

Cultural Aspects of Matuaism

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ABSTRACT

Human being is the best creation of 'God' among the entire animal world. Therefore, He creates all types of environment and needful things whatever he or she needs. He invented a suitable world and a beautiful nature for him or her. Everything goes on nature's own rule and regulation. No any creature is boundless within this world. However, when any animal has become greedy, he wants more and tortures others for his relaxation or demand. Then, he has broken all the limits and has crossed all the boundaries. After that, he has created his own rules and regulations. In addition, he has divided many formulas between him and others. He has started to torture others and to absorb all types whatever he or she could. For these reason creates any new things like new society, status, and ways of living and different types of races. We all know that there is any difference within the word 'race of man'. However, some people have created different kinds community within human being.

1. Introduction

We can see lots of community within this world. Many reasons are presence for appearing of any new community. Like that community, one has appeared in the adjoining border of East Bengal of India. The name of the community is 'Matua'. Though there is presence lots controversy to take the name 'Matua'. Having taken the people of Namasudra society and all types' lower or base castes of all over earlier independent India, Sri SriHarichand Thakur has established it. It was a religious community as of 'Matua Dharma'. 'Matuar Religion' has set up to protect absorption of merchants, property owners of Hindu-caste who hated, neglected maximum religiously and socially of Namasudras lower castes of East Bengal. For the protection of Namasudras and other, lower caste from neglect of priest's doctrine and diverting into Islam and Christian religion. It established also for the development self-consciousness and spiritual sensation for protection and rescue of Namasudras and lower castes. It protests against obsolete, illogical, in human and derogatory traditional practices of their followers. The messages of 'Matua Religion' advised to all human beings of the world. The aims of this religion were more merciful how the depressed class only and to retrieve them to the main stream of society, and not to believe the practices of caste distinction. Therefore, the people of all communities accept and bring up with this religion. It was also as aim to donate dignity of the people of Namsudras and lower castes. They advised to believe in the doctrine of action and to do work in hand with the uttering of the name of God in mouth. They have suggested bringing up the religion of familial lives honestly having the practicing of the life of spiritual meditation and the *Brahmacharyawith* their only own wife. The Matua's sect is monotheist. The lower people have advised not to follow Vedic rituals. They showed the way of salvation by keeping faith and devotion only one that is God.

Different types of works performed and developed with the help of 'Matua Religion' for Namasudras and others lower parts of society. It performed social reformation, cultural reformation, establishment of a newly distinct religion, development of social status, respect, position and honour, development in agriculture, economy, familial lives, human moralities,

reservation in educations, services and in elections etc. These become needful for different types social positions and because of partition of society and professions. Coming of Aryan caste and their tortures upon other castes, maintaining keen system, following of restriction about food habits, customs and cultures of different castes, social marriage system, social rituals, protection of religion from devastations, establishing of identity and to construct a new ways of freedom life-living.

Before the Aryan periods of India as like the developed economic structures were Kings, emperors, town-councilors etc. respectable persons with these there were also man servants and maidservants. According to the Yajurveda, the works of four castes or classes explained. It had been come to close to inner-class marriages. The Brahmins set up at the top position of the society through the base of works. The differences started within the cultures of social arrangements on the base of class or colour. Later it started to create their cultures of every class. After that, these started to appear as distinct categories. However, the Brahmins were at the top of position of the society. Therefore, lots of rules and regulations depended on them. Because these Brahmins only the main creators of cultures and maintainer or main advisers. After some time, these were happened newly mixtures within the social arrangement. There were formed newly class mixtures also within the social arrangements. As a result, there created new classes. In India, there could found another one class who were original inhabitants or natives, famous as Koal, Munda, Adibasdi, Santal etc. They lived within the severe, extensive localities. Their foods, habits, rules and regulations of living, cultures, and social arrangements were a completely distinct figure. We could not find out similarities with them.¹

Culture is the word, which means the arts and other manifestation of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. Cultural aspects of Matuaism are relating to the ideas, customs and social behavior of the 'Matua' society. It is the community of human kind, in particular of Matuas. Though, Matua community established taking the men and women of Namasudras and other lower castes. In the early

days, social structure was formed within institutional inequalities of untouchable castes for the partition of human societies based on caste, colour, religion etc. So, they are habituated with different types activities, customs, habits, rituals, ways of life living.

Matuas are doesn't do worship the other God or Goddess only the God Shree Hari. Most of Matuas does not to love ales and drinks, not to smoke Ganja and not to steal any things. They always try to left the habits of playing cards, chess, gambling's. To acquire self-power, they obey the rituals of society and do business with maintaining the sacredness of character for getting the difference within the castes. They habituate to devote to their parents with purity, to became good courteous in the breathing and habit of sanctity. They maintain the expenditures in the works of marriage, obsequies etc without reason. They make relation with their own wife only at the time of period if the intension grew in the mind of taking child. To comprehend of revolutions and equalities, Matuas use the red flag, which is bordered with white colour to keep the similarities of political, economic and social.²

Like that Matuas use a religious stick in their hands to save the religious persons, to deal the irreligiousness, to relief the distress, ailment of bodies, by worshiping regularly as mighty Matuas keep watch the power of austere endeavor of women than the power of men. Matuas keep long hair to gain the greatest object by the power of masculinity. However, they are males, but they take the disguise of cogitation of female to realize the world lord. Matuas ring the trumpet in high volume with the uttering of the name of lord Hari in devotion. They utter

the name of lord Hari seated with this to less the power of physical six complexes and to destroy the plasmas of different kinds of the microbes of body.

A different type of festivals, fair, dance-songs, operas, plays etc. Carry proves of cultures of their communities. Habitual adoration in lower castes people and social festivals of Namasudras, sweepers, blacksmiths, potters etc. of ancient Bengal conducted without Brahmin priests. If prosperous philosophy does not work in the field of adoration of home, Devi Manasa, first day moving of plough of farmers, first day of cutting of crops and spreading of seeds, wheels of potter, loom of weaver, adoration of blacksmith's furnace, these festivals are celebrated with deep attention in the questioning of lives and professions. These festivals were outer purification of Brahmin. Within the borderless poverty and distressful lives, in the courtyard of own arts, literature and culture, Matuas tried to enjoy with the connecting to different festivals like 'Baruni Fair, Matua's songs, poet-songs, plays or operas and gave patronization within introducer, saints, Pagal(mad) and organizers of Matuareligion. Matua's cultural festivals are lifted up in the following figures-

'Baruni Fair' is the best the festival of Matuas, which is observed at the birth day of Harichand Thakur on thirteenth day Falgun month of every year of Bengali calendar. Baruni Fair started first at Orakandi of Faridpur of Bangladesh. Guruchand Thakur introduced this fair. In after partition of country Pramath Ranjan Thakur started 'Baruni Fair' at Thakar Nagar of North 24 Pargana. Every year near about 15-20 lakh devotees come here.



Plates : Different scenes of Maha Baruni Purnosnanand Mela 2011 Sridam Orakandi³

Characteristics of 'Baruni Fair' are- here, devotees of gangs of Matua branch *sangha* from different parts of country, have influenced taking the framed pictures of Harichand, tri-angular red flag in hands, trumpets, a dish of bell metals, horns for blowing etc. different types of musical instruments are rung and giving 'Matam' in the restless dance saying as'

jay Harichand', 'Jay Harichand', 'Haribol', 'Haribol'. After that they bathed in the pond, 'Kamana Sagar' of Thakur Nagar and submitted their words of demands and complexes to Harichand and Guruchand Thakur to purify them with the holy water and to be cured of their diseases.



Plate 2: Matua followers are taking bath in Kamana Sagar because they think that their every sin shall be curtailed if they taking bath in this sacred pond.⁴

Famous village fair investigator, Bhubesh Dutta wrote about this fair-“If I could be able to come here, I would feel that thousands of people come from inland and foreign country, what arrangement is organized for their food and lodging.

Having taken the information about this, I was able to know that every person has given rice-pulse etc. and staying place are hither and thither. But no one has any complain, no one has any dissatisfaction, all are confined with one tune.”³



Plate :Matua followers are nourishing their *Baruni* festival in Thakurnagar⁵



Plate 6:Women are ready to welcome the Matua at Thakur Nagar ⁶



Plate 7:Cultural road procession by Matua Followers in Thakur Nagar⁷



Plate 4:Using typical instrument during festival And a procession of women in traditional⁸



Plate 5:Soul sacrificing followers of Matuaism during Mahabaruni Mahamela⁹

Through the whole year, villagers wait for this primordial alliance festival and keep prepared arrangement of food and lodging for a week. Within a month of participation in ‘Baruni Fair’, devotees celebrate grand festivals which are called as ‘ChhayaBaruni’ or ‘ShakhaBaruni’ in the own localities or at the

birthplaces of special ascetics. Matuasangeet or song and Matuapadageeti or foot songs are another important branch of Matua’s culture of literature. Before the coming of Matuas, Banglali songs have made stronger and have grown up by lyrical singers or poets of Namasudrascastes. In the field of

folksongs, boat-songs, Boul-songs or singing songs in a special mode illustrating their doctrine, got an ancient example of Namasudras. Spiritual feelings and effects of marginal feeling are more observable in these songs. Greatness of Hari-Gurchand, On the one side, songs are found as philosophy of Matua religion and process of austerities, but on the other hand, these are identified as movements of historical events and feelings of life-living subject of society. Indigent devotion of Hari-Guruchand towards spiritual dalliance, bewilderment, Matua devotees, glorification of simple, general people or within the publication of good-bad manner of austerity of any eleventh lunar day of a fortnight keeps an urge of reaching towards a suspicious aim of readers mind within these songs.¹⁰

'Kabigan' or 'songs of poets' is another important side of Matua's literature and culture. Kabigan is the mainly mass-literature or human cultural based. These poets are not only singers but also reformers. Poets spread Matua Dharma and also different ways of Matua religion. Matuas use Hari-play, play and narrative songs for spread of Matua religion. Charak or ceremonial swinging from tall pole by worshipers of shiva and 'Ashtak Gan' or songs of ashtak are seen in Matuas within different places. 'Harilut, Shantisabh, 'Matua Mahachhap' are celebrated within the different Matua Branch Sangha or the houses of devotees or Gonsai. Companies with horns, trumpets, flags fans etc do processions, they become busy in joy tuning with dance and enter in the courtyard of 'Harilut Matua festival' dancing with the position saying as 'Haribol', 'Haribol', 'Jay Harichand', 'Jay Shanti-Satyabhama' etc. This situation is called as 'Matam'. After that assembled Matua 'adoration' song is sung in front of the image of deity, Hari. Then 'Sri Sri Harileelamrita' is read by pious or Gonsai. Later 'Adoration community' of local branches serve sings and with the distribution of propitiousness, 'Harilut' or grand festival is ended. Other festival are celebrated in different places in different names like-

- *All India Convension Of Matua Pratibimbo Pratika' and 'Matua Research Committee' formed at Shampur and Beltala Pally in Burdwan in 1999.*
- *'Historical Meeting Of The Members Blongs To Matua Research Team at Netaji Institute Hall Kolkata in 2003.*
- *'Matua Religious Festival And Cultural Programn', 'Matua Religious Festival And Cultural Programnin' in 2007.*
- *'Matua Religious Festival And Cultural Programn', at Suryasen Park, South Kolkata in 2007.*
- *'Matua Religious Festival And Cultural Programn' at Rangamati Colony, Bankura in 2007.*
- *'Big Festival In Memorable Of Hari Guru, Gopal Chand at Jokatran Sarani Kolkata, 104 in 2007.*
- *'In Memorable Programn Of Maha Kavi Maharshi Mahananda Haldar' at Parol Kot, Pakhanjar in 2008, 'Maharani Bathe Festival And Matua Religious Festival' at Indira Bijosh Nagar, Uttara Khandin 2008.*
- *'Fourth Matua Religious Festival', at 2 No Netaji Colony at Chittaranjan of Burdwan in 2008, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Utsav' at Thakur Nagar, North 24 Pgs, 1n 2008.*

- *'Matua Mahati Mahotsav' in 2008, 'A Program Which Is Recognized In Memorable Of Goswami Jagadish Chandra Sadu' at Rangamati Thakur Bari, Bankura District, in 2008.*
- *'Matua Mahotsav' at Bankura Patrai Colony, in 2009.*
- *'Bithday celebration 124 years of Shyamchand Gonsai' at Pakanji Harichand Ashram, Odisha, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Religious Festival' at Jou Gram, Burdwan District, in 2009.*
- *'Fifth Years Matua Religious Convension' at 2 No Camp Chittaranjan Colony, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Big festival' at Naihati, Amrapally, North 24 Pargana, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Big Festival And Religious Programn' at Government Colony Hoogly District, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Mahotsav Programn' at Hiragacmeehi, Jyoti Pally at Burdwan, in 2009.*
- *'Matua Religious Meeting And Big Festival Programn' at Pachkura Gram, Bankura, in 2008.*
- *'Matua Big Religious Meeting And Festivals' at Arab Amir Sahi Palace Hotel, Dubai in 2010.*
- *'Big Convension And Meeting' at Sports City Complex, Dubai, 'Matua Religious Festival' at Boreya Gram, Nadia in 2010.*
- *'Matua Religious Meeting And Big Festival Programn' at Nabbab Nagar, Burdaman, in 2009.*
- *'All India Matua Big Ceremony And Meeting Programn' at Malkangiri, Burdwan, in 2010.*
- *'Matua Religious Programn And Meeting' at Gangur, 'Matua Religious Convension' at Pally Shree Madhyamana Colony, Barojora Block, Bankura, in 2010.*
- *'Jayanti Big Fair In Memorable Of Shri Shri Harichand' at Ram Nagar Village Reside At Sea Shore, Odisha, in 2009.*
- *'Annual Matua Big Festival' at Chaparnu Hat Village Near Katowa, Burdwan District, in 2010.*
- *'Matua Religious Convension And Matua Big Festival' at 2 No. Netaji Colony Near Chittaranjan, Burdwan, in 2010.*
- *'All india Representative Of Matua Religious Convension' at Bugda Village, North 24 Pgs, in 2010.*
- *In 2010.*
- *'Meeting on Memorable Of Shri Hari Chad And Guru Chad' at Ashok Nagar, in 2010.*
- *'Matua Respeactory's People Meeting And Festival' at North 24 Pargana in 2010¹¹*

The cultural atmosphere of Namasudras developed in association with all the existing social terms, lifestyle, ethics, rules and regulation the generation tend to follow, rituals and religion of the nation. The traditional culture of India since time immemorial and the culture developed by the Matuas cannot be the same. Certain disparities found among them. There exist both similarities and disparities in between the inherited culture of India and the culture developed by the Matuas through their own philosophy. *Matua Sangit* (spiritual songs of the Matua sect) containing praises of the god Hari and their gurus, Harichand Thakur and Guruchand. Composers of

Matua songs include AswaniGosai; Tarak Chandra Sarkar, ManoharSarker, MahanandaSarker, RasikSarker, PrafullaGonsai, SurendranathSarker, and SwarupSarker. Composed in the manner of baul songs, these songs are predominantly about love (prem) and devotion (bhakti). The closing lines of the songs mention the name of the composer. Musical instruments such as the drum, shibga, and kansar are used as accompaniments.

The devotees dance while they sing. Matuya songs describe the longing of the soul for the divine. As in other religious poetry, the desire of the human soul is imaged in terms of human love as in the following songs: "Haritomarnamermadhu pan korlana man-bhramara (The honey-bee mind has not drunk the honey from your name, oh Hari), Kabetanrepab re, parankandeHarichandbali (When shall I meet Him, my soul cries for Harichand), Amar eiakivchan, he Guruchandtomayamibhalabasi (Listen to me, O Guruchand, I love you).

"AcherangaNirukta", written by *Bhadrabahu* who was Spoken as the guru or the spiritual teacher of Chandra GuptaMourjya, there created total of sixteen classes- Brahmin, kshatriya, *baishya*, *shudra*, *mixed-kshatriya*, *Mixedbaishya*, *mixedshudra*, *ambatath*, *wgra*, *Nishad*, *seet*, *Kshatta*, *Baideh* and *Chanda* etc. In India, there could be found another one class who were Original inhabitants' natives, famous as *koal*, *munda*, *adibasi*, *Sawtal* etc. They lived within the serve, extensive localities.¹²

Their foods, habits, rules and regulations of living, cultures, and social arrangements were a completely distinct figure. We could not find out similarities with them. After that there could be seen to create more and newly thirty six classes on the bases of taking foods and living of lives. The persons, whose foods, manners and customs, arrangements of living

lives were like the manners of varieties. The manners and customs of social arrangement constructed mainly on the base of scriptures.¹³

Matuas ring a trumpet at the time with the uttering the name of *Hari*. *Jaatuas* use a red flag to symbolize equalities of political, economic and social. Matuas use a stick in their hand as a religion stick. *Matuas* keep long hairs for their desireless love and the power of devotions. Matuas attempt to protect the properties of their fathers all time. It has said to all *matuasto* rear at start point of youth. Matuas are included with *Aaud* community. With these, within Matua religion, females have given the rights like males to read the *sasipfuses*, to bring up religion, to human rights and to social rights. There is not present any counteract within the Hindu system of untouchability. Matuas think all human being are sacred within Matua Religion. There is not present any arrangement of polygamy. Even they complete their ideal marriage ceremony with their own distinct opinion avoiding rules and regulation of Vedas Brahmin. Matuas are one- woman *brahmacharya*. Matua religion is free from superstition. All people have right to entering into a temple within Matua religion. Matua religion do not agree with Vedic religion in believing, they do not obey the administrator of Vedic, within Matua Religion, there is not present the religion of an ascetic mendicancy. There is not present the practices of immolation within Matua religion. There is only one absolute name, which is 'Haribal' or shouting of the name of Lord *Hari*. According to their opinion, they perform all the *sraddha* ceremonies. Matua Religion is not pompous, easily reared. Matuas do not worship any other God or goddess and any idolatory, within them there have not the custom of a *Kulin* family. Matuas respect other woman considering as a mother. They live the lives not behaving contrarily, not eating ales and drinks, *ganja*. They bring up the human lives like an ascetic mendicancy having left the playing of cards, chess, gambling and quitting all things.¹⁴

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