

**A LOST TRADITION?: REFLECTIONS TOWARDS SELECT TRIBAL
SONGS OF ODISHA**

A Dissertation

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**MASTER OF ARTS
IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

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Thank you all.

Manjit Mahanta

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “**A Lost Tradition?: Reflections towards Select Tribal Songs of Odisha**” submitted by Mr. Manjit Mahanta in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, is an authentic work carried out by him under my supervision.

To the best of my knowledge, the matter embodied in the thesis has not been submitted to any other University / Institute for the award of any Degree or Diploma.

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis aims at examining the oral tradition of the Kondh and Oroan people of Odisha. Highlighting the translated versions of Kondh and Oroan songs—chiefly highlighting issues on agriculture—we argue that the relevance of these songs have fallen apart in the recent decades with the advancement of modern knowledge and thinking. What remains instead is a faint voice in the oral tradition that sings the past indigenous knowledge in the form of oral literature. Though there have been few attempts to document the rich cultural tradition by some individuals—Sitakant Mahapatra’s can be cited as an example—the need to document the tradition remains ever arching. In short, the thesis examines Kondh and Oroan “songs” and argues for a need to document the tradition. It also shows a comparative study on both the tribes on Agriculture which shows their cultural identity and a diversification of both the tribes in nature and how these tribal groups are associated with nature and the cycle of it.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

This thesis is a reflection towards tribal songs of Odisha. It argues that with the advancement of civilization, rapid modernization and with the rise of dominant cultures, the oral tradition, including tribal songs, is in the process of depletion. We shall analyze the ways the oral tradition has been deeply affected by the passage of time. The focus of the present study is on a few select tribal songs of Odisha. Taking instances from a few published documented and translated tribal songs of Odisha, chiefly of the Kondh and the Oroan, and with a sample of some unpublished tribal songs of Sundargarh district chiefly—of the Oran tribe—this thesis is an attempt towards highlighting the slowly dying tradition. While on the one hand Kondh and Oroan songs have received some attention, on the other the oral literature of the Oroan has been sidelined, to a significant degree. The former is partly documented and translated by Sitakant Mahapatra in *Staying is Nowhere: Kondh and Parija Poetry* (1975) and *The Awakened Wind: The Oral Poetry of the Indian Tribes* (1983). Though there is some literature available on the Oran community, its oral tradition is yet to be properly documented and their songs, most of them, are yet to be translated.

Consequently, this thesis takes instances from Kondh and Oroan poetry and in documenting and translating a few oral songs of the Oroan people, it highlights three neglected issues such as death, diseases and destruction as projected in the selected tribal songs. While we understand that agricultural of ample significance in the age old oral tradition, we also understand that the concepts, in their traditional form, have been sidelined with the advancement of modern science and technology. With the advancement of modern science and technology, in other words, the attitude towards these concepts has undergone sea changes. We explore that though the relevance of these songs has fallen apart in the recent decades, it highlights a belief system of a culture and its historicity. In the process what remains instead is a faint voice in the oral tradition that highlights the past indigenous knowledge in the form of oral tradition, which we shall explore in subsequent chapters.

1.2 Terminology

In the present study we frequently refer to terms such as “ballads,” “folktales,” “chants,” “epics,” “folklore,” “tradition” and “myth”. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term “tradition” as “the action of handing (something material) to another” and as “an ordinance and institution orally delivered”. The expression “tradition” applies both to a process and to its products. The ‘products’ include oral messages based on previous oral knowledge. The process is the transmission of such messages by mouth over time until the disappearance of the messages. The present study will chiefly explore folksongs and ballads to understand a cultural tradition—the oral culture—which has its relation to the present. We have broadly entitled the discourse as the ‘oral tradition’.

Oral tradition, oral culture and oral lore are cultural materials and tradition transmitted orally from one generation to another. The messages or testimony is verbally transmitted in the forms of sayings and songs and form examples of folktales, sayings, ballads, folksongs, etc. In this way society transfers its oral narrative, history and other knowledge across generations without a writing system. “Ballad” is chiefly a poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas. Traditional ballads are typically of unknown authorship, having been passed orally from one generation to the next and represent sentimental or romantic song. ‘Folktale’, as observed, is a story originating in popular culture, typically passed on by word of mouth. A chant is considered a repeated rhythmic phrase, typically sung in unison by a crowd or a repetitive song, typically an incantation or part of a ritual or music a short musical passage in two or more phrases used for singing unmetrical words; a psalm or canticle sung to such music or say or shout repeatedly in a sing-song tone. Folklore is the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth or a body of popular myths or beliefs relating to a particular place, activity, or group of people. Tradition is defined as the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on or a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another or an artistic or literary method or style established by an artist, writer, or movement, and subsequently followed by others. Myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events or a widely held but false belief or idea or a fictitious or imaginary person or thing.

Ballad

a poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas. Traditional ballads are typically of unknown authorship, having been passed on orally from one generation to the next or a slow sentimental or romantic song.

Folktale

A story originating in popular culture, typically passed on by word of mouth.

Chant

A repeated rhythmic phrase, typically one shouted or sung in unison by a crowd or a repetitive song, typically an incantation or part of a ritual or music a short musical passage in two or more phrases used for singing unmetrical words; a psalm or canticle sung to such music or say or shout repeatedly in a sing-song tone.

Epic

A long poem, typically one derived from ancient oral tradition, narrating the deeds and adventures of heroic or legendary figures or the past history of a nation. A long film, book, or other work portraying heroic deeds and adventures or covering an extended period of time or heroic or grand in scale or character.

Folklore

The traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth or a body of popular myths or beliefs relating to a particular place, activity, or group of people.

Tradition

The transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on or a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another or an artistic or literary method or style established by an artist, writer, or movement, and subsequently followed by others.

Myth

A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events or a widely held but false belief or idea or a fictitious or imaginary person or thing

1.3 Methodology:

The research methodology consists of folk songs collected from SitakantMohapatra's books on Kondh and Parija poetry such as *Staying is Nowhere* (1975) and *The Awakened*

Wind (1983). Songs are also collected from a field work at Santoshpur area in Sundergarh district of Odisha. They are translated and transcribed. They are reproduced in subsequent chapters.

The research methodology is based on books on the theory of Oral tradition. It also includes interpretation of the select songs. We shall analyze books on Oral tradition and criticism on folksongs to explore that

- Tribal songs are dying slowly.
- With the passage of time—with industrialization and modernization—the oral tradition has been neglected.
- With the advancement of civilization and with rise of dominant cultures, i.e., mainstream cultures, the Oral tradition, including tribal songs, is in the process of depletion.

1.4 Further Chapterization:

Chapter Two, which is entitled as “The Oral Tradition: An Introduction” deals with a theoretical concept of oral cultures. It is a critique of theoretical framework available on Oral culture and its significance and its various forms which help us in understanding tradition and its relativity with orality and the knowledge and how it is transformed from one generation to the other.

Chapter Three deals with Kondh and Oroansongs collected from various printed sources and songs that we have collected from a field-work that was carried out in Santoshpur village of Sundergarh District of Odisha that involved Oroan songs. The chief focus is on cultivation songs and comparisons are also drawn with other songs that celebrate nature.

Chapter Four is a review of the work done and it concludes the present study. It highlights that it was with the advancement of modern civilizations that the importance of oral culture has fallen apart and documenting the knowledge-system of the indigenous people is the need of the day.

Chapter 2

The Oral Tradition: An Introduction

‘Oral tradition’, ‘oral culture’ and ‘oral lore’ are cultural material and traditions transmitted orally from one generation to another. The messages or testimony are verbally transmitted in speech or song and may take the form, for example, of folktales, sayings, ballads, songs, or chants. In this way, it is possible for a society to transmit oral history, oral literature, oral law and other forms of knowledge across generations without a having writing system. It has been there in different cultures throughout the ages. Oral tradition is basically transferred to us by the elderly people in the various forms of stories, songs and sayings which distinct it as a mark of tradition in our society irrespective of cultures. We learn a lot of things through this system of knowledge transmission, such as our age-old customs, beliefs, rituals, etc., which are given to us in the childhood so that we can carry them to future. By oral tradition one can also know about the society very closely. It also gives us the information about the past. Various factors such as how the people lived, what they did and what they performed are much reflected in the oral cultural tradition. Oral tradition also shows glimpses of history when we don’t have any sufficient relevant information documented. In such cases, we examine Oral history which is also a part of oral tradition and it helps us know facts about a tradition. Therefore, oral history is an integral part of any culture that we seek in explore in the present generation.

The creative and instructive nature of oral tradition is carried forward from one generation to another through the method of storytelling and is imparted to children. By folk tales and sayings, which are told to us in the childhood in the form of entrainment, the general motif is learning where things about a culture are transmitted to the new generation of people. The stories which we hear all have moral lessons in them from which we understand the concepts of good and evil and the system is basically introduced to educate children. The songs which we hear also say the story past people and about their happiness and sadness. In any festival, for example, there is the tradition of singing songs accompanied by dance, which not only becomes entertaining but also becomes educative. There is reason like when the monsoon is about to start and the people are very happy so they perform or when agricultural productivity is more or more rainfall, and then due to all this reason there

is singing and dancing with the joy of happiness. (Borrows, John. "Listening for a Change: The Courts and Oral Tradition." *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 39, no. 1 (2001), 1–38.)

Oral tradition is a tradition which is still followed however modern we are and they preach basic human ethic values in our life. Though this is the age of modernization, one can understand the impact of modernity on everyone but still one cannot forget the past. Where it is seen that we are losing our tradition and following westernization which is not good to full extent but till some it is good in some cases. But we should not forget our own culture, tradition, values which are given to us by the parents. If we don't have basic norms then at time the society comes and blames us that we are going towards modernity and a parent have not imparted the basic values of life but if we look when one is following the tradition and modernity both then there is praise of them by everyone. If we look people in the villages where the follow each and every parcel of tradition but still we tell this people are backward and they don't know anything. Which it shows the face of the society in real sense but in fact this people are living a happier live then the others who live in urban area and there is concept of tradition where there is careens of own people where old parents are thrown away from their own house and they stay in old age home or ashram then is it tradition or modernity and if we look then the village people are far better and there living a life with full of happiness and joy .So we can is it the loss of tradition or the advent of modernism which we copy cat from the western culture which we take to develop ourself or towards the own downfall which still remains a question mark for all of us.

A narrower definition of oral tradition is sometimes appropriate. Sociologists might also emphasize a requirement that the material is held in common by a group of people, over several generations, and might distinguish oral tradition from testimony oral history. In a general sense, "oral tradition" refers to the transmission of cultural material through vocal utterance, and was long held to be a key descriptor of folklore (a criterion no longer rigidly held by all folklorists). As an academic discipline, it refers both to a set of objects of study and a method by which they are studied -- the method may be called variously "oral traditional theory," "the theory of Oral-Formulaic Composition" and the "Parry-Lord theory" (after two of its founders; see below) The study of oral tradition is distinct from the academic discipline of oral history, which is the recording of personal memories and histories of

those who experienced historical eras or events. It is also distinct from the study of orality which can be defined as its verbal expression in societies where the technologies of literacy (especially writing and print) are unfamiliar to most of the population. (*The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.)

Oral-based knowledge systems are predominant among First Nations. Stories are frequently told as evening family entertainment to pass along local or family knowledge. Stories are also told more formally, in ceremonies such as potlatches, to validate a person's or family's authority, responsibilities, or prestige.

As to the origins of oral tradition, Bascom theorizes that any story must be invented by some individual, and it is either accepted or rejected by the group because it does or does not fill a need. Acceptance or rejection of an item is also contingent on its compatibility with the accepted patterns and traditions of folklore of a culture as a whole. In the course of retelling a story, experience shows that changes occur, and the piece is again subject to acceptance or rejection. As this process continues, each new invention is adapted gradually to the needs of the society and to the pre-existing culture patterns, which may themselves be modified somewhat to conform to the new invention. Accordingly, folklore spreads from one society to another. It is then again subject to acceptance, rejection, or adaptation.

Bascom says that every culture, including our own American culture, depends in part on folklore for the maintenance of its continuity. This is evidenced by the fact that much of our communion is composed of repetition of familiar ideas expressed in a familiar form. New ways of expressing ideas which have what Adams calls an artistic and structured form, and are passed on from person to person, may become types of oral tradition.

The Functions of Oral Tradition

Both Adams and Dundes discuss functions of oral tradition in terms of what I originally considered motivations for storytelling. Perhaps function is a more accurate term than motivation since motivation suggests a premeditated intention. Adams names these functions: validation, maintaining conformity or control, escape, and education. Oral tradition, they suggest, validates certain aspects of culture and justifies its rituals and institutions. There is the explanatory tale or a moral animal

tale, myth or legend to validate doubted pattern or to warn of subsequent consequences if necessary when accepted practices are violated. Oral tradition also provides rationalizations when institutions and conventions are challenged.(Borrows, John. "Listening for a Change: The Courts and Oral Tradition." (*Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 39, no. 1 (2001), 1–38)

The second function which Adams calls integration is group cohesion and group feeling. Dundes terms this maintaining conformity. Dundes notion emphasizes the way folklore acts as a controlling factor. Consider how oral tradition can be used to express social approval of those who conform. On the other hand, Adams says that the telling of legends can act as an icebreaker to let outsiders into the group or bring the group closer together.

Adams labels a third function of oral tradition compensation for something lacking in reality, and he suggests that telling the tale may serve as an ego building device for the teller. Bascom looks at the same function from a slightly different slant and calls it escape in fantasy from a) frustrations and repressions and b) Geographical environment and biological limitations.(Napoleon, Val. "Delgamuukw: A Legal Straightjacket for Oral Histories?" *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 20, no. 2 (2005): 123.)

Many agree that a fourth function of oral tradition is to educate. Folklore can carry along and teach the history of a people as well as its cultural norms diligence, respect, perseverance, etc. Dangers and how to avoid them may be pointed out. The most fascinating tales are legends which attempt to teach why things are found as they are, for example, why the elephant has a long nose or the bear a short tail. While no one labels entertainment as a function of folklore, it seems that one of the primary purposes served when a story is told is to interest, and provides fun or excitement.

The functions of legends are not fixed and may change as the context changes. According to Adams the context includes the following: 1. When and where the tale was told. 2. Events which took place before the narration began. 3. Was the legend told verbatim or not. 4. Gestures and facial expression. 5. The relationship of the narrator and the audience. 6. The amount and type of audience reaction and participation. 7. The age, occupation, ethnic background, etc. of both teller and

audience. For example, when and where the tale was told, or to whom could change whether the tale acted as an educating or controlling factor. These factors provide a good source of investigation and class discussion.

In Islam people bury the dead. Parsi people they put the dead on a top of mountain so that vulture eat flesh. We have our own rich well, custom, tradition, belief system for all at—for childbirth, funeral, a marriage or for puberty. We have our own belief system—for a guest, for an enemy, for a relative, for a teacher and a neighbor. The knowledge of present has a deep relation to the culture of the past. Sometimes we get it from reading books, articles, journals. Sometimes we get from our parents, teachers and our society, chiefly from their teaching.

We have our own belief system— for a guest, for an enemy, for a relative, for a teacher and a neighbor. The knowledge of present has a deep relation to the culture of past. Sometimes we get it from our parents, teacher and our society chiefly from their teaching. The source of their knowledge systems remains as decisive field of enquiry. The oral tradition which chiefly consists of ballads, folksongs, chants, sayings hold and equally important feature in stretching our rich cultural past. Here is a song of the ‘kondh’ tribe that speaks of a death in a culture, from here we understand of sacrifice and the rich well to be perform in a culture.

An understanding of modern day funeral comes from that road of the past which comes from our ancient people. My area of study will be chiefly about of folksongs and ballads to understand a past cultural tradition which has its relation to the present data. We have broadly entitled it as Oral tradition.

Lamentation for the Dead

“Did some evil spirit devour you, eclipse you?

Alas! Alas!

What justice! What pain!

Did some sorcerer kill you?

Alas! Alas!

Or did we ourselves

Kill you?

Where did you hide, dear one?
We do not know
Who killed you, ate you
Let our sigh, our curse
Be on his head;
Let him die accursed
Liked you” (Mahapatra, 1975; 5)

The song is taken from *Staying is Nowhere: An Anthology of Kondh and Parija Poetry* translated and introduced by Sitakant Mohapatra. Oral tradition is historical sources of a specific nature. Their special nature derives from that fact they are ‘unwritten’ sources couched in a form suitable for oral transmission, and that their preservation depends on the powers of memory of successive generation of human beings. Oral tradition makes an appearance only when they are told. For fleeting moments they can be heard, but most of the time they dwell only in the minds of people.

Among the various historical sources oral traditions occupy a special place. They are messages, but unwritten, their preservation is entrusted to the memories of successive generations of people. In those parts of the world inhabited by peoples without writing, oral tradition forms the main available source for reconstruction of the past and even among peoples who have writing, many historical sources, including the most ancient ones, are based on traditions

Does this situation and their reliance on memory automatically deprive oral tradition of all validity as a source of history? Or may “.... Belief upon unwritten story foundly traced from sire to son” (Wordsworth, the Excursion, Voll: 941-43)

The expression Oral tradition applies both to a process and its products. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages, at a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth overtime until the disappearance of the messages

The main elements of oral tradition are folktales, sayings, ballads, songs and chants. Their importance is that it gives us a source of historicity. It gives us an understanding of past lives and about our cultures and civilization. They are source of entertainment. They educate us as the stories have different morals which one can learn. It also tell us the situation in which they live the harder condition spent by them

during the night where they sang songs and chants to pass their night. They also show the enlightenment of joy during different seasons sang at different seasons. It tells us about the cultural past and values. They are the main sources of knowledge acquiring from the past and it also shows the value of past and how it was and how the people act on them. They also show the various rituals which have been still practiced in the modern society and which it shows the linkage of passage from generation to generation.

Some stories are told only during certain seasons, at a particular time of day, or in specific places. In the same vein, some stories are meant to be heard only by specific people. Such stories often teach important lessons about a given society's culture, the land, and the ways in which members are expected to interact with each other and their environment. The passing on of these stories from generation to generation keeps the social order intact. As such, oral histories must be told carefully and accurately, often by a designated person who is recognized as holding this knowledge. This person is responsible for keeping the knowledge and eventually passing it on in order to preserve the historical record.

In contrast, written history does not present a dialogue so much as a static record of an authority's singular recounting of a series of events. As readers, we may interpret these writings, but the writing itself remains the same. Oral narratives, on the other hand, do not have to be told exactly the same way—what is fundamental is whether or not they carry the same message.

Oral tradition is, therefore, a collective enterprise. A narrator does not generally hold singular authority over a story. The evident in distinct versions of a specific history represent a broader understanding of the events and the various ways people have internalized them. Often, oral histories must be validated by the group. This stems from the principle that no one person can lay claim to an entire oral history. Narrators will also “document” the histories they tell by citing the source of their knowledge, such as a great grandparent or an elder. This is sometimes referred to as “oral footnoting”. Such collective responsibility and input maintains the accuracy of the historical record.

Nonetheless, discussions of oral history have occasionally been framed in oversimplistic oppositional binaries: oral/writing, uncivilized/civilized, subjective/objective. Critics wary of oral history tend to frame oral history as subjective and biased, in comparison to writing's presumed rationality and objectivity. In Western contexts, authors of written documents tend to be received automatically

as authorities on their subjects and what is written down is taken as fact. Such assumptions ignore the fact that authors of written documents bring their own experiences, agendas and biases to their work—that is, they are subjective.

Ultimately, the divide between oral and written history is a misconception. Writing and orality do not exclude each other; rather they are complementary. Each method has strengths that depend largely on the situations in which it is used. The academic world and the oral history process both share an important common principle: They contribute to knowledge by building upon what is known and remembering that learning is a life-long quest. Together oral and written methods of recalling and recounting the past have the potential to contribute greatly to the historical record. Since the mid-20th century, particularly as a result of growing interest in the histories of marginalized groups such as African-Americans, women, and the working class, Western academic discourse has increasingly accepted oral history as a legitimate and valuable addition to the historical record.

Some experts and scholars differentiate between oral *history* and oral *tradition*, but some do not. Anthropologist and historian Jan 'Vansina' distinguishes the two as follows:

The sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants. This differs from oral traditions in that oral traditions are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants.

Vansina adds that oral traditions may be “spoken, sung, or called out on musical instruments only” and although they are passed down from a generation or more ago, they are not necessarily about the past nor are they necessarily narratives. Vansina, however, has worked principally with oral societies in Africa. The ways in which oral societies around the world organize and understand their narratives vary. (JanVansina : *Oral Tradition as History*, 1985)

Communities create and use tradition as a community-strengthening process, expressing and reweaving their sense of group cohesion. This was true of both the process of passing folklore on and the content of such folklore. The process for transmitting folklore was always an inter-personal one as we have seen—and usually, as well, quite an occasion for entertainment. An audience to a story was not only

given the content of the story to muse over, to take away with them until “it came time for them to use it,” they also had the shared experience of listening to that story.

In many African societies, a storyteller must be encouraged, with either traditional or spontaneous audience responses: the audience collectively works as a kind of “midwife” to a story as they share the experience of the story’s performance not only with the storyteller but with one another. African-American speeches today which are greeted with communal audience response are thus following in an ancient tradition. Indeed, audiences had special parts in a storytelling performance in every traditional culture I am aware of. The process of folklore transmission certainly strengthened links between generations as well. In this process, the elderly gifted the young with knowledge and entertainment, and the young gifted the elderly with attention and respect.

There is, as a Chehalis woman directly expressed to Thelma Adamson in 1926, often a kind of “love” engendered in the process of sharing folklore. In speaking of a special medicinal knowledge that was the privileged domain of women in Chehalis society, she stated that the elder with knowledge of this special medicine would pass it on “to some young woman she loved.” (Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. “Oral History.” (In *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises: Researching the Indian Land Question* (2nd ed.) Vancouver: Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, 2005. 109-112)

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Western discourse has come to prioritize the written word as the dominant form of record keeping and until recently, Westerners have generally considered oral societies to be peoples without history. This could not be further from the truth. Oral societies record and document their histories in complex and sophisticated ways, including performative practices such as dancing and drumming. Although most oral societies, Aboriginal or otherwise, have now adopted the written word as a tool for documentation, expression and communication, many still depend on oral traditions and greatly value the oral transmission of knowledge as an intrinsic aspect of their cultures and societies. (“Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues.” *Canadian Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1994): 403–18.)

Nonetheless, discussions of oral history have occasionally been framed in oversimplistic oppositional binaries: oral/writing, uncivilized/civilized, subjective/objective. Critics wary of oral history tend to frame oral history as subjective and biased, in comparison to writing’s presumed rationality and objectivity. In Western contexts, authors of written documents tend to be received automatically as authorities on their subjects and what is written down is taken as fact. Such assumptions ignore the fact that authors of written documents bring their own experiences, agendas and biases to their work—that is, they are subjective.

Ultimately, the divide between oral and written history is a misconception. Writing and orality do not exclude each other; rather they are complementary. Each method has strengths that depend largely on the situations in which it is used. The academic world and the oral history process both share an important common principle: They contribute to knowledge by building upon what is known and remembering that learning is a life-long quest. Together oral and written methods of recalling and recounting the past have the potential to contribute greatly to the

historical record. Since the mid-20th century, particularly as a result of growing interest in the histories of marginalized groups such as African-Americans, women, and the working class, Western academic discourse has increasingly accepted oral history as a legitimate and valuable addition to the historical record.

Oral history has been increasingly recognized in academia as a valuable contribution to the historical record. Interviews were and are recorded, transcribed, reread, and analyzed. Yet oral historian Alessandro Portelli cautions that the transcript is not the oral narrative and should not be seen as such. Transcription by its very nature must adhere to the rules and regulations of its written language—punctuation marks, for example, that give a sense of the way something was said but do not account for the rhythm or the melody of one’s voice or the variations in diction that emphasize different points or feelings. Portelli believes that narratives convey meaning that “can only be perceived by listening, not by reading,” and that simply reading a transcript “flattens the emotional content. In addition, a written document allows no immediate feedback—there is no opportunity for dialogue or spontaneity. Audio or audiovisual recordings can present similar problems—principally, that certain contexts might not translate.(Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.“Oral History.” In *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises: Researching the Indian Land Question* (2nd ed.) Vancouver: Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, 2005. 109-119)

Thus we can see how the evolution of oral tradition took place and different scholars gave it different names like folklore. And the form of oral tradition which plays an important role in understanding the oral tradition and the significance of oral tradition to the society which shows our past and it educates us. Therefore oral tradition is an important aspect which makes our tradition alive and due to which it is still continuing and will continue forever from one generation to another.

Chapter 3

A Lost Tradition?: Reflections towards Select Tribal Songs of Odisha

This chapter discusses the folk tradition of Kondh tribes and in particular cultivation songs of Kondh and also songs of Oran tribes collected from the field area.

The Kondh are the largest single group of tribals in Odisha and their number, as reported in the 1971 census, is 869,965. They are concentrated mostly in the districts of Koraput, Phulbani and Kalahandi. Well known for the rite of human sacrifice or *meriah* in historical times, the name of the tribe, according to Macpherson, is derived from the Telgue word *konda* which means a "hill". Along with their sub-tribes that form nearly forty per cent of the total population of the state, they have moved to different parts of Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

The Kondh villages generally nestle on gentle hill-slopes and in the laps of rolling valleys. They are not very different from typical Odisha villages but the houses are not as neatly arranged in rows as in case of Oran villages. The houses are generally very sparsely furnished and the walls mostly bare. The village common, the village street, and even the tiny verandahs of the houses are often littered with cow dung, the excreta of pigs, droppings of pigeons and ordinary dust and dirt.

One sub-group of kondhas is the *Dongria Kondhas*. They inhabit Rayagada, Koraput and Kalahandi districts. Their major concentration is found in the blocks of Kalyansinghpur, Bissamcuttack and Muniguda. They are called Dongria or dweller of *donger* ("hill" in Oriya) and settle in higher altitudes due to their economic demands. The Dongria Kondh call themselves Jharnia meaning those who live by the Jharana (streams). Hundreds of perennial streams flow from Niyamgiri hill, and there are hundreds of Dongria villages by the streams. The Dongria are considered the protectors of these streams, hills and jungles by the people of the nearby plains.

The Dongria have syncretic beliefs combining animism. Their pantheon has both the common Hindu gods and their own. The gods and goddesses are always attributed to various natural phenomena, objects, trees, animals, etc. They have a god or deity for everything and anything. The Dongrias give highest importance to the

Earth god (Dharani penu), and Niyam penu (Niyamgiri Hill) who is held to be the creator and sustainer of the Dongria. For instance, in a house, there is a deity for back and front street, kitchen, living room, implements and so on and so forth. In the Dongria society, breach of any religious conduct by any member of the society invites the wrath of spirits in the form of lack of rain fall, soaking of streams, destruction of forest produce, and other natural calamities. Hence, the customary law, norms, taboos, and values are greatly adhered and enforced with high to heavy punishments, depending up on the seriousness of the crimes committed. As with any culture, the ethical practices of the Dongria reinforce the economic practices that define the people. Thus, the sacredness of the mountains perpetuates tribal socio-economics, whereas outside cultures that neglect the sacredness of the land find no problem in committing deforestation, strip-mining etc.

For social control in the village and at *Muttha* level (regional), there are hereditary religious leaders like *Jani* (religious head), *Mondal* (secular head of the community), *Bejuni* (sorcerer), *Barik* (messenger) to co-ordinate, decide by holding a meeting where the punishment is awarded along with appeasement procedure is followed with sacrifices of buffaloes and cocks. The punishment may be in cash or kind and may lead to ostracism from the community if not obeyed.

Kondh Agricultural Activity: A Link to its Cultural Identity

The mainstay of the kondh economy is agriculture. This is still at the primitive subsistence level and is largely shifting cultivation or podu. Shifting cultivation is wasteful and is destructive of valuable forest resources. Productivity in such cultivation is very low and the kondh lives in a perpetual cycle of poverty, indebtedness and exploitation.

Human sacrifices were once prevalent in their agrarian primitive cultures. Frazer has discussed them in detail in his *Spirits of the Corn* and *The Golden Bough*. Mircea Eliade has also documented many of these forms in *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. Here is the account of the *meriah* sacrifice of the Kondhs in Frazer. (Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983,43)

The *meriah* was a voluntary victim, bought by the community. He was allowed to live for years; he could marry and have children. As opposed to the idea of homo sacre, proposed by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), the *meriah*. A few days before the sacrifice the *meriah* was consecrated, that is, he was identified with the divinity to be sacrificed; the people danced around, and worshipped him. After this, they prayed to ‘mother earth’: “O Goddess, we offer thee this sacrifice; give us good harvests, good seasons and good health.” And they added turning to the victim: “We have bought thee and have not seized thee by force: now we sacrifice thee, and may no sin be accounted to us!” The ceremony also included any orgy lasting several days. Finally the *meriah* is drugged with opium, and, after they strangle him, they cut him into pieces. Each of the villagers receives a fragment of his body which they bury in the fields. The remainder of the body is burnt, and the ashes strewn over the land. This is the tradition of the past that is reflected in numerous studies with a focus on the culture of Kondh cultivation.

The British administrators used to look upon the Kondhs as a barbaric and uncivilized people given to drinking, dancing and debauchery. Even the rite of human sacrifice was explained away by linking it to the supposed belief of the Kondh that human blood will make the turmeric they cultivate redder in colour. Today it is that these observers never saw the ritual base of the *meriah* sacrifice. Even a cursory reading of the song accompanying the sacrifice will make it clear that it has nothing to do with making turmeric red. It must be seen as a part of the universal pre-occupation of the primitive mind with the God for the peace and welfare of the group. Nineteenth century social anthropologists had largely missed this cross-cultural perspective on the rite of human sacrifice and its relationship to religious belief and ritual practices.

The kondh have no written language of their own. Most of the songs were collected by the eminent novelist, Gopinath Mohanty. The songs are part of oral tradition and need early documentation as they are in the process of being forgotten by the younger generation. The most important of these songs is the *meriah* song or sloka to which reference has been made earlier. This song or sloka is an invocation to the earth goddess for the welfare and prosperity of the tribe and, in parts, it can be compared in the Vedic hymns.

The *meriah* sloka has to be looked upon as a ritual incantation which combines the emotions of fear, surrender to the unknown supernatural power, and a concern for the welfare of the community. In its lyrical tone, and the pathos, compactness and straight forwardness of the emotion conveyed, it is perhaps unparalleled among primitive ritualistic incantations anywhere in the world.

The songs of Kondhs, being ritualistic in context, are meant exclusively for particular occasions. A ceremonial song is taboo on non- ceremonial occasions. For example, the *meriah* song is not supposed to be uttered at anytime other than at his ceremony. It is recited and taught to another person only by a Kondh perist, and even then under certain strict conditions. This is why this was one of the most hidden and obscure songs in the literature of tribal India.

The sloka for exorcising diseases and evil spirits is usually recited by a *bejuni* who goes into a trance after carrying out elaborate rituals of fasting, worship and offerings. This song is an in an incantation and is recited like a mantra, in a deep, possessed voice.

The *meriah* sloka is in three parts. It is the most important invocatory song of the kondhs and accompanies the sacrifice performed to propitiate the earth-goddess Dhartani or Dharitri

The second song is sung by the perist on inflicting the first stab on the *meriah*. His recitation is usually followed by a chorus in which all the villagers join.

The third song invokes wistful racial memories of an ancient kondhistan and prays to Dhartani to bestow prosperity and plenty on the entire village community. The reference to Durga, the Hindu goddess, is intriguing.

Cultivation Songs

The *Meriah* Song

O' our saonta

Our village elder

Have you baby kurtas

Have you got tiny fowls
Have you got sons?
The season has come
The season of Dhartani
The earth – goddess.
Give us young fowls
Baby kurtas
We will buy.

(Sitakant Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

The *meriah* or the object of sacrifice is generally preserved and nurtured in the saonta's (village headman's) house long before the sacrifice. All possible attention is endowed on it. The villagers go to the houses of the saontha on the day of the sacrifice, sing the first song and then symbolically purchase the object.

On This Sacred Soil of Ancestors

The stream is full
Our age equal
Come, dear brother.
If you are the son in law
If you are not
Come, dear brother.
Calling you in love
Calling you with open heart
Come, dear brother.

When in our backyards
Maize and millet
Swing in happiness,
Come, dear brother.
Come all you son in law
All you brothers in law
We will have fun
In the backyards,
Come, dear brothers.
With the help of all the sons in law
We will make a bornfire
We will spread the compost,
Come, dear brother.
We will burn the dongar
We will grow many crops
Come, dear brother.

(Sitakant Mahapatra: *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

This song is normally sung by men and women together at the village meeting- place. The village and the soil of the village are sacred to the kondhs. There the dead are buried. The soil yields crops. But the hill- slopes have to be cleared, burnt out by fire so that the ash will fertilize the land and improve its quality– a system of cultivation the kondhs call podu. The kondh is not a modern agriculturist but he brings a lot of artistry to the cultivation of his crops. This is a primitive agriculture and often results in destruction of valuable forests, but kondh this is a way of life sanctified by generations of practice. Attempts at putting an end to podu and

bringing the kondhs down to the valley from hills and setting them in government colonies have met with very limited success. The village is sacred. Its soil is scared. It is where history is or where the ancestors and their spirits dwell.

For the dead ancestors

One festival will follow

Another

The never– ending cycle.

In the festival

We remember the ancestors

Invoke them to come.

Shameful not to be hospitable

To those departed.

And yet

Our hospitality

Won't keep them with us.

For their chosen and true place

Is the funeral ground

(Sitakant Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

This is songs only sang when by the men folk during the harvesting season. For the kondh, the ancestors is an ever– present reality and not a shadow. A man is not dead and gone. His spirit, his *duma* and oversees and overhears everything in the village. There are good and bad, benevolent and malevolent *Dumas*. Even tigers and other animals are believed to have *Dumas* after death. The kondh speaks lovingly of

dead ancestors; on several occasions offers food, crops, drink, fowl and worships and prays to them for the health and happiness of the family.

Oraons Socio–Cultural Profile

The Oraon or Kurukh tribe, also spelled Uraon, Oran, or Oram, are tribal aborigines inhabiting mostly of Sundergarh in Odisha. Traditionally, Oraons depended on the forest and farms for their ritual and economic livelihood, but in recent times, a few of them have become mainly settled agriculturalists. Small numbers of Oraons have immigrated to the northeastern part of India, where they are mainly employed in tea estates.

According to the Indian Anthropological Society, Konkan is said to be original home of these Kurukh, Munda tribes, from where they migrated to Northern India. Kurukh substratum is very prominent in the language of the Konkan or the Konkani language.

The Kurukh or Oraons are the tribals of Chota Nagpur plateau. Oraon appears to have been assigned to them as a nickname by their masters, possibly with reference to their many migrations and proneness to roam, however they like to be called as Kurukhar.

The Ekka, Tigga, Barla, Kujur, Lakra, Tirkey, Bakhla, Toppo, Kispotta, Minz, Kachhap, and Kerketta are some common sub casts.

The Oraon are not nature worshipers. They are the most assorted people, borrowing freely from neighbouring cultures elements quite alien to their primitive tradition. The Oraon religious system has been largely influenced by the Munda and the Kharia religious traditions. The Oraon eclectic tendency is again manifest in their borrowing from Hindu beliefs. For instance, in their religious context, the Oraon call the sun as 'Biri Belas' (Sun King), when any superficial observer notices such thing, s/he might immediately conclude that the sun is one of their deities. But as a matter of fact, they consider the sun only as symbol of God's glorious power and brightness. No Oraon identifies the sun with Dharmes. In the same way, a stone, a pool of water, a river, a cluster of trees, a hillock, etc., are never considered as objects of worship, but only as the dwellings of the spirits to whom they turn to for help in their misfortunes.

If we observe and investigate the Oraon religious practices, we find that Oraon religion has also given place to environmental features like in some other religions. These features are considered as the residence of spirits and are focal of ritual worship. Such common features in Oraon religion are the sacred grove, some trees, a mountain, a hill, a river, a tank, a well and a stone. The major customs among the Oraons, as with any other community, are connected with birth, marriage and death. The linkage of customs with the ecology is best reflected in customs connected with marriage and death. There are many customs preceding marriage with which the environment is very closely connected. There is the custom of men going to the forest to fetch firewood and women to fetch sal leaves for preparing cups and plates. The preparation of the marriage mat and marriage baskets of various sizes are other customs. Setting up a marwa is, however, the most significant. Nine sal saplings with leaves on top are planted in the courtyard in three rows. The middle one of the second row differs in its height. Also planted are branches of bamboo, sidha, bhelwa, mango and mahua. The mango suggests perpetuity of descendants, the bamboo symbolises progeny, the sidha fidelity of husband and wife, the bhelwa protection from the evil eye and the mahua, love between the couple. The marriage ritual would be incomplete without this invocation of trees and plants. During funerals the Oraons practise burial and cremation. Bodies are buried when crops stand in the field. In this custom, various shapes of branches cover the bottom of the grave, lengthwise and crosswise.

Important festivals of the Oraons pertain to the forest, hunting, agriculture and cattle. Besides these, there are socio-religious gatherings known as jatras, which take place at the commencement of different seasons. It is not possible to discuss all their festivals. I shall confine myself to a few for the purpose of illustration.

The spring festival, known as sarhul, is celebrated when the sal tree is in full blossom. In this festival the Oraons perform the symbolic marriage of the sky with the earth. This is done to ensure the fertility of mother earth. On this day a propitiatory sacrifice is offered to the old lady (the village goddess) who is believed to abide in the sacred grove of the village. Phaggu is a festival which is observed towards the end of February or the beginning of March. On the evening previous to the feast, a young castor (*Palma christi*) plant and a semar (*Bombax malabaricum*) branch are planted in an open place. Around these some hay, firewood and dry leaves are heaped. The

village priest sets fire to the hay. When fire burns at its brightest the young castor shrub is cut into pieces with an axe. Immediately the young boys of the village light torches from the bonfire and throw the burning torches at fruit trees, saying, 'Be loaded with good fruit'.

The Karam festival of the Oraons falls within the socio-religious domain. The Karam festival is classified as an agriculture festival. In this sense, it is highly symbolic as it is also associated with the idea of 'productivity' or 'fecundity'. The idea of fecundity applies to the agricultural produce or crops as well as to the recently engaged girls of the village who venerate the Karam deity residing in the Karam tree. Thus the Karam festival also becomes an occasion to petition God for perpetuity of the clan or community through the fecundity of the participating girls of the village. The Karam festival also becomes a motif because the communitarian fervour is invoked and enforced through the sacred and secular observance of it.

The Karam festival is celebrated usually on Bhado Ekadashi, on the eleventh day of the bright full moon (Purnima) of the month of Bhado (August-September). The Karam tree, scientifically called *Nauclea Parvifolia* is the center of the proceedings at the festival. The preparations, for the Karam festival, start around ten or twelve days before the festival. The girls, who wish to participate in the festival, sow barley in their homes. They keep it inside their homes, in shade, away from direct sunlight. They also sprinkle water mixed with turmeric over it due to which the germinating barley acquires a golden yellowish tinge and looks beautiful. The idea behind this ritual is to revive in their memories, the day of the 'great escape' of the Oraons from the enemy tribe Cheros in the Rohtas fort in the Shahabad district of Bihar. The whole process of germinating barley seeds is a ritual and so is replete with the singing of songs to the germinating seeds by the girls of the village who keep watch over the germinating barley like mothers watch over their children. The barley or jawa in the pot is an image of the impregnated earth (or the womb of the earth) fertilizing the jawa seeds and producing shoots or jawa flowers. The image is extremely pertinent in the context of the Karam festival. During this period, the girls participating in the festival abstain from consuming non-vegetarian food to maintain the auspiciousness of the Karam festival.

Oraons Agricultural Activity: A Link to its Cultural Identity

The orans celebrate a number of festivals linked to agricultural cycle. The sowing operation starts with the festivals of Muthi-china when the heads of households carry baskets full of paddy covered with new clothes to the fields and sow seven fistfuls of seed. Liquor, rice beer and meat are used in plenty in the community feasting which accompanies this festival. In the month of Asadha (June– July), the Oraons observe the Bihuda Jatra to coincide with the reploughing of the fields and the de-weeding operations. On the occasions, the Oraons sacrifice fowls and pigeons and offer liquor to the village deities and spend the day singing and dancing. During the Gamha Purnima festival in the month of Sravana (July–August) the cattle are fed with dried mahul flowers and salt and their horns are painted with oil and turmeric

The karam festival occurs towards the middle of August, when the paddy crop is growing fast and strong in the fields but has not yet thrown up the stalks of grains. This is the time when the Oroan has leisure to sit back and relax and prepare himself for the pleasure of harvesting after the arduous transplantation de-weeding operations. The ritual consists of the installation of three cut branches of karam tree near the akhra, or dancing ground. Archer has referred to the resemblance between the Karam festival and the Christmas celebration of the Christians. He also rightly thought it to be a fecundity festival, the aim of the worship being to help forward the ripening of the crop. Archer quotes S.C Roy's description of this festival in his *The Blue Grove* :

The center of the rituals consists in the cutting of three branches of a Karam tree and their installation in the akhra or dancing ground. The branches are called the Karam Raja. The entry of the branches into the village is accompanied by dancing, and after the installation Karam dances revolve round the Raja through the night. The following morning the branches are garlanded and Karam legend is recited. Flowers are then thrown over the Raja and offerings of curds and rice are made. Red Karam baskets full of grains are also put before the branches, and some ceremonially nurtured barley seedlings are distributed among the boys and girls who put the yellow blades on their hair.(Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983,231)

Songs sang in the agricultural fields

In the dust, by the roadside

In dung heaps

The wild trees come up:

But they never truly look beautiful

Without the flowers.

I had cooked very good

Banana curry

Deliciously done

For my dewar

Why did he not

Relish it?

Here women cook food at home and send or take it to the fields for the men folk.

(Sitakant Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

[2]

At the deepest point in the stream

Plunge your fish-catching contraption.

[3]

Where had you gone, my son

All your clothes are red with dust.

If you had a wife

She would clean them very well

But we can clean it only with ash.

The women's son has got dusty working in the fields.

(Sitakant Mahapatra: *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

[4]

Where are you, my lady of the house;

Bring me a lota of water.

The lady of the house has

Gone to her mother—

And who will give you a lota of water?

After a day's work in the fields, the farmer wants to freshen up.

(Sitakant Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

[5]

In the field of till

The parrots have entered

The parrots are destroying the flowers;

Give me my bow and arrows

I must go and kill the parrots.

(Sitakant Mahapatra : *The Awakened Wind*, 1983)

Songs collected from field

Karma Song-1

Garagaram malu makhan cheon

Papan makhan nay checn papan

Makhan.....

Mannenu chundiya, keteranu

Tiliyan....

Daurdanu nuyan tawanu kirimdi

Ant dunnu...

Sajwan tantar Nu Nathran

Daudanu....

Nuyan, Bijay papa nidananta

Kida, mala biti pae.

Meaning

Here the daughter tells her mother stop eating bitter peels and chapatti . Mother is telling her daughter, this year there is famine, so there will be no cake. Still the daughter is not responding she explains how she managed to make the cake.

Song-2

Karam ta chaligalean

Nahiyardesar, karna ta chaligalen

Nahiyardesara, nakherechelaen

Karamagalaeen, konbhaiya

Upsana kone bhej piyas

Chalaji karma kosebayege

Chote bhiya upasana bale

Bhaye piyasa chote bhaiya

Upasa bale bhaiyapiyasa

Chalache karam kaseba

Meaning

Karma has gone and people are making a gathering there, where they planted the karama branch. Both the Younger and elder brother remained in fasting (without eating and drinking), while looking after the karma.

SarhulSong-3

Kaddi kalako kala nayange

Tikarinu namba sekera

Kalako kala nuyange paisa

Manje dhara chandwan khel khelo khelo

Pairi biri nuyan kalako nadt

Biri kal khasane

Kala ko kala nuiyan gage

Pisa manje dhara chandwan

Khel khel o khel.

Meaning

Go and soon plough the land and don't sit under the sun. Later you will wash your necklace which is made of silver coin. Rise early in morning and go for ploughing. In the afternoon go to make ridge in the field. In the evening you should wash your silver necklace.

Song-4

Paienya manja jiage jhajhat

Ayang bangaru naw dechar

Bharei natiu patari bidiar

Nalaghi saman yang bangara

Meaning

It is very cold during winter. Oraons are very poor. So in regret that are saying that by burning the entire paddy and making a bed near it, they will sleep like a dog and spend the whole winter.

Thus from here we can say that both Kondh and Oraons have different rituals which they perform during agriculture. Kondh emphasis is more on sacrifice of object during the occasion, but Oraons they believes more on nature and the enjoyment with nature.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

The unwritten literary world of the tribal community comprises very rich oral tradition. Oral tradition which accounts of manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, folktales etc. of the olden time be recorded so that later people could turn for the information to these dying remnants of the unrecorded past which were termed popular as Oral Literature. In a broader sense the oral tradition generally comprises the least tangible expression of the aesthetic culture. In other words it consists myth, folktales, ballads, folk songs etc.

Oral tradition performs various functions. Myth explains the universe and provides a basis for rituals performances and religious belief systems. Folk tales instead are of secular character. The folk tales are regarded as unwritten records of tribal history. These tales serve to maintain a sense of group identity and unity. The stories are told chiefly for recreation, but in many areas they are taken as myth to explain some of the important phenomena of the universe. Animal stories are widely told. These stories narrate the wit of some animals and foolishness of the other animals.

Folklore reflects the life of the people and reveals their aspiration values and goals. Different people enjoy different status in a society. The folklore particularly the ballads, myth reveal the status of the people in society.

The study of oral tradition as a cultural phenomenon aids significantly in the understanding of the culture of which it is a part of the society. The folksongs are stable and tenacious and this factor helps in reconstructing the contacts of communities with one another and in understanding the diffusion of cultural traits.

Lastly it can be said that the study of oral tradition throws light on literacy qualities of the folksongs, ballads, myth etc and which consists of folklore. It is necessary to collect large number of tales and songs from a single society and studying these scientifically using proper methods of analysis so that the ways by which plots of the

songs are developed and the character that is developed to sustain interest in them and achieve adequate features, can be found for cross-cultural comparative analysis.

The roots of India's literary traditions can be traced to the rich oral literature of the tribes / adivasis. Usually in the form of songs or chants, these verses are expressions of the close contact between the world of nature and the world of tribal existence. They have been orally transmitted from generation to generation and have survived for several ages. However, a large number of these are already lost due to the very fact of its orality. The forces of urbanization, print culture and commerce have resulted in not just marginalization of these communities but also of their language and literary culture. Though some attempts have been made for the collection and preservation of tribal languages and their literatures, without more concerted efforts at an accelerated pace we are in danger of losing an invaluable part of our history and rich literary heritage.

Literature no longer means as something written. It is lot more than writing. That writing is the necessary reminder of our times. It is for us to realize that unless we modify the established notion of literature as something written, we will silently witness the decline of various rich oral traditions.

The tribal arts are distinct in the manner of constructing space and imagery, which might be described as "hallucinatory". In both oral and visual forms of representation, tribal artists seem to interpret verbal or pictorial space as demarcated by an extremely flexible frame. The boundaries between art and non - art becomes almost invisible. A tribal epic can begin its narration from a trivial every day event; tribal paintings merge with living space as if the two were one and the same. In a way, the syntax of language and the grammar of painting are same; as if literature were painted word and painting were a song of images.

Though oral and pictorial tribal art are intimately related to rituals- the sacred can never be left out- the tribal art rarely assume a serious or pretentious tone. The artist rarely plays the role of the creator. One of the reasons for this unique mixture of the sacred and the ordinary may be this that tribal works of art are not specifically for sale. Artists do expect a certain amount of patronage from the community, like artists in any

other context; but since those performing rituals are very often artists themselves, there is no element of competition in the patron artist relationship.

And we can also draw out that that both the tribal society has different rituals, which makes them different from each other. Though agriculture is a common activity in India. And which shows the distinct feature in them and it also replicates that tribe is mostly associated with sacrifice of animals and human and which the Oroan tribe doesn't have in them. They are purely nature loving and they enjoy the best out of the nature.

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