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BRIEF STUDY OF CULTURE OF TRIBAL PEOPLE IN ASSAM

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Abstract

Culture is a greater satisfaction and efficiency of the physical, vital and mental life of man in society. It is the consciousness of life created by philosophy and religion, art, poetry and social and political institutions. Vital element is essential to every culture. According to Sri Aurobindo, "No anti-vital culture can survive". It is a complex phenomenon which includes many things. It includes both material as well as non-material things acquired by men.

Culture can be used to convey various meanings. It stands for beliefs, ideas, customs, law, morals, art and other capabilities and skills acquired by men and women as a member of the society. The traditions and taboos, beliefs and behaviour of scheduled tribes are reflected in their Rituals and Festivals.

Assam is a land of fairs and festivals. Most of the festivals celebrated in Assam have their roots in the diverse faith and belief of her inhabitants, but a spirit of accommodation and togetherness characterizes the celebration of all festivals. The major religious and social festivals celebrated in Assam are 'Brahmaputra Beach Festival', 'Elephant Festival', 'Bihu', 'Baisagu', 'Ali-Ai-Ligang', 'Baikho', 'Bohaggiyo Bishu', 'Ambubashi Mela' and 'Jonbil Mela' and so on. The people of Assam also celebrate Holi, Durga Puja, Diwali, Swarwati Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja and the birth and death anniversaries of Vaisnava Saints. The Ojapali dances of non-Vaisnavite origin are usually associated with the Serpent Goddess Manasa etc. The tribes of Assam follow these festivals in their respective names.

Key notes: Introduction, history of Culture, the Rituals and Festivals, Cultural practices of the tribes of Assam, Festivals of Tribal people of Assam.

Introduction

Perhaps the most important method of social development that man has devised so far is culture and civilization. It is a method for greater satisfaction and efficiency of the physical, vital and mental life of man in society, through a mass of social institution which stimulate mutual co-operation in men through social laws and customs¹. Culture is dynamic. It represents identity and community. To understand culture, one needs to understand things as languages and gestures, personal appearance, social relationships, religion, philosophy and values, family customs, education and communication systems. It is a complex system of values, traits, morals and customs. But, not all cultures are alike. According to Sri Aurobindo, "The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation²".

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To attempt to reveal the introduction of Culture.
- To attempt to explain the brief history of Culture.
- To attempt to reveal the Rituals and Festivals.
- To explain Cultural practices of the tribes of Assam
- To attempt to explain some Festivals of Tribal people of Assam.

Methodology

The method of the present study is analytical in nature which is based on the primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources contain books, journals, leaflet, data collection from website documents published from research institutes. Books, particularly on the culture in Assam are supplied a greater source of information.

Primary data collected by the meeting of some social workers and also in interview with renowned persons helped fruitful analysis and authenticity of the topic.

Review of literature

A good number of literary works are available in culture in Assam. But only little works have been done specially on culture of tribal people of Assam. No serious academic exercise has been done particularly on culture and its practices among the tribal people of Assam.

¹ Sharma RamNath, Social Philosophy, Kedar Nath Ram Nath, Delhi, P.233

² Murphy G., Personality, P. 129