

EVOLUTION OF RISA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRIPURI TRIBES IN TRIPURA

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Abstract

Tripura is a tiny state of North-Eastern region of India. One of the major tribes residing there weave and wear a traditional dress called Risa. During the reign of Raja Trilochan, the King of Tripura this form of weaving almost reached the peak. However, this incredible traditional cloth is at present undergoing huge changes because of the demands of a changing society and lack of financial support. This particular fabric is woven in their own traditional handloom called loin loom. The finished products are vivid, multicoloured and showcase a variety of designs, which give an additional significance to their weaving. Risa plays a central role in the structure of Tripuri tribal community. Its stands like a fine mast in the construction of special designs of Tripura and its people. This research focuses on how this traditional cloth is undergoing a change, in the modern day Tripura, as far as their design and materials are concerned.

Keywords: Tripuri tribal community, traditional handloom, traditional textiles, Risa

Introduction

Human beings have survived by acclimatizing to the environment. The nature and surroundings have always been reflected in every culture. Tripura is situated in the Eastern region of India. It is surrounded on the East by the Lusai Hills and Chittagong Hill, on the West by Tripura, Its Northern and southern boundaries are flanked by Sylhet and Noakhali in Bangladesh.

This state has a huge Tribal population. There are nineteen tribal communities, among them Tripuri tribal community is one of the major and popular community. This community has its own cultural heritage. They have their individual ethnic features that match so well with these bright traditional dresses. The tribal women of the North-East region engage themselves in making their traditional clothes as well as their ritual costumes. This Risas are known for their, surprising and stylish designs, exclusive multicoloured combinations and lasting texture. This cloth won accolade from international weaving stalwarts. It also carries a great significance of their art of Tripuri.

The Tripuri tribal women make all the fabrics including Risa with the help of loin loom, They make Risa with multi-coloured warp and weft threads on this loom, and create the most amazing, stylish designs. Bright colour combinations and intricate texture is atypical of this beautiful fabric. The Tripuris have a great knowledge of multicolored design weaving which have been handed down to them from generation to generation. They have mastered the art by visual lessons which are given by their older female members of their family. The Risa is very famous in their community and this clothes are in high demand in the market.

Objective of the Study

- To study the previous traditional Risa designs in their traditional dress.
- To find out the reasons of the lack of interest in making this dress in their traditional loom.
- Impact on the new generation.

Material and Method

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary source of data are based on my field work. These were collected from various books, Journal, Govt. records and official documents.

It is also based on field study, it is conducted by Questionnaire method, simultaneously random sampling, cross section and observation method has also been applied to collect the proper information and compiled of all these method to get the relevant information. The field work is carried in three stages, 1) Pre-field study, 2) Field study and 3) Post-field study.

Risa

Risa is a popular traditional dress of Tripuri women. This dress occupies a prominent place in Tripuri communities. Risa is a small piece of cloth which is used to cover the upper portion of female body.

The legendary King of Tripura Subrai Raja (Trilochan) was known as the benefactor eager for the development of new designs; he encouraged the Tripuri women to innovate new designs. It is said that he had 250 wives who had created two hundred fifty new designs. But most of these designs had lost their flow with the passing of time and only a few are retained till date.

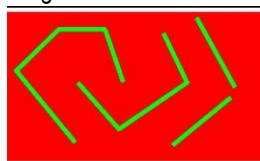
Many designs are kept the special interest, reason of that these designs are simple and can easily transferred and imitate to frame loom,

Traditionally the Risa was woven by female folks. In a marriage ceremony a mother presents a Risa to her daughter-in-law to show love and affection. It is also an indication of her acceptance as a bride in their family. This tradition is still continuing which had started during the reign of King Trilochan, The Risa is used in worship, religious gatherings and festivals.

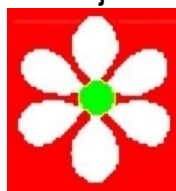
In the earlier days this Riya made by Tripuri women was highly appreciated both in domestic and International markets. At the time of the death rites which is known as Thuilai Thanglai of Tripuri community, Tripuri women also wear this traditional dress Risa.

In the beginning in every family only the women are engaged in making this beautiful fabric along with all the household activities. At the age of 8-9 the tribal girls' help their mothers or grandmothers as they engage in spinning, or in pre-process of making loom and simultaneously they observe the technique of weaving on loin looms to make a beautiful Risa. The girls also helped their mother or grandmother to dyeing the yarn also. They have their own unique textile designs and that has a great significance.

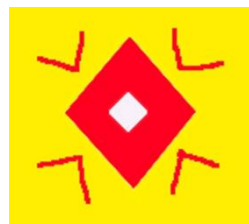
Some of the designs motifs are very much popular and till now they try to make Risa with these motifs which are given below:



Anji



Bubar



Maitangsa



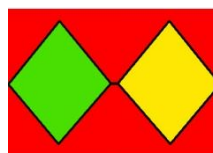
Butaisa



Khakaitu



Thaichumbar



Thaisa Thainoi



Bangchai



Khumtai

Findings and Results

As per 1920 census in the hilli area of Tripura there lived 34,856 families, among them 31,485 worked on the loom (Sen, p-1047)

As per the National Handloom Census 1986-87 in Tripura there are 1,15,236 weavers including commercial and non-commercial. There were 184 weavers' societies at the time. People accepted weaving as an integral part of their life. According to the third Handloom census in India in 2009-10 total households of Tripura are 118,708 including urban and rural areas. 1,00,901 handloom workers' families are engaged in weaving on looms. The products are used both for domestic and urban consumption.

As per National Handloom counting census of 1997, in Tripura there are 1,27,000 weavers, among them most of the women, are from the different Tribal communities. They make their cloth in their primitive loom called loin loom. Around 12,000 weavers are working for the commercial market, they are all Bengalese. (Shilpayan O Tripura, 2001). It is noted in, At a glance 2007 to 2012 and present picture, published by Handloom, Handicrafts & Sericulture, as per 2010-11 Govt. of India census in Tripura there are 1,37,177 handloom weavers. Clusters have been formed by different primary weavers co-operative societies. There are total 42 Clusters. They are situated in West Tripura District, Sipahijala District, Khowai District, South Tripura District, Gomati District, Dhalai District, North Tripura District, Unakoti District.

Socio-economic Condition

The Tripuri Tribal community has marvellous textiles of high demand from the whole world. The Risa is exported for its excellence of design. In the early period the Tribal people of Tripura dyed their yarn in indigenous dye which is derived from different trees, barks, roots, leaves etc for

making their traditional dress. Now for save the time they are buying the yarn to weave. This dyeing process was too lengthy.

In the earlier time, each and every Tripuri family had one or more spinning wheels in their home. The Tripuri women were used only hand spun yarns for making this beautiful fabric. They were also accomplishing the process of cleaning and spinning the cotton yarn. But with the passage of time, due to the demand of the market and to save the wastage of time they started using the mill made yarn instead of hand spun yarn. As a result this indigenous cloth has become almost extinct. Now-a-days a very few number of Tripuri women are still engaged in making this fabric using hand spun yarn. Therefore the uses of hand spun yarn in this weaving on loom, this art of weaving in their society are dying out rapidly. Now a day's educated Tripuri women wear saris like Bengalee women. Now this community to some extent is becoming aware of the importance of academic excellence and as a result are no longer eager to be engaged in making traditional clothes, they are least interested in carrying on the tradition. They are placed this fabric in the market for the purpose of sale.

Due to this decreasing interest in making their own clothes in loom, lots of fine specimen designs which the Tripuri women had created with much care and skill have gradually turned into a mere memory of the past. Yet that was their proper art heritage. Definitely it is a severe loss for the world of art inheritance of the past.

The Modern Society

The Modern Tripuri societies have adopted the Bengali Hindu culture in dress, food, residence etc. They now feel detached from their tribal ground. The transition from past to present and the effect of industrialization impart an enormous influence on their entire way of life.

There is a debate between old and new generation on the implementation of new way of life and modern point of view. To attenuate their isolation, since the last few decades they have been interacting more and more with people in the plains. Gradually this Tripuri community are being alienated from their roots and opted to go with the flow.



Oldest Risa

The older persons had felt obliged to embrace the old customs, whereas the younger generation are getting on to accept the modern way of life.



Different types of Traditional Risa



Contemporary Risa

Interpretation, Discussion and Conclusions

World is changing for the rapid industrialization and alongside due to modern technology. In hill and the rural areas of Tripura the living style of Tribal community is less developed than the urban area. The modern Tripuri people have adopted the modern standard of living and life style.

In this State there are about 1.37 lakh handloom weavers were conducted as a part of All India programme as per the 2009-10 Census, Although The National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC) help the different co-operatives. Now a Primary Weavers' Cooperative Society (PWCS) has been formed in each cluster. There are region wise many clusters in Tripura which are still working to make handloom products but only 3-4 clusters are engaged in the production of only traditional tribal handloom textiles of the Tripuris.

Although the different clusters have taken initiatives to save the traditional designs even in the remote areas of the state, educational facilities in those areas are still less. Various projects can upgrade the weavers. Making of their traditional fabrics on their traditional loom is too much time consuming but there is a special beauty of that fabric that had uses of the hand spun cotton yarn. it furnished a relief kind of texture on surface of the fabric. When these clothes are going for sale, the tribal people who make these beautiful clothes, with laborious effect and intuitive artistic touch hardly get any money or appreciation.. So they want to upgrade and adapt new techniques in order to save the time and upgrade loom instead of their traditional loom.

In the context of the changing socio-economic condition the weavers are not satisfied by weaving their traditional fabric making in loom. And for that different Clusters can support the socio economic enhancement of

the artist cum weavers. The clusters scheme will help in development of the diversified products. Therefore with the help of different Govt. project still now can re-constructed the old designs, which will help to documented as well preserve the most remarkable designs from the past. Newly reconstructed designs and infrastructures are required for providing diversified products as per demand on market trends.

In Tripura there are two types of weavers' category one is commercial weavers, in this category most are Bengali weavers and the another is traditional household weavers, in this category only the Tribal women weave their fabrics for domestic and ritual purpose. Young generations should be provided with adequate employment opportunities especially in the remote and hilly areas. They should be made aware of the greater demand of traditional fabric both in the domestic markets and foreign countries. It is high time that these traditional designs are protected and worked upon to suit the demand of the day.

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