

Modernization of Myth among the Tribals of North 24 Parganas, W.B : An Anthropological and Communication Study

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Abstract

Oraons of North 24 parganas have been investigated under the discipline of anthropology of communication in this paper. The pockets are classified with two type, namely Typa-A and Type -B. Type-A is governed by Panchayet System and B under the Municipality. Type A is situated from the city at least 25 kilometer distanced, and Type-B is under the Gobardanga municipality in ward No 1 & slum, no-2 of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. We have applied some technique which are used various scientists in Anthropology. To study, we have searched the myth related stories or tales from the villagers for navigating that how the myth presently exists on them. It has been observed that the present perception of myth reality is changed and modified among the people. But they have not completely rejected their own traditional myth concept. Rather they have tried to make a compensated situation between the two of Traditional & modernization. And they represent a new identity themselves as Urban Oraon by the blending of traditionalism and modernity. To study we have recorded some tales from the field against the entire research of myth on this filed which is encouraged us to suggest them as an Urban Oraon.

Keywords: Communication, Myth, Traditional means of Communication, Modernization

Introduction

Communication is active movement of human mind. It is a system of transferring & receiving message from a man or place to another. Generally "communication" is a process of sending and receiving message with feedback. Some scholars said it is give and take policy of message. The communication has many channels. Modern channels or means of communication is very popular to us. In this phase scholars are prescribed that the modern media like as News paper, TV, radio, Internet etc are the components of Modern means communication. Even today, in village, semi-urban & local town's peoples are conveyed message in their own cultural communication system which is designed as Traditional means of communication. Practically they would not able to habituate to use the Modern communication channels to some extent. It has observed that these areas the people has been always tried to maintain their own traditional means communication system in parallel the modern means communication. As the result a balanced motives of the two channels of communication within a new platform in which the traditional means communication very seriously reshuffle and reflects a new motion of modernization. Thus, we mention that "the motion modernization affects on traditional means of communication among the oraons of the studied area are addressed as Urban Oraon." The villagers even today convey their message to another by traditional means of communication. The traditional means of communication are Myth, Festival, Rituals, Song, drama, Puppet show etc.

The term myth comes from Greek mythos and originally meant the stories of the ancient gods and heroes of Greece and Rome, to which were soon added those India, Europe and elsewhere. Anthropologists and most other scholars would probably agree that myth in the classic sense has a number of characteristics. To celebrate on several recent to specify these, here is a brief list :

1. Myth is a story rather than a statement of belief or doctrine.
2. It includes personalities that may be human, animal, or supernatural, or a combination of these, who do things or to whom things happen.
3. It is a story that is not just known but "believed" and regarded as important or sacred.
4. It has no known author or authors, myth is different in this way from religious revelation or prophecy, to which it may otherwise be similar.

Myth frequently are concerned with origins-the creation of the universe and its various aspects, the origin of important cultural aids such as fire , the origins of significant food animals and plants , the beginnings of death or illness , the origin of the society itself and of its clans or other social segments , and the ceremonies and rituals (Beals & Hoijer). Boas (1938) stated that "The mythological beings preexisted the modern order of the world. They may still appear as actors in tales relating to the modern world, but their great belong to mythological period. It would not be fair to assume that the myths dealing with the origin of the world or a of the gift of arts and ceremonials to mankind were the result of a light play of imagination, as we suppose the rather in significant animals tales to have been. Boas further said "It is impossible to draw a sharp line between myths and

folk tales, because the same tales which occur as myths appear also in the form folk tales. If we define myths as tales that give an interpretation of natural phenomena, we are confronted with difficulty that a tale may conform with this definition in one case, while in another it may be a purely human tale sometimes even void of wonderful elements. Thus the same tale would at one time be classed as a myth, and at another time as a folk tale.”

Myths are the oldest and most powerful of all story forms. They often carry an important message for a culture or group. Myths are stories that give people a relationship with the universe, the passing of time, and with their environment. Some myths give the official view of creation; others are a way to explain natural events. Myths were passed on by spoken word, and their function was to explain, to teach lessons, and to entertain.

Literature Review

Tylor (1899), described there are many ways in which man can communicate with one another. They can make gestures, utter, cries, speak words, and draw pictures, write characters or letter: when for any reason people cannot talk together by word of mouth, they take to conversing by gestures, in what is called dumb show or pantomime. The gestures-language among the deaf and dumb, the most perfect way of making out its principals is in its use by people who can talk but do not understand one's another's language.

Kluckhohn,(1958:573) explained his general definition of communication from Hockett, who argues that“ communication acts by which one organism triggers another. But I shall deal only with that kind of communication called language. Language differs from other communication systems in that there is a nonlinear feedback. Language is physics, Biology and culture. However, I shall deal only with the cultural aspect of language, though I recognize that some of the universal features of human language which are built into all cultures rest upon certain limiting conditions and forwarding's provided by the constancies of physics and Biology”(p-63)

Bride (1980) proposed that the traditional ways of the communication tend to predominate in remote areas. In African and Asian village societies, for instance, daily events and cultural developments are presented through stories, songs and dances. However, they also serve a purpose in Urban areas, since old those methods have not disappeared from city centers and live on to influence radio, television and film production.

Tradition is communication, the passing on of (social) culture through shared practices and lore. It is an expression of intense emotional bond between performer and source and by extension, the cultural manifestation of that relationship at the intersections of memory, orality, and literacy (Mc Kean, 2003).

Wilber (1964) described sharply that when a society set out to modernize, one of the first signs of the development is the lengthening out of communication channels. In a completely traditional and illiterate society, the effective environment extends about as far one can observe, although it does include folk wisdom and religious beliefs handed down from parent to child, or priest to believer. The traditional village lives on its ancient life patterns and its restricted horizons –until “development” begins. The government, roads, schools, literacy and mass media invade the privacy of the village and invite the villagers into a larger world.

Yadav (1992) had been written that “An Indian Village is a community comprising of the several jati groups where agricultural continuous to be one of the main source of livelihood. There is more interaction and communication among the members of the village community as against their contact with the outside world. Though, face to face or interpersonal communication is basic form of interaction and expression. He further mentioned that “ A study of the traditional means of communication can helps us to understand the village communication system.

Inglis (1990) described that the condition of cultural continuity in Oral society are very much more limited than today. In a wholly oral culture, meaning in language is highly specific and local. The context of oral culture is the memory, asked to store and keep accessible what is relevant. Oral traditions used verbal messages that are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation. Among the inter-personal forms through which

Methodology

The Oraons of North 24 parganas had been living long years ago. They are living near local towns. They have continuously interpreted with larger people by regular basis steady communication. As the result a large number of social and cultural traits have been entered their way of life. In this study we have taken two different area, one, is under the panchayet system and other is Municipality. To procure the data, we have applied the techniques & methods which are used by several social scientists including Anthropology. The following method and techniques are applied for the present study. Namely these are Observation, Genealogy,Case study, Questionnaires and Interview.

The people

Oraons of North 24 parganas have been investigated under the discipline of anthropology of communication in

this paper. The pockets are classified with two type, namely Typa-A and Type –B. Type-A is governed by Panchayet System and B under the Municipality. Type A is situated from the city atleast 25 kilometer far and Type-B is under the Gobardanga municipality in ward No 1& slum, no-2 of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal.

Table: 1
 (Introduction of villages)

Type A	Type B
1)Village : Dhalani	Village Name : SardarPara
2)Para or Hamlet: Sardar Para	Slum No : 02
3) Panchayet : Koniar-1	Ward No : 01
4)Mouza and No : Dhalani, 91	Municipality : Gabradanga
5.) J.L No : 96	Total Poulation : 41618
6) Total Cultivated area; 418.02 Acrs	No of total Male : 21105
7) Water Body area : 4.37	No of Total Female : 20513
8) Vested area : 0.17	Studied population : 104

Table: 2
 Dhalani (Sardar Para)
 Age and Sex Wise Population Distribution

Age group	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
0-4	12	2.8	17	4.0	29	6.8
5-9	17	4.0	17	4.0	34	8.0
10-14	19	4.4	23	5.4	42	9.9
15-19	19	4.4	27	6.3	46	10.7
20-24	20	4.7	29	6.8	49	11.5
25-29	25	5.8	17	4.0	42	9.9
30-34	10	2.3	20	4.7	30	7.0
35-39	23	5.4	16	3.7	39	9.1
40-44	16	3.7	12	4.0	28	7.7
45-49	20	4.4	11	2.5	31	6.9
50-54	9	2.1	8	1.8	17	3.9
55-59	9	2.1	3	0.7	12	2.9
60-64	4	0.9	3	0.7	7	1.6
65-69	6	1.4	4	0.9	10	2.3
70-74	4	0.9	1	0.2	5	1.1
75-79	-	-	1	0.2	1	0.2
80+	1	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.4
	214	49.5	210	50.9	424	100

There are 425 people studied in this pocket. Out of 214 people are male (49.5 %) and 210 are female (50.9 %). In case of male, the age group '25 to 29 'shows highest i.e. 5.8% and the age group 20 to 24 in female shows highest No of person i.e. 6.8 % in respect to total population.

Table No: 3
 (Age and Sex wise population distribution of Ward No.1, Sardarpara, Gobardanga)

Age group	Male	Female	total
0-4	2	1	3
5-9		2	2
10-14	1	1	2
15-19	3	5	8
20-24	8	4	12
25-29	4	6	10
30-34	9	3	12
35-39	8	4	12
40-44	3	7	10
45-49	3	6	9
50-54	2	4	6
55-59	4	0	4
60-64	7	2	9
65-69	0	2	2
70-74	0	0	0
75-79	2	0	2
80 +	1	0	1
Total	57	47	104

Findings (Changes and Modification of Urban Oraon myth)

Dalton (1872) mentioned Dharmesh is the original creator of Oraons , who is manifest in the sun. He further said that” Oraons regard Dharmesh as a perfectly pure, beneficent being , who created us and would in his malignant spirits whom mortals must propitiate, as Dharmesh can not or does not interfere , if the spirit of evil once fastens upon us”(p-262). Presently like this character of Dharmesh has not been found among the studied people.

‘Oraons is Kurukhas, still they have, besides, and among strangers only, a sufferance name , which is Dhanger . Dhanger , in the Oraon , language , means a slave’ .But in case present study Urban Oraons have no knowledge of Dhanger as proposed by Grignard (1909). No traditional story is found on “ The origin tradition in its account of Dharmes and the twelve Asurs” as said by Roy & reviewed by Dixon .

1. It is orally transmitted from generations.
2. The people or Urban Oraon has a lot of freedom of the narrator to improvise and to make a new story alive.
3. they try to reconstruct their historical stories
4. They convey the messages of their original legends to the new generation with modern platform such as they uses the words Ram/ Sun (surjahi)
5. They added the separate reverent identity themselves from the reverent of monkeys.
6. The most important changes and modification is that the printed documents of Myth related stories have now been found.
7. No concept of Dharmesh has been found today as said by S.C Roy

Regarding the findings, following Myth related tales have been collected

- a) “We were reverent of Rama likely to monkey. They said” We and Monkey were not equally justified by Lord Rama. Most probably Rama preferred us rather than monkey because we were cultivated the land. While Sita (wife of Rama) were permanently lived in Jungle in Balmiki,s Ashrom. Two sons of Rama namely Lob & Kush had been fighting against him & result Lord was dead”. At this time Oraons were soundless and uttering “ Oh Ram” . The word “ Oh Ram” is transferred to the word “Oraon”.
- b) “We are the descendents of Mahisasur to Ravan and Oraon. When Ravan Brother Bhivison joined lord Rama, same time oroans were joined with Rama.
- c) They believe today that the sun is the supreme god of oraons community. Sun or Surjahi (Sadri Language) created the world. We have described in Below the Myth story of urban Oraon

The Origin Of Earth and HumanTraditional ancestral Oraon story(summery)

“Sun is the actually oraons god ‘Surjahi.’ They said sun and Surjahi is the similar word as look like a coin. He is the original creator of the earth. The world was not same as we look today. The upper surface of the world was totally covered with water. Sun or surjahi first gave egg. He created the reptiles in the water of the world. Sun advised the reptiles to make mud land. On land, Egg heated by the ray of sun and birthed the birds. But these were not worshiped him. So he thought better animal would be made by himself. He

made two human that was male & female by the mud. Afterwards the human has evolved in the world in large number one of them is oraons”.

In this myth story, it is very important issued that the myth of the urban Oraon reflects the concept of Geological time table. They first mentioned the age of Paleozoic then Age of Reptiles and lastly the age of Cenozoic. They have proposed the theory geological time in their own traditional system or means of communication. They presently write this story in print format.

Conclusion

The Oraons of North 24 parganas were immigrated since long time. Several migrations study focused that they had came in this locality for Railway construction, Jungle cutting etc, as laborers. They are contacted with larger people in everyday life. The result a huge number of urban threats or traits have injected in their life. But they do not given up their own cultural system by taking over features of urban traits. The two locality of oraons pocket have been studied simultaneously. One pocket is residing in the Semi town and other in Panchayet. One is 20 km far away from Town and other is in town. Both people are equally tried to maintain their traditional life in contrast modernization which is completely reflected they traditional means communication system that in their Myth, Song, dance etc. We are investigated details study on Myth. The younger generations of both areas played a role as narrator to improvise and to make a new story alive. They have presently written their myth related documents in Books, or typed. While their festival pahan (Priest) giving speech they provided the people the printed document of Myth related stories.

Oraons have their own creation story that expresses their inner spiritual aspirations and religious convictions. In their creation story, Dharmes creates human beings in his own image. No concept of Dharmes is found today in their way of life. Oraon creation stories are consisted with two major parts, namely, the Genesis of the human beings and the Origin of the sprits. However, to bring-out its ecological significance, their stories have been divided into three parts----the creation of the earth and human beings, the fall of human beings and Punishment and the restoration. Oraon have no written documents of myth and tales. Tradition and Everything has been handed down from generation to generation orally. Hence, the villagers have a lot of freedom to improvise and to make new story alive. The essence of new story remains unchanged, but the freedom of the narrator in improvising the story brings changes in the story line. The stories are handed down in various mode of communication system. But the printed documents of myth related stories have now been found. An important fact is investigated that they represents themselves a reverent of Rama. Thus, important modification and changes has been recognized in their tradition that they distinguish themselves from monkey in their traditional beliefs. All these Myth related findings has led us to designate them as Urban Oroan and fit to be an Anthropological study.

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