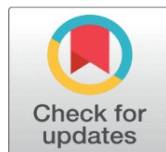
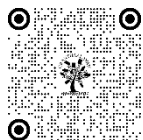


CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HAKKI PIKKI COMMUNITY TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HASSAN DISTRICT- A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the cultural significance of Hakki Pikki community traditions and beliefs with reference to Hakki Pikki community of Hassan district. Originally the Hakki Pikki community is a nomadic tribe of people moving in groups from place to place in search of livelihood. After the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and other forest laws became more regressive, the tribes started moving in groups from place to place in search of livelihood. Gradually they started selling forest products including hair oil, honey and spices. Now they are emerging as entrepreneurs selling traditional products including massage oil, hair oil, Hibiscus power, extraction of plant oils, and spices. Some of the members of the tribe are also travelling to African countries where herbal products especially hair oil are in greater demand. Currently, the members of this tribe are claiming that 70 percent of them are cashing in on the sale of Adivasi hair oil trend which has become very popular after celebrity endorsements. From bird catchers to entrepreneurs of traditional forest products the tribe is emerging as one of the culturally significant tribe in Hassan district. But there is a need to study constraints and limitations hampering their prospective socio economic progression.

Keywords: Hakki Pikki Tribe, Hassan Region, Traditions and Beliefs, Cultural Significance

1. INTRODUCTION

The Hakki Pikki tribe is a semi nomadic tribe traditionally engaged in bird catching and hunting activities. They live in forest areas and are found in south India especially in Karnataka. They are centred in Shimogga Davanagere and Hassan districts of Karnataka. The Hakki Pikki clan is purely matriarchal and monogamy is followed. Lineage is traced through the mother's side with inheritance often passing down to daughters

Origin: The Hakki Pikki tribe is a Scheduled Tribe in Karnataka and their origin is said to be an ancestral relation with the legendary Rana pratap Sing of Marwari clan of Rajasthan. The tribe is divided into four clans, they are Gujaratia, Panwar, Kaliwala and Mewaras. It is also debated that they came from Andhra Pradesh. They have a population of 11

, 892 according to 2011 census . In Karnataka they are settled in Davanagere , Mysore , Kolar , Hassan and Shivamogga districts.

Beliefs and traditions of the Hakki Pikki tribe: The Hakki Pikki tribe as noticed through their genealogical ancestry , are a semi nomadic tribe who travel from place to place selling forest products. But the social norms and traditions of the tribe have been customarily evolved from the original clan.

- 1) **Matriarchal Family:** The Hakki Pikki tribal clan is purely matriarchal. The Hakki Pikki tribe traditionally follows matriarchal family system placing mother or the eldest female as the head of the household. This tradition has been followed customarily and this tradition is providing her with major power over decision making. Female ancestry is considered for property ownership and share in family assets. This female lineage is considered to be potentially leading to increased female empowerment, stronger support networks, and supportive for gender dynamics. The sociologists are of the opinion that Hakki Pikki tribal women are in receipt of greater honour and respect while compared to patriarchal systems. The Hakki Pikki community provides power to women within the family to deal with household affairs. Lineage is traced through the mother's side with inheritance often passing down to daughters. Some sociologists argue that matriarchal systems is able to promote greater gender equality and is supporting women by elevating women's social status and decision making power. The studies on tribal traditions have pointed out clearly that matriarchal societies would foster strong social connections between tribal members by providing support and guidance within the community.
- 2) **Hindu beliefs:** The Hakki Pikki tribes follow all Hindu traditions and celebrate all Hindu festivals. They are non vegetarians and rely on meat. All the members consume non vegetarian food and on festival celebrations also non vegetarian food is distributed among members of the clan.
- 3) **Male Hair identity:** The Hakki Pikki tribe believes in several social taboos and convictions. The eldest son in the family is not supposed to cut his hair so that he can be identified easily. This belief has been continued for generations.
- 4) **Poor literacy:** even though the Hakki Pikki tribal people have been into commercial success the literacy rate is very poor. Even though the younger generations are school going, the literary rates have been very dismal.
- 5) **Monogamy:** The Hakki Pikki tribe prefers cross cousin marriages. According to locals the usual age of marriage is 18 for women and 22 for men. The groom gives dowry to the bride's family. The Tribe follows the principles of monogamy very strictly which has helped to maintain male female sex ratio in balanced proportion. Monogamy also helps to ensure children are raised effectively and that parents have strong emotional ties with their children. This tribal belief supports inheritance rules, succession and membership in kinship groups easier.
- 6) **Language crisis:** The Hakki Pikki tribal people once were used to speak Indo Aryan language called as Vaagri . But gradually through cultural assimilation they have started speaking local languages effortlessly. The Hakki Pikki tribes of Hassan District speak Kannada Language . UNESCO has listed this Vaagri language as endangered language .
- 7) **Celebrity product endorsements:** A new trend in the hair care market is emerging with the rise of Adivasi hair oil. The Hakki Pikki tribes are commercially successful in marketing Adivasi hair oil across India and even abroad. This product claimed to have originated from the forest produces has gained popularity among young customers. Despite its traditional sounding name the brand has embraced modern marketing techniques collaborating with prominent celebrity influencers such as Farah Khan , Sonu Sood , Bharthi Singh etc which helped them to reach a wider audience. Besides most of the educated members of the tribe are going to African countries and popularised their product. Online platforms have been helpful in marketing this product.

Support from Government of Karnataka: The Hakki Pikki tribes have been thoroughly supported by the Government of Karnataka.

- 1) The State has provided them with all possible support to bring them to social mainstream.
- 2) The State Government has supported them with micro loans, public transport facilities, basic education, health care and such other needs of the tribes.
- 3) The State Government has been vehemently condemning the intolerance and prejudicial treatment by the superior communities against these tribes through commissioning Tribal welfare board.

- 4) The State Government has encouraged them to sell hair oil products and has promised to provide quality certification.
- 5) State Government has assured all possible socio economic support to help them move out of marginalization.

2. CONSTRAINTS

- 1) Several questions are raised on the degree of female authority and decision making power within the tribal affairs. There is a need to study the impact of matriarchal culture when the community members are becoming globally accepted.
- 2) Poor literacy rates is an impediment which is halting their progression in marketing and commercial field,
- 3) The certification support requirement for their products is delayed which needs to be attended.
- 4) Celebrity endorsements are forthcoming but there is a need to diversify products.
- 5) The tribal community has been restricted to selling hair oil only on the road side mainly on state highway , there is need to set up marketing stalls at district central points.

3. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Hakki Pikki tribes have been culturally amalgamated with their special traditions and beliefs. Several studies have been undertaken focusing on their customs and traditions. Their economic progression will not provide answer to the conventional traditions. Hence , there is need to recognize the constraints and limitations hampering their general development. State Government needs to take the support of the NGOs and other agencies to promote their inclusive growth.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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