

Role of Print Media in Promoting Jharkhand's Popular Folk Music: "Khortha"

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Abstract

Amongst the traditional art forms, folk art forms including folk dance and music have been the greatest affected. One such art forms include an indigenous art form named 'Khortha' that has its roots and origin in Jharkhand. As a state Jharkhand too has been on the brink, sidelined by the mainstream media. However, whatever little remains of this art form that has managed to survive, the main contributor has been the media. This paper focussed on how books and the newspapers have kept this art form alive since ages and continues to do so.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most precious gifts that god has bestowed on the living things of this planet is music. India is popularly known for its ancient culture and diversity. One can hear music in every corner of this country without making much effort. Music has always been an important aspect of the lives of Indian people. India's rich cultural diversity has two different genres of music that is Indian Classical music and Folk music. Both can be learned by oral traditions only. Almost every region in India has its folk music, which reflects the folk peopleway of life. Folk music is closely associated with farming and other such professions and evolved to alleviate hardship and break the monotony of routine life.

In India, every state has its folk music because of the difference in culture, languages, beliefs, etc. and Jharkhand is one of them. It is mainly famous for its world-class coal, Abrakh, Steel, Iron, etc. But apart from those things it is also famous for its rich culture of folk music.

Jharkhand is a state which is mostly associated with Tribal people. Tribes like Munda, Santhali, Khariya, Ho, Birhor, etc. have been living here for thousands of years.

A tribe is viewed, developmentally or historically, as a social group existing before the development of, or outside, states. A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for their livelihood, who are largely self-sufficient and not integrated into the national society. It is perhaps the term most readily understood and used by the general public.

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Stephen Corry, director of Survival International, an organization dedicated to indigenous rights, defines tribal people as those who “ have followed ways of life for many generations that are largely self-sufficient and are clearly different from the mainstream and dominant society.¹ There are an estimated one hundred and fifty million tribal individuals worldwide, constituting around forty percent of indigenous individuals. Although nearly all tribal people are indigenous, some are not indigenous to the areas where they now live.²

Folk Music: The Inevitable Journey

Essentially folk music is a genre of music that is mainly associated with folk people. It includes both traditional and contemporary. It usually passes from one person to another orally and there is no other medium to learn it. In Jharkhand, tribes usually sing or perform folk music on different occasions like farming crops, different rituals, worshipping their gods, change of seasons, etc. For every occasion, they have different folk songs. And that's why Jharkhand's folk music is unique in its own way.

Khortha is one of the most popular languages of Jharkhand and it is usually spoken by more than two crores of people of Jharkhand. Some scanty works have been done on this language. Nageshwar Mahto a renowned linguist and philosopher has worked on Khortha. He worked on the script of Khortha, also called Kharoshtha lipi whereby he identified 36 speech sounds. Mahto's study is largely based on the phonological aspects of the language. He has also made a software, Anshu software dedicated to Khortha.³ It is mostly spoken in Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ramgarh, Bokaro, etc.

Nowadays media plays a vital role in promoting every kind of music whether it is Indian Classical Music or Folk music. It really helped artists and listeners to get connected with each other. Human beings have immensely get benefitted from the advancements in technology. A new kind of revolution came into existence when the Media became an important

1. Corry Stephen. 2011. Tribal People's for tomorrow's world.

2. <http://www.survivalinternational.org/info/terminology> accessed on 18th March 2022 at 12:00 AM.

3. <http://www.readwhere.com/publisher/khortha-lipi-aar-vyakaran-by-dr-nageshwar-mahato/37415> accessed on 15th December 2022.

part of our life. This was only made possible because of the continuous efforts of our scientists and media people who rigorously worked for it.

Print Media

China was the pioneer in the invention of paper and print. Paper was first made in the second century A.D. and in 868 A.D., Wang Chieh published 54 a book printed from blocks. The oldest evidence of Chinese printing is a Buddhist scripture known as the Diamond Sutra dated 868 A.D.⁴

Print media created a revolution when it came to Jharkhand as the struggle for a separate state that continued for more than three decades came to an end. For those who were fighting for a separate state, print media gave them a way that is more powerful than saying something orally. “Jharkhand state was formed on 15th November 2000. With the formation of a state, some newspapers namely *The Telegraph* and *The Times of India* started publishing their editions. Hindustan and Hindustan Times started publishing from here a little before the state's formation. Since the formation of the state almost two years Dainik Jagran published a special edition for Jharkhand from Patna. At present Dainik Jagran is publishing from Ranchi, Jamshedpur, and Dhanbad. Prabhat Khabar, Hindustan is also published in Ranchi, Jamshedpur, and Dhanbad. Along with this Ranchi Express, Uditvani, Aaj, Chamakta Aina, and Bihar Observer including a dozen of small - big dailies are publishing from Jharkhand.

Because of being a separate state, offices of many multination companies, central and financial institutions, and public organizations have opened up in Jharkhand, possibilities for business have increased and revenue sources for the newspapers have also increased. That includes advertising by the state government.⁵ Literature which is related to Khortha folk music is not that ancient because before the print media arrived in Jharkhand it was all part of oral. After the arrival of print media in

4. Rangaswami, Parthasarathy, Journalism in India-From the earliest times to the present, p.3

5. <http://asu.thehoot.org/research/books/the-print-media-and-the-poorest-districts-of-jharkhand-954> accessed on 17 Dec. 22 at 11:50 PM.

Jharkhand, Khortha folk music and songs started to get recognition through the print media on a large scale. People other than the tribes of Jharkhand started to read about the songs of mountains, rivers, seasons, crops, etc. written by the poets of Khortha folk after the print media came into Jharkhand. In modern times, when the folk music of Jharkhand is also a main part of education in schools and universities, the need for textbooks and Journals became a necessity and it is increasing day by day.

Nowadays if a scholar is working on his/her thesis he or she needs references and the primary source for that, are books and journals.

Names of some books written by poets and scholars -

- Daamudarek Koraayin by Shivnaath Pramanik.
- Aankhek Geet by Srinivaas Panuri.
- Ajgar by Vishwanath Dasaundhi
- Udbhaasal Karn by Srinivaas Panuri.
- Ek Mauni Ful by Santosh Kumar Mahto
- Khortha Sahitik by Dr. B. N. Ohdaar
- Dhovayyak Dhamak by Dr. Binod Kumar
- Daah by Sukumar

Apart from these books, there are many articles and journals through which scholars get help in

promoting and popularising Khortha folk music. Some of them are -

- Language Attitude of Khortha Speakers in Giridih: A Survey Report by Niladri Sekhar Dash
- Khortha, a Dying Language and Urgency to Retain its Pure Variety Swati Priya & Rajni Singh
- Folklore and language: Ergativity and Agreement of Khortha language in Jharkhand by Dr. Anita Kumari
- Making of Jharkhand Identity and Culture by Vijay Prakash Sharma

This is brief details of how print media helped in promoting and popularising the Khortha folk music.

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