

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NAGAON



FIELD VISIT REPORT ON

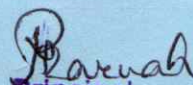
**TITLE: CULTURE OF ADVASI COMMUNITY AND ITS
CHANGING SCENARIO**

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INTRODUCTION

The **Adivasi community**, comprising various indigenous or tribal groups, is an integral part of the cultural fabric of our country. These communities are the original inhabitants of specific regions, having deep roots in the land and a profound connection with nature. With a diverse range of cultures, languages, and traditions, the Adivasi community represents the rich and varied tapestry of India's indigenous heritage.

The Adivasi community has a long and complex history, dating back thousands of years. Their cultural practices, folklore, and belief systems have been passed down through generations, preserving their unique identity and wisdom. Despite facing historical challenges, such as marginalization, discrimination, and the loss of ancestral lands, the Adivasi community has managed to maintain and celebrate their rich cultural heritage.

The Adivasi culture is deeply rooted in their close relationship with nature and the environment. Their customs and traditions reflect a harmonious coexistence with the natural world, where they have developed sustainable practices and profound knowledge of the local ecosystems. Traditional Adivasi art forms, including dance, music, storytelling, and handicrafts, depict their spiritual beliefs, folklore, and ancestral wisdom.

Furthermore, Adivasi communities possess a profound understanding of sustainable agricultural practices, utilizing traditional methods that are in tune with the ecological balance. Their traditional knowledge and practices serve as a valuable resource for environmental conservation and the preservation of biodiversity.

The social structure of the Adivasi community is often characterized by strong kinship ties, communal living, and collective decision-making. Extended families and village-level governance systems play a significant role in their social fabric. These tight-knit communities foster a sense of solidarity, where the well-being of the entire community takes precedence over individual interests.

However, in recent years, the Adivasi community has been undergoing significant transformations due to the influence of external forces and societal changes. Factors such as urbanization, modern education, migration, and exposure to mainstream cultures have impacted their traditional way of life. While these changes have brought new opportunities, they have also posed challenges to the preservation of their unique cultural practices.

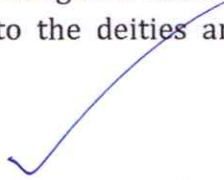
This report aims to delve into the cultural landscape of the Adivasi community, exploring their festivals, traditional attire, culinary heritage, and social systems. It also seeks to shed light on the changing scenario within their community, examining the influences of education, socio-economic factors, and modern technologies. By understanding these dynamics, we can appreciate the resilience and adaptability of the Adivasi community while also recognizing the importance of preserving their invaluable cultural heritage for future generations.

FESTIVALS

The Adivasi community celebrates a wide array of festivals throughout the year, each carrying its own unique significance. These festivals are deeply rooted in their cultural traditions, mythology, and agricultural cycles. For example, festivals like **Sarhul**, **Karma**, **Sohrai**, **Dasain** and **Hal Punhya** hold immense importance in different regions.

1. **Sarhul:** Sarhul is a significant festival celebrated by several Adivasi communities, particularly in Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. It is observed during the spring season to worship the Sarhul Devta, who is believed to bring prosperity and ensure a good harvest. During Sarhul, villagers decorate Sal trees with flowers, leaves, and fruits, offering prayers and performing traditional dances and songs. The festival signifies the onset of spring and celebrates the relationship between nature and humanity.
2. **Karma:** Karma is a popular festival celebrated by the Oraon, Munda, and Ho tribes in Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal. It is dedicated to the Karma Devta, the deity associated with fertility, growth, and well-being. The festival involves vibrant dance performances, music, and cultural activities. Men and women participate in the Karma dance, seeking blessings for a good harvest and prosperity. Karma is a community festival where people come together to celebrate and strengthen social bonds.
3. **Sohrai:** Sohrai is a harvest festival celebrated by various Adivasi communities in Jharkhand. It is a time of thanksgiving for the bountiful crops and is observed with great enthusiasm. During Sohrai, intricate traditional paintings called Sohrai paintings are made on the walls of houses using natural pigments. The festival involves cultural performances, songs, dances, and feasting on traditional delicacies. Sohrai highlights the significance of agriculture and the bond between the community and nature.
4. **Hal Punhya:** Hal Punhya, also known as Pithori Amavasya, is a festival celebrated by the Bhil community in Maharashtra and Gujarat. It falls on the Amavasya (new moon) day of the Shravan month. The festival is dedicated to the worship of Goddess Hinglaj Mata, who is believed to protect the community from evil spirits and ensure well-being. During Hal Punhya, people observe fasting, offer prayers, perform traditional dances, and participate in community feasts.

These are just a few examples of the major festivals celebrated by the Adivasi community throughout the year. Each festival carries its own significance, traditions, and cultural practices, representing the unique cultural heritage of different Adivasi tribes and regions. During these festivals, Adivasi communities come together to participate in vibrant celebrations that involve traditional music, dance, rituals, and feasts. These festivities not only strengthen the bonds within the community but also serve as an opportunity to express gratitude to the deities and ancestors for blessings and abundance.



CULTURE

The Adivasi culture is rich in artistic expressions, folklore, oral traditions, and spiritual beliefs. They have a unique worldview that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and a deep reverence for nature. Adivasi art forms, such as **Warli paintings, Gond art, Madhubani paintings, and Pattachitra**, showcase their creativity and storytelling traditions. The Adivasi community encompasses a rich tapestry of cultures, customs, and traditions that have been passed down through generations. Their culture reflects their deep connection with nature, strong community ties, and spiritual beliefs. Let's explore the various aspects of the Adivasi culture:

1. **Language and Communication:** The Adivasi community comprises numerous tribes, each with its distinct language or dialect. These languages are an integral part of their cultural identity and are spoken and preserved within their communities. Language serves as a medium to pass on traditional knowledge, oral history, folktales, and songs from one generation to another.
2. **Art and Craft:** Adivasi art and craft exhibit a remarkable blend of aesthetics, creativity, and traditional techniques. They skillfully create intricate handcrafted items using materials like bamboo, wood, clay, metal, and natural fibers. Adivasi artisans are known for their expertise in pottery, weaving, basketry, mask-making, beadwork, and traditional painting styles. Their art forms often depict mythological stories, nature, and daily life.
3. **Traditional Dress:** The Adivasi community has unique traditional attire that reflects their cultural identity. The choice of clothing varies among different tribes and regions. Women often wear vibrant sarees, skirts, or garments like phirans and lehengas, adorned with intricate embroidery, mirror work, and traditional motifs. Men's clothing includes dhotis, lungis, kurta-pajamas, and jackets. Accessories like jewelry, headgears, and ornaments made from beads, shells, metals, and feathers are also part of their traditional attire.
4. **Music and Dance:** Music and dance play an integral role in the Adivasi community's cultural expression. They have a rich tradition of folk music, which often accompanies dance performances. Adivasi music incorporates a variety of instruments such as drums, flutes, stringed instruments like the ektara, and percussion instruments. Traditional dance forms like Bihu, Karma, Ghoomar, Cheraw, and Gaur Maria showcase their vibrant movements, footwork, and storytelling.
5. **Spiritual Beliefs:** Adivasi communities have deep-rooted spiritual beliefs that revolve around their connection with nature, ancestral worship, and a sense of harmony with the environment. They worship various deities, spirits, and nature elements like rivers, mountains, and trees. Rituals and ceremonies are performed to seek blessings, protection, and guidance from the divine. Sacred groves and natural landmarks hold significant spiritual importance for many Adivasi tribes.
6. **Traditional Food:** Adivasi cuisine is diverse and often reflects their close association with nature and agricultural practices. They have a strong emphasis on locally sourced ingredients, wild edibles, and traditional cooking methods. Staple foods vary among tribes but commonly include rice, millets, pulses, vegetables, and forest produce like fruits, mushrooms, and herbs. Each tribe has its traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and unique flavors.

- 7. Social Structure and Community Life:** The Adivasi community places great importance on communal living and maintaining strong social bonds. The community often follows a patriarchal system with defined roles and responsibilities. Elders hold a position of respect and authority, and decisions are often made collectively through community gatherings and councils. Festivals, ceremonies, and communal activities play a vital role in strengthening community ties.

The culture of the Adivasi community is a testament to their resilience, deep-rooted traditions, and unique way of life. It embodies their close connection with nature, spiritual beliefs, artistic expressions, and a strong sense of community. Preserving and respecting their cultural heritage is essential for fostering inclusivity, celebrating diversity, and promoting social harmony in our society.

DRESS

The attire of the Adivasi community is diverse and varies across regions and tribes. Traditional garments are often woven from natural fibers like cotton, silk, or wool, and showcase distinctive patterns, colors, and embellishments. Adivasi women commonly wear sarees, ghagras, or long skirts with intricately designed blouses, while men often don dhotis, lungis, or turbans along with embroidered or patterned shirts.

The Adivasi community exhibits a fascinating diversity in traditional attire, with each tribe and region having its distinctive style of dress. The clothing of the Adivasi people not only serves as a means of protection from the elements but also represents their cultural identity and heritage. Let's explore some of the typical dress styles of the Adivasi community:

1. Women's Attire:

- **Saree:** The saree is a popular garment worn by Adivasi women in many regions. It is a long piece of cloth draped around the body, with one end typically pleated and tucked into the waist, while the other end is draped over the shoulder. The choice of fabric, colors, and patterns varies among different tribes, showcasing their unique cultural identity.
- **Skirts and Blouses:** In several Adivasi communities, women wear skirts or ghagras, which are ankle-length garments made of cotton or silk. They are often embellished with colorful embroidery, mirror work, and traditional motifs. These skirts are paired with matching or contrasting blouses or tops, enhancing the overall attire's vibrancy.
- **Phiran and Lehenga:** In some Adivasi tribes, women wear traditional outfits like phirans and lehengas. A phiran is a loose, long-sleeved tunic or dress, often made of wool or cotton, which provides warmth in colder regions. Lehengas are ankle-length skirts, usually adorned with intricate embroidery, and are accompanied by a blouse or choli.

2. Men's Attire:

- **Dhoti and Kurta:** The dhoti, a long rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and legs, is a common garment worn by Adivasi men. It is paired with a kurta, a loose-

fitting, knee-length shirt. The dhoti and kurta combination varies in terms of fabric, colors, and patterns based on the specific tribe and region.

- **Lungi:** The lungi is another garment popular among Adivasi men. It is a rectangular piece of cloth worn around the waist, reaching the ankles. The lungi is often made of cotton and comes in a wide array of colors and patterns. It is worn for comfort and ease of movement, especially in warmer climates.
- **Jackets and Headgear:** Many Adivasi men wear jackets or waistcoats as part of their traditional attire. These jackets, often embroidered or embellished, add a touch of elegance and cultural significance to the overall look. Additionally, headgear such as turbans, caps, or scarves is worn by men, reflecting regional and tribal customs.

3. Accessories:

- **Jewelry:** Adivasi women adorn themselves with an assortment of jewelry, including necklaces, earrings, bangles, and anklets. These pieces are often crafted from beads, shells, metals, and natural materials. The jewelry design and significance may vary among tribes, symbolizing marital status, cultural beliefs, and personal adornment.
- **Ornaments:** Adivasi communities are known for their use of ornaments made from feathers, seeds, shells, and other natural materials. These ornaments are worn as necklaces, bracelets, and headdresses, and hold cultural and spiritual significance within the community.

The dress of the Adivasi community represents their cultural heritage, regional influences, and traditional craftsmanship. It reflects their close connection with nature, their vibrant sense of aesthetics, and their pride in preserving and showcasing their cultural identity.

FOOD

The Adivasi community's food practices are closely tied to their agricultural lifestyle and the availability of local resources. Adivasi cuisine is characterized by its simplicity, nutritional value, and reliance on indigenous ingredients. Staples include various grains like rice, millets, and corn, along with legumes, lentils, fresh vegetables, wild fruits, and herbs.

Traditional Adivasi recipes are often prepared using age-old cooking techniques such as open-fire cooking, clay pots, and stone grinders. These methods not only preserve the nutritional value of the ingredients but also reflect the sustainable practices of the community. Adivasi food traditions also involve the use of forest produce like honey, mushrooms, and tubers, showcasing their deep connection with nature. The food of the Adivasi community reflects their deep connection with nature, reliance on local resources, and their unique culinary traditions. Adivasi cuisine showcases a rich diversity of flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques, varying across different tribes and regions. Let's explore the food of the Adivasi community in more detail:

1. Staple Foods:

- **Rice:** Rice is a staple crop and a fundamental component of Adivasi cuisine. It is consumed in various forms such as boiled rice, steamed rice, or fermented rice preparations like pakhala or pej, depending on the region and tribe.
- **Millets:** Millets, such as ragi (finger millet), jowar (sorghum), and bajra (pearl millet), play an important role in Adivasi diets. These nutritious grains are often used to make porridges, flatbreads, and fermented preparations like idli or dosa.
- **Tubers and Roots:** Adivasi communities rely on various tubers and roots like yam, sweet potato, colocasia (taro), and tapioca. These ingredients are versatile and used in curries, stews, or as a base for other dishes.

2. Non-Vegetarian Delicacies:

- **Meat:** Adivasi cuisine includes a variety of meats, such as fish, poultry, pork, mutton, and game meats like venison or wild boar. These meats are often cooked with local spices, herbs, and ingredients, reflecting the region's unique flavors.
- **Fish:** Many Adivasi communities living near rivers, lakes, or coastal areas have a strong tradition of fishing. Freshwater or marine fish are prepared in numerous ways, including frying, curries, or steaming, using indigenous spices and herbs.

3. Vegetarian Dishes:

- **Dal:** Lentils and legumes, such as toor dal (pigeon pea), masoor dal (red lentil), or moong dal (mung bean), are commonly used in Adivasi cuisine. These are cooked with various spices and seasonings to create flavorful dal preparations.
- **Leafy Greens and Vegetables:** Adivasi communities incorporate a wide variety of leafy greens and seasonal vegetables into their meals. Examples include spinach, amaranth leaves, drumstick leaves, pumpkin, gourds, and locally grown greens like kochu (taro leaves) or kalmi saag.

- **Chutneys and Pickles:** Adivasi cuisine often includes tangy and spicy chutneys and pickles made from locally available ingredients like tamarind, raw mango, bamboo shoots, or gooseberries. These condiments add a burst of flavors to meals.

4. Indigenous Food Preparation Techniques:

- **Fermentation:** Fermentation is a traditional food preservation technique widely used by Adivasi communities. Fermented foods include bamboo shoot pickles, fermented rice preparations like hando or pakhalā, and various fermented condiments.
- **Smoking and Drying:** Smoking and drying techniques are employed to preserve fish, meats, and vegetables. Fish or meat is often smoked over a fire or dried in the sun, enhancing the flavor and extending their shelf life.
- **Traditional Cooking Methods:** Adivasi communities employ traditional cooking methods like clay pot cooking, open fire cooking, or using traditional stoves made from mud or stone. These methods infuse a distinct taste and aroma to the food.

Adivasi cuisine embodies a deep respect for nature, sustainable food practices, and the use of locally available ingredients. It reflects the community's cultural identity, resourcefulness, and adaptability to their environment. Exploring and appreciating the diverse culinary heritage of the Adivasi community offers a glimpse into their rich cultural traditions and their harmonious relationship with nature.

SOCIAL SYSTEM

The social system of the Adivasi community is rooted in their cultural traditions, kinship ties, and collective identity. It encompasses various aspects of social organization, roles, relationships, and norms that govern the community's functioning. Here are some key elements of the social system within the Adivasi community:

1. **Kinship and Family Structure:** The Adivasi community places significant importance on kinship ties and family structures. Extended families or clans often form the basic unit of social organization. Lineage, descent, and kinship connections play crucial roles in determining social roles, inheritance patterns, and community affiliations. Respect for elders and intergenerational bonds are deeply ingrained in the social fabric.
2. **Community and Village Life:** Adivasi communities typically reside in villages or settlements, where collective living and communal activities are integral to their social system. Villages often have their own governing bodies or councils, where community decisions are made. The community members actively participate in communal work, agricultural activities, and celebrations, fostering a sense of togetherness and interdependence.
3. **Leadership and Decision-making:** Leadership roles within the Adivasi community are often based on traditional systems of authority and consensus-building. Village heads, elders, or respected individuals may assume leadership positions and play crucial roles in mediating disputes, maintaining social order, and representing the community's interests. Decision-making processes are often participatory, involving discussions and consultations with community members.
4. **Gender Roles and Equality:** Gender roles and relationships within the Adivasi community are shaped by traditional norms and practices. While specific gender roles may vary across tribes, there is often a division of labor based on age, gender, and expertise. Women often play essential roles in household management, agriculture, and crafts, while men may engage in hunting, fishing, or other livelihood activities. Despite traditional gender roles, there are instances of empowered women leaders and efforts towards promoting gender equality within the community.
5. **Traditional Justice Systems:** Adivasi communities have their own systems of justice and conflict resolution, which may operate parallel to or in conjunction with the formal legal system. Disputes and conflicts are often resolved through village councils or traditional institutions, where customary laws and community norms guide the decision-making process. These systems emphasize reconciliation, restoration, and community harmony rather than punitive measures.
6. **Rituals, Festivals, and Cultural Practices:** Rituals, festivals, and cultural practices are integral to the social system of the Adivasi community. These events serve as occasions for community bonding, religious or spiritual expression, and the transmission of cultural values and traditions. They often involve music, dance, storytelling, and participation in traditional ceremonies that reinforce collective identity, foster social cohesion, and honor ancestral beliefs.

- 7. Land and Natural Resource Management:** Adivasi communities have a deep connection to their ancestral lands and natural resources. Traditional land-use practices, resource management systems, and ecological knowledge play a vital role in their social system. The community's relationship with the land is often characterized by sustainable practices, conservation ethics, and a spiritual connection to the environment.

It is important to note that the social system within the Adivasi community is diverse, and specific customs, practices, and social structures may vary among different tribes and regions. However, common threads of community cohesion, respect for tradition, and collective well-being run through the social fabric of the Adivasi community. Understanding and respecting their social system is crucial for promoting inclusive development, preserving cultural heritage, and empowering Adivasi communities to shape their own future.

CHANGING SCENARIO IN THE ADIVASI COMMUNITY

(TRADITIONAL CULTURE VS. CHANGING CULTURE)

The Adivasi community, like many other indigenous communities around the world, is experiencing a changing scenario where traditional culture encounters influences from the rapidly evolving modern world. This interaction between traditional culture and changing culture gives rise to a complex dynamic within the Adivasi community. Let's delve deeper into understanding the key aspects of this changing scenario:

1. **(Traditional Culture):** Traditional culture refers to the longstanding customs, practices, beliefs, and values that have been passed down through generations within the Adivasi community. It encompasses various aspects of their daily life, including language, art, music, dance, social structure, spiritual beliefs, and traditional knowledge systems. Traditional culture holds immense importance in preserving the unique identity, heritage, and social cohesion of the Adivasi people.
2. **(Changing Culture):** Changing culture refers to the influx of external influences, modernization, globalization, and interactions with mainstream society that impact the traditional way of life of the Adivasi community. These influences can be attributed to factors such as urbanization, migration, educational opportunities, exposure to new technologies, and increased connectivity. Changing culture brings about shifts in values, lifestyles, social dynamics, and the overall worldview of the Adivasi community.

In the context of the Adivasi community, the changing scenario manifests in various ways:

- A. **Cultural Erosion:** The rapid integration of the Adivasi community into the dominant mainstream society often leads to the dilution or loss of traditional cultural practices. Younger generations may increasingly adopt the cultural norms and practices of the mainstream society, resulting in the erosion of traditional values, language, art forms, and rituals.
- B. **Lifestyle Changes:** Changes in the socioeconomic conditions, educational opportunities, and employment prospects may lead to shifts in the lifestyle choices of the Adivasi community. This includes changes in dietary habits, clothing preferences, housing styles, and patterns of work. As individuals and families adapt to new opportunities, their traditional ways of life may undergo significant transformations.
- C. **Education and Language:** Education plays a crucial role in shaping the changing scenario within the Adivasi community. As access to formal education increases, younger generations may prioritize acquiring mainstream knowledge and skills over traditional knowledge systems. This can lead to a decline in the transmission of indigenous languages, as younger generations increasingly opt for the dominant language in education and communication.
- D. **Cultural Revival and Adaptation:** Despite the challenges posed by changing culture, there are instances of cultural revival and adaptation within the Adivasi community. Efforts to preserve and revitalize traditional art forms, languages, rituals, and ecological practices are undertaken by

individuals, organizations, and community leaders. This resurgence of cultural pride and identity helps in maintaining a sense of belonging and heritage.

E. Intergenerational Dynamics: The changing scenario often creates a generational divide within the Adivasi community. While older generations may strive to preserve traditional culture, younger generations may navigate the complexities of embracing modernity while also valuing and reconnecting with their roots. Bridging this gap requires a delicate balance between preserving traditions and embracing new opportunities.

Understanding and navigating the changing scenario in the Adivasi community is crucial to address the challenges faced by the community and to promote cultural resilience, self-determination, and sustainable development. Balancing the preservation of traditional culture with the benefits of socio-economic progress is essential to ensure the well-being and cultural integrity of the Adivasi community

INFLUENCES OF CHANGING CULTURE OF THE ADAVASI COMMUNITY

The changing culture within the Adivasi community is influenced by various factors. These influences shape the community's social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Here are some key examples of the influences of changing culture:

1. **Education:** The expansion of education opportunities among the Adivasi community has a profound impact on their culture. Education exposes individuals to new ideas, knowledge, and perspectives, leading to shifts in values, aspirations, and lifestyle choices. It can provide access to better employment opportunities, economic mobility, and increased participation in mainstream society. However, it may also result in the erosion of traditional practices and indigenous knowledge systems if not balanced with the preservation of cultural heritage.
2. **Industrial Development:** Industrialization and economic development often bring changes to the Adivasi community. The establishment of industries, mining operations, and infrastructure projects in or near Adivasi areas can lead to demographic shifts, displacement, and changes in traditional livelihood patterns. It can also introduce wage labor, market economy, and consumer culture, impacting traditional subsistence practices and community dynamics.
3. **Urbanization and Migration:** The migration of Adivasi people to urban centers in search of employment, education, and improved living conditions influences their cultural practices. Urbanization exposes individuals to a diverse range of cultures, lifestyles, and value systems. Adivasi individuals and families living in urban areas may experience acculturation, where they adapt to the dominant culture while simultaneously maintaining elements of their own cultural identity.
4. **Media and Technology:** The advent of mass media, television, internet, and social media platforms has a significant impact on the Adivasi community. Access to media exposes individuals to global trends, influences fashion choices, and alters cultural preferences. It also facilitates the exchange of ideas, activism, and the promotion of cultural awareness and revival efforts.
5. **Government Policies and Programs:** Government policies and development programs can both positively and negatively influence the Adivasi community's changing culture. Development initiatives aimed at improving living conditions, education, healthcare, and infrastructure can bring about positive change. However, inadequate consultation and consideration of cultural sensitivities may lead to cultural disruption, land encroachment, and loss of traditional practices.
6. **Interactions with Mainstream Society:** Increased interactions with the mainstream society, whether through social interactions, intermarriage, or participation in cultural events and festivals, can shape the Adivasi community's changing culture. It can lead to the adoption of new cultural elements, values, and practices, as well as the development of hybrid cultural expressions that blend traditional and modern influences.

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PHOTO GALLERY



SARHUL FESTIVAL



KARMA FESTIVAL



HAL PUNHAYA



GOND THALI (TRADITIONAL FOOD)



BRAHMKASS



TRADITIONAL ATTIRE

Kishorali
3/8/23