compared to plains of Bengal. Among inhabitants SCs and STs are dominant. A special sub caste, Kurmi Kshatriyas are there also. Their festivals are different, their culture is also different. Apparently, they are resting in a situation that may be regarded as anachronistic. Still, they are extracting pleasure from their impoverishments. In this study I have tried to focus light on the speciality of the region.

### Objective of the study:

- Identification of demographic feature of inhabitants.
- The value of education of culture.
- Listing of popular local festivals and studying their character.
- Comparing culture features of Jangal Mahal and rest of Bengal.

### Delimitation of the study:

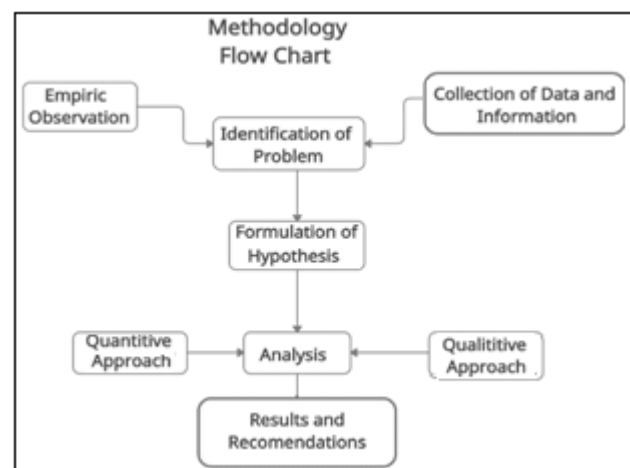
The study delimits to the following extent:

- The investigator was chosen only students of secondary level of Class IX as sample.
- The investigator was chosen only 200 Samples.
- The researcher would carry forward his research only in Jhargram, Purba& Paschim Medinipur (Jangal Mahal) in West Bengal.
- The sample was chosen from Government sponsored Bengali medium schools only.
- The study was delimited only on Social Science subject.

## 2. Methodology

This study starts with the importance of the association and dependence of tribal of Western West Bengal on the forests, based on empirical knowledge of the space and people

comprising the aboriginals. Thus, extensive literature review has been a primary necessity. District Gazetteers and Various Literatures have provided to perceive and explain historical framework of the tribal people, changes in forest composition and critical role of forest ecosystem in tribal life. Data and information have been collected from various Books, Census, District Statistical Handbooks, State Forest Reports and previous research studies, but most important being rigorous field visits.



### Value Education:

Values are the principles or standards of an individual's behavior and can help him/her to judge what is important in their life. They reflect one's attitudes, choices, decisions, judgements, relationships, dreams and vision towards their life and surrounding environment. Hence, educating each and every individual about the values, right from their childhood is really important. An individual learns different values from different sources like family, relatives, friends, community, religion, traditions, customs, books, environment, great personalities and many other sources.

There are two types of values: innate and acquired. Innate values are the internal values developed from one own mind and feelings. Examples include love, care, empathy, honesty, hate, etc. Acquired values are the external values developed from one's own experiences or influences by the immediate environment for example: convenience, status,

ambition, power, one's mode of dress, cultural customs, traditions, habits, tendencies.

There is a serious need to give the "Value Education" to individuals mainly in the place of learning environment, as they spend most of his/her time and learn many things. Value education can be given or gained in any place like home or in schools, colleges, universities, jails, voluntary youth organizations or at many other places. John Dewey (1966) said "Value education means primarily to prize to esteem to appraise, holding dear and also the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else".

Value education is deep rooted and in-built in Indian philosophy and culture. The Vedas and Upanishads form the source of inspiration for value education. In the Ashram education seen in Vedic period, the Guru used to insist his sishya(s) to follow some values throughout his/their life. This concept stood as a bases to start the Gurukul schools in the present days. This tells that the Value Education is being practiced in the educational institutions since the ancient times. In the modern world, educational institutions like schools and colleges play a significant role in the promotion of value education.

#### Definitions of Value Education:

- According to Perry (1968), "Value means the relation of an object to a valuing subject."
- According to Hindzay (1966), "By values we mean a person's idea of what is desirable, what he actually wants"
- In the words of John Dewey (1966), "Value education means primarily to prize to esteem to appraise, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else."
- Right living is reached only through value education which only stands against cardinal sins as Mahatma Gandhi has cautioned us: "Pleasure without conscience; Politics without principles; Prayer without devotions; Education without character; Wealth without work; Science without humanity; And commerce without morality."

#### Three levels of value education:

- **Household level:** Traditions, family, culture, religious education
- **Classroom level:** Curriculum, Interaction with peer group, Professional learning
- **Society level:** Politician education, Legal education, Social interactions

#### Factors influencing the learning values:

Hogan (1973) believes that moral behavior is determined by five factors:

- **Socialization:** Becoming aware as a child of society's and parent's rules of conduct for being good.
- **Moral judgement:** Learning to think reasonably about our own ethics and deliberately deciding on our own moral standards.

- **Moral feelings:** The internalization of our moral beliefs to the degree that we feel shame and guilt when we fail to do what we "should".
- **Empathy:** The awareness of other people's situation, feelings, and needs so that one is compelled to help those in need.
- **Confidence and knowledge:** Knowing the steps involved in helping others and believing that one is responsible for and capable of helping

#### Socio-Culture & Heritage:

Jhargram, Medinipur, Purulia and Bankura is the rich place of Folk Culture. A unique cultural heritage developed here in the form of folk dance, songs etc. centering different believes, rituals, social programs. Some of the main folk dance and folk song of Jhargram are Bhuang Dance, Chang Dance, Chhou Dance, Pata Dance, Langrae Dance, Ronpa, Jhumur Song, Bhadu Song, Tusu song. Some of the main festivals of this area are TusuParab, BahaParab, Karam Puja, Bhadu Utsav, BadnaParab which bearing the cultural heritage of this area. Different festivals, Folk Dance and folk songs which are tightly related to the daily life makes this place unique.

#### Demography and Culture:

Since 1774, there were around 55 severe tribal revolts against the 'dikus' or outsiders until India got its independence. During this long span leaders of rebellion like Tilka Majhi, Birsa Munda, Sidhu, Kanhu, Chand murmu, BhairabMurmu and many more influenced lives of people of the region. Now-a-days however growing cultural infiltration from outside through media, gadgets etc, has been creating a problem of 'cultural lag' within their community.

Culture of any community is reflected in their everyday activities, composition of family, degree of tie with their relatives, celebration of festivals, nature of worship and on many other things.

#### Festivals of Jangal Mahal:

Social festivals or community festivals play a great role in developing the process of socialisation. Social network also strengthens with social cohesion among community members during festivals. Villagers of rural parts of Jangal Mahal suffer a lot from lack of amusement. Amusements help to bring in colours and contrast in their regular daily life. Social festivals help villagers to make them relieved from being bored. It also creates opportunities for new avenues of development. If the area is additionally well endowed with natural resources, visitation of outsiders may increase with frequent occurrence of social festivals. Gradually scope of nature-based tourism may increase in the area. There are however possibilities of future dangers associated with such change. For instance, overcrowding, vehicle congestion, behavioural degradation may be introduced in the concerned society.

Considering the above notes, it may be inferred that festivals of Jangal Mahal may indirectly induce possible future change of the region. We don't know whether such change would be good or bad for the time being let us in brief take a look at the local festivals of Jangal Mahal.

- **Tusu Puja:**

On the day of Makar Sankranti, Tusuparab is celebrated. Mainly kurmi community this festival in Jangal Mahal. It's a very colorful festival. Idol of Tusumoni is prepared every year and is dressed in vibrant colors. Dance, folk music and gurpitha (a kind of sweet cutlet) are integral parts of this festival. It's generally a two days festival. Though the genesis might have been different, now Kurmi community considers the festival as a festival of prosperity.

According to local folklores three different stories are heard as the basis and initiation of Tusuparab, First, a prince marries a beautiful lad, named Tusumani. Tusumani was daughter of a poor potter. The Prince died at an early age. Out of deep sorrow with the incidence, Tusumani jumped into the pyre and committed suicide. Since then, people are memorizing the sad incidence by observing Tusuparab.

Secondly, a story is there which says that a king was passionately wanted to marry a village lad, named, Tusumani. But the king could not marry her because of her early death. The agony made the king as being virtually mad. To relieve the king villagers made a statue of Tusumani and kept it near the king's palace. The idol of Tusumani is made since then, every year and festival are observed with grandeur.

A third story says that a Mughal King wanted to marry a potter's daughter, named, Tusumani but when her father refused to get his daughter married to the king, the king started torturing the villagers. To help the villagers, Tusumani ultimately committed observed with grandeur.

Whatever be the story, Tusumani has become a legend.

Tusuparab, like other aborigine festivals, is also linked to the harvest season. During the harvest season, a small amount of crop is left untouched in the fields. This untouched crop is known as DilliBudhi' and is cut when AghranSanskriti starts in mid-December.

This particular event holds immense learning value as it teaches the values of sincerity, patience, honesty. These aspects of value education are provided through formal education in the modern society but here the people of the village learn the same aspects in form of the Tusu Song.

- **Bhadu Puja:**

Bhadu is the social festival of Jangal Mahal. The festival starts from the first day of Bengali 5<sup>th</sup> month, Bhadro, and continues till the end of the month.

It has its origins in the story of a princess called Bhadravati (Bhadresvari, in some version) of Panchakote dynasty who committed suicide. Bhadravati's devotees made an image of her and sing and dance before it throughout the month. On the last day of Bhadra, they gather on the river bank and immerse the image in the water. Songs, mainly focusing on marriage, form the main.

Attraction of the festival in which both professional groups and amateurs take part. Celebrations include fairs and cultural programmes.

The values that are been depicted through this puja is patience, honesty, and many other values that is been taught to us through formal education, but Bhadu puja says it all through its simple musical chores.

- **Karam Puja:**

Karam or karma is one of the most popular festivals of Jharkhand and Paschim Medinipur. This festival falls in the month of August/ September (11<sup>th</sup> moon of the Hindu month of Bhadra). Apart from western districts of our state tribes of other Indian states also celebrate Karam. It is a festival celebrated by mainly the Oraon, Baiga, Binjhari and Majhwar Tribes of Jharkhand, Chattishgarh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh among others.

The name Karma is drawn from the name of a tree "Karam". The branch of the Karam tree is carried by the Karma dancer and is passed among them with singing and dancing. The branch is washed with milk and rice beer locally known as Handia. Then it is raised in the middle of the dancing arena. All worshipers dance for whole night in the praise of the "Karam". The ritual starts with the planting of trees. The dancers form a circle and dance with their arms around each other dancer's waists.

As per the legends of Karam Devi, she is believed to be the goddess of wealth and children.

Here the puja is done in the hope that the farmers could flourish in their work. According to the Delors commission, there are four pillars of modern education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together and the Karam puja depicts all the pillar of education very well through its event. Karam puja teaches us that what we do in life will follow till the end. It teaches us that our work is equally important and holds the same value as our life.

- **Dharma puja:**

Thakur is worshipped as the "high god" of a large number of villages of the Rahr plains, a region that comprises of the greater part of the West Bengal state. Dharma-Thakur has no prescribed form; he is worshipped in the form of stones, as wooden votive slab, or through a pair of sandals. Among other attributes he is a fertility God and healer of disease. Worship of Dharma--Thakur is correlated with sun worship, and Dharma-Thakur's annual worship known as Dharma puja, has been described as a kind of sympathetic magic to make the monsoon rains begin to fall. Among the neighbouring tribal peoples there are number of practices and deities that share some of the characteristics of Dharma-Thakur. The majesty and exploits of Dharma-Thakur are presented in a class of works in Bengali literature known as Dharma-mangal. This event depicts that human beings are the actual living God that we need to worship through our love, care, and kindness.

- **BadhnaParav:**

The most popular & joyful days of southern=western Bengal is BaandhnaParab among Santals, Kurmi (MAHTO), Bhumij, Korha, Munda etc, communities. Bandhanaparab mainly celebrated on the day of Amabasya (DIWALI) of Bengali Kartik month. The people enjoy the festive with various types of rituals. On that night a group of young men

go from house to house to awaken cows and the peoples. They mainly visit all the cow-shades of the villages. They sing whole night this type of traditional BandhnaGeet with Dhamsa, Dhol, Bansi, Jhumka, Madol etc, musical instruments.

- **Folk song and dance:** Some of the main folk dance and folk song of Jangal Mahal are Bhuang dance, Chang Dance, Chhou Dance, Pata Dance, Langrae Dance, Raibenshe Dance, Ronpa, Jhumur song, Bhadu song, Tusu song. Some of the main festivals of this area are TusuParab, Baha parab, Karam puja, Bhadu Utsav, BadnaParab, which bearing the cultural heritage of this area. Different festivals, Folk Dance and folk songs which are tightly related to the daily life makes this place unique.

- **Raibenshe and Chhou Dance:** Both of these dances are physically trained dances. The only differences that follow is that Raibenshe dance is specifically performed by men, whereas Chhou dance is performed by both men and women. There is particular designed artistic mask that is used in Chhou dance that depicts the immense traditional culture that has been followed through decades. Raibenshe is a genre of Indian folk martial dance performed by male only and this dance was once very popular in West Bengal. Traditionally, this dance involves vigorous and manly movements of the body along with the acrobatics of a raibansh (a long bamboo stick), from which its name originated. During the performance, the performers enact the actions of drawing a bow, throwing a spear and waving a sword. The performers wear a brass anklet (nupur) on their right ankle. It is accompanied by dhols (drums) and Kanshis (cymbals). It was traditionally performed by Bagdi community, who worked as the bodyguards of the landlords in medieval Bengal.

There are many other cultural festivals of Jangal Mahal that is been performed through years which also depicts different aspect and variance of value education. For example: Folk drama, regional proverb speeches, all these events depict the immense heritage of West Bengal and also provide insights to value education, moral and ethical education.

### 3. Conclusion

The entire passage here gives explanation and information about the great Jangal Mahal of West Bengal and all the cultural heritage it has. It is explained here how these events impact socio-cultural aspects of the society and its people. There are many other events that occur every year in the depths of these villages that promote the culture and heritage of the society. It also contributes to the value education and learning cultures of our society.

### References

- [1] Chattopadhyaya, Annapurna. The people and cultures of Bengal a study in origins. Firma KLM private limited. Kolkata. 2002
- [2] Islam Majharul. Folklore: parichiti o pothanpathan. Abosar, Daka, Bangladesh. 2015
- [3] Chowdhury, Dulal. Banglarlokosanskritubiswakosh. Academy of Folklore. Kolkata, 2004

- [4] Patra, Jayanti, "the society as perceived by the educated people of West Bengal, an analytical study." Dept. of education, K.U. 2009
- [5] Bhattacharjee, Ira "A comparative study of values of some secondary school girls offering in age and in socio-economic and cultural status." Dept. of education, K.U. 1988
- [6] Bhowmik, Prabodh Kumar. Loksamaj o sanskriti. Lokosanskriti o adibashisanskritikendro. Totho o sanskritibivag. Paschimbongo Sarkar. Kolkata. 2003
- [7] Lakshmi V. Vijaya & Paul M. Milcah. International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR), ISSN (P):2249-6947; ISSN (E): 2249-8052, VOL.8, ISSUE 4, AUG 2018, 29-38
- [8] Dan, Koushik. People, Festival and Culture: A study on Jangal Mahal of West Bengal. 2018 IJCRT, volume-6, Issue 1 February 2018, ISSN: 2320-2882
- [9] Bhattacharjee Subhasis, Geography, The University of Burdwan, India & Siddique Giasuddin, Geography, The University of Burdwan. Significance of forests in Tribal Habitation of Jangalmahal. International journal of research on social and natural science, Volume I, Issue 1 June 2016, ISSN (online) 2455-5916