

*Tribal Folk Cultures and Performativity: A Study of JaniShikar and
MurmaJatra*

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&

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Abstract

Folk theatres in India have been extremely rich and diverse in their artistic and ideological reach. Folk theatres such as *Jatra, Chau, Nautanki, Nacha, Yakshgana, Ramlila, Raslial* among several others have proved viable forums for the pedagogic, and cultural reawakening in Indian post-independence scenario. And they have also played a pivotal role not only in the configuration of nation but also in de-colonizing the Indian theatre from the European theatrical modalities. Of late Tribal theatres too have been seriously considered for their ethnographic and cultural significance in the theatrical genres. Tribal theatres of central India, especially of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra and Telangana etc. have a rich heritage in terms of subject matter and also in artistic nuances. In Jharkhand, tribal festivals are based on nature, agriculture, village gods and in practice of paying homage to the spirits of the ancestors. They are full of exuberance. The festivals of community employ the symbols of myths for their

proliferation and entertainment and are deeply rooted in the people's belief system. Sarhul, Sohrai, Karam, TusuParab, BahaParab, Jawa, etc. are a few tribal festivals celebrated in Jharkhand by the majority tribes. These performances require our intellectual engagement not only to see their performative dimensions but also to attest the changes they have incorporated over the year from the point of view of communication and transformation.

We shall be looking at the two popular tribal cultural practices of Jharkhand namely, *JaniShikar* and *Murmajatra* from Richard Schechner conceptions of 'efficacy' and 'entertainment' in performances.

Keywords: gender, performance, ritual, transformation, ethnic, marginality, subjection, power, everydayness, culture.

Introduction

The festivals of a community employ symbols of its myths and tales. They are also deeply embedded in people's conviction of life and society. In Jharkhand, tribal communities' festivals are likewise based on nature, agriculture, village gods, and the spirits of the ancestors. They are full of exuberance in cultural messages and rituals. Sarhul, Sohrai, Karam, TusuParab, BahaParab, Jawa, etc. are a few tribal festivals celebrated widely in Jharkhand by the tribal community. The

tribal population of the state has kept Nature and its scenic beauty intact because they have developed their arts, tradition and culture in proper synchronization with Nature. It can well be seen through the lives of tribal men or women whose routine is according to the movement of nature. These tribes have their own ecology of a society (Schechner, 1974).

Our focus is to spotlight the performative dimensions in the two popular tribal rituals namely *Jani Shikar* and *Murma Jatra* from Richard Schechner's theory of 'efficacy' and 'entertainment' (Schechner, 1974). In the evolution of theatre he has highlighted, these two entities are decisive factors. The theatre, he implicates must be judged and jettison against efficacy and entertainment for the better understanding of performance. Rituals he considers as the primordial modes of performance. He categorically states that, "no performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment" (1974, p. 15). Along his argument of thought, we consider *Jani Shikar* and *Murma Jatra* not only the sites for ritualism and but also performance in their own rights.

Jharkhand state is geographically located in central part India and has got its statehood in the year 2000. It can boast of as the habitat of heterogeneous tribe groups among which 32 groups are most well-known, and they are *Munda*, *Santhal*, *Oraon (Kurukh)*, *Kharia*, *Gond*, *Kol*, *Kanwar*, *Savar*, *Asur*, *Baiga*, *Banjara*, *Bathudi*, *Bedia*, *Binjhia*, *Birhor*, *Birjia*, *Chero*, *Chick-Baraik*, *Gorait*, *Ho*, *Karmali*, *Kharwar*, *Khond*, *Kisan*, *Kora*, *Korwa*, *Lohra*, *Mahli*, *Mal-Paharia*, *Parhaiya*, *Sauria-Paharia* and *Bhumij*. Each of these tribes has their own cultural and linguistic background. They even have separate food habits and cuisines. Amongst these tribes, *Munda*, *Oraon*, *Kharia*, *Ho*, and *Santhal* are the major tribes of Jharkhand. *Oraon*, *Munda*, *Kharia*, and *Ho* tribes are found in the Chhotanagpur region of present-day Jharkhand and the *Santhal* tribe is found mainly in the Santhal Pargana region of Jharkhand. The religion that these Tribes follow is called

the *Sarna* religion. It is misconstrued as ‘animistic’ religion nonetheless; it stipulates that the plants, trees, and all other natural phenomena have a ‘soul’. The followers of Sarnaism believe in, worship and revere Dharmes¹ who is also invariably called Marang Buru, Singbonga and so many other names by different tribes. Followers of this cult also believe in and worship Chala Pachho², which is identified as the mother earth or nature. It is symbolized by the *sal* tree. Dharmesh deity is believed to have manifested himself in sal trees. In this way ideologically tribes have an indigenous, primordial belief system of their own which is partly naturalistic and partly pagan. This should also be noted that all the tribal festivals of Jharkhand are more or less dependent on seasons and nature’s cycle. Dr. Robin D. Tribhuwan, a renowned author on tribal studies states that, “On festive occasions they feel free and relaxed from several tensions from their hard life. They participate in the festivals with a sense of solidarity. They participate hastily in feasting, drinking and dancing to celebrate the festivals along with propitiations of both benevolent and malevolent spirits to get a good harvest, plenty of rainfall and to be protected from diseases and natural calamities. A type of gratitude is expressed to the supernatural forces and the cosmic beings for helping them in the times of adversity” (Tribhuwan, 2003, p.9).

JaniShikari is one of the main tribal festivals of the Oraon which must be read as the site of cultural pride and women power. *JaniShikar* is made up of two words-“Jani” meaning female and “Shikar” meaning hunting. Hence, it is a festival of hunting by the women. In this festival, the tribal women clad themselves in men’s attire such as jeans, trousers, shirts, dhotis, etc., and go out for hunting armed with traditional weapons. The story behind the celebration of *JaniShikar* is

¹In Sarnaism, Dharmes is considered to be the Supreme God, who is the creator of the universe.

²She is the mother goddess, identified as earth or nature. She is symbolized by a *sal* tree.

preserved into historical memory. It is believed that when the Oraons were living in the Rohtasgarh Fort, now in present-day Bihar, was attacked by the Turks, the European invaders. The Oraons fought back and defeated them. This is well mentioned and often sung in the folk songs and stories of the Oraon tribe that unfolds their glorious past.

Namhaepurkharrahechar re

Rohtas Patna nu rahechar-2

(Koonathan 1999, 107)

(Our forefathers once lived there

They lived in Rohtas and Patna) (Toppo, 2018)

The Turks were never able to defeat the Oraons in open combat. So, they hired a spy, a milkmaid named Lundari into the fort to get the secret information about the tribes and their war skills. She advised them to attack the fort in the morning just after the *Xaddi* (Sarhul) festival. In this festival men generally drink the country liquor. They drink and sleep till quite late in the morning. The drink is rice beer called *Hadiya*. Oraons folk songs mention the Turkish designs a plan to capture the Oraon territory, with the help of a local spy, an Ahir milkmaid named Lundari (Roy 1915, p. 26) as follow:

Ahirin (Gwalin) bhaiyakobadidagadela

Rohtasgarhbainilutiyongela,

'Baini' kamure Raja pagdibandhai

Janikamure Raja pagdibandhai.

(Ahirin (milkmaid) has cheated our brothers

Rohtasgarh has been plundered sister

King ties turban on 'sister's' head

King ties turban on the head of a woman) (Toppo, 2018).

As per the spy's inputs they attacked and found to their surprise that all the Oraon men were under intoxication and were asleep. The womenfolk got a tip-off of the secret strategy of the Turks. The women, led by Princess Singi Dai and her friends Champai and Kaili Dai (Bhagat 2013, 93-94) dressed up as men fought the invaders twice. The rendering of this has been so poignantly captured in the lines:

O Dekha,

Aye gelain raja beti Sinagi Dai

Sathe-Sathe Champa, Kaili

Aur sobhe Janana Man

Mude Feta, Hathe Chinyari

Mardana Bain Ke

(O see,

the king's daughter Sinagi Dai has come

and along with Champa and Kaili

and all the ladies,

with turban tied on their head and bows and arrows in their hand,

becoming like men.) (Topp, 2018)

On their way back, few Mughal soldiers saw Lundari the milkmaid and got hold of her. They accused her of giving them the wrong information about the Oraon men getting drunk and intoxicated during the *Xaddi* festival. They were questioning Lundari about the wrong information, who was standing quietly and listening to all the allegations. She then revealed to the Turks that they were not fighting the men but they fought and were defeated by the women dressed up as men. They could not believe that they were defeated by *Oraon* women. Hence, to

check the veracity of the information they decided to employ some troops on the other side of the Son River. Turk soldiers hid behind the bushes on the bank and acted as watchdogs from a distant place (Bhagat, 2013). The weary and tired champions who were in fact women came near the bank; they sat down comfortably and started cleaning their face off and drinking water (97). They employed both hands for splashing water on the face or for drinking (Kiro31). The Turks were completely disillusioned and shocked to find that all warriors were women folk. They could also see how all soldiers prepare their face for the decoration at the bank and how their gestures were quite womanly. They felt ashamed of having suffered two consecutive defeats from these brave women, whom they had considered delicate, fragile and powerless. They then began drawing out plans for the third attack on the same day of the festival with firm determination (Bhagat,2013).

The very next time they did not wish to bring shame to their male and their power/hegemony. When the attack was launched again, ladies were perfectly normal neither shocked or surprised. Like the brave soldiers, they were ready to defend the fort against the attacks. They defended their bastions valiantly. The commander of the Turkish army now understood the reasons behind the resistance and boosted up the morale of his soldiers. He started off shouting continuously to revealing the true identity of challengers (women soldiers), in order to arouse their male ego (Bhagat,2013). He was successful in his mission. The women could not resist the fierce onslaught of the Turks for long. The Turks stormed into the fort and began killing men and women ruthlessly. The women, however, lost the third battle against the Turks but with a sense of guilt that they were fighting with women, not men. As a result of which, the Oraons had to leave the castle and they had to flee to different parts of the city and migrated to Chotanagpur.

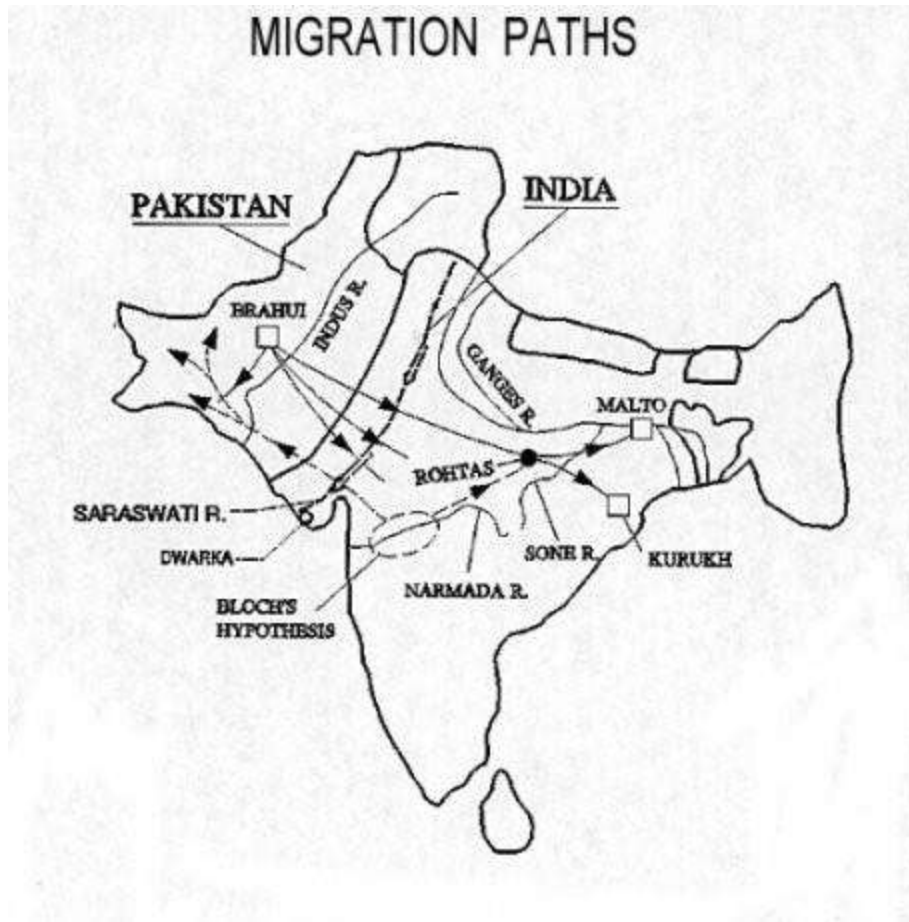


Image 1: Bloch's hypothesis

Nevertheless, the brave leaders of the women's army such as Sinagi Dai, Champu Dai, and Kaili Dai managed to save the life of many tribal men and women by safely rescuing them through a secret passage (Bhagat, 2013). Some of them who fell in the hands of the enemies were brutally tortured and subjected to corporeal punishment and even death. The captive women were forcefully branded with three dots with a hot iron rod in a straight line on their forehead as a reminder of the three battles fought and also for the realization of the fact that they had lost the third battle. These dots were intended to defame them. But they are now considered the symbol of victory of the Adivasi women (Kujur, 2010). Though

tribal women wedged a fierce battle against the intruders and consequently lost the third battle, it has been recorded in history that the princess Sinagi and her friends fought against the intruders. It was also narrated they were the epitome of courage and honor. But the fact is quite different from the history. It is needless to say that the Oraon women were valiant and chose death to dishonor or slavery. The historical tale of valor and masculinity of the Oraon ladies led to the concept of *JaniShikar*. This festival thus has a political and as well ethnic value attached to it.

This festival is not only a site of culture practices and ritual but also has enshrined a lot of performative dynamism. Therefore, women of the Oraon tribe have been commemorating women's power through *JaniShikar* to perform their power and collective identity by engaging in hunting animals. The womenfolk wear men's dress; leave homes to hunt for animals, mostly goat and hen. As the night approaches, they arrange for a feast to celebrate the day.

Panchopaharbicheshikarkhelegeli

koinahilage sang saath- 2

(we went around five mountains and hills for hunting
some people (women) came, some didn't.) (Bhagat, 2017)

The tradition of celebration of this festival has changed due course of time. Earlier this festival was observed for eleven days. The women folk used to march forward to the East from their villages and walk and hunt for eleven days and return back to their villages on the twelfth day where they started from. On returning back to their respective villages they used to cook the hunted animals and distributed the cooked meat as *prasad* (offerings to god) to the whole village and this feast continued accompanied by dancing the whole night. In contemporary times, this tradition of hunting for eleven days has been reduced to

three to seven days. The women folk gather in the *Akhra* or the worship place of the village, where the *Pahan* or the village priest blesses them and wishes them luck for the hunt. Then the group of women dressed as men go on the hunting spree. They go from one village to other hunting animals without their husband or male partners. When they enter a village, they go to the *Akhra* of the village to get the blessings of the *Pahan* of that village. Thereafter, they move to another village preferably in a group. The crowd watches the procession pass by in jubilant mood. And some of them also join the procession of women. As the sun starts to set in, the women folk return to their villages where the hunted meat is cooked and distributed among the villagers as *prasad*.

Gaove re Chaitrabujhegeli, bandookke deli othangaye
Ranchi tohsaharbulegeli, bandookkechorahaeerlel ho,
chora-chorinipoichialaye re, Budha- budhideikhaalaye.

(when we knew a deer came out in the village, we pulled our trigger but when we went to Ranchi city, our guns were stolen when we returned from hunting, girls and boys did not come to receive us, but the elders saw and came to welcome us.) (Bhagat, 2017)

However, there has been encountered a lot of change in recent times. Earlier the festival was celebrated in the forests but now the women involved in the public hunting also go hunting in the streets of the city and also victimize domestic animals that make the situation very uncouth for the modern audience. Under the forest law enacted by the Indian Government, poaching deer is unlawful and forbidden in forests. However, the community sometimes hunts deer. There have also been some strange incidents in *JaniShikar* rituals very recently where women

dressed in men's garb would stop the vehicles near Ambedkar Chowk, Pithoria Kanke and asked for the donations which are actually not a part of *JaniShikar* (Bhagat, 2017). Other changes occurred in the recent past is physical assault and abuse to the practicing women who go for the *shikar*. "Earlier, womenfolk used to wear traditional dhoti and pagris. Now, they wear jeans and t-shirts. Besides, taking donations forcefully was also not part of the tradition," said Sadhulal Munda, general secretary of Maharaja Madra Munda Kendriya Parha Samiti, Pithoria. (Dey, 2017)



Image 2: "Oraon Women walking and carrying chicken-roosters during *JaniShikar* at Kanke near Ranchi" Lal, Ratan.

MurmaJatra is an annual tribal festival of the tribal communities in Jharkhand. It is celebrated in Murma, about 23 kilometers away from the capital of the state, Ranchi. It is a two-day festival celebrated by the Oraon and the Munda tribes. According to historians the fair was first celebrated 200-300 years back after the arrival of Oraon tribe from Rohtasgarh and their victory over the local inhabitants (Tribhuwan, 2003, p. 195). It is believed that the *MurmaJatra* is celebrated in the commemoration of meeting of these two tribes, Oraon and Munda. “Munda and Oraon are two main agricultural tribes of the plateau who have been organizing and actively participating in the *Jatra* since the time immemorial (Tribhuwan, 2003). There are several legends related to this festival. One of them is that after the Oraons were defeated by the Turks, they had to flee to the Chotanagpur region which was the place of the Munda tribe. The fleeing Oraons came to the Mundas to ask for shelter. It was Murmawhere the Oraons and Mundas met. They had a dance war for the land. The losing tribe had to leave the land and move to the South, now Khunti region. The Mundas lost to the Oraons and had to leave the land and move to the South. This was the place of social and cultural accord between Oraons and Mundas.

There is another hypothesis by Sarat Chandra Roy about the meeting of fleeing Oraons and the Mundas. He writes “... before the Oraons migrated to what is now Chota-Nagpur, the tribe had been living in comparative affluence and ease under a king of their own in Rohtas plateau further to the north-west, but that, in an evil hour, on the day of the annual Khaddi or Sarhul festival in honor of ChalaPachcho, when all their adult male population lay almost senseless with drink, some hardier tribe styled in the tradition as the Mlechchhas surprised them from the Rohtas plateau and chased them beyond the river Son into what is now Chota- Nagpur. The Oraons of those days, it is asserted, knew no *bhuts* or spirits nor did they eat beef or other unclean food. They had a great

sense of hygiene and maintained cleanliness in their habits. They even wore the *janeu* or sacred thread commonly worn by the Brahmans and other upper caste Hindus. To elude the pursuit of the enemy, the Oraons, it is said, took shelter in the houses of the Mundas whom they found in occupation of the country, and concealed their own identity by discarding their sacred threads and taking to the unclean food and the habits of the Mundas and adopting as their own the deities and spirits of the Munda pantheon” (Tribhuvan, 2003).

Regardless of the different narratives of the Oraon tribes prevalent in the history and popular belief system even today *Murma Jatra* is a huge cultural event of dancing, worshipping and meeting for the Oraons and Mundas. People from different pockets and areas of the villages or *parhas* meet together through this. They worship, meet and dance collectively. The ritual begins from the house of *Pahan* or the village priest, where people gather and a woman carries the *kharsa*³ or the sacred earthen pots on their heads and walk towards the *Jatra* place. Women strike a balance while making a movement. The *kharsa* which is covered with a net-like structure woven by the raw paddy straws signifies the earth. A lighted earthen lamp is placed on top of it which synecdochically represents the sun.

³Holy earthen pot



Image 3: *Kharsa*. Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

People follow them playing drums- *mandar* and *nagda*, dancing in joy. The people from the village carry their *parha* flag to the Jatra and dance around the *Shakti Khuta* which means the pole of power or strength. The *Shakti Khuta* is the most sacred place of the *MurmaJatra*. Only the *Pahans* enter the area for rituals. The *MurmaJatra* takes place around the *Shakti Khuta*. It is believed that *Dharmesh* resides in the *Shakti Khuta* and the success of the *Jatra* depends upon the relation of *Dharmesh* residing in *Shakti Khuta*. The *Shakti Khuta* becomes the “heated center” of the “eruption” and the rest of the *Jatra* becomes the “cool rim with spectators coming and going” (Schechner, 1994). The ceremonial centers become a place to “maintain good relations. To exchange goods, mates, trophies, techniques. To show and exchange dances, songs and stories” (1994).

MurmaJatra thus becomes a place where different communities meet, buy goods, sing and dance. The tribes are performers of their dance and music and also the spectator of them. Schecher's view is quite relevant here that the rituals are theaters in their own context.



Image 4: Women carrying *kharsa*.Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

People from three parhas' forty villages take part in the annual *MurmaJatra*. *Murma'sPahan*, *BandhanTigga* maintains, holds a huge significance. It has core social and cultural values in the Oraon community. In the Oraon community, the Parha system acquires the main place amongst various popular social institutions. Parha signifies that the Oraons living in different villages have to be united so that they can compete effectively with the natural and supernatural forces as well as protect themselves. Thus parha can also be called a large tribal organization of the Oraons, which is based on mutual understating and shared value of clan groups.

The Oraons from forty Parha villages bring their special parha symbols and parha flag with them. Dressed up in their traditional attire, they enter the jatra place dancing and singing and making circles around the *Shakti Khuta* and then move towards their assigned *khod'ha*⁴ where they dance in groups. Some traditions and rules are followed for entering the jatra place. For instance, first, the members of Pungiparha village will enter then followed by other parha villages. This village has more importance and respect than other villages because it has the right to change the *Shakti Khuta*. Only after the people from Pungiparha village have entered then the people from other parha villages enter in queue traditional way. The forty villages which take part in *MurmaJatra* are classified respectively: seven, twelve, and twenty-one. On the basis of this classification, the present tower which is constructed over the *Shakti Khuta* is divided into seven, twelve and twenty-one feet which represent these forty parha villages.



⁴Assigned place

Image- 5

People entering with the *parha* flag. Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

Villages under seven Parha	Uchri, KorambiSakra, Pipartoli, Tatkondo, Jhijhri, Khatanga and Totambi.
Villages under twelve Parha	Murma (big), Murma (small), Sursa, Nagda, Kanbhittha, Gore, Naro, BudhaKhukhra, Karkara, Pungi, Mesal, and Meral.
Villages under twenty one Parha	Chund, Bargadi, Jaher, Kiskani, DhayodhaToli, KaranjToli, Tiko, Sevadi, Murungada, PatraToli, Kanaud, Mahanpur, PhutkalToli, MudiyaToli, Dedhiya, Sidrau, Nauj, Matwayi, Geswayi, MandanaToli and Chapa Toli.

Table 1: villages under the three parhas(Mishra 1996)

In this way, *MurmaJatra* is the Jatra of forty villages of three parhas. One folksong related to this is as follow:

Murmatonka nu, mhaipurukharbarechar

isanoomJatrakhutagadecharbhaiya.

JaterakhutabhaiyaDharmesgahiedpa

isanoomsaatbilliurukhabhaiya

*saatbilliurukha, saatodharmkamechar.
Jaterakhutantibarahbilliurukhabhaiya
barahbilliurukhabarahparhakamechar
narahparhabarha, barhokoraukiyar
barhokora nu ukiya, dharmsevaNajjar
Jaterakhutantiykkisbilliurukha
ekkisbilliurukha, ekkisparhakamechar
ekkisparhakamechar, ekkisdhauda nu kudiyar
goteraajiinjormanjabhaiya.*

(our ancestors came to Murmatan
at this place they embedded the Jatrakhuta brother
God dwells in the Jatrakhuta brother
seven lights came out of here
these seven lights made seven religion.
Twelve more lights came out of the Jatrakhuta
twelve lights came out, twelve parha were formed
twelveparha brothers, sat in twelve directions (corner)
sat in twelve directions, performed religious services.
Twenty-one more lights came out of the Jatrakhuta
twenty-one lights came out, twenty-one parhas were formed
twenty-oneparhas were formed and toured twenty-one organizations
(parha)
the entire state was illuminated.) (Mishra 1996)

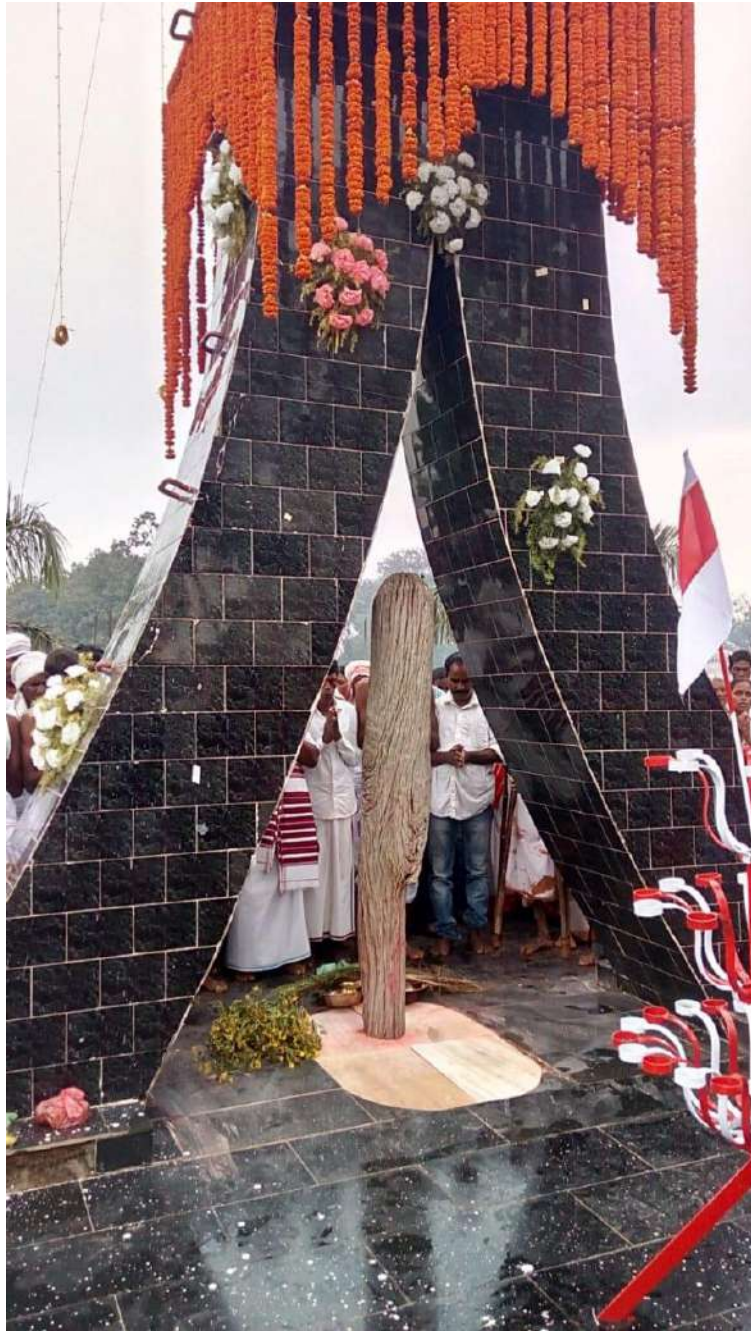


Image 6: Shakti Khuta. Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

BandhanTigga further explains the socio-cultural significance of the *MurmaJatra*. He maintains that *MurmaJatra* is the meeting place of the Oraon and the Munda tribe. He emphasizes this as an important cultural moment in

consolidation of tribes and elucidates that earlier the Chotanagpur region was ruled by Madra Munda and his ancestors. When Oraons reached the Chotanagpur area, they met the Mundas in Murma and there was a cultural conflict between the two tribes. The Oraons won the battle and there was an agreement between both the tribes. Members of both the tribes established the *Shakti Khuta* here. He further states that the Mundas who are in the Eastern part can speak Kurukh and the Oraons who are in the western part can speak Mundari. There has been a cultural confluence between these two tribes. He further added or expressed his opinion about the religious emblems or symbols. He says that *Murma Jatra* is the place where all the religious symbols that includes flags or parhas, special symbols of each parha, etc. meet. This signifies the meeting of village gods and goddesses of various parhas. These symbols signify that the village deities are brought in a procession of dance and songs accompanied with musical instruments and are circled around the *Shakti Khuta*.

Murma Jatra, as stated earlier, is also a place of pilgrimage for the Oraon community. The below is the list of symbols associated with *jatra* prevalent in different sub groups of the tribes:

S. no.	Parha Village	Religious symbols
1	Nagra	Tiger
2	Karkara	Horse
3	Chund	A pair of oxen
4	Uchri	Rampa Champa (wooden)

		horse)
5	Kanbhittha	Umbrella
6	Khatanga	Elephant
7	Mesal	Trident
8	Murma	Symbol of cock on a white flag
9	Pungi	Red and white duriya (rope) flag
10	Sursa	Horse

Table 2: Few parha villages and their religious symbols. (Mishra, 1996)



Image 7: Parha villages and their religious symbols. Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

PahanBandhanTiggacategorically states thatMurmaJatra is essential for the purpose of marriage. He says that the trend of marriage starts from here. The voluntary selection of a suitable couple for marriage was a key task of this jatra. We can now conspicuously understand that the MurmaJatra is the site of inter-Parha meeting or interaction. In this the young men and women of different parha villages gather in one place, where they get an opportunity to sing and dance, to see each other and talk, and chose a young man or a young woman for themselves who are later married by the consensus of their parents. It is purely a tribal method in to the match making. It should also be noted that this process of

nuptial arrangement for man and woman has adversely affected the artistic and performative values of *Jatra*. Art here has a deep sociological relevance which seems now dwindling rather fast in neo-liberal capitalist society.

With the passage of time, there has occurred various socio-cultural changes in *MurmaJatra*. It is *not* free from the adverse impact of modernization and urbanization. As modern capitalism has tendency to reduce the value of arts and culture merely to a 'price' without even looking into the originality of them, the efficacy of art is in severe danger. Earlier the space or place of *Jatra* performance was free from any kind of commercial or mercantile impact. Generally the space/site would be surrounded by huge trees, and there was no permanent construction at that place. Now there are permanent constructions or structures have come up to enact the *jatra*. The area of *Jatra* has shrunk but strangely the number of people has increased. The *MurmaJatra* has spread across the adjacent areas. It has also witnessed the negative impact of development and modernity on various dance groups performed by the people of various parhas. As a result of which the traditional vesture, dance style, and the nature of instruments used have also changed.

PahanTigg clearly states that yesteryear *Jatra* wasn't like the usual fairs with all its rides and circus but it was a place of worship and meeting of all the forty parha villagers. Earlier the rides which only included the giant wheel would only start after the worship of *Shakti Khuta* is over. Now they all start even before the worship starts ignoring the primitive traditions. Even the forty parha villages do not participate with full enthusiasm with a group dance and religious symbols. The number of parha villages has been reduced to more than half of it. One of the reasons behind this is that the *Pahans*, *Kotwars* and the *Mahtos* have lost their societal importance. Earlier all the forty parhas used to perform the ritual sacrifice and religious works but now only the *Murma* village performs these rites. The

traditional dress which included *karyaor dhoti* and *pachori*, has also been discarded by the present-day Oraon youths. Despite such periodic interferences and modern allurements, the importance of this festival is still intact. This is being practiced regularly as the social and cultural heritage of the Oraon community. It needs to be preserved and sustained for the ethnic identity of the tribes.

The paper thus has tried to establish that the Oraon and the Mundas share rich cultural rituals in terms of *MurmaJatra* and *JaniShikar*. These just two are very popular cultural forms and more visible among numerous other tribal forms which are prone to die out. These forms are the treat of music, dance, and singing, and more importantly have a unique contribution in the tribal social formation, and not merely sites of entertainment. Our effort is in making and we sincerely hope that we can develop it not only as an inclusive approach towards their rituals but also would underline it as a document of rare tribal culture and art pedagogy.



Image 8: Young tribal girls in *MurmaJatra*. Kuiry, Hare Krishna.

Note

In the paper Turks and Mughal are coterminous term and must be considered alternative. It is also pertinent to note that the Mughal is ethnically Turks and hail from middle- east.

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