

The Sacred Secrets of Indigenous People in Traditional India

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Abstract

The Indigenous people and local communities have created a wealthy traditional knowledge and cultural expressions which are still protected. Their cultures, traditions, food habits and dress codes were not only unique but are treasure to us in this pandemic period. Traditions must be understood by the pupils of India which could be beneficial for our kids in this pandemic period. India is still a country of peasants. Agrarian development is extensive, but still with primitive technique. Though pupils learn via internet, mentors has the responsibility to teach them about the sacred secrets about indigenous people and their cultural habitats which may aware them from the pandemic diseases. This article analyse the secret traditions of indigenous people through Roy's novel. Indigenous communities are far away from us in technology but well to do in food habits, cultural habitats and all time occupations.

Keywords: Culture, Tradition, Indigenous, Technique, Habitats.

Traditional sacred secrets are protected to guard against the misappropriation and misuse of the knowledge. India is largely a country of old immigrants, which explore its tremendous diversity. It follows that tolerance and equal respect for all communities and sects are an absolute imperative if we wish to keep India united. It was believed at one time that Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India, that view has since been considerably modified. Now the generally accepted belief is that the pre-Dravidian aborigines that is, the ancestors of the present tribals or Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), were the original inhabitants.

Indians are known as the Indigenous people or 'aborigines' or Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis), who now comprise only about eight per cent of the population of India. The rest, 92 per cent, consists of descendants of immigrants. Thus India is broadly a country of immigrants, like North America.

India was a veritable paradise for pastoral and agricultural societies with Indigenous people because it has level and fertile land, with hundreds of rivers, forests, etc., and were rich in natural resources. Hence for thousands of years people kept pouring into India because they found a comfortable life here in a country which was gifted by nature.

Special provisions have been made in our Constitution in Articles 15(4), 15(5), 16(4), 16(4A), 46, etc., for the uplift of these groups. Among these disadvantaged groups, the most disadvantaged and marginalized in India are the Adivasis (STs), who, as already mentioned, are the descendants of the original inhabitants of India, and are the most marginalized and living in terrible poverty with high rates of illiteracy, disease, early mortality etc.

The well-known example of injustice to tribes is the story of Eklavya in the Adiparva of the Mahabharata. Eklavya wanted to learn archery, but Dronacharya refused to teach him, regarding him as lowborn.

Despite this horrible oppression on them, the tribes of India have generally (though not invariably) retained a higher level of ethics than the non-tribes. They normally do not cheat or tell lies, or commit other misdeeds, which many non-tribes do. They are generally superior in character to non-tribes.

It is time now to undo the historical injustice to them. Let us try to follow the sacred secrets of indigenous people which could be helpful for us to recover this Covid- 19.

Yes, A few weeks ago, Mukteshwar Kalo, a member of the Kondh tribe in eastern India, suddenly came down with a fever, cough and aches.

Nearly anywhere else, these symptoms would be enough to raise fears of COVID-19, but 58-year-old Kalo, who lives in Surupa village in the state of Odisha, was not worried.

His wife treated him with remedies made from plants in a nearby forest: a drink with the leaves of the night-flowering gangasiuli jasmine to get rid of his fever and pains and a solution of extract of patragaja, or air plant, for his cough.

"The leaves, roots and other resources collected from our forests cured me in less than a week," said Kalo.

As India continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, health experts and environmentalists say the climate-resilient, nature-based lifestyles of many indigenous communities are helping to protect them from the virus and its economic impact.

The same practices that keep the villagers' climate-heating emissions low and provide them with food also prevent them from catching and spreading the virus. Preserving forests, protecting wildlife and managing natural resources wisely help keep

indigenous people healthy, said the executive director of vasudhara. "The tribes in the region have been conserving their native biodiversity for generations through their community-led practices".

"This is paying off during these tough times of global pandemic, in terms of food, medicinal and livelihood security."

Dr. Debananda Sahoo, assistant professor of general medicine at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Bhubaneswar, said the natural diets of many indigenous villagers strengthen their immune systems key to keeping the virus at bay.

Wild, organic fruits and vegetables have high levels of vitamin C and vitamin E. "Wide varieties of tubers, wild fruits, leaves, roots (and) mushrooms gathered from the forests and regularly consumed by the indigenous communities are rich in nutrients and antioxidants," he said. "Most importantly, they are free from chemical fertilizers and pesticides, thus very pure and effective." When lockdowns, quarantines and travel bans during the peak of the pandemic made life difficult for people in cities, (it) stayed comparatively easier for these Indigenous communities."

Villagers use the flowers of the mahua to make a solution with antiseptic qualities and take two spoonfuls each day in a bid to keep the novel corona virus away." said an Indigenous man. They also spray the solution along the entry and exit points of the village and outside their homes. "The value and efficacy of such traditional healing systems and plants have long been recognized. "But we need to have more robust research and trials. Especially of the ingredients used their specific dosage and concentration - to establish them scientifically."

A spoon of powdered bark of ashwagandha, also called Indian ginseng, stirred into a cup of warm milk acts as an analgesic, reduces inflammation and builds immunity, he said.

And when giloy shrub branches are ground and boiled with water, the solution helps clear congestion and chest infections

with, all educational system should provide the awareness of Health education to our younger generation that Neither Money nor is our education going to save us. It's the sacred secrets of our Indigenous traditional foods and herbs are going to To conclude.

"We take care of the forests and forests look after us".

It's the bitter truth in this pandemic period that we are in search of oxygen cylinders. Let us all try to safe guard the balance sacred Traditional India for our upcoming generation. Many indigenous and tribal people live in areas rich in living and non-living resources including forests that contain abundant bio-diversity, water and minerals.

Historically, the desire of non-indigenous society for such resources has resulted in the removal, decimation or extermination of many indigenous communities. Today, the survival and integrity of the Hemisphere's remaining indigenous and tribal people requires recognition of their rights to the resources found on their lands and territories on which they depend for their economic, spiritual, cultural and physical well-being. Indigenous and tribal people have property rights over the natural resources which are present in their territories. The natural resources traditionally used by indigenous people and linked to their cultures, including uses which are both strictly material and other uses of a spiritual or cultural character. Hence the need to protect indigenous and tribal people's rights over the natural resources they have traditionally used; that is "the aim and purpose of the special measures required on behalf of the members of indigenous and tribal communities is to guarantee that they may continue living their traditional way of life, and that their distinct cultural identity, social structure, economic system, customs, beliefs and traditions are respected, guaranteed and protected by the states.

Eco-criticism is a study of literature and the environment from an inter-disciplinary point of view, where literature scholars analyze texts that illustrate environment concerns and examine the various ways that literature treats the subjects of nature. It is mandatory that the study of eco-feminist reading of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* also focuses on how the novelist utilizes various techniques signaling modes of revolt of nature in terms of the muted group theory and backchannel communication motif. The novelist also apostrophizes nature to blur dialectical pairs.

Symbiotic relationships are underscored by Roy through the motifs of metaphor and metonymy thereby revealing underlying principles of kinship. Eco-feminist practice is necessarily ant hierarchical. It preaches that life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected on to nature and then used to justify social domination (King quoted in Vakoch, 2011). In the novel, the twins' relationship with their mother and the river functions on a parallel plane as Ammu poses as the river, and the twins as frogs. Ammu's reference to the twins as frogs is significant, as frogs have semipermeable skin rendering frogs susceptible to dehydration, which is why they either live in moist places or have special adaptations to deal with dry habitats. Just as the twins in spite of their vulnerability, adapted to circumstances to live without Ammu (the river). Noteworthy is that soon after the Orange drink man episode, Estha longs for the river, as instinctively as he would crave for maternal protection. The river-women connection is

also pronounced in the manner. Roy links Ammu to a river during the Velutha–Ammu union. Roy claims,

“She was as wide and deep as a river in space.

He sailed on her waters.” (Roy 1997 p. 337).

Nature as a pleasure-giver as well as a nurturer is clearly foregrounded in these images. The river is so close to the twins’ hearts that they simultaneously dream of “their river”, as they sleep cuddled together at Hotel Sea Queen. The experience serves as a nostalgic reminiscence of swimming together through “their mother’s cunt” during their prenatal existence. The children’s familiarity with the river and closeness to it is clearly evinced by Roy: “They knew the afternoon weed that flowed inwards from the backwaters of Komarakom. They knew the smaller fish” and it is here that they study “Silence (like the children of the Fisher Peoples), and teach the bright language of dragonflies” (Roy, 1997, p. 203). Thus, the river, on another level, serves as a surrogate mother to the twins, feeding them and teaching them.

The river motif also comes across as a microcosm of the ecosystem in Roy’s works that reflects other components of the natural environment—the moon, the skies, and the trees. Eco-feminism is conceptualized as a sisterly bond, a fundamental rejection of all forms of domination, whose necessary goal is diversity rather than dualism (Vance, 1993). The river that once reflected the whole of Nature in its diversity and immaculate beauty is now a dismal picture, and is said to be a slow sledging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Many years later as Rahel returns, she finds the river welcoming her with a ‘ghastly skull’s smile, with holes where teeth had been, and a limp hand raised from a hospital bed.’ The spiritual essence endowed to the rivers is substituted with a sense of nihilism. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like sub-tropical flying flowers. (p. 124)

The fluidity of the river seems to be curtailed and its limpidness adulterated. Elsewhere the river is described to have “smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans” (p. 13). This concern for the river and the dispossessed is later seen to mark her works of nonfiction where her commitment to the River Narmada and its people are discussed in detail. Prof. I. Shanmugha Das (2011), a noted Indian critic, states how Arundhati Roy started her march toward the Narmada mission from the banks of another river in Kerala, the Chaliyar that has also been subjected to pollution by the effluents from Gwalior Ryons (p. 24). He ascertains that her clarion call to save Narmada is perhaps her plea to save the Meenachal of her childhood from succumbing to the venomous pollution spewed

out by the developmental process (Das quoted in Kunhi, 2014, p. 151). In her essay, “The Greater Common Good,” Roy (2002b) foregrounds the harm caused by Big Dams on rivers, “Ecologically, they’re in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste. They cause floods, water-logging, salinity, they spread disease. There is mounting evidence that links Big Dams to earthquakes” (pp. 57-58).

Roy thereby succeeds in presenting an eco-critical perspective through humanizing nature in a way that appeals to our emotions as well, and justifies the title of the novel. The move to blur the boundaries between nature and the human world not only works as a stylistic strategy that echoes the theme but communicates with the sensibilities and sentiments of the readers. The eco-feminist dilution of duality works as a subversive strategy questioning the conceptualization of hierarchies where for “the anthropocentric feminists, the ‘other’ is nonhuman animals and nature; for radical feminists, ‘other’ is culture and man; for the animal liberationists, ‘other’ is human emotion and collectivity” (Gruen, 1993, p. 80). Efficacious incorporation of the various motifs to signal revolt in an age of anthropogenic proves to be successful. The author underscores that “literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but rather, plays a part in an immensely complete global system, in which energy, matter and ideas interact” (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. xix). The foregrounding of the personal despair of the downtrodden like Velutha, Ammu, and the suppression of other natural elements in the novel, work by extension through intersexuality and activism in Roy’s prose works, extending the theme of revolt beyond the purview of the characters and text. She extends it to the state of the dispossessed tribes and the displaced farmers affected by the “Big Dams,” which Roy claims in her essay. “The Greater Common Good,” are a brazen means of taking water, land, and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich, as “their reservoirs displace huge populations of people, leaving them homeless and destitute” (Roy, 2002b, p. 42). And this “public turmoil of the nation” is further extended to the earth as a whole when she voices her concern over the amassing of nuclear weapons:

“If there is a nuclear war, our foes will not be China or America
Or even each other. Our foe will be the earth herself. The very
Elements—sky, the air, the land, the wind and water—will all
Turn against us. (Roy, 2002a p 6)”.

Hereby this article tries to analyze the sacred secrets of indigenous communities through Roy’s novel. Not only Roy but the professor above mentioned in the article literally realized the sacred things of the indigenous people and tribes. Nature mother always support their kids

in all our good and bad times, especially during this pandemic period. Let us feel the sacred of nature and respect the indigenous people who are living in the lap of nature mother.

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