

AN STUDY ON KORAGA TRIBE'S CULTURE DETERIORATING ON THREE POSSIBLE MOTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Three motives are being identified. 1) Cultural Detachment 2) Acculturation and 3) Cultural Transformation. The Linguistic Alienation is identified due to Language shift and attrition. The Koraga Tribe belongs to one of the five primitive tribes of Kerala. Koragas are found Throughout the historical Tulunadu region of Karnataka and Kerala. They play a prominent role in the Cultural and Traditional landscapes of Tuluva Culture. The Koragas are facing Cultural and linguistic alienation against socio cultural motives. The Koraga Tribe had lost their language in past decades. The culture of Koraga Tribe like Bootha Kola is on the verge of extinction. This paper proposes to discuss the Cultural and Linguistic Alienation of the Koraga Tribe in the Kasaragod District. Cultural discourses on the Koraga Tribe had been subjected to study. The motives of Language loss are also addressed. The methodology of study is based on the empirical approach of data. Personal Interviews had been conducted during the cultural discourse. Field visits had been conducted into the Koraga Hamlets in the Perla and Enmakaje Panchayaths of Kasaragod. The Literature reviews carried out were mainly from the studies of Historians like Dr. Gururaja Bhat and B. A. Salathoor are available exclusively in Kannada and Tulu. Oral Folk traditions had been recorded during the study. The preliminary findings of the paper include the motives of the cultural deterioration of the Koraga Tribe. Three motives are being identified. 1) Cultural Detachment 2) Acculturation and 3) Cultural Transformation. The Linguistic Alienation is identified due to Language shift and attrition.

Keywords: cultural-discourse, Cultural-Alienation, Acculturation, Linguistic

1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a name whose origins are a little unclear. Kerala is said to be sprung from the Malayalam words kera coconut tree and alam land, which means "land of coconuts," which is a nickname for the state according to one traditional etymology. Because of the abundance of coconut trees in the area, it is widely used by the locals. The term Keralaputra appears in the 3rd-century BC rock inscription of the Maurya Emperor, Asoka, which refers to the Kerala River (BCE). Keralolpathi, a 17th-century Malayalam text, claims that Parasuraman, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, saved the country of Kerala from the sea by brandishing an axe and fighting with a group of warriors (hence Kerala is also called Parasuraman kshetram, the land of Parasuraman)

In ancient Sumerian records, the area of Kerala was a significant spice exporter before the common period, and it is believed that same was true today. In certain circles, it is still referred to as "the spice garden of India" or "the spice garden of the world." Kerala state is located on the southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, in the south western portion of the country. The terrain is abundantly watered, and there are forty-four rivers that run across the state, making it a water-rich region. Spanning from the river Kalyanpura in Udipi to the river Payaswini in the south in Kasaragod, Tulunad had the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea as its boundaries in east and west respectively. Kasaragod or the entire Tulunadu in general was considered as the melting pot of diverse cultures and tongues. Kasaragod is often known as saphthabhasha sangama bhoomi (the conjuncture of seven languages). It

is the most linguistically diverse region in Kerala. Malayalam, Tulu, Kannada, Beary, Marathi, Konkani and Urdu are spoken in the district. Apart from these languages, several minor tongues are also prevalent throughout the district. The ethnicity in the district is associated with the linguistic aspects. There were migrations from several parts during different time period. It is also an amalgamation of languages where new dialects were found. Some of these dialects are on the transition to the status of independent languages.

Koraga

The Koragas are one of the five primitive tribes found in Kerala, India, and are considered to be the most primitive. The primitive tribe is defined as a particular set of tribals who still continue to forage for food and do not engage in any kind of agriculture. Their socioeconomic situation will be poor, as shown by a shrinking population and a very low or no literacy rate, among other characteristics. Kerala's primitive tribal tribes include the Cholanaikans, Kurumbas, Kattunaikans, Kadars, and Koragas, who are all descended from the same ancestor. It is estimated that they account for approximately 5 percent of the entire tribal population in the state. The Koragas are considered to be one of the oldest occupants of southern India, and as such, one of the most primitive tribal tribes on the planet. When it comes to scheduled tribes in Karnataka and Kerala, the Koragas are without a doubt the most

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impoverished. The Koragas are an indigenous tribe that originated in the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of the state of Karnataka. Koragas are located in the Kasaragod District of Kerala, which is part of the state.

The Koragas' origins are steeped in tales and myths, which help to explain their existence. The origins of the Koragas are told in a variety of ways according to different legends. According to a well-known legend, Koragas are the offspring of a Brahmin woman who married a Sudra man and had children. Another legend tells of Habashika, who invaded the Tulu country and expelled Mayura-varma, the founder of the Kadamba Dynasty, as a result of his conquests. It is also claimed that the army of Habashika defeated the Anagaravarma, son of Viravarma of Manjeshwara, who was a member of the Anagaravarma family. Habashika and his followers were expelled from the land after he was defeated by Lokaditya Raya, son of Mauryavarma of Gokarna in a later battle. The Koragas were driven out of the area, and Brahmins were brought in to replace them. In a third legend, Habashika [King of the Chandalas] consented to the marriage of Kanayathi, the daughter of Lokaditya; a Kadamba Prince and a girl from the Varma family, according to the legend. According to legend, during the marriage ceremony, Lokaditya's soldiers killed Habashika and his party, who had been driven into the forest by Lokaditya. The Koragas are said to have surrendered on the promise that they would be cared for and maintained by royals, but they were instead neglected.

Language The Koraga tribe has its unique set of cultural characteristics, including language, traditions, and beliefs. Their language is Koraga, and they are unquestionably a Dravidian people. Although the Koraga language lacks a written script, today's few literates have largely adapted its linguistic resources from the Kannada language. As a result, the Koragas are bilingual and multilingual individuals. Those who are multilingual, such as the Koragas who live in the Kundapura and Karkala taluks, speak in three languages: Koraga, Kannada, and Tulu; those who are monolingual, such as those who live in the Udupi and Mangalore taluks, speak in two languages: Koraga and Tulu. Koragas who live in Kasaragod now mostly speak Malayalam, with some also speaking Tulu. The Koraga community in the Kasaragod area has undergone a significant linguistic change as a result of this. As the most widely spoken language in the Tulu-speaking communities, Malayalam is gradually replacing Tulu as the most widely spoken language. Koragas are no exception to this rule. Koragas in the Kasaragod district were among the first to use Tulu for external communication with the outside world and their own native Koraga language for internal communication within the community. The Koraga language is rapidly disappearing from the community today, primarily as a result of attrition and language shift. Only a small number of Koragas are fluent in the Koraga language, which is their native dialect. The majority of them speak Malayalam or Tulu, although to a lower degree. The Koraga language is becoming estranged from its original speakers in the Kasaragod region. The ethnic and physical characteristics of the Koragas indicate that they are an ancestral Dravidian group. It is said that the Koragas are members of a matriarchal family structure, and that they worship main Hindu deities as well as their own Bhoota

pantheon of gods. They conduct modest rituals at the time of death, puberty, and marriage, among other things. Their main god is called as KoragaThaniya or Koragajja, depending on who you ask. He also serves as the patron of the Koragas people. Shrine devoted to Koragajja will be built in each Koraga hamlet, and they will be made of tiny stones or any kind of flora, such as plants or trees.

Bootha Kola is an abbreviation for Bootha Kola.

Bootha Kola is a ceremonial custom that is unique to the Tuluva culture and cannot be found anywhere else. It includes the ancient dravidian worship of lesser deities or demi gods known as Bhutas or Daivas, as well as contemporary worship of lesser deities or demi gods. Bootha Kola is the Tuluva equivalent of the Theyyam tradition, which may be found in the neighbouring north Malabar region. It was possible to detect a number of cultural exchanges and similarities between these two areas. Malayalam names Bootha Kola as Tulu Theyyam, while Bhutas of Kerala ancestry are referred to as Malayali Bhuta in Tulu, respectively. The terms Theyyam and Bhuta kola are used by both the Malayalies and the Tuluvas to refer to the same ceremonial practise. In Tulunadu, several Theyyams or Bhutas of Kerala origin are popular, such as Vishnumoorthi and Chamundi, while Tulu Theyyams such as Dhoomavathi and Panjuruli are popular in north Malabar. Bhuta Kola is a custom in which the Bhutas are impersonated by a ritual dancer in the form of a ritual dancer. There are more than 300 Bhuta cults in the world now. Jumadi, Bobbariya, Kalkudan Kallurutti, Vishnumoorthi, Koraga Thaniya, and other Bhutas are among the most well-known of them. The Bhuta impersonators come from the lowest levels of society, and they are considered untouchables by the majority of people. Communities such as the Koppala, Nalikadaye, and Pambada, among others, are known for their traditional Bhuta impersonation in Tulunadu. During the ritual, the ritual dancer is adorned with elaborate makeup and costumes, which are worn by the audience. Tulu oral traditions (paddanas) were used to tell the stories of the deities in the background while the music was playing. This may be compared to the thottam of the Theyyam philosophical traditions. During the ceremony, several instruments such as the kulal, tasse, and dholu are used to accompany the singers. Following the transcendence, the dancer is referred to be Bhuta or God, and his social standing is enhanced as a result.

Bootha Kola is practised by the Koraga Community, just as it is by any other community in Tulunad. Koragathaniya or Koragachan Theyyam, as it is called in Malayalam, is a famous Bhoota deity of Tulunadu and is also known as Koragathaniya or Koragachan Theyyam. The Bhuta, also known as Koragajja, was revered as the supreme god of the Koraga people and was worshipped as such. Bootha Kola is a ritual performed in honour of Koragajja Koragathaniya or Koragachan Theyyam, as it is called in Malayalam, who is a famous Bhoota God in Tulunadu and is known for his benevolence.

The alienation of the Koraga tribe

Koragas are one of the backward tribal communities not only in India perhaps in the entire world. Mainly forest dwellers, they are marginalised as the untouchable community. The social system excluded Koragas. In a

meaner way, the Koragas was not even considered as human beings. It was equivalent to the *untermensch* or sub human slave material concept in Nazi racial policy. Koragas were treated more or less like animals. Their social contexts were not different from that of an animal. It can also be said that the Koraga was merely human to non-Koraga eyes. The Koraga community was subjected to several ill treatments throughout history. Race through the Kambala track and Ajilu practice are some of them. Kambala is the traditional buffalo race conducted throughout the Tulu nadu. It was considered as one of the symbols of the Tuluva culture. It is packed with customs and traditions. One of the practices was that Koragas are made run across the Kamabala fields like buffaloes. Further, traditions existed in association with Kambala like the Kadri Kambala near Mangaluru where the Koragas were subjected to sexual exploitation.

Ajilu practice is described as a cruel custom existed in independent India against the subaltern. The practice involves providing food for the Koragas mixing with human remnants such as nails and hair. They were made to eat it. There are reports of this practice have been performed in modern days. Several Koraga and human right groups were fought against this practice of injustice. The government of Karnataka had prohibited the Ajilu practice as a punishable offense under the Karnataka Koraga Ajilu prohibition act in 2000.

This paper observes the motives of the cultural deterioration of the Koraga Tribe. Three motives are being identified. 1) Cultural Detachment 2) Acculturation and 3) Cultural Transformation. The Linguistic Alienation is identified due to Language shift and attrition.

2. CULTURAL DETACHMENT

Koragas were the outcasts from the mainstream community living in the forest edges of the land. The mainstream communities consider the Koragas as savages. The traditional and cultural practices of the mainstream community are alien to the Koragas community. They don't have their own festivals. They become participants of the festivals observed by the other communities. The culture, tradition, language, etc of a community are important. Here Koragas are left with nothing but the remnants of the mainstream community. As mentioned, the native Koraga tongue is on the verge of extinction, and it is somewhat disappeared from the Koraga hamlets of the Kasaragod district. The Koragas are detached from the mainstream society even in the modern period. They are confined in their own world. This is often viewed as a comfortable zone for them. But the basic amenities are absent in their settlements. This withdrawal syndrome is leading the Koraga community into more seclusion rather than a comfortable point. The dropouts of Koraga children from the schools are high. The literacy levels among the Koragas are somewhat near 15%. Still, many of them liked to live by their own clan profession of basket making. They went inside the forest to collect the raw materials and get back by dusk. Most of the members of the tribe are drawing into the outside world for cheap manual labour. However, contact with the outside world should be associated with their efforts to survive in a globalized modern world.

3. ACCULTURATION

Koragas who are exposed to the outside world are sometimes settled outside their hamlets and persuade others to come out of the comfort zone. Few Koraga community members had completed their primary education and involved in cheap labours around the district. A few members who obtained a secondary education are opting to move out of the hamlets to urban centres for better life conditions. Thus, considerable amounts of Koragas are assimilated into the modern mainstream community. The consequent factors could be identified with the identity loss and language loss. Cultural assimilation compelled Koragas to accept the living standards of the neighbouring communities. The tradition and customs are also accepted. Moreover, a cultural transformation could be visible throughout the relocated Koragas. A language shift is often viewed along with it. In the Kasaragod district, Malayalam is the native tongue whereas in the Mangaluru and Udupi regions it is Tulu and Kannada respectively. The younger generation is receiving education in either of these languages and using these languages while communicating with others.

4. CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The relocation of the Koraga community in Kasaragod also resulted in a cultural transformation of the community. Some of the community members had given up the nomadic life style. They had undergone a cultural transition that involves the urbanization and globalization elements. the cultural transformation is a slow process. In the digitalized world this accelerated due to technological advancement

CONCLUSION

The Koraga Tribe in the Kasaragod District is undergoing a gradual change, which is social, economic and cultural in nature. These above factors serve as motives for the deterioration of the Koraga tribe in Kasaragod. The Koraga counterpart of the Karnataka is also needed to be counted on further discourses. More enquiry and interventions of the administration is required for the further uplifting of the Koraga tribe. Along with that, more academic discourses should be conducted on the various aspects concerning the Koraga tribe.

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