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URBANIZATION AND FOLKLORE: EMERGING ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH-EAST INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization refers to the population shift from rural to urban areas, the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas and the way in which each society adapts to the changes. Urbanization enables cities and towns to grow. It can also be termed as the progressive increase of the number of people living in towns and cities. It is highly influenced by the notion that cities and towns have achieved better economic, political and social mileages compared to the rural areas. These includes social and economic advantages such as better education, health care sanitation, house, business opportunities and transportation, more employment opportunities and better recreation facilities etc etc. Whereas folklore is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group or community people, it encompasses the tradition common to that culture subculture or group. This includes oral traditions such as tales, proverbs, songs, ballads, jokes etc that are historically handed down through oral tradition to the next generation. It demonstrates the “old ways” over novelty and relates to the sense of community.



KEY WORDS: social and economic advantages , health care sanitation.

INTRODUCTION :

Knowledge can't be confined. It is all inclusive now. Basil leaf is called as gift of Asia. Not only that all kinds of leaves are precious. Constant researches are going on in all over the world about the lofty treasures of India. It is there in “The Gita” and “The Upanishada” about the benefits of various leaves but it is very confined among the scholars. Knowledge came from shruti (listen) and shreeti(memory) (from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana). Mask dance(mukhanaach) in Majuli, the river island is world famous. Bamboo dance in Mizoram, Ali-aei-ligang of Missing community, Khasi dance of Meghalaya, kobigaan in Bengal, zatra (open theatre accompanied by orchestra) etc spreading knowledge by dramatic performance. Baulsangeet carries meaning through songs. It is education through entertainment and amusement, which was called ‘morality play’ in ancient Europe.

North eastern states of India are the home of number of tribes that has got their own cultures and traditions that translate into a place for celebration almost year round. The most important festival of Assam is Bihu, celebrated with fun and abundance by all Assamese people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, faith and believe has to made international through the modern technological use of ‘whatsapp’ and ‘facebook’. Bihu songs and dance performed by young boys and girls in their traditional attire make a mesmerizing beauty which can attract the tourists of the world. ‘Hornbill Festival’ is no longer confined to a

particular place. Karbi youth festival, Jhumur dance of Shanthal community and many more are the examples of rich cultural heritage of the respective communities.

‘Baul songs’ of West Bengal is very rich in its forms and a symbol of the individuals of the quest for inner spiritual realisation and social harmony. Through such songs the singer conveys social status of various people and carries a message throughout the song for the listener. Purna Chandra Das, Kali Shankar Bhattacharya and very renowned figure late Kalika Prasad are the prominent figures in this field. Lorea notes that the term ‘Baul’ is an umbrella term that is used to refer to a diverse group of non institutionalised tantric religious communities drawn from the lower caste societies. The highly romanticized image of the Baul as the lonely itinerant minstrel in search of inner spiritual realisation and social harmony was largely the product of nineteenth century Bengali nationalist authors who sought to use Bauls as the basis for a cohesive national identity that cuts across religion and boundaries.

In these days of urbanisation, use of technology specially through whatsapp, facebook, twitter, telegram, imo and instagram etc, exchange of information has become very easy and fast. Rather faster than sound. So we can take these advantages of digital world and spread the knowledge from one pole to the other. It also helps the growth of tourism. Many stories related to the Durga puja, Kali puja etc are there for which tourist came from all over the world to India. These are myriad wealth of India. Countless stories are found in this connection. India is called a magic land. We find some reference in the mysterious India in the novel “A Passage to India” by E.M. Foster. “A lady character coming recently to India than wanting to know from her husband what India is actually like, is it all mountains, seas, or hills or what?” In reply the husband said that he stayed in India for the last twenty years or so he could not come to any conclusion about India. This shows about the vastness of India and its terrain. However, a just reply was given by publishing another novel “A Passage to England” by Nirod C. Choudhuri in England.

Folklore validates certain aspects of cultures and justifies its rituals and institutions. It also provides rationalisation when institutions are challenged. Folklore can be used to express social approval those who confirm. Folklore can educate. It can carry along and teach the history of a people as well as cultural norms diligence, respect, Perseverance etc. The most fascinating tales are legends which attempt to teach why things are found as they are. Foreexample, why elephants has a long nose or the bear a short tail. While no one labels entertainment as a function of folklore, it seems that one of the primary purpose served when a story is told is to interest, and provide fun for excitement.

The world is soon going to be paperless. People are going to have much time for pastime. This leisure period can be utilized by stuffing information of our folklore. People must be engaged and must live with a hope. Else psychiatric patients would increase in near future. Manual work is being replaced by auto technology as for example sitting in a small room with a small gadget we can control the things that are under ones reach. Those who won't be able to use and utilised such facilities may suffer from mental vacuum. Assam is perhaps not given much importance yet in this case for which many indigenous languages of this region are dying very rapidly. Even the Assamese Language itself in danger, according to the Language Researchers. The Baul songs which were once very popular even in the remote village of Bengal is now a forgetful chapter. We notice the disappearance of the wondering minstrels which are nothing but dying echoes today in this digital world. But we can go for publicity with the help of digital equipment and bring awareness about the lofty virtues and deep meaning of the songs to new generation with the help of whatsapp, facebook etc. These old performatic traditions –Bauls, the patos – the bahurupisor the rural puppet theatres, these were ignored during the long rule of communist in Bengal. The Bauls were consistently attacked by the ‘lumpen’ and the left parties. Whereas deep esoteric knowledge can be found in Bauls and Fakir's songs. To revive all these dying treasures of our country people we need to invest money and time in a systematic and scientific way. New generations should be encouraged to unveil the deep rooted meaning of these treasures. Opportunities and perspectives are there, only proper measures need to be taken to revive all these dying treasures.

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