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Adjustment to Adopt a New Landscape of Technological Advancements for the Folk Artist of Rajasthan

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Abstract:

Rajasthan is known for its rich heritage and culture, which the musical communities of Rajasthan are continuously trying to preserve and flourish. Literature can be found in various forms and folk tales and folk songs are also associated with it. Folk tales and music are part of our traditions and culture. Rajasthan is a state where folk music plays an important role. Here music is an integral part of its culture. Folk music is not just a thing for amusement but it is deeply associated with the feelings of the people. Rajasthani folk music can captivate the listeners with its melodious rhythm and lyrics. The origin of these songs is stories that have been transferred from one person to another. There are many popular forms of music in Rajasthan, including Ganwari, Panihari, Maand, Langa, Kalbelia, Chari, Pabu Ji Ri Phad etc.

Although these artists are promoting the rich musical heritage of Rajasthan still, they are facing the issue of technological advancement. The present paper aims to understand the problems of these musical communities in adopting the social media platforms. It is also concerned for the socio-economic condition of the musical communities of Rajasthan. It is significant for those people who want to flourish and preserve the folk art which they learned from their ancestors. The focus is to examine the attitude and perception of mainstream society towards a marginalised musical community. These communities come from the poor sections of the society, where they are suffering for the basic necessities of life.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Music, Folk Literature, Mainstream, Technological Advancement, Social Media.

Introduction

Rajasthan is known for its rich cultural heritage and the folk communities of Rajasthan are continuously preserving and flourishing it. Literature that can be perceived in various forms such as folk tales, folk songs and folk theatre. Rajasthan is a state where folk music has an important place in the heart of every Rajasthani, for them Folk music is not just a mean for amusement but it is deeply associated with the cultural life of the people. Rajasthani folk music can captivate the listeners with its melodious rhythm and lyrics. The origin of these songs are the stories that have been transferred from one person to another.

Rajasthan has a number of musical communities; these communities have been working hard to preserve the history and folk literature of Rajasthan. Among them, the notable communities are: Manganiyar, Kalbelia, Langa, Bhopa, Bheel and Jogi. The popular dances of these people are Ganwari, Panihari, Maand, Langa, Kalbelia, Chari, Pabu Ji Ri Phad etc. These communities are mostly found in western area of Rajasthan and most of them are from the nomadic tribes of Rajasthan. The popular singers among these communities are Allah Jiloh Bai, Mame Khan, Kheta Khan, Gavari Devi, Sartaj Khan, Chhotu Singh Rawana, Rappaiya Baalam and Kohinoor Langa Khan. Women musicians are also skilled in singing as Jamali Devi who is a well-known "Mand Gayiki", Amana Devi and Mali Devi who play on Iktara. Their songs are inspired by Sant Kabir and Meerabai, who played an important part of Indian literature during the Bhakti movement. In the field of Jagran (A full night hymns), Sumitra Devi sings hymns of local deities like Pabu Ji, Devnarayan Ji, Rani Bhatiyani Ji, Goga Ji and Teja Ji.

Manganiyar: Manganiyar people are the legends in the field of music because these people preserve the history and lineage of Rajasthan. Manganiyar community comes under the most prominent group of musicians. Customarily, the Manganiyar have provided family genealogies and ceremonial music to their hereditary patrons for remuneration in kind for at least the past three centuries (Kothari 1994, 205) (1).

Kalbelia: Kalbelia (Snake charmers) community of Rajasthan considered themselves as the followers of saint Kafi Nath. Mostly Kalbelia people are found in Pali, Chittoor and Udaipur district of Rajasthan.

Langa: The Langa literary meant as “Song Giver” is also popular musical community of Rajasthan, these people are mostly found in Barmer Jaisalmer and Jodhpur district of Rajasthan who are skilled artists, poets and musicians. Muslim -Sindhi are the patrons of the Langa community. The Langa community is very much influenced by Sufi music.

Bheel: Bheels are very much involved in song and dance, and it is a colorful community. They perform Ghoomar and Gair dances during their traditional presentation. Music, song, and dance are an integral part of Bhil life and they accompany it in all feasts and celebrations.

Bhopa: Bhopa is also a group that is associated with the religious musical community. The singers who recite stories in the music are called Bhopas. The musical ballads are favorite to Bhopas who perform song and dance while reading painted scrolls. These scrolls are called Pabuji ri Phad that Bhopas recite in front of the audience.

Although these artists are still promoting the rich musical heritage of Rajasthan, they are still not getting proper attention from the society. The present paper aims to understand the challenges of these musical communities in preserving folk music of Rajasthan. It is also concerned for the socio-economic condition and adaptation with digital media of the musical communities of Rajasthan. It is significant for those people who want to flourish and preserve the folk art which they learned from their ancestors. The focus is to examine the attitude and perception of folk communities towards a digitalization in arts. These communities come from the poor sections of the society, where they are suffering for the basic necessities of life. Therefore, present study stresses that many of the music artists are poor and have no hope for any financial help. These musical communities are unaware of any government schemes and benefits, facing unending hardships to use multi-media sources. Everyday these communities are victims of the atrocities of the so-called civilized society. These highly talented artists are forced to beg to fill their stomachs.

This study focuses the research questions

- (a) What is the necessity for conveying folk music on social platforms?
- (b) What are the problems suffered by the musical folk communities of Rajasthan?
- (c) Is there any variation mandatory? If yes, what, how and where?

- (d) What are the occasions this investigation proposes?
- (e) What type of communication and description in conveying folk music styles should be used for the upcoming generation?
- (f) What are the threats in this switch media

Traditional Narrative Style of the Rajasthani Communities

The lyrics of Manganiyari and Kalbelia groups sing for desert culture. These musical groups set the tune for the couplets and ballads. Normally this begins with Alap and sets the tune for epic ballads. The songs are inspired by the local folk deities and legends most prominently tales of Pabuji, Ramdev ji, Gogaji, Tejaji and Rani Bhatiyani ji which the Langa and Manganiyar community sing with their musical instruments. It is also observed that these local musicians also present the literary tradition of choric songs when the other participants repeat the verse. Surely, these musicians are actively involved in the vocal groups who perform and sing together to highlight their culture in world scenarios. There are some artists sitting behind to do commentary on the actions of the ballad that reminds us of Homer and Odysseus. The musical instruments used here indicate the mental condition of the characters.

Challenges for the Folk Communities

Societal Challenges

Despite preserving the Rajasthani folk culture, these communities are facing various problems for their existence. These tribes are not getting any financial support from the government schemes, although there are some beneficial schemes but due to lack of education and awareness, these musical communities are getting any support. One of the biggest problems is that due to their belonging to Muslim community and closer to Hindu families as Manganiyar, Langa and Kalbelia communities are facing a religious identity crisis too. Kalbelia, Manganiyar and Langa communities, earlier they used to get financial help from the Rajput kings because they were the entertainers and used to have genealogical records of these royal families, now they are helpless and struggling to fill their stomach for a single time once a day.

Secondly, these tribes are not ready to adapt with the other cultural changes of the society. Kalbelia and Manganiyar tribes reside at the outer-side of the village, therefore it is very hard for

them to mingle with other castes of Rajasthan, we can say that these people are not flexible with the other culture and arts to adopt it easily. Rather than this the upcoming generation of these communities are not interested in learning their traditional art because after performing very hard, audiences are not getting sufficient money and young children are moving towards education.

Earlier there was a system in which royal families used to give food and financial help to these musical communities who had been working continuously in their houses. Now it has almost stopped. Some communities are often seen protesting for education and land entitlement and also demands for the proper auditorium or any such place where they can practice their art. For many years, some of these musical communities by occupation have provided family lineages and performed to their genetic musical patrons for wages. They have been devoted not only to distinct patron relations, but also to complete family heredities over many generations through communal and financial dependence. However, in current times, new innovation is threatening this lifestyle. No longer do fresher musicians see the length of musical collection that their fathers knew, nor do they be contingent so much on their *jajmans* (patrons) financially. Likewise, their *jajman* families do not generally possess the musical knowledge and interest that their ancestors once had, nor do they feel the responsibility to provide economic sustainability for their Manganiyar. Many musicians have begun to excel the limitations of their low caste title and position in society by integrating not only development rhetoric.

Narayan Bareth says when we have visited him in Barefoot College of Tilonia in Rajasthan to highlight socio-economic status of folk artists as are, Langa and Manganiyar and felt remorseful state of the folk artistes in the state. “If the present situation continues to be allowed, we will see some of the instruments will be fashioned out,” says Manohar Lalas, a disciple of late Komal Kothari who promoted the folk musicians of the desert. A renowned social worker Bankar Roy conducted a survey, he writes that the musical communities of Rajasthan are not getting survival needs as water, housing and even burial ground. The Barefoot College survey also reports that the local artists were forced to go for secondary options for income. Consequently, these musicians are going back and getting frustrated and their art is slowly fading.

Yogita Swami (2020) (2) a journalist infers in her interview given to Indian Express that “these musical folk singers who are lower caste Muslims are referred to as BEGGAR in spite of

being traditional artists'. The musical artists of these communities perform their art on various occasions but get only a small amount or just food items in return for their performance". Some of the artists have performed abroad and even performed on Door Darshan and All -India Radio still not getting proper money for that laments the artists of these communities. It is very hard for them to get any offer to perform on the stage, only a famous artist can approach the big audience, rest are not coming out from their present situation.

Challenges of Digital Media

During the struggling times as in Covid pandemic, the construction of art and its circulation were harshly hit globally. The folk artists of Rajasthan suffered badly during the covid pandemic. They were facing the starvation and lack of resources to present their art. Even they were not aware of the social media that was approachable and accessible platform for the people. Some of the folk artists somehow learned this technique and uploaded it on the social media recorded or live. Dr. Nikhil Kumar Gouda (2022) (3) writes in their article that During this period, most public institutions lack audiences and there is a passive reaction of the government.

Khandge (2021) (4) writes that folk art can be expressed through various means as music, dance and drama. Which these local folk uneducated artists are serving to their coming generations. The study also states social media definitely affects our values and can help spread our age-old civilizations with enormous desire and respect. During the performance, the artists feel demotivated due to lack of audience therefore it is required that the government should promote and support through announcements on social media, and offering simulated trips. In addition, the Sangeet Natak Academy, Ravindra Manch Jawahar Kala Kendra, Shilp Gram Sanstha should plans for organizing events as Summer Festival, Desert Festival, Pushkar Mela etc. with special opportunities for their advancement, it may be a great help for the artists.

Shalini Ayangiri (2007) (5) writes in her paper about narrowing gaps and widening the capacities for empowerment the musical communities of Rajasthan "These musicians have always made their livings from begging. Well, not anymore. Now we beg from them". She has examined how this community of musicians, in an ever-increasing world of modernization, is actively [re]configuring musical practices, [re]constructing space and social positioning, and [re]articulating relationships in order to assert their livelihoods and individual agency. An

investigation has been conducted by various researchers on folk artists in Rajasthan, they collected folk songs on social aspects of their struggle to blow-out consciousness that is intensively rooted in the folk artists that how to use digital media on a large scale not just performing on the theater or the stage.

Expectations from Society and the Government

These poor uneducated artists are not trained for online performance so they face many problems uploading folk content on social media. Government should introduce these new technological innovations for their cultural expansion since there are no other alternatives for the continuation of art. In beginning artists may feel hesitant to learn it, but if successful artists will motivate them and help them, then it will not be a hard task for them. It is also seeming that there is no equal partition of the female music artist although there are many dedicated female performers in folk communities of Rajasthan. Now we should give proper space to the female artist to move forward a step. Another thing is that these artists come from a rural background and are not educated, hence their performance is also traditional.

Nowadays Bollywood is mixing folk music with western and the rustic artist are not come up with the mixing of their musical songs and style. We talked with an artist he says that if I am ready for the digital platform, there I face ambience issue and I feel stuck in this situation and remains inexpressive, I lose my concentration and my quality degrades, only because of unfamiliarity with the technology. We are poor people who are not familiar with high production equipment. What we want is the YouTube tutorials and practice to do a lot for this. Many artists got offers for the big events. They told us that there was very little camera space in the recording room, they lost that spontaneity that we feel in the open surroundings of Rajasthan. The majority of the artists are not committed to their art, so they pay less concentration with this mindset that singing and music are not giving them sufficient earning. Some artists are really talented but they are passive due to the financial pressure and a smaller number of audiences. “If an artist’s art is not reaching to the level which he or she wants, then what should the artist feel...Obviously he or she will not feel motivated and we will not upgrade our skills” says Bungar Khan.

Conclusion

Therefore, this paper is an attempt to give insights about music and literature of Rajasthani musical communities. It has discussed the traditional music and legends of the communities with their musical instruments. Malini Nayar writes “The world of Rajasthani folk music is shrinking despite its global fame and success”. In the absence of local support Manganiyar and Langas are forgetting the local Gathas and Kathas”. It has concerns with thousands of musical artists of Rajasthan who are preserving the folk literature through their tradition of music and dance especially the Langa, Manganiyar, Kalbelia and Bhopa communities of Rajasthan, which are doing their job from generation to generation and are desperate for earning. Here arouses a question that whether these communities are able to assume any role in all literature or in a literary society? Hence, this paper provides a debate: what is the place of these local musicians? Are they really contributing in our literature- if yes then where is the place, what is the role for these musicians? Therefore, efforts are required to do our best to get the proper recognition and foster the musical arts and enhance their skill. Definitely it will help in promoting culturally and financially to these folk artists. It is a privilege for us that there are people around us who are preserving oral folk traditions and literature of Rajasthan. These people are not educated but orally document our folk literature in the form of songs and stories. The future generation of these artists are suffering for the basic needs hence it is required that these marginalized communities should be given proper attention.

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