Art and Distinctive Culture of Budga Jangama Community

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Introduction
Indian Tribal Culture speaks volumes about the diversity of the country. 'Unity in diversity' is one of the most spectacular features amongst the population of India. Amongst the diversified population, a significant portion comprises the tribal people, the aboriginal inhabitants of the primeval land. Tribal culture of India, their traditions and practices interpenetrate almost all the aspects of Indian culture and civilization. In order to comprehend tribal culture in India, to understand the uniqueness of their culture, a detailed study is very much required by travelling within the society. Affectionate hospitality, undemanding ways of living and earnest judgment of the opinions is some of the characteristic traits that earmark tribal cultures of India. Their customs mirror their confidence in simplicity. Most of the tribes in India possess their own gods and goddesses, reflecting the dependence of tribal people on nature and animals. Except for the few, most of the tribes in India are affable, hospitable and fun-loving, coupled with potent community bonding. Some of the tribes share patriarchal cultural ties and some of the tribal societies are inclined towards women-oriented issues. Thus, they have their own festivals and celebrations. In the book Primitive Culture, E B Taylor has pointed out that Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society.

This paper focuses on the distinctive culture and art of Budga Jangama tribe in Karnataka. Karnataka is a treasure of folk arts. Each community has enriched the culture by its own art form. Hagalu Vesha is one such art which has carved its own niche in the field of art and culture in Karnataka.

Origin of Budga jangama
Hagalu Vesha artists stage episodes of great epics of India and many stories of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata were popularized by these artists even before the advent of mainstream communication medium. As per 2011 Census, the population of Budga Jangamas is 24132 only. The members of this tribal community are largely seen in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The mother tongue of this tribe is Budga (Maragu). Historical evidences have proved that Hagalu Vesha was in practice right from 12th century. It is also said that Basavanna's followers successfully utilized the services of hagalu vesha artists to spread religion across Karnataka. During the reign of Shivaji, the members of this community were used as spies. Great kings and kingdom patronized the art of Hagalu Vesha. Hagalu Vesha artists are basically forest dwellers and they ate forest fruits and vegetables. Hagalu Vesha is a collective art which includes literature, humor, dance and music. Hagalu Vesha is the root of folk performing arts in Karnataka. Hagalu vesha artists are also known as Bahurupi, Bhagavata, Burrakatha artists, Bairagi, Kondamama, Bala Santa, Beda Jangama, Budga Jangama and Jangala. The attire of Hagalu vesha artists has become their identity.

Unique Culture
The art of this community is different from other tribal communities. They do not retire after performing for one day. They neither beg nor take rest after earning some money after staging public shows. Haglu Vesha has many forms such as Burra Katha Mela, hagalu vesha, Balasantha Mela, bairagi mela, Kur Kar Mama Kondamama Mela, folk music, light music and Vachana Mela. This is the distinctive feature of this tribal community. They breathe art.

The multitude gathers in large numbers upon seeing these artists. Thousands of eyes witness the art of this community when Hagalu Vesha artists apply Kajol on their eyelids. The artists of this art perform stories picked from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. This art is indeed a blend of dance, music, humor and literature. The artists camp in small villages and prefer to erect their tents on the outskirts of a village. They present Surpanakhi Garvabhanga, Mohini Bhasmasura, Sundha
Upasundha, Jatursura Vadhe, Siddi Vesha and other episodes on daily basis. For them it is a means to instill social values among people by performing these shows. They have dedicated their lives for the cause of this art. They are neither staying nor visiting artists. They prefer to live amidst masses despite living on the outskirts. Art has been the unique identity of this community. Even an infant is exposed to this art at a very young age. The artists don the role of Rama, Ravana Bhima and other mythological characters. An artist repeatedly changes his role from place to place. All female characters are played by men only.

These artists catch local languages very easily and as a result of this they are well versed in Kannada, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi and Urdu. Each artist is a living encyclopedia. Most prominent artist from this community is Burakatha Daroji Eramma. She has won Dr Ambedkar award, Janapada Sri award, D. Raj Kumar Award, Nadoja (doctorate) Award. The folk epics of Daroji Eramma have resulted in publishing Kumara Ramana Mahakavya, (Mega Peic of Kumara Rama), Krishna Gollara Mahakavya, Yallammana Kavya written by noted Kananda scholar Dr K M Metri. Likewise, Dr Sa Chi Ramesh has written Syasi Chinnammanama Kavya, Marawadi Seth Kavya, Dr Chaluvaraj has authored Balanagamma Mahakavya, Bali Chakravarti. Her grandson V. Ramanjineya has Editing Bobbili Nagreddy Kavya.

However, the material available on Daroji Eramma’s art is very minimal. Had the scholars have studied more on Daroji Eramma, more books would have been published by now. Hagalu vesha artists are blessed with photographic memory power. They have the in born talent to perform any mythological roles without any prior rehearsal. These artists never perform for the sake of living but for the sake of the art. However, this community has been left in lurch these days. They are no less than cine artists when it comes to enacting mythological roles but unfortunately they are not properly supported by the masses. They do not need any make up artists for make up as they can do make up for themselves and sing as per raga, tala, bhava.

With advent of globalization and modernity the hagalu vesha art has been belittled by mainstream artists. The modernity has left them in lurch as there are no takers for this art. They have now resorted to sell plastic goods, sarees, mattress, and other petty jobs. Janapada Academy awardees Ashwa Ramanna opines that Hagalu vesha artists should be extended monthly pension and other social security schemes to make them live with dignity.

Hagalu Vesha culture, if understood in a broad sense, indicates all human activities such as religion, philosophy, moral standards, laws, politics, economic, society, history, literature and art, such as have been preserved, learned and transmitted in a given community or group over a long period of time. With the rapid development of modernization and scientific civilization we are faced with several problems common to all human races. How can Hagalu Vesha artists establish coexistence and co prosperity? How can man they maintain harmony with nature and how can they protect their dignity? We should tackle these problems together by going beyond ethnic and national backgrounds, because the problems are related to the whole earth itself rather than to only individual nations. This paper is an endeavor that we should be always accompanied by the quest of how human beings can be human. At the same time each country should review its own traditions and discover new meanings in the traditional ways of life.

Objectives
Cultural study of a community does not necessarily mean assessing the rituals, customs and beliefs but it is rather to identify the social status of a community. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To know the comprehensive social status of Budga Jangama community.
2. To identify the unique quality of their performing arts.
3. To identify the challenges and problems of Budga Jangama in the light of influence of globalization.

Study Area
Buda Jangama community is largely found in Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu states. However this study is restricted to Hyderabad Karnataka region where major chunk of Budga Jangama community is inhabited. Six districts of this region namely Yadgiri, Koppal, Kalburgi, Raichur, and Bidar districts have been selected for this study. Hyderabad Karnataka region was ruled over by many kingdoms and dynasties. Majority of South Indian social and cultural movements began from here. Likewise, Vachana Movement, Haridasa Movement, Anubhava School of Thought had their
genesis here. Moreover, this place is rich in terms of natural resources and Krishna, Bhima and Tunga Bhadra Rivers flow in this region. The social and cultural movements took place in this region have a great significant impact on the life of Budga Jangama and nomadic tribes. The cultural features of this community have bridged Kannada and Telugu oral tradition. This community has made this region as its centre place to eke out a living from ages. Even today, this community is largely found in this region. That is why the present study has chosen this region to explore the social status of this community.

Hypothesis
1. Budga Jangamas, who have been agents of promoting folk arts since ages, are waiting for best possible opportunities to come to the mainstream of the society.
2. The members of this community are now pinning hopes on welfare measures to be taken up by the government to uplift this community which is battered by social, economical and educational problems.

Methodology
A research study would be incomplete which is devoid of a proper methodology. How to study (Methodology) is as important as what to study. The present study would employ questionnaire, interview, statistical data, comparative study and historical methods. Both written and oral sources would be used for this study. The origin of Budga Jangama, their food culture, customs, judicial system, oral literature, education, migration, festivities would also be video recorded.

Conclusion
The specific objective of this study is to identify the social status and economic conditions of Budga Jangama community which is worst hit owing to the onslaught of the globalization, privatization policies and rampant industrialization. They are being treated like hapless creatures at the hands of capitalists. The other objectives are they are paid paltry sum while the big capitalists are earning in huge sums at the cost of the hard work done by these hapless community. How do the members of this community cope with when in financial distress? What about their health conditions? These questions will be probed in this study. Besides this, this study intends to examine the socio-economic conditions, the analysis of welfare schemes implemented by the Government, the problems and challenges faced by them, and the impact of modernity over the traditional occupation of this community would be analyzed in detail. The people of the community moved in small bands from place to place by putting up typical Budag Jangam tents on the outskirts of the villages. They either cooked food or begged from households in the main village. Hunting and making of leaf mats was the main avocation but the decreasing forest cover, urbanization and invention of plastic goods led the community people to shift to hawking plastic pitchers. The street vending was a recent phenomenon. Since they had experience to sell leaf mats on the streets, they could easily adopt to vending plastic utensils. According to scholars, the community men hunted and ate anything that crawls aright from wild cat, jackal, lizards, etc. However, the community men were discarding hunting due to restrictions and the shrinking forest area. The community practiced its own set of rules for marriages, divorce and settlement of marital disputes. It is argued that the members of this community are mistaken Shivites. The present study feels that that a fresh anthropological study of the community would put to rest all the doubts.

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