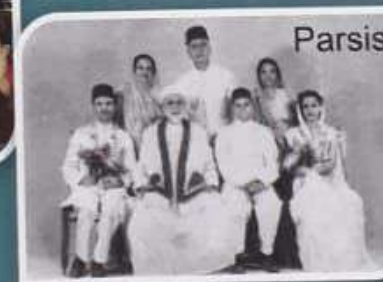


Education of Minorities in India: Issues and Concerns

(भारत में अल्पसंख्यकों की शिक्षा: मुद्दे और चिंताएं)



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Cognitive Dilemma of Linguistic Minority (Juang) of Odisha at Primary Level: A Concern to Sustain their Language

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Introductory glance about Juang

The Juangs are mostly concentrated in Banspal, Tekoi and Harichandanpur block of Keonjhar, Odisha. They believe that in ancient times their tribes emerged from the hills of Gonasika, where the river Baitarani has its source. According to them, the word "Juang" means, "Men emerged from the Earth" at the same place where the river Baitarani emerged. The Juang also refer to them as patra-Savars means leaf-wearing tribe. By this, they mean that they are that branch of the savara tribe whose members used to dress themselves in leaves. They have their own dialect, which has been described by Col. Dalten as Kolarian.

They shift their village sites frequently as they consider it inauspicious to live at a particular place for a longer period. Each Juang village is marked by the presence of a dormitory known as Majang, where their traditional dance takes place and the village Panchayat sits. It also serves as a guesthouse for the visitors to the village. The Pradhan who is the secular headman and the Nagam or Boita or Dehuri, the village priest constitute the traditional village panchayat of the tribe. A group of neighboring villages constitutes a prith which is headed by a sardar who decides inter village disputes.

The Juangs are matrilineal and their society is tagged by the existence of totemistic clans, which are divided into two distinct groups known as "Bandhu clans" and "Kutumba clans". The totem is never ruined or hamper by any of its members. The clans are exogamous and marriage within the same clan is considered incestuous. Monogamy is prevalent and commonly practice at the same times polygamy is not preclude. Levirate and sorority type of marriage is prevalent on the Juang society. A Juang husband generally worships the "Sajana" (drumstick) tree if his wife turns out barren and gives her a paste made of "Sajana" flowers and seeds to eat and he ties a seven fold knots round his wife's neck, believing this to be a kind of talisman, which will cause conception.

They depend on primitive shifting cultivation and collection of minor forest product for their livelihood. They celebrate a number of religious festivals in honor of their Gods and Goddesses. For them Sun God and Earth Goddess are the supreme deities. The Gramashree is the presiding deity of the village. They believe a number of other deities like hill, forest and river as deities at the same time they believes in the existence of spirits and ghosts.