

social VIBGYOR

Social Engagement
with Our Regional
Roots

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FOREWORD



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Dear Readers

Welcome to another edition of VIBGYOR. We are all students of the social world. We have spent a lifetime trying to understand and uncover patterns of life in anecdotes, songs, music, folktales or just a street side view. We watch one another. We observe each other's dress, food and behavior. We do it in order to understand the other. We also do it to try and unravel and explain other people's lives and motives. We hope that this would lead to a meaningful interaction. We apply the sociological lens all the time.

The Pandemic has changed the way that we look at the world. In today's world a large part of our life is lived online. The virtual world has reduced our interactions to the small screen and we have learnt to play around with the visuals. We apply 'backgrounds' to portray an image to the others. We dress and speak in a particular way. We project certain images. The omnipresence of social media has made it impossible for us to imagine in our lives without it. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Signal and other media handles are here to stay. The Sociological lens also helps us understand the virtual world and interactions.



The collection of articles, poems and photographs in this edition are a true representation of the social. They apply the Sociological lens to unravel reality.

Congratulations to this batch of students. Their efforts are laudable. I wish them all the best!

Regards
Reema Bhatia



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SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIONAL ROOTS

Section-3



PUNJABIYAT: A SPIRIT BEYOND BOUNDARIES



Source: Pinterest

WRITER: GURMANGEET KAUR PANDEY

*Ajj aakhan waris shah nu, kiton kabara wicho bol
Te ajj kitab-e-ishq da, koi agla warka phol
Ik royi si dheey punjab di tu likh likh maare vain,
Ajj lakhan dheeya rondiya, tenu waris shah nu kain,
Ve dard manda de dardiya, uth tak apna punjab
Ajj bailey laashan bichiya, te lahu di bhari chenab*

This excerpt from the poem "Ajj aakhan waris shah nu" was written by the legendary Punjabi poet Amrita Pritam. This legendary piece of literature is set in the backdrop of the bloody partition of 1947. The poem is addressed to Waris Shah, a magnificent 18th-century Punjabi Sufi poet of the Chishti order. His one of the most significant contributions to Punjabi literature was the epic love story "Heer Ranjha." In the poem, Amrita Pritam appeals to Waris Shah to rise from his grave and see what is happening to his Punjab. She says once a daughter of Punjab (heer) cried, you wrote an entire saga (Heer Ranjha), and today millions of daughters are crying due to bloodshed of partition and calling out to you. She asks him to look at his Punjab and see the fields are lined up with corpses, and Chenab is full of blood. This is the most painful depiction of the Indo-Pak partition. It shows how the partition had turned a fertile land into a venom for its people.

The Punjab Province, which once used to be a land of peaceful coexistence, turned acrimonious. Partition gave birth to two Punjabs- West Punjab in present-day Pakistan and East Punjab in present-day India. The people refer to the west (Pakistan) Punjab and East Punjab (India) as 'lehnda Punjab' and 'charda Punjab' respectively. 'Lehnda Punjab' means 'land of setting sun', and 'Charda Punjab' means 'land of the rising sun'.

Although the partition had turned things sour between people, for the time being, people inherited a sense of Punjabiyaat. Despite the bloody separation and most significant human displacement in 1947, there is no feeling of animosity against each other in both Punjab today.

Punjab is divided by boundaries today but still stands united by culture. The two Punjabs are living examples of how cultures surpass the artificial political limits. The culture of both the Punjabs is so amalgamated that Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who was entrusted with the task to draw borders for the newly formed nations of India and Pakistan, was left deeply confused, and wondered how to remove the boundary. Historian Ramachandra Guha writes that Sir Radcliffe had no prior knowledge of India and was given five weeks to draw the borders. He was assigned four advisors, two Muslims, one Hindu, one Sikh who shared lots of disagreements about the ideal boundaries. He wrote to his nephew:

"Nobody in India will love me for the award of Punjab and Bengal; there will be roughly 80 million people with a grievance who will begin looking for me. I don't want them to find me...."

The three components of culture, norms, ideas, and material unite both the Punjabs. Punjabis are united by their language, legends, traditions, tales, literature, folk dances, songs, myths, superstitions, dressing sense, festivals, carnivals. Punjabi is spoken both in Indian and Pakistani Punjab although Punjabi is written in Gurmukhi script in India and Shahmukhi script in Pakistan. Despite different scripts, the proverbs remain the same, the slangs stay the same, and the style remains the same. Unfortunately the Punjabi language has suffered in Pakistan due to linguistic chauvinism wherein regional languages were wiped out to impose the supremacy of Urdu. But slowly, Pakistani Punjab is waking up to its lost spirit of punjabiyaat.

The Punjabi literature is equally celebrated on both sides. Medieval literature like Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah, Soni Mahiwal by Fazal Shah, Mirza Sahiba by Hafiz Barkhurdar, Sassi Punnun by Hashim Shah are the most celebrated love stories on both sides. Heroic ballads called 'vaar' are also gloriously sung in both the Punjab.

Fariduddin Ganjshakhar, a 12th century Punjabi Muslim preacher and mystic, is admired profoundly by Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus of western

and eastern Punjab. He was born in Pak Pattan (present-day Pakistan). The Indian city of Faridkot (Punjab) takes its name after him. During his time, Punjabi was not a well established language and was considered to be a less refined folk language. His contribution to Punjabi literature was the development of Punjabi as a literary language. His Hymns were included in Guru Granth Sahib, the most sacred scripture of Sikhs by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the 5th Sikh guru. Bulleh Shah, 'the father of Punjabi enlightenment' and a revered Punjabi Sufi poet, is also honoured sincerely by people irrespective of their religion and country. If a cultural enthusiast from India visits Pakistan, they definitely visit Bulleh shah's tomb at Kasur in Pakistan.

Culture , according to Robert Beirstedt ,is the complex whole that consists of everything we think, and do and have as a society. Culture means a way of living, it tells how people lead their daily lives, and we can find similarities in that. We can hear common proverbs, idioms, for example-: "khote to diggi te gussa kumhiyaar te" which means one is angry at something else and venting out his anger on another. Another most heard proverb is "apna maruga , chaavein suttuga" which means even if kin or a friend will kill you (hurt you, betray you), he will still have a soft corner in his heart for you and will not be brutal in betraying you. Even mothers use slangs like 'maran jogeya,' 'beda tar je' while scolding their children.

Bhangra, the world-famous dance form, originated in Sialkot (present-day Pakistan), in the Majha region of Punjab. People performed bhangra on Baisakhi when the crops were harvested to mark happiness and prosperity. It then spread to the whole Punjab. This is the celebrated dance form in both charda and lehnda Punjab. In bhangra, dancers execute robust kicks and leaps (jhoomer), including bending the body in a particular style. They dance on beats of dhol accompanied by short amusing songs called 'boliyan.' The lyrics of boliyan remain the same in western and eastern Punjab. Many bolis are regarding mother in law, husband, sister in law, younger brother in law. Many Indian Punjabi songs mention Pakistani cities like 'jutti Kasuri paeri na puri' (Kasur is a city of Pakistani Punjab), 'jhanjharan mangwaiya Multan ton, taare tut paine aasmaan ton' Multan again is a city in Pakistani Punjab. The most recent example in this regard is Guru Randhawa's song 'Lagdi Lahore Di Aa.'

Similar songs and tappe are sung at weddings and other auspicious occasions. There is an endless list of songs without which weddings are incomplete in both the Punjabs . Here's an example:-

“Piche piche aunda meri chaal wehnda aayi ,
cheere waleya vekhda aayi ve mera laung gawacha,
nigah maarda aayi ve mera laung gawacha”

“Chitta kukkad banere te,
Kashni dupatte waliye munda sadke tere te”

Pakistani singer Noorjahan is widely heard in Indian Punjab and Indian singer Surinder Kaur known as "Nightingale of Punjab," is also fondly heard in Pakistan. Same songs have been sung by singers from both Indian and Pakistani Punjab. The song 'bajre da sitta,' which was recently in trend on social media, was sung by Surinder Kaur from Indian Punjab and Musarat Nazir from Pakistani Punjab. The unparalleled 'Jugni' song has been sung by Alam Lohar and Arif Lohar from Pakistani Punjab and Gurdas Mann from India. Sarabjeet Cheema (India-Canadian) and Arif Lohar (Pakistan) have sung together a song together 'Sanjha Punjab' in 2017, and its lyrics go like:

‘gal jaden chid di lahore ludhiane di,
Jatt yamle yaa fir aalam gharane di,
Khid jaan ruhan jive khid da gulab,
Saanjha e punjab saada saanjha e punjab,
Rhe vasda punjab , rahe vasda punjab..’

('Whenever there are talks about Lahore and Ludhiana, soul blossoms just like rose blossoms. It's our shared Punjab; it should always grow and blossom')

Dressing sense is identical in both regions. Men are found wearing kurta and pajamas, especially the Muktsari style kurta pajama in India is indistinguishable from the one worn in Pakistan. Women in both areas wear salwar suits. Cross-border exhibitions are held in both countries which receive lots of love and affection from the audience..

Affiliation and a sense of affection can also be noticed by examining the relations of Muslim jats from Pakistani Punjab and Sikh jatts from Indian Punjab. Jatts from both Pakistani Punjab and Indian Punjab share this sense

because of their common clans and common gotras despite their religion being different. Gotra broadly refers to people who are descendents in an unbroken male line from a common male ancestor. Sikhs in Indian Punjab and Muslims in Pakistani Punjab have common surnames like Sandhu, Virk, Bajwa, Aulakh, Gill, Cheema, Basra, Kahlon Minhas, Dhindsa, etc. A Muslim virk from Pakistan has an emotional attachment with a Jatt Sikh Virk in Indian Punjab. A jatt Sikh Cheema in Punjab will have an affiliation with Muslim Cheema in Pakistan.

Similarly, clans of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs Khattris in Punjab often share surnames Najam Sethi, one of the foremost public intellectuals in the land clads a prominent last name in Pakistan. Sethi's surname is prevalent in India.

The harmony between people on both sides of the Radcliffe line (boundary between India and Pakistan) is also depicted in present-day Punjabi movies like 'Chal Mera Putt' and 'Lahoriye'. 'Toba Tek Singh' is a short story written by Saadat Hasan Manto which is a satire on the partition. Plays based on it are performed in both countries.

Another most prominent example connecting the two regions divided by borders is Pinjar written by Amrita Pritam, set in the backdrop of partition. It is the story of a Hindu girl abducted by a Muslim man. In India, a movie was made with the same title in 2003. Based on this novel Pakistani television series went on air titled "Ghughi."

Literature enthusiasts of Pakistani Punjab have made optimum efforts to reconnect both the punjabs. World Punjabi Congress was established in Lahore in 1986 with an objective to promote Punjabi language and culture. It also aims to establish peace and tranquility worldwide, especially between India and Pakistan. Despite the prevalence of jingoism in both countries, the hearts of Punjabis across the Radcliffe line beat in love. Their shared history, culture, beliefs, language draw them towards each other, and even the international boundary cannot halt this. The attachment abetween the two Punjab can turn acrid Indo-Pak relations into a harmonious one. This can be a cultural key to establish peace and prosperity in this key region of South Asia .In the words of prominent singer Gurdas Maan;-

'Saanu sauda nhi pugda ,
Raavi ton chenab puchda ,
Ki haal ae satluj da..
Paine dur peshawaran de,
Wagah de border te raah puchde lahora de.'

'This deal of partition is unbearable for us,
River Chenab asks sister Ravi, "How's my brother satluj?
The road to Peshawar is far and distant,
At Wagah border, I search for those paths that once led to Lahore
But those roads don't exist anymore..'



RATIONALIZING THE TAMIZH SOCIETY



Source: Pinterest

WRITER: K.S. VAISHNAVI

First Name: K.S.

Surname: Vaishnavi

Having grown up predominantly in the northern parts of the country, I noticed the slightly different way my friends filled the columns of 'First Name' and 'Surname'. It began with their 'personal name' followed by a 'surname'. Living in a caste society this meant that more often than not a person's caste location was inherent in their surnames enabling people at the very meeting to be categorized within the four-fold hierarchial varna system (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya & Shudra) and those who don't fall into these four categories are labelled as Avarnas. This in turn becomes a significant factor in the kind of social intercourse that a person is put through. A recent report by the Social Justice Ministry recommended against the revelation of caste surnames and the details about the candidates' social background at the interview stage in Civil Services as this increases the chances of discrimination revealing the inherent prejudices that plagues the Indian society.

Traditionally in Southern India the naming pattern consisted of the name of your native village, then the name of your father, third would be your personal name and then finally followed by the caste title. (Jayaram, 2005) My grand-uncle told me parents in our family increasingly dropped the practice of giving their children caste titles as surnames around the time he was born, that is, in the 1930's. However, this wasn't the case with just members of our family but rather this practice was catching with the whole of Panchalingapuram (our ancestral village) or even better, the whole of Tamil Nadu. This reminded me of a line that I read in Mill's *The Promise* (1959)- "Neither the

life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both” While a person or a few dropping a conventional practice could be said to be borne out of free will but could that still be a cause when we talk about an entire state with a population of about twenty three million (Census 1931)? The answer would be a firm a ‘No.’ Were Mill to work on this today he’d have suggested to not limit ourselves to an individual’s immediate surroundings and rather have asked us to look beyond. Beyond the private realms and onto the public realm, a realm where we assume ourselves to be mere spectators not realizing we’re active participants. And the public realm of Tamil Nadu in the 1930’s was helmed by E.V.Ramasamy, affectionately known as Thantai Periyar who laid the foundations for the social justice politics in the state.

In the year 1927, Periyar when publishing the Tamizh weekly Kudiarasu, of which he was the founder and editor, consciously made the decision to drop his caste title ‘Naicker’ when writing his name under the editorial category. This significant act encompassed within Periyar’s broader objective of wanting to reform and rationalize the Tamizh society through the Self-Respect Movement set in motion transformatory forces that continue to challenge and disgruntle the non-rational and traditional social structures of Tamil Nadu.

The Self-Respect Movement initiated by Periyar in the 1930’s was a continuation of the attempt to secularize and modernize the Tamizh society that began with the start of the Dravidian Movement in the 1920’s. The rise of the Dravidian Movement is read within the context of the growing monopoly of the Brahmins over the civil and political society of the Madras constituency. The Brahmins made up only a little over three percent of the total population of the Madras constituency yet their presence was overly-visible in the Madras government. In 1886 they held about 58% of the elite posts in the executive and judicial services and the representation of Non-Brahmins further dwindled by the 1900’s. At the same time even within the social sphere the Brahmin’s hegemony was maintained owing to their location within the hierarchical varna system. Their presence in both the spheres was marked by bilinguality- their alternating reverence for English and Sanskrit which differed with the contempt they held for Tamizh, the language of the masses. This monopoly over both the worlds provided them an easier access to socio-economic resources putting them at a higher pedestal than the rest. (Pandian, 1994)

The quest to then dilute this hegemony began with the foundation of the South Indian Liberation Federation by Dr Natesa Mudaliyar, Sir PT Theyagaraya Chetty and TM Nair on November 20, 1916. It was popularly known as the Justice Party (later renamed as Dravida Kazhagam) after the 'Justice' newspaper it published. This saw the beginning of the Dravidian Movement. With the declaration of the Non-Brahmin Manifesto in December, 1916, a firm ideological basis was laid down for the Movement. The movement further gained momentum with Periyar leaving the Congress party in 1925 due to ideological differences, who then, began working closely with the Justice Party. Periyar agreed with everything the Justice Party stood for yet he felt that they worked more towards empowerment within the system than emancipation from the system. Periyar's more radical approach to fight the forces of Brahminical oppression culminated with the start of the Self-Respect Movement in the late 1920's. (Aloysius, 2019)

The movement being called 'Suyamariyathai' or Self-Respect is symbolic of the fact that 'Maanam' or honor is a basic human instinct that distinguishes us from other animals. Periyar asserted that the actualization of self-respect is what would make one human. He called on the marginalized to recognize the shackles of Brahminical oppression binding them down and break-free by actualizing self-respect. He strongly believed each one had to fight for themselves as relying on others for upliftment wouldn't establish true freedom as the relationship here would represent the one between god and individual thereby defying the very purpose of the movement. Periyar identified the notion of self-respect with three other important concepts which are 'Samathuvam' (Equality), 'Suthanthiram' (Freedom) and 'Samadharmam' (Communism). The actualization of self-respect is bound up within the attainment of these. (Aloysius, 2019)

Periyar while providing a firm theoretical basis on which the movement was based on, also provided practical suggestions that would propel people towards actualizing their self-respect. The individual was now the site of transformation and revolution. The conscious personal choices made, on one hand, were a result of the emergence of a new consciousness at the public level and at the same time helped reinforce the structural changes taking place. Personal choices beginning from what newspapers one read, what one wore and how they wore it, how one got married and the collectivities and festivities one decided to be a part of - all reflected the historical changes taking place.

Sarah Hodges in 'Revolutionary family life and the Self-Respect Movement in Tamil South India, 1926-49'(2005), has documented these individual emancipatory practices. Self-Respecters preferred reading Periyar's Kudi Arasu & Viduthalai over nationalistic newspapers, women in the movement shunned thali, pottu and followers donned black shirts and sarees which then became a color of resistance against Brahminical hegemony at a time when people from the marginalized castes weren't even allowed to wear thundu over their shoulders. Suyamariyathai thirumanam or self-respect marriages that shunned Brahminical rituals and priests, in particular, was a direct attack on the institution of family- a site that reproduced unequal social relations. While staying away from traditional gatherings and festivities, the Self-Respecters created their own alternative spaces for socialization and education.

This sustained collective action of the Tamizh people led by Periyar encompassed elements that were redemptive, reformist and revolutionary, which aimed to rationalize all spheres of human life to achieve complete humanity.

In present day Tamil Nadu, Periyar's ideologue intersects the various sections within the Dravidian political spectrum and continues to threaten and destruct the status quo of the Brahminical forces.



OVI: AN ODE TO WOMEN STRINGING TOGETHER SOLIDARITY

Source: Pinterest



WRITER: SRUSHTI SARAVADE

Imagine an Indian middle-aged rural woman; she's wearing a casual saree stained with all sorts of liquids, sitting bare on the floor, working on the traditional hand-operated stone grind mill, crushing the grain to flour. Along with cooking, cleaning, and laboring away at the farm, this is another among the many monotonous chores that she performs routinely. She has her fair share of political, economic, social, and personal problems. She is tired, she is bored, and yet she has no other option than to toil away. How does she cope? She sings. She expresses her emotions, her life's trials and tribulations, her joys and sorrows; and ultimately, herself. Through self-composed songs, which she sings while working these unrecognized, unpaid jobs, she articulates a cathartic experience and at the same time gives a voice to herself even when there is no one to listen to.

This is a typical scene of Maharashtrian villages. These songs, known as 'jatavarchyi ovi' (grind mill song), are performed to this date by women in rural Maharashtra.

Ovi, a poetic metre, is one of the oldest Marathi song genres still performed today. There are two forms of ovi, one is the granthik or literary ovi (dates back to the 13th century) and the other is women's ovi, which was transferred orally through generations of women (predates literary ovi). Andrew Schelling in 'Love and The Turning Seasons' rightly points out that the women's ovis are "protest songs more than work songs." The themes range from something as personal as unhappy marriage, childbirth, relationship with her children, brother, mother, mother-in-law, and even her sister-in-law to socio-political matters like caste oppression, poverty, land ownership, history, and politics. Rhymed and sung in a particular taal, they are

beautifully composed using nuanced metaphors of various seasons, trees, wildlife, agriculture, and their respective professions. These songs give one a peek into their world, and with it depict the village life, the family, kinship, and marriage structures and paints a realistic picture of gender, caste, and class issues.

The People's Archive of Rural India (PARI), a digital journalism platform, has collected over 100,000 folk songs composed and sung by the women in Maharashtrian villages and translated over 40,000 of them into English. The project aims at documenting these phenomenally massive and wide-ranging songs as the practice seems to be disappearing with the emergence of motorized grinding mills.

The following ovi, recorded in 1999 by the GSP team was sung by a 72-year-old woman, talks about the undervalued nature of women's work and the different phases of their lives right from birth.

आगीच्या गं नेट ओल्या जळत्या साययरी
 अशी ना किती गं कष्ट करु धस ना त्या माहेयरी
 अशी बाई अगाईच्या नेट वल जळतो गोईला
 बाई किती कष्ट करा धस नाही त्या बाईला
 आगीनीच्या नेट वली जळती लाकडं
 अशी जलमा आली लेक आई बापाला साकडं
 बाई गुजामधी गं गूज येवढ्या ना गुजाच्या गुजराणी
 अशी उठू उठू गं गेल्या या तर मावच्या शेजारीणी
 बाई गुजा मधी गं गुज माय लेकी गुज गोड
 बाई मावळाय गेली ही तर चांदणी सोप्याच्या आड
 बाई नको मला घेवू नको माझ तुरे चालवू
 सांगते रे माझ्या बंधू मला शब्दानी बोलावू
 नको नारी म्हणू दिरा भायाचा आसारा
 पाण्यामधी नाव तीला तागाचा कासरा
 नको नारी गं म्हणू माझं असंच चालणं
 बाई पाण्यातील नाव जरा येगं ढकलणं
 अशी ना भावजय गं कुंकू लावावं दारात
 बाई आता माझा गं बंधू उभा आरसा दारात
 लेकाच्या माईला नका म्हणू नाचारीण
 माझी शकुंतला मोती पवळ्याची आचारीण
 बाई काळी चंद्रकळा हीचा पदर मुंबई
 सांगते गं तारुबाई तुझ्या बाळाची कमाई
 तुझा माझा भावपणा लई दि बाई लागलं जोडाया
 कुणी कालवील विष खिन न लागं मोडाया

Translation: (by People's Archive Of Rural India (PARI), 'The Grindmill Songs Project')

Wet wood burns in the kindled fire
 How much can I work? Nobody cares for it in my parents' home
 Wet wood burns in the kindled fire
 A woman may toil and toil, it has no value
 Wet wood burns in the kindled fire
 A daughter is born, a calamity for the parents
 O woman, there are many friends in whom we confide our deepest feelings
 Our neighbor women, if not close to us, go away without listening
 Sharing of joys and sorrows between mother and daughter is the happiest thing
 They get so engrossed in talking, they don't realize that the stars have set
 Don't buy anything for me, don't fulfill my demands
 I tell you, my dear brother, just ask me to come home
 O woman, don't say you have your brother-in-law's protection
 For a boat in water, it is like the [snake-like] rope tied to it
 O woman, don't say you will behave any way you wish
 For you are like a boat in water that will tilt one day
 Sister-in-law, apply kumkum [vermillion] in the doorway
 O woman, my brother is standing like a mirror in the doorway
 Don't call the son's mother irritating
 My dear daughter Shakuntala is precious like pearls and corals
 O woman, [I have a] black Chandrakala saree, its padar is modern, Mumbai style
 I tell you, Tarubai, my dear sister, it's from your son's earnings
 It has taken a long time to build our close friendship
 If someone spoils it maliciously, it won't take a moment to break

The ovi begins by stating how even wet wood will catch fire eventually when set ablaze implying how indifference and neglect towards women's work fuel the fire of rage in them. Even in their parental homes, which are supposed to be kinder to them, their hard work is taken for granted. In the next couplet, a daughter's birth is called a 'calamity'-unwelcomed in a society that considers her a burden. Then the ovi explores the close relationship a woman has with her friends and mother to whom she shares her innermost feelings. In a patriarchal world, women's friendships form a sacred relationship that somehow helps them cope with the unequal society

and form solidarity among themselves. While the woman looks at her brother with affection, she warns other women to be careful with their brothers-in-law who she fears may take advantage of them. Women's life is compared to a boat in water where they need to tread cautiously as the boat seems to be tethered with a dangerous snake-like rope. Further, the narrator goes on to say that just like a boat can tilt in the tumultuous water anytime without warning, a woman too could be harmed or taken advantage of at any point in her life. It illustrates the universal feeling of constant terror and uncertainty that women experience in a patriarchal world. In the next couplet, the narrator asks the women to not call their mothers-in-law irritating, a relationship that is often described as a toxic one in mainstream Indian culture as even she is bringing up a daughter with love and affection.

This shows the empathy that women show towards each other in the harshest of conditions. Next, the narrator tells her sister about the black Chandrakala saree with a 'modern Mumbai style padar' that she received as a gift from her nephew. The ovi ends with the narrator cautioning her friend about how their years' long friendship could break in a moment if they let anyone with malign intent come between their relationship.

"These ovi show the real lives of women," explains the narrator in an interview taken by the GSP team. "We could not speak about it out in the open, so we spoke to the grinding mill to share our sukha-dukkhha (joys and sorrows)." The grinding mill was like a close friend to the women, she adds.

Art imitates life and so do these songs. They are a mirror to our society, its unequal structures, the bigotry, and to these women's lives- the overwhelming joy and sorrow and a few moments of peace amid pervasive chaos. Ovi means 'stringing together'. These women string together powerful words and give them meaning with their lived experiences, repressed emotions, and enchanting creativity. Moreover, these songs not only give women a stage to share what is often left unspoken and disregarded but also help form a sense of genuine solidarity among themselves.



SOCIOLOGICAL ARTICLES

SECTION - 4

PINTEREST



MENSTRUATION: STILL A TABOO?

Shagun Das

Menstruation is the monthly process of blood discharge from the uterus that the body goes through in preparation for the possibility of pregnancy. Since the earliest times, till date, there is a thick blanket of taboos that surround it. Ranging from hushed talks to teachers skipping the topic in class, these stigmas aren't rare. Periods are as natural as they can be. The idea of menstruation being a disease, menstrual blood being impure, girls being restrained from activities because they are on their periods and so many more are still prevalent. One has the option of shaking them off as ignorant notions circling around us since forever. Yet, it isn't easy to ignore the larger implications.

Stigmatizing a natural process that one goes through almost every month has an impact on their mental well-being, leaving them with a feeling of insecurity about something so normal. Additionally, the financial burden posed by menstrual products has led to an increase in economic vulnerability. This is referred to as

Period Poverty. According to the National Family Health Survey 2015-2016, only 36% of menstruators in India use sanitary napkins. The percentage not only reveals a lack of awareness but also lack of accessible hygiene products.

When Instagram deleted Poet Rupri Kaur's menstruation-themed photographs back in 2015, it raised a very imperative question. How arrested are the notions that people hold against periods? Misinformed, irrational notions but still prevalent ones. The fact that people got so uncomfortable with the pictures that they reported it to an extent that a bigshot social media platform had to take it down, is extremely unsettling. The question raised remains, what is so uncomfortable about period bleeding for an audience that seems almost perfectly capable of handling gory violence on their screen? To answer this, one should probably take a look at the way menstruation is perceived in India.

Menstruation observes a variety of reception here in India. In the state of Odisha, Raja (pronounced as raw-jaw) is a prominent three-day long festival that celebrates "womanhood". Here a woman's menstrual cycle is paralleled with the earth's fertility/ agricultural cycle. It is believed that the Goddess Bhudevi menstruates on the three days that the festival is celebrated. All kinds of fieldwork are stopped, especially ploughing, digging, or anything that can possibly hurt the Earth since she is believed to be resting for the three days. It is refreshing really to see a festival that celebrates periods. On the occasion, women are supposed to dress up, play games, eat traditional uncooked food, and avoid work. Raja doli, which refer to swings, are an important part of the festival. If one goes around Odisha (especially the rural areas) during this time, they are probably going to come across plenty of swings, with women swinging and singing their folk songs in pure joy!

Similarly, there exists a ritual in Andhra Pradesh celebrating menstruation, called the Ritu Kala Samskaram/ Half-saree Function which is basically a "Coming of Age" ceremony. So when somebody has their first periods, they are first secluded, bathed, and made to wear what is called a langa voni. The ceremony then becomes a full-fledged, extravagant function.

Relatives and family friends are invited, the feast is arranged and all the festivities are carried out. The menstruator is gifted a saree (half-saree to be precise) by their uncle. This is the first time they wear a saree and this is seen as an entry into womanhood”. These functions are extremely elaborate, call them “mini-weddings”!



Source: odishatourism.gov.in

It was indeed comforting to hear of these festivities surrounding menstruation; the first time. None of these events were gender-specific, people from every gender are allowed to participate in the festival as well as the ceremony. Yet how are there stereotypes you ask? Well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Gaining first-hand experience in both of these festivities has brought me to the realization that the one thing still inherently missing in these events is - communication, some real-world talks.

Despite these being some of the most important events of the respective states, nobody is talking about menstruation.

For instance, imagine you walk into one of those half-saree functions, the first thing you would notice is the menstruator sitting weakly on the “throne” meant for them. They usually are meant to fast, they are definitely decked up with all the jewellery in the house and are meant to look really pretty, while one guest after another sprinkle a mixture of

turmeric and raw rice on the menstruator's head as a blessing. It isn't true that everybody who has this function is mad about it, but most of them are definitely tired of this facade. After all, the function isn't a choice offered to the menstruator.

Moving on, you would hardly find talk about periods. How much was spent on the function? What saree did the uncle give? Is the food good? These are the "important" questions raised. "Congratulations on having your first period" is hardly the way to greet the menstruator; "Congratulations you are a grown-up now" is the ideal way. While the latter isn't exactly wrong, it is the idea of avoiding the word period and menstruation and menarche that one must find faulty in a setting that is meant to celebrate its arrival!

It is a similar case with the festival of Raja. Most men are probably unaware of the idea behind the festival. For most people, it is a tradition that has remained and is followed.

Moreover, the parallels drawn between nature and women are a problematic aspect hardly talked about. The age-old notion of nature being feminine doesn't do much to negate patriarchal stereotypes. The glorification comes wrapped with the supposition that like nature, women are expected to prevail endlessly accepting and adjusting to everything they are offered. The reverence with which femininity is treated works against the idea of equality. Festivals and traditions like these, put femininity and fertility on a pedestal, reducing the worth of the menstruator merely to their ability to reproduce.

One idea common to both the events, is that it announces that the menstruator is now ready for a union. The idea behind these occasions was to declare that the girl is now of "marriageable age and suitable prospects are invited". This mustn't be too surprising considering the total absence of conversation on consent in the earlier times, accompanied by the prevalence of child marriage. Today, however, it is not so that the girl begins getting marriage prospects post-function but the underlying belief is that it's time for the girl to start being a woman after menarche.

Yet there is no denying that these occasions are nothing but celebrations of the arrival of periods, which they might indirectly refer to as “growing-up” nevertheless. Despite the celebrations, the belief that menstruation is impure and polluting continues to exist. The origin of these beliefs on ‘impurity’ are hard to trace. Traditions established centuries ago often lose their contemporary relevance. The purpose is lost and what remains is mindless loyalty to them. In most Indian households even today, the menstruators are expected to sit, sleep, eat separately, avoid touching or even coming face to face with people (specially men) in the initial days of period, every month. The taboo regarding entering the kitchen and temple is well-known and doesn’t need much of an introduction. Though the festival of Raja in no way blatantly fosters this taboo, it still provides a ground for them to persist by restricting women from entering the kitchen, that one day.



Source: feminisinindia.com

Another idea that Raja perhaps inadvertently fosters, is the notion that during menstruation, the person is physically weak and needs rest. This is well and good when spoken from a space of empathy, the problem arises when it is used as an argument to prove that a particular sex is stronger/weaker in general. Period fatigue is true. Many menstruators feel weak, physically and mentally during their periods explaining the need for the ‘infamous’ period leaves. However this could be occasional, or due to other health issues and deficiencies. This does not mean that a person is

to be secluded and restrained from sportive activities. Different people have different ways of coping with periods. It is important to respect all of these ways.



Source: wellnesskeen

There is a relative growth in today's discourse about periods, as compared to that in the past. Yet there is such a long way to go, that the growth seems little and ineffective. These beautiful occasions of celebration can become wonderful mediums to spread the right word. There is potential yet to be used. Traditions, rituals, and cultures need a lot of reflection and rectifications. They can only cause harm by remaining static in an ever-changing world. American author, Letty C. Pogrebin puts it well when she says-

“When men are oppressed, it's a tragedy. When women are oppressed, it's tradition.”

Once one realizes that traditions don't have to be the norms by which the world runs, the work will get a lot easier. We don't have to disown our traditions, but mindlessly keeping them alive and following them is causing more harm than is visible.

The discomfort surrounding menstruation has to go. The solution is to just start the conversation and keep it going till it becomes inherently normal.





WHAT ROLE COULD CULTURE PLAY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Vanshika Dubey

Being the youth of the 21st century, it becomes imperative for us to think and consider what the future may or should look like. However, we can't become oblivious to the concept of sustainable development when we talk about a future because the ground-level reality of the world as we know it today is that resources are scarce in comparison to our needs. The question then arises that how should we promulgate the entire narrative of the importance of this concept such that our society has no problem adapting the true essence of the same.

Sociology, fortunately, can provide us with a trustworthy source here by bringing into the picture the idea and mechanics of culture. In sociological terms, we define culture as a pattern of learned and shared beliefs of a particular social, ethnic, or age group, in more exact words, "culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as members of society" but another intrinsic part about culture is that it is not an individual property instead it is something that is shared within the member groups. Hence, culture is a salient feature of our existence because it defines our evolutionary identity.

In the book “Sapiens-A Brief history of Humankind”, Yuval Harari talks about the waves of extinction, leading us to believe that the third wave of extinction that the industrial wave is causing today is leading to a human flood that only humans will survive. The gripping fact here is that the fallouts that these waves of extinction caused, whether the first wave where the world saw the spread of foragers or the second wave that accompanied the spread of farmers, are the fallouts of the cultural shift that mankind has experienced. The problem here was that even though these caused evolutionary changes for humans, no one actually anticipated the impact of this on the planet.

Understanding the importance of environmental impact, The United Nations Sustainable development summit in 2015 introduced 17 sustainable goals. It was here that culture was declared the fourth pillar to meet the goals set by the committee. One of the many ways to ensure a healthy light over sociological contribution is to promulgate the sociological theory as well as various researches. This should be done in a way to ensure that it's not insulated from ground level mechanics while not lacking theoretical sounding to ensure that the results are sustainably relevant. It has to throw significant light upon how in post-industrial societies, the urge on sustainable development has to be one of the priorities to ensure the relevance of the community as a whole. Marcus Garvey beautifully states the significance of culture, "A people without the knowledge of history, origin, and culture is like a tree without its roots". We unravel how culture in itself has been an intrinsic part of our society and this is all the more true in a culturally vibrant and diverse country like India.

The relationship between culture and sustainable development can be somewhat complex since culture evolves and encompasses different things way quicker in comparison to the environment, which only observes minor changes. For protecting, restoring, and also promoting terrestrial ecosystems and sustainability the cultural factors can help by ensuring the inclusion of relevant local and traditional knowledge system that has a support system on account of being intrinsic to their culture and then modify them into taking the form of policies of awareness campaigns, the people can hence be made aware about a "modern" goal

and the attempts towards the same by drawing upon cultural aspects that are rather cherished in the status quo. This may look like awarding a "sacred" pedestal to mangroves as is done in India where natural elements are considered to be divine and hence the emphasis is placed to protect and cherish the same, and this is something that has been passed down the generations, therefore, making it a part of cultural identity.

Education is one of the other goals of sustainability described by the United Nations that can be promoted by incorporating more vocational courses centered on the spread of awareness and knowledge about the various cultures and sending out a message about inclusivity. The interaction between education and culture can be our step towards a world with creativity and a more stimulating understanding of various cultures and hence a world with better ventilated moral standing. Concerning the environmental front, we know how rivers have been considered pious in the Hindu culture.

Consequently, drawing upon those beliefs, we can run along with the idea of maintaining these rivers for future generations by sending out the message about preserving the flora and fauna because they are well linked to the belief system of our country. When we go ahead and embrace the diversity of the cultures and also integrate these knowledge systems while keeping in mind the interests of our primary stakeholders, we see that we have these highly developed knowledge systems that have the potential of providing us with predominant institutional models for drawing upon community-level social and cultural information and insights. Drawing upon something as old as a culture to ensure the pursuit of modern goals will set the foundation of a better world, especially in the context of developing nations, by not only maintaining a healthy bond with our past, in the form of culture but also ensuring up-gradation of the same by incorporating it in the policies for our future.



Source: eurekaalert.org



UNDERSTANDING FGM THROUGH SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Riya Bhardwaj

TRIGGER WARNING: MENTION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision, is a significant public health issue. It is recognized internationally as the violation of a person's rights to health and security from inhuman or degrading treatment. The practice reflects deep-rooted inequality between the genders, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. In this article we attempt to understand the meaning of FGM and sociological perspectives behind it.

TERMINOLOGY AND MEANING

The term female genital mutilation was used by Rose Oldfield Hayes, an American anthropologist in 1975 in a journal *American Ethnologist* and later Fran Hosken, a feminist campaigner called it mutilation in her influential *The Hosken Report: Genital and Sexual Mutilation of Females*. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional

Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children began referring to it as female genital mutilation in 1990, and the World Health Organization (WHO) followed suit in 1991.

FGM is a traditional harmful practice of cutting or removal of a female's external genitalia. The WHO describes it as "any procedure that injures the female genital organs for non-medical reasons". This is carried out on mostly young girls between infancy and age 15. In 2016, UNICEF estimated that 200 million women in 30 countries—Indonesia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Yemen, and 27 African countries—had been subjected to one or more types of FGM. Although primarily concentrated in Africa and the Middle East, it is also practiced in some countries of Asia and Latin America. In 2021 alone, there are 4.16 million girls around the world, who are at the risk of undergoing FGM.



This woman in Mombasa, Kenya shows the razorblade she has used on girls' genitals

Source : Getty Images

According to WHO, they can be grouped into four main types :

- Type 1 (clitoridectomy) - removing part or all of the clitoris
- Type 2 (excision) - removing part or all of the clitoris and the inner labia
- Type 3 (infibulation) - narrowing the vaginal opening
- Type 4 - other harmful procedures to the female genitals

The procedures are generally performed by a traditional circumciser (cutter) in the girls' homes, with or without anaesthesia, and the cutter is usually an old woman or a community barber. In several countries it is

also done by a medical professional. But in the places where traditional cutters are involved, non-sterile devices are likely to be used, including knives, razors, scissors, glass, sharpened rocks, and fingernails. According to a nurse in Uganda, quoted in 2007 in *The Lancet*, a cutter would use one knife on up to 30 girls at a time. This practice of FGM has no health benefits. Instead it can cause serious harm including severe bleeding, urination problems, and later cysts, infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

WHY IS FGM PRACTICED ?

The most frequently cited reasons for carrying out FGM are social acceptance, religion, misconceptions about hygiene, a means of preserving a girl or woman's virginity, making the woman "marriageable" and enhancing male sexual pleasure. In some cultures it is regarded as a rite of passage into adulthood, and considered a prerequisite for marriage. We will try to further analyse the reasons through three sociological perspectives viz. the symbolic interactionism, functionalism and the conflict perspective.

Symbolic interactionism argues that individuals and societies develop the meanings attached to symbols through social interactions. These interactions involve an exchange of information from one individual to others. This pattern of informational exchange continues, involving a whole society. In regards to female genital mutilation, symbolic interactionism would argue that girls learn meanings attached to FGM through interactions with other women and girls.

"When girls of my age were looking after the lambs, they would talk among themselves about their circumcision experiences. Every time the other girls talked about their infibulated genitals, I would feel ashamed I was not yet circumcised. Whenever I touched infibulated girls, they would tell me not to touch them since I was [still] "unclean."... One day I could not stand it anymore. I took a razor blade and went to an isolated place. I tied my clitoris with a thread, and while pulling at the thread with one hand I tried to cut part of my clitoris. When I felt the pain and saw the blood coming from the cut I stopped I was seven years old." (Abusharaf 1998).

The above account describes an overwhelming urge to conform to socially constructed symbols. These social labels are strong enough to cause a seven - year to mutilate herself. Where FGM is practiced, it is strongly promoted and closely safeguarded; it is regarded as an essential ritual that symbolizes virginity, cleanliness, fertility, and enhances the beauty of a woman's body. These are the symbols girls are taught to associate with circumcision at a very young age (Asali 1995). The idea of the Looking-glass Self by Cooley also argues that individuals develop a sense of themselves as they believe others see them. In other words, people build their image only with the help and judgements of others. For instance, a girl is told by her mother and other women that after circumcision she would become an attractive and pure woman. So she would eventually start feeling like a beautiful woman after her circumcision.



Source : scooper news

The next perspective is the **Functionalist perspective**. Functionalism holds that society is a complex system whose various parts work together to produce stability and solidarity. "It is often referred to as 'consensus' theory because it does not address the issue of conflict in society, rather it projects an ideal picture of harmonious social relationships (Sociology at Hewitt)." Functionalists believe that the basis of an orderly society is the existence of a central value system that imposes common values on all its members.

Female circumcision is deeply imbibed in local customs and beliefs. This practice is a "self-enforcing social convention" to which families feel they

must conform to avoid uncut daughters facing social exclusion. In addition to this, parents also face the pressure of social norms, as choosing not to excise one's daughter leads to the family's isolation from the community. So, the most common reason is social pressure to maintain tradition. Interviews of the Sabinu people of Uganda state that an uncircumcised woman who marries into the community is always lowest in the pecking order of village women, and she is not allowed to perform the public duties of a wife, such as serving elders. Uncut women are called girls, no matter what their age is, and are forbidden to speak at community gatherings. The social pressures are so intense that uncircumcised wives often become circumcised as adults (Abusharaf 1998).

The second most common is the belief that uncircumcised women are not good bakers or cooks. An Indonesian woman was asked by Abigail Haworth, a journalist, that why she thought female genital mutilation was good for a girl's health, her answer was it kept a girl from being sexually over-stimulated and helped her urinate a less bad-smelling urine. When asked if there were other benefits, her answer was : "*My grandmother always said that circumcised women cook more delicious rice.*" (quoted from the article ' The day I saw 248 girls suffering genital mutilation' by Abigail Haworth in The Guardian dated Sunday 18th, 2012).

Finally, "**Conflict theory** states when people in a position of authority try to enforce conformity, which they must do, this creates resentment and resistance. The result is a constant struggle between dominant and disadvantaged groups (Heinlein 2005)." In the case of female circumcision, it is the women of the society and not men, who organize all forms of FGM.

Anthropologist Rose Oldfield Hayes wrote in 1975 that educated Sudanese men who did not want their daughters to be infibulated (preferring clitoridectomy) would find the girls had been sewn up after the grandmothers arranged a visit to relatives. Why do women subject their daughters to what they know firsthand to be a wrenchingly painful ordeal ? Many are simply being practical. "*I think that it is very important for the virginity of women to be protected if they want to get husbands who respect them,*" a fifty-five-year-old Sudanese mother of five girls reports (Abusharaf 1998).

Source : UNICEF/Getachew



Pictured in Ethiopia is 6-year-old girl who underwent FGM because her mother, believed she could not marry honourably without it, saying, "From our own experience we know that [cutting] causes problems. However, it is a tradition."

Getting married and having children is a survival strategy in a society plagued by poverty, disease and illiteracy. Conflict theorists argue that the socio economic dependence of women on men affects their attitude toward circumcision. The importance given to the institution of marriage and economic dependency are very influential in perpetuating the practice. In these societies, women have very low levels of education and limited opportunities outside of marriage. They also often do not have property rights. So these women are more likely to get married to wealthier men only if they are circumcised.

Advocates of female circumcision charge the increasingly vocal opponents of the practice with trying to undermine African culture. European colonialism tried to abolish female circumcision, but local people adamantly rejected the interference of invading foreign cultures and held onto their own traditions as a backlash. They began to associate female circumcision with their own identity and cultural traditions (Lightproof-Klein 1989).

OPPOSITION AND LEGAL STATUS

One of the earliest campaigns against FGM began in Egypt in the 1920s, when the Egyptian Doctors' Society called for a ban. There was a parallel

campaign in Sudan, run by religious leaders and British women. Infibulation was banned there in 1946, but the law was unpopular and barely enforced. The Egyptian government banned infibulation in state-run hospitals in 1959, but allowed partial clitoridectomy if parents requested it. Egypt banned FGM entirely in 2007.



Source : wearerestless.org

Criticism of opposition in Kenya

In 1929 the Kenya Missionary Council began referring to FGM as the "sexual mutilation of women." The 1929–1931 period is known in the country's historiography as the female circumcision controversy. There was some opposition from Kenyan women themselves. But elsewhere, support for the practice from women was strong. In 1956 in Meru, eastern Kenya, when the council of male elders announced a ban on FGM in 1956, thousands of girls cut each other's genitals with razor blades over the next three years as a symbol of defiance. The movement came to be known as Ngaitana ("I will circumcise myself"). Historian Lynn Thomas described the episode as significant in the history of FGM because it made clear that its victims were its perpetrators also. FGM was eventually outlawed in Kenya in 2001, although the practice continued, reportedly driven by older women.



Some Kenyan Maasai women voiced opposition to a FGM ban because of fears that uncut girls would not be able to get married or become promiscuous

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

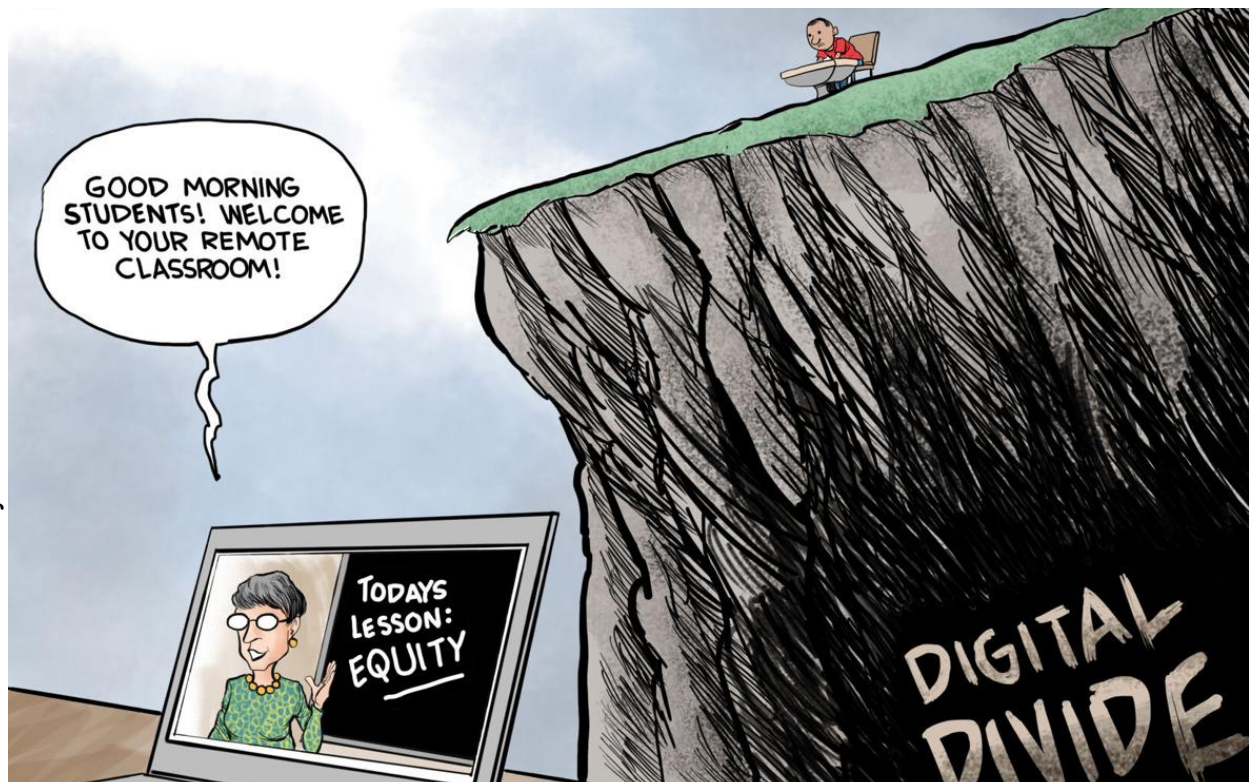
There have been international efforts since the 1970s to persuade practitioners to abandon FGM, and it has been outlawed or restricted in most of the countries in which it occurs, although the laws are often poorly enforced. Since 2008, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), jointly with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), lead the largest global programme to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation. The Joint Programme currently focuses on 17 countries in Africa and the Middle East and also supports regional and global initiatives. In 2010, WHO published a "Global strategy to stop health care providers from performing female genital mutilation" in collaboration with other key UN agencies and international organizations.

Although the practice has been around for more than a thousand years, there are reasons to think that it could end in a single generation. That is why the United Nations strives for its full eradication by 2030, following the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 5. In 2012, the UN General Assembly also designated February 6th as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, with the aim to amplify and direct the efforts on the elimination of this practice. This year the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme and the Inter - African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC) jointly launched the 2021 theme: "No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation."

Along with these institutional solutions, there is a need to raise awareness about the issue. It can be done by bringing it up with family and friends and starting a conversation. Also, educational programs and campaigns should be organized to educate girls and women on a large scale. These steps will definitely help the movement get little closer to achieving the goal of ending FGM by 2030.



Source : dailyastorian



DIGITISATION : REPLICATING SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Divyanjali Bijalwan

Social Stratification i.e. a system by which categories of people in a society are ranked in a hierarchy is inevitable in any society as rightly pointed out by **Sociologist Max Weber (Essay: Class, Status, Party)**. This hierarchy then shapes people's identity and experiences, their relations with others, as well as their access to resources and opportunities. According to **Karl Marx (The Communist Manifesto)**, the Industrial Revolution led to the stratification of society on the basis of class in the form of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Similarly, there also exists some other forms of stratification in the society on the basis of class, gender, ethnicity caste (particularly to India). Now with the advent of digital revolution a new form of stratification has emerged known as the **digital divide**.

The digital divide is the gap that exists between the individuals who have access to modern information and communication technology and those who lack access. Some of the dimensions of the digital divide are as follows.

First, ethnicity, age, gender, levels of education and socio-economic background and status are influential in the dynamics of the digital divide. Second, there is a technological divide amongst world regions with different levels of infrastructure that prevent some regions linking into a global economy. Third, there is a widening knowledge gap for those with low access, low skills, and little cultural capital to use digital resources. These dimensions configure in different ways across the globe. In the US the ethnic divide is still significant amongst digital inequalities. This kind of digital stratification further enables the antecedent social stratification (on the basis of class, gender, race, ethnicity, status) to replicate, leaving no scope for equality to emerge in the society. If we look at this digital divide through the lenses of Weberian approach in which sociologist Max Weber emphasizes that the goods that people buy and use are closely related to their status in society gives a new dimension to the understanding of digital stratification. It creates social inequalities in a new media society, because it influences social status by giving increased prestige to those in positions to use new technologies of communication, mastering new specialization/skills and increasing the ability of digital literati to create new opportunities to realize their goals in social economic or political spheres. For example: A clear link emerges between education (a marker of prestige and economic influence) and ability to transform knowledge (via digital fluency) into social, economic or political influence.

The Marxist-derived or conflict perspective focuses on the economic aspects of social stratification. According to this perspective the society is stratified into two classes: (1) Haves (Bourgeoisie) and (2) Have nots (Proletariat). While haves is a wealthy capitalist class and accrue all the benefits in the society, have nots struggle to afford even one square meal and are subjugated by the haves. Clearly this perspective has been strongly represented in the field of digital divide as we see that the 'Haves' are able to ace any digital device whether in terms of purchasing it or using it, as through a good education they have acquired those skills which enables them to smoothly sail through this digital world. On the other hand, 'Have nots' struggle to decode this digital technology because of the lack of resources.

India is no exception to the digital stratification of society. This stratification has augmented the Indian society with more layers of stratification which was already grappling with the caste, health, class, geographical, status and education based stratification. According to National Sample Survey data from 2017, only 6% rural households and 25% urban households have a computer. Access to Internet facilities is not universal either; 17% in rural areas and 42% in urban areas. Sure, smartphones with data will have improved access over the past four years, yet a significant number of the most vulnerable are struggling. This stratification is also prevalent between men and women. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India, male users account for 67% of India's online population, women account for just 29%. These kinds of stratification are further multiplied by the ongoing pandemic. Although we aren't stratified directly by pandemic but indirectly we are. This can be associated well with the Theory of Risk society by Sociologist Ulrich Beck. Ulrich Beck proposed that in risk society people will be stratified on the basis of risk / insecurities they face (climate change, diseases, etc.) and so they seek for risk aversion through the process of adopting a change in their lifestyle. In India, although every strata of society is affected by COVID -19 but what makes them stratified is their ability to seek for risk aversion through adopting various lifestyle measures.

Economically or geographically advantageous people are able to access the information about the COVID -19 and as well as immunization programs (through digital media) successfully because they have the access to digital devices. While poor people often fail to adopt this lifestyle measure of using tech devices as they either lack the money to buy it or skill to use it.

When it comes to acquiring the skill, we know that it's usually through the course of education. But we can't overlook the fact that the pandemic has also rendered the education sector stratified.

Surveys by the National Council Of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), The Azim Premji Foundation, Annual School of Education

Report(ASER) and Oxfam suggests that between 27% and 60% could not access education for a range of reasons: lack of devices, shared devices, inability to buy data packs, etc. Peer learning has also suffered. According to the Durkheimian perspective this deprives students of developing 'social consciousness' (**Book: Division Of Labour**). Durkheim believed that society exerted a powerful force on individuals. People's norms, values and beliefs make up a collective consciousness, or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. The collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration. This collective consciousness is produced by individuals through their social interaction and action. Students who did not studied in English medium schools come to colleges where English is the medium of instruction they struggled with. Yet surrounded by English Speakers, however, falteringly many managed to pick up the language . Such students have been robbed off this opportunity due to online education .The fact is that the privileged are getting ahead not necessarily because they are smarter but because of the privileges they enjoy .

Something similar is happening with the healthcare sector. Both low public expenditure on healthcare and poorly regulated private health sector in India put the poor at a disadvantage in accessing good healthcare. In several instances, developing an app is seen as a solution for allocation of various health services . Platform and app based solutions can exclude the poor entirely or squeeze their access to scarce healthcare services further . The use of COWIN to book a slot for vaccination makes it that much harder for those without smartphones, computers and the internet. There are reports of techies hogging slots ,because they know how to work the app .This sort of inequality was also expressed by **Virginia Eubanks'** widely acclaimed book , '**Automating Inequality**' where she alerted us to the ways that automated decision making tools exacerbates inequalities ,especially by raising the barrier for people to receive services they are entitled to. The levels of access and the quality of resources are key aspects in enabling individuals and groups to participate in the life of society . The

question therefore involves ensuring that individuals and groups have access to the relevant resources to enable them to participate.

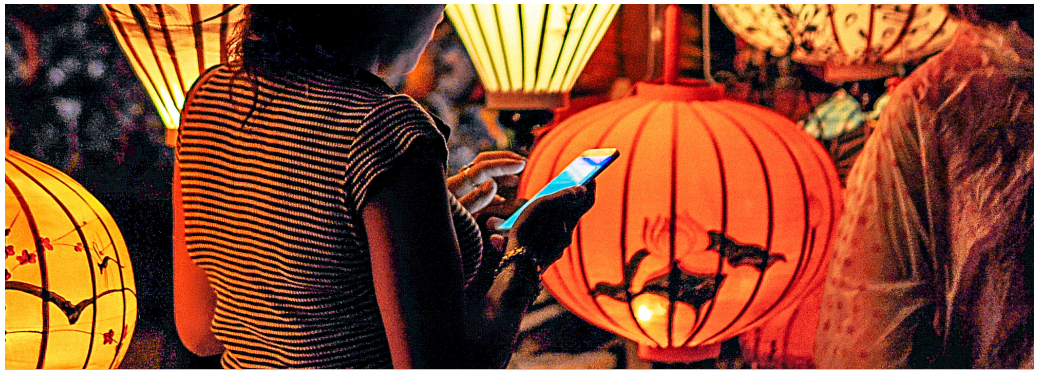
When digital technology is seen as resource then it can be seen as part of a virtuous circle, where those with access to (fast) Internet, good education and socio-economic background are in good positions to take advantage of economic development. Those on the other hand who lack access to any of these resources are at a disadvantage and at risk of exclusion. The allocation of resources is related to positions of power, with those with the least resources having less power in determining their futures, securities, and freedom to participate.

Inclusivity should be incorporated in order to overcome digital stratification, be it offering digital literacy to the masses or providing the "Not so tech savvy " folks with some other alternative . We must not forget that " Rome was not built in a day" and for India where Digitization was initiated only in 2015 with the scheme of 'Digital India', it seems that it would take a few more years to be digitally empowered.





Section-5



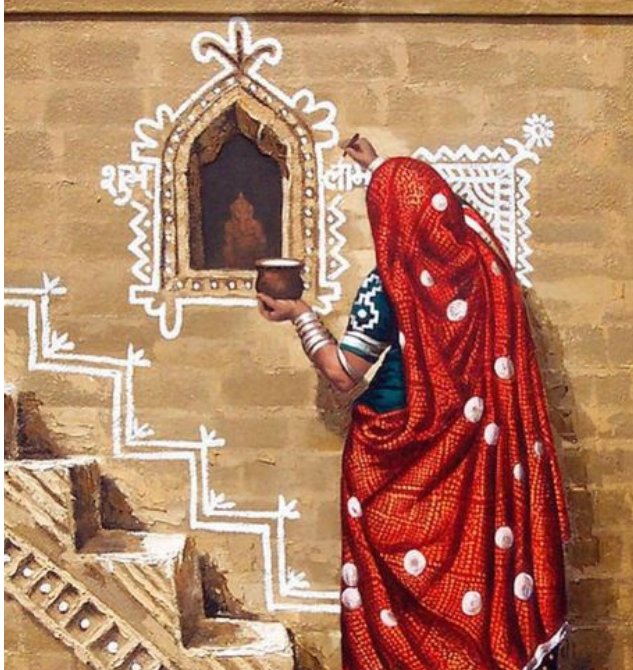
Reconnecting with our Regional Roots



Neha Yadav

3RD YEAR

I never felt the need to learn Rajasthani or Marwari, till I entered college and faced curious faces who expected me to know Rajasthani because I'm from Rajasthan. Knowing that Rajasthani is not a language but a group of dialects doesn't stop me from feeling discomfort in not knowing my regional language. Not just me but I guess everyone faces this assumption, that you can speak the language of your region. To some extent, I too think that you should be able to speak your regional language with other languages, but it's hard when prominence is given to English and Hindi even in education.



Shagun Das

2ND YEAR

Living in Andhra Pradesh, I often come across Rangolis, or what is called “muggu.” in Telugu. If you happen to wake up early enough and go around, you can also see women drawing it outside their homes. The difference between traditional rangoli and muggu is that the latter is started by putting down several dots. These dots are joined to form a pattern, unlike in rangoli, where the powder is directly dropped to create the design. Whenever I come across a muggu, I’m reminded of the Odia version of rangoli called “jhoti or chita.” The difference here is that instead of powder, a rice paste is used. One can use their finger, a stick, or a cloth to create beautifully intricate designs. Walls of houses in Odisha villages are filled with these. So everytime I spot a jhoti or a muggu, I instantly feel at home.



Janhvy Kadian

2ND YEAR

Being from an army background, I have always been moving to different corners of the country which has made me miss my native state, the flavor of churma made by my dadi, winters with dabbas full of goond ladoos, and halwa and kheer during festivals. Although it is easy to find food anywhere, thanks to globalization and advancement, the flavor and the connection with traditions are somewhere missing in all of them.

The best thing about the Haryanvi cuisine is the purely natural ingredients, grown in their fields and it's mostly the elders who make the food, so it has an earthy touch to it. Among all this, I one day met this old woman from whom we used to get milk every day, and she was making churma for her grandchildren, the same way as my dadi. She also served me the churma; it felt as if I was eating my dadi's made churma. I instantly got carried away to my state, and I soon developed a connection with her and the food. Whenever I visited her, I felt the same connection every time. In this strange land, it was the only place that made me feel at home. Her hands made the magic happen, and her love made the dishes even tastier. Her food made me feel as if I was in the fields, swaying my arms with the wind, and smelling the beautiful aura of the Haryana.



Tomatoes & Onions

K.S. Vaishnavi
3RD YEAR

“Domestic flights suspended,” read the headlines, and with that, I lost my final opportunity to go back home amid the Covid19 pandemic. Being the overly optimistic person I am, I decided to wait until the end of March 2020 to see whether or not the situation gets better enough for the lockdown to be lifted and the university to re-open. Well, neither happened, and I had to continue living in my PG. The stay, however, wasn’t lonely as a college friend of mine, too, had decided to stay back. We kept ourselves busy with our assignments, TV series, and conversations on the balcony.

On April 8th, 2020, my friend and I took a trip to the nearby department store to restock our stack of snacks. Then we went to the vegetable vendor right outside to buy some lemons, and there I heard it: “Machan, thakkali vengayum vangikalam rate seriya irukku.”

(Translation: Machan (term of endearment), let’s buy tomatoes and onions. The rate seems fine.)

I turned my head, and there stood two young men probably my age stocking up on veggies.

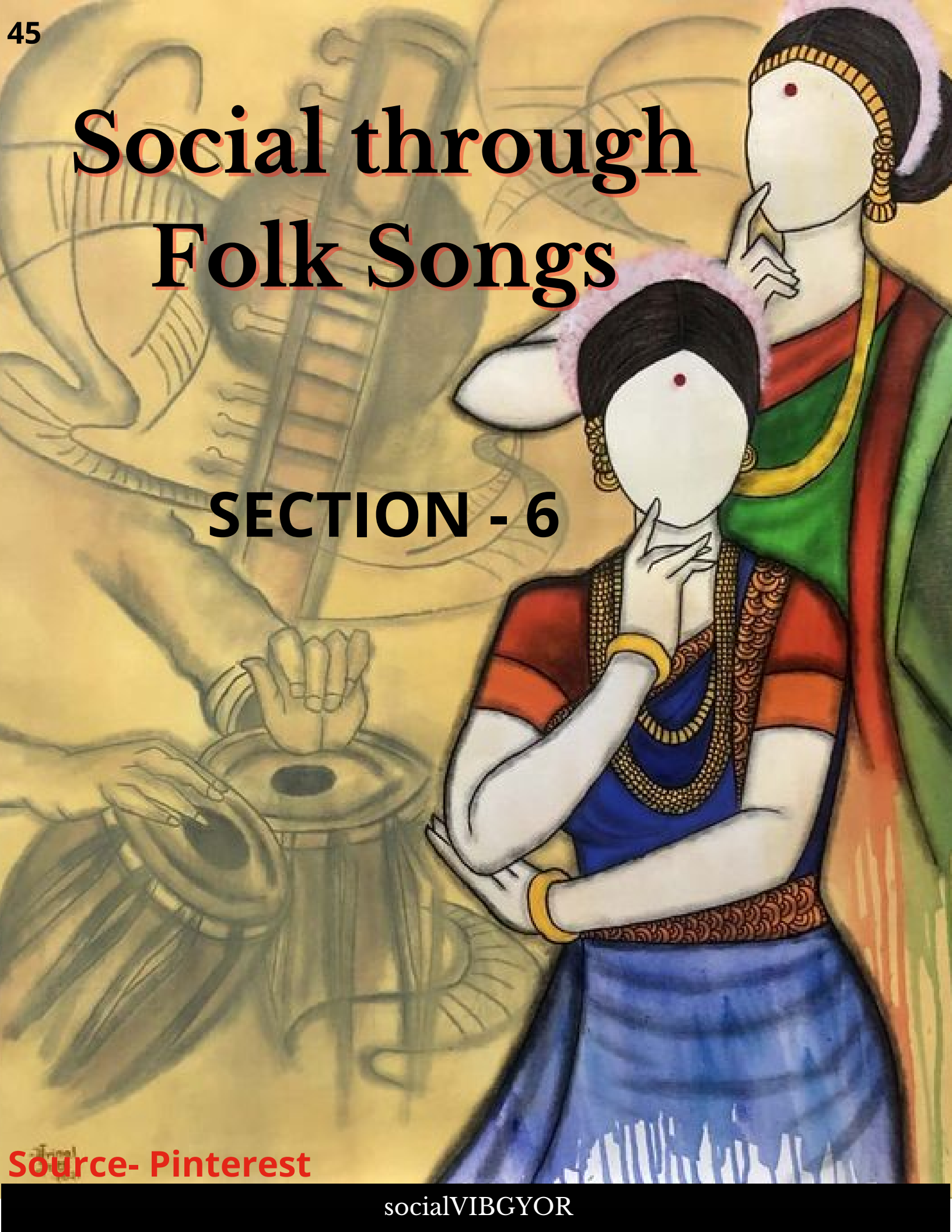
It felt nice. Nice to hear someone speak Tamizh when I was so far away from home and very eager to return. It felt nice to hear someone speak in a tongue I understand entirely without having to take refuge in Google Translations or having to look up their meanings. It felt nice knowing I wasn’t alone.

There is something uniquely beautiful about mother tongues that can never quite be put into words. There’s a sense of comfort in understanding and being understood.

And for the first time in the year since I moved out to study in Delhi, I missed home more than I ever had until now.

Social through Folk Songs

SECTION - 6



Source- Pinterest

BADHAWA

Song

Badhya ya Mene sone Ka mangwaya
Badhya mene sone Ka gadwayo

Sas ne fariya m dubkayo
Sasur ne de hukka girwayo

Jithani ne angiya m dubkayo
Jeth ne de danda girwayo

Dorani ne Rasoi m dubkayo
Dewar be de Bala girwayo

Nanda ne gudiya m dubkayo
Nandev ne de thappad girwayo

Translation

I brought gifts of gold,
I brought gifts of gold,

Mother-in-law hide it in her Dupatta,
Father-in-law made it drop by his
huka,

Jethani(wife of husband's elder
brother) hide it in her blouse,
Jeth(brother-in-law) made it drop by
stick,

Devrani (wife of husband's younger
brother) hide it in kitchen,
Dever(brother-in-law) made it drop by
bat,

Nanasda(sister-in-law) hide it in her
dolls,
Nandev(husband of sister-in-law)
made it drop by a slap.



Analysis

This folk song is under the category of Bhadhaya, literal meaning of "Bhadhaya" is gifts. It is mainly sung when a child is born or after a wedding, when the bride comes with gifts. This song is sung with great enthusiasm and happy spirit but if we translate it and look at it critically, we would find how these songs reflect the normalisation of domestic violence in the society. This song not only tells about domestic violence but it also stereotypes women. It portrays women as the one who likes ornaments. According to the song, female members hide their gifts in some safe places and men bring those out by exercising their physical power on women. When I asked my elders what wrong do women do in hiding those gifts, after all they are their owners, they don't have any answers.

- NEHA YADAV



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JALLA SAIN



Jalla sain ra mayila sa, jeene ab rot aayi re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Mhe to raj ra dera nirkhan aayi re Jalla.

Jalla saingara maylo, raj bhalo Rathori re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Raja mayelo raj bhalo rathori ra Jalla.

Jalla sain shehra maylo, shehar bhalo jodhano re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Shehar maylo shehar bhalo Jodhano re Jalla,

Jalla sain ranya mayli, rani bhali Bhatiyani re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Ranya mayeli rani bhali, bhatiyani re Jalla.

Jalla sain chita mayli, chint bhali multani re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganani ra Jalla,
Chint mayeli keet bhali, multani re Jalla.

Jalla sain kuwadiya ro, thando imrat pani re,
Mhari Jodi ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Thando pani mhara sayab ji ne payi re Jalla.

Jalla sain Aamaliya paki re ab root aayi re,
Mhari jod ra Jalla, mirganaini ra Jalla,
Mhe to raj rad era nirkhan aayi re Jalla.



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Jalla Sain (Groom's loyal friend/cousin) it's time for me to travel to the faraway land from where my husband belongs, my Soulmate's friend, Jalla, oh mrignaini's Jalla (her husband has beautiful eyes like that of a Deer or Gazelle) I'm ready to leave for the Dera (her rich husband's house) with you.

Jalla Sain, Rathores are the best among all the rulers/elites, (her husband is a Rathore, i.e. Rajput sub-caste in the Mewar empire of Rajputana), my mirganaini's friend, Jalla, Take me to the majestic Rathore empire.

Jalla Sain, Jodhpur (ancient name- Jodhana, capital city of the greatest Rajput empire, Mewar) is the best cities among all the citites, my husband's friend, Jalla, Take me to my Majestic new home, the great city of Jodhpur. (her husband lives in jodhpur, as an elite Rathore Thakar, i.e. feudal Lord).

Jalla Sain, among all the Rajput community girls, the ones from Bhati community (Rajput sub-caste from the western Rajasthan) is considered to be the best for marriage (she is from the Bhati community and choosing a bride from the Bhati community was good since they were considered more patient, mature and serious for the culture). my Soulmate's friend, Jalla, I as a dauther of the Bhati community will be the best bride for him.

Jalla Sain, Fabric(Chint) from Multan (Modern Pakistan) is considered to be the best among textiles, oh mrignaini's Jalla, I am wearing the dress made from that fabric (she is indicating that she is adorned with the best dress and ornaments).

Jalla Sain, water from smaller wells are considered to be the coolest and sweetest. Oh my husband's dear friend Jalla, help me take this delicious water for my husband (she is denoted as being devoted to serve her husband as soon as she gets married).

Jalla Sain, the fruits has ripen now (indicating she is old enough to live the life of a married women), oh Jhalla, take me to my husband's Dera (house).

Analysis

This folk song began to be sung during medieval Rajasthan when the Mughal had a political influence on the Rajputana empire. Rarely sung in modern times, it has been underrated due to the notion of having a 'Mughal influence' in it. Sung by the women after marriage, the folk song showcases the story of a new bride leaving for her husband's house with her husband's friend/cousin.

The folk song reflects the influence of a patriarchal society where women who were patient or gentle-natured, mature, conservative and completely devoted to the husband, were identified as the ideal type of women. The influence of caste on the institution of marriage in the Rajput community of medieval Rajasthan, as well as the ritual of 'Gauna' (the ritual of bringing the bride to her husband's home years after her marriage when she enters the adolescence period) and child marriage is clearly visible in the song.

The song also displays the socio-economic conditions of the medieval Rajputana Empire including trade and hierarchy in the society, and also the standards of beauty, (refined features like deer-like eyes.)



Translation Source :

The translation of the folk song has been provided exclusively by my friends' mother. She belongs to the Bhati community (as mentioned in the song) which proved to be of great help in understanding the essence and importance of the folk song. My sincere thanks to her and her family for extended the helping hand in understanding such a beautiful cultural representation of the Rajput community.

-NANDINI SHARMA



GARHWALI FOLK SONG: 'PHULARI'



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चला फुलारी फूलों को
सौदा-सौदा फूल बिरौला

हे जी सार्यु मा फूलीगे ह्वोलि प्योली लयड़ी
में घौर छोड्यावा
हे जी घर बौण बौड़ीगे ह्वोलु बालो बसंत
में घौर छोड्यावा
हे जी सार्यु मा फूलीगे ह्वोलि

चला फुलारी फूलों को
सौदा-सौदा फूल बिरौला
भौरों का जूठा फूल ना तोड्यां
म्वार्यु का जूठा फूल ना लायाँ

ना उनु धरम्यालु आगास
ना उनि मयालू यखै धरती
अजाण औंखा छिन पैंडा
मनखी अणमील चौतफीं
छि भै ये निरभै परदेस मा तुम रौणा त रा
में घौर छोड्यावा
हे जी सार्यु मा फूलीगे ह्वोलि

फुल फुलदेई दाल चौल दे
घोघा देवा प्योल्या फूल
घोघा फुलदेई की डोली सजली
गुड़ परसाद दै दूध भत्यूल

अर्यु होलू फुलार हमारा सैंत्यां आर चोलों मा
होला चैती पसरू मांगना औजी खोला खोलो
मा
ढक्यां मोर द्वार देखिकी फुलारी खौल्यां होला

DIVYANJALI BIJALWAN

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Let's go! 'Phulari' for flowers
Will pick fresh flowers

O dear! In the fields must have blossomed buds
Take me home

O dear! Home and woods have rebounded with primness spring
Please take me home

O dear! Buds would have blossomed in the fields

Let's go 'Phulari ' for flowers
Will pick fresh flowers

Don't pluck flowers tasted by bumblebees
Don't pluck flowers tasted by honeybees

Sky here isn't serene alike not the land loving either

Unknown people unlike odd people all around

Fie! You in this unlucky place

Fie! You in this unlucky place

Live here if you want

Take me home

O dear! In the fields buds must have blossomed

O Phuldeyi ! give lentils and rice

O Lord Ghoga ! give flowers of 'Phyoli'

Will adorn the palanquin of ghoga and phuldeyi

Offerings of jaggery ,curd ,oblation of milk and rice

Flowers must have blossomed on peach ,apricots we planted
'Aujis' in the courtyards must be asking for the new years favours

Seeing locked doors phularis must have stunned

Background

This folk song is associated with the festival of Phooldeyi celebrated in the Uttarakhand region to mark the arrival of Spring season. It generally begins in the month of February and continues till March. In every village, girls aged between 10-12 yrs from each household assemble in early morning hours and pick freshly bloomed, beautiful and colorful flowers especially comprising of yellow flowers in their baskets and diffuse them on the threshold of every house. This is generally done in the early morning hours so as to surprise the household members as they wake up seeing the beautiful and aromatic flowers on their threshold. In this way girls bless every family with lots of happiness and prosperity. On the last day of the festival which is Baisakhi the little girls are worshipped, given gifts and served with feast. This marks the end of the festival which is considered as the harbinger of goodness, prosperity and cheerfulness. This festival not only reflects the celebration of spring season but also highlights the place of girls in our society. Little girls are seen as the epitome of goddess and so are especially chosen to carry out the ritual. People experience as if the goddess herself is blessing them with happiness and prosperity. It really teaches us the way the girls are ought to be treated, although not really as a goddess but the affection and love a family shows for a boy should also be shown towards girl child. This is exactly what our culture and ancient value system taught us but over the passage of time people with their own interpretations and alterations of rituals overthrew the existing ones and made the whole society see a girl child with disappointment.

So, we should always try to preserve and practice our ancient cultural system and reflect upon the current wrongdoings of society.

- DIVYANJALI BIJALWAN



MERA MADHYA PRADESH

S O N G

मेरा मध्य प्रदेश

सुख का दाता, सबका साथी,
शुभ का ये सन्देश है,
माँ की गोद, पिता का आश्रय,
मेरा मध्य प्रदेश है।

विन्ध्याचल का, माँ नर्मदा का जल इसके पास है,
यहाँ ज्ञान, विज्ञान, कला का लिखा गया इतिहास है।
उर्वर भूमि, सघन वन, संपदा यहाँ अशेष है,
स्वर सौ रंग सुषमा से मंडित मेरा मध्य प्रदेश है।
सुख का दाता, सबका साथी,
शुभ का ये सन्देश है,
माँ की गोद, पिता का आश्रय,
मेरा मध्य प्रदेश है।

क्षिप्रा में अमृत घट छलका, मिला कृष्ण को ज्ञान यहाँ,
महाकाल को तिलक लगाने मिला हमें वरदान यहाँ,
कविता न्याय, वीरता गायन सबकुछ यहाँ विशेष है,
हृदय देश का यह मैं इसका मेरा मध्य प्रदेश है।
सुख का दाता, सबका साथी,
शुभ का ये सन्देश है,
माँ की गोद, पिता का आश्रय,
मेरा मध्य प्रदेश है।

- महेश श्रीवास्तव





Giver of happiness, partner of all,
This is the message of auspiciousness,
Mother's lap, father's shelter,
My Madhya Pradesh.

It has the water of Vidhyanchal's 'Mother Narmada',
Here, the history of knowledge, science, art has written.
Here, lands are fertile, forests are dense and wealth
complete,
My Madhya Pradesh is ornamented with tone and color.

Giver of happiness, partner of all,
This is the message of auspiciousness,
Mother's lap, father's shelter,
My Madhya Pradesh.

Nectar of immortality spilled in Kshipra where Lord
Krishna got educated,
Only here, we got the boon to apply Tilak to Mahakal(Lord
Shiva).

Poetry, justice, singing heroism are all pre-eminent here,
This is the heart of the country, I belong here, my Madhya
Pradesh.

Giver of happiness, partner of all,
This is the message of auspiciousness,
Mother's lap, father's shelter,
My Madhya Pradesh.

Analysis

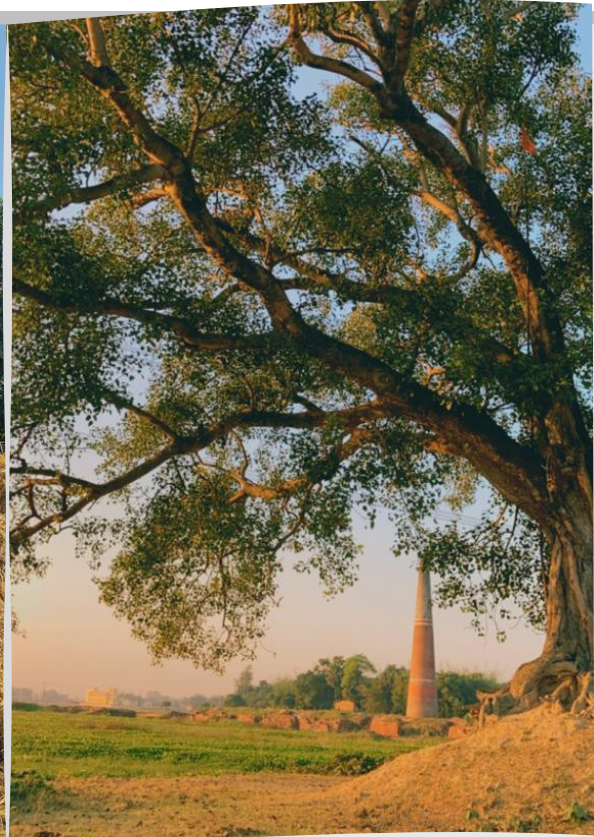
“Mera Madhya Pradesh” is the state song of the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh. The song was written and composed by journalist Mahesh Shrivastava and was officially adopted in October 2010. It is sung so that the people of the State feel a sense of belonging and affinity towards the state.

- KIRTI PATIDAR



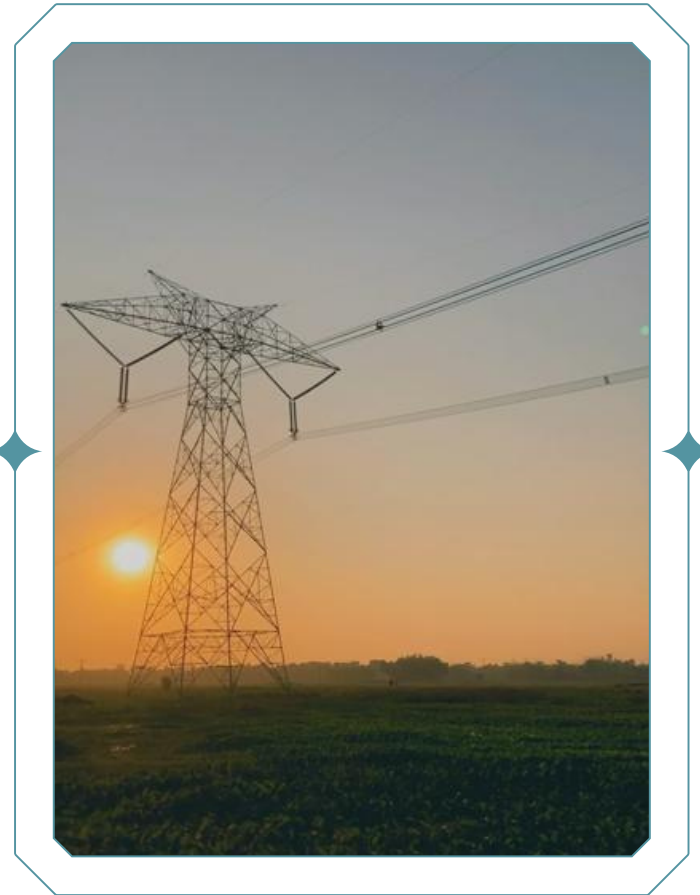
VISUALIZING STORIES







Cattles have always been an integral part of households and the economy across Saharsa, Bihar. Yet, with each visit I make, I see fewer and fewer cattles. The elders tell me they have no choice but to sell them as grazing lands have shrunk, their children have migrated to cities, and more people are moving towards mechanizing the agricultural process.



- Maitrayee Jha, BA Philosophy (H), 3rd year



This is a photograph of Gangoor Pooja. It is a festival of Rajasthan, which is celebrated in the Chetra month of Hindi calendar. Wives keep fast and make sand dolls representing God Isher and Goddess Parvati.

This festival is mainly celebrated by women of the house to secure a lifetime for their husbands. Many unmarried girls also participate in this festival, to get a good future husband and in-laws, as it is said to be.



- Neha Yadav, BA Programme, 3rd year

One of the many post-marriage rituals in a Maharashtrian marriage involves wrapping a belan or a rolling pin in a saree or dupatta and putting it into a make-shift hammock made of a long cloth. Belan is symbolic of the newly wed couple's baby, the dupatta/saree symbolic of the baby's clothes and the makeshift hammock-like structure is a symbol of the baby's cradle.



What follows is almost the exact set of rituals that are performed on Barsa i.e., name keeping ceremony performed when an actual baby is born. This ritual has an eccentric name, commonly known as, 'Gopa hagawne' (literally means baby defecation) and takes place after a day or two of the wedding. It reflects a society where social norms dictate immediate expectations of producing children after marriage to the extent that a name keeping ceremony takes place after a day of the wedding with no actual baby.

- Srushti Saravade, BA Programme, 2nd year

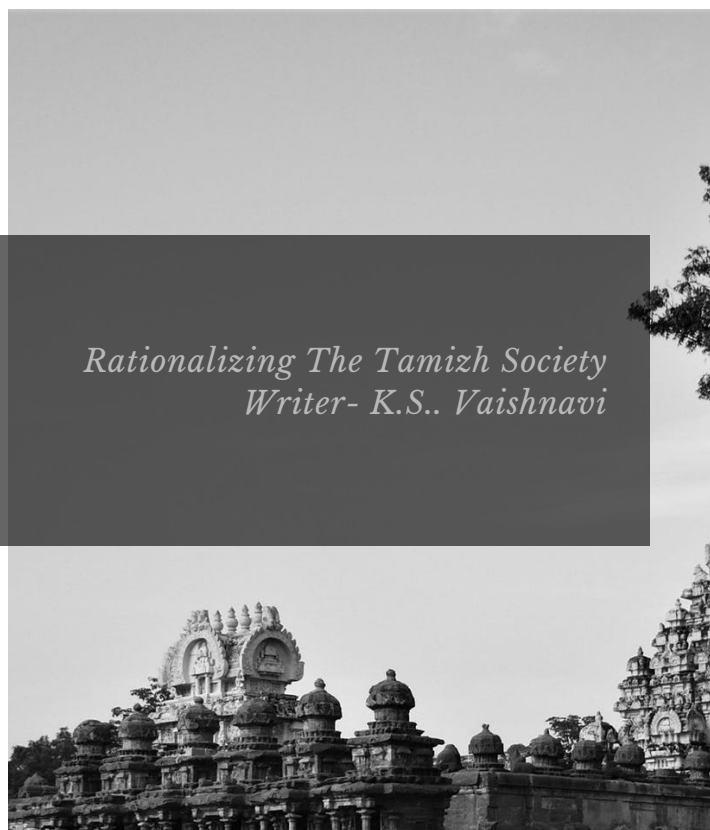
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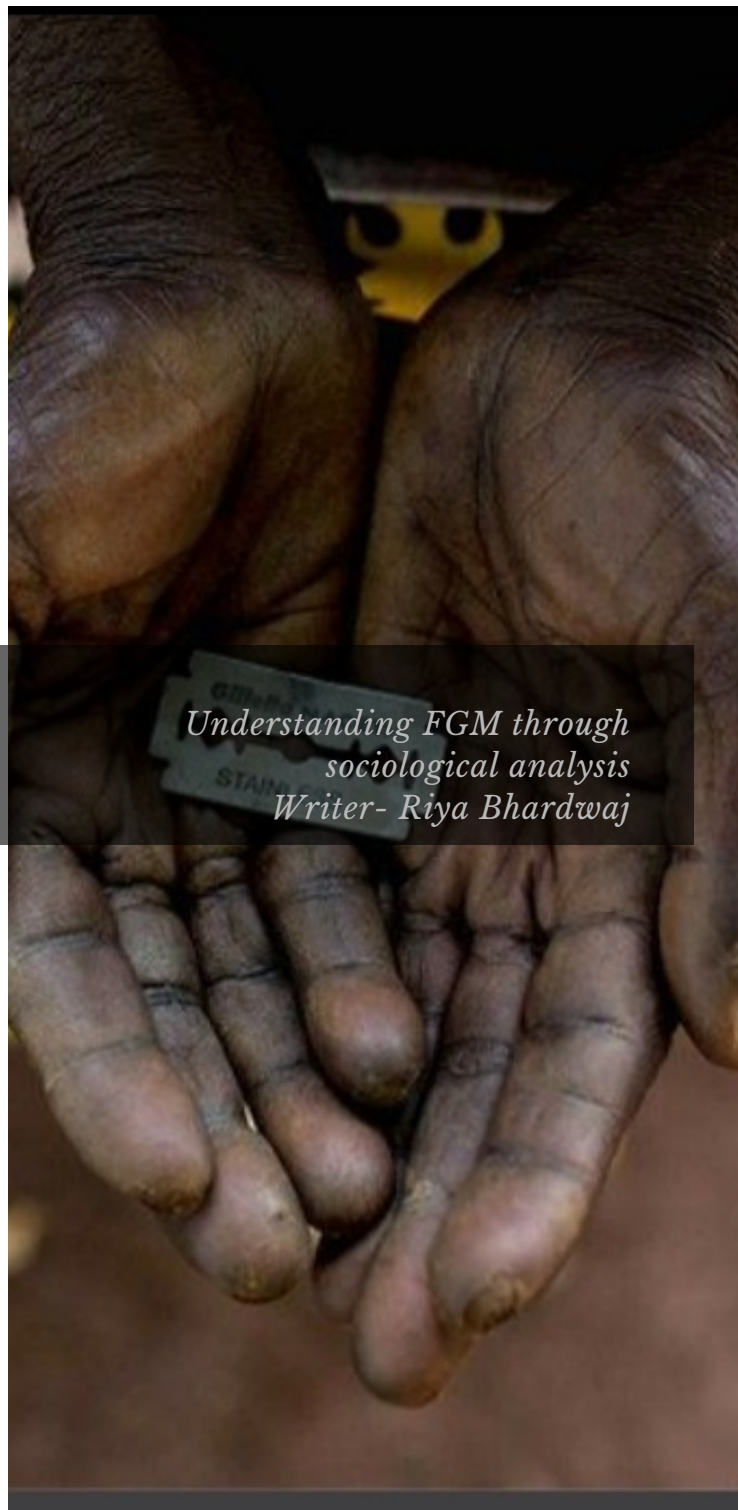
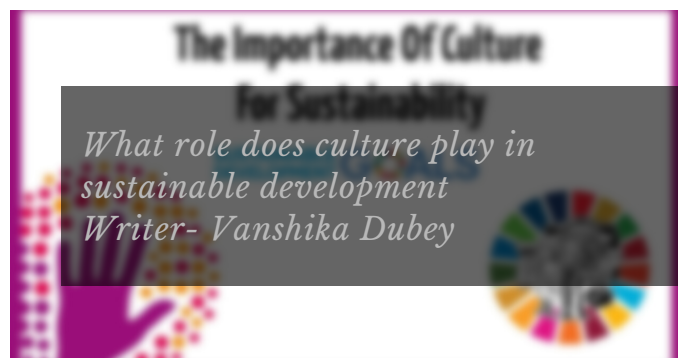
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